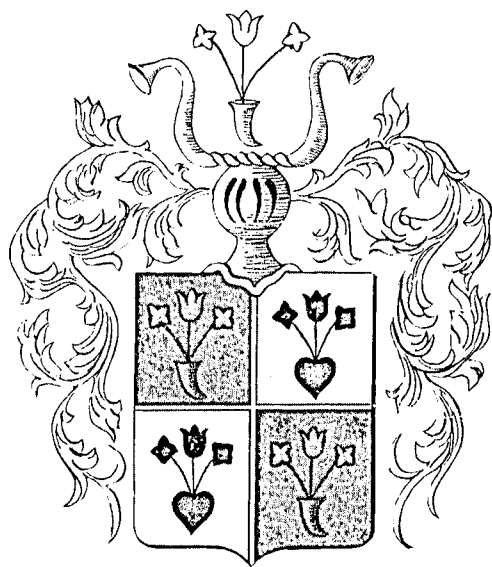


A
LIVELY
LEGACY

ESSAYS IN HONOR OF ROBERT PREUS



*A LIVELY LEGACY:
ESSAYS IN HONOR OF
ROBERT PREUS*

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The cover design is a reproduction of the Preus family coat of arms.

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*Circumdate Sion, et complectimini eam;
Narrate in turribus eius.
Ponite corda vestra in virtute eius,
Et distribuite domos eius, ut enarretis in
progenie altera.
Quoniam hic est Deus,
Deus noster in aeternum, et in saeculum saeculi;
Ipse reget nos in saecula.*

(Vulgate)

*Walk about Zion, go round about her,
number her towers,
consider well her ramparts,
go through her citadels;
that you may tell the next generation
that this is God,
our God for ever and ever.
He will be our guide for ever.*

(RSV)

Psalm 48:12-14.

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Editorial Foreword

As *A Lively Legacy* heads for printing and distribution, we would make two cautionary observations and discharge a threefold debt of thanks.

Some of those who will rejoice at the publication of a volume of essays celebrating, albeit somewhat belatedly, the sixtieth birthday of Dr. Robert Preus, may, upon glancing at the List of Contributors, pose the question: *cur alii, non alii*—why some and not others? By way of answer, we would stress the spontaneity of the decision, taken over a year ago, to seek to assemble a *Festschrift* in honor of Dr. Preus; the need to wrap our project in the greatest possible secrecy so that, as was in fact the case, its announcement at Concordia Theological Seminary's opening service for the new academic year should come as a complete surprise to the jubilarian; and, not least, the limitations imposed by the imperative of haste.

We would furthermore emphasize that, while all the contributors understand themselves to be subject to the Holy Scriptures and to the exposition of them given in the Confessions of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church, the appearance of these fifteen essays in juxtaposition to each other does not mean that each essayist concurs with every opinion expressed by his fellows. Each writer takes responsibility only for his own contribution. Above all, we would state the obvious fact that Dr. Preus himself bears no responsibility for the idiosyncracies of those who write in his honor!

Our thanks go, in first place, to our contributors, whose essays, we hope, will serve the cause of Lutheran Confessionalism. Secondly, we wish to express our gratitude to Mr. Gordon Aasgaard and Mr. Robert Merryman, and their co-workers at Graphic Publishing Company for their untiring assistance in transforming these essays from manuscript to printed form, and to The Reverend Professor Albert Wingfield and The Reverend Douglas Christian of Concordia Theological Seminary for their ready aid in looking after the business side of this venture. Thirdly, but by no means least, we would record our hearty thanks to Mr. Raymond Joeckel and Mr. John Wiebe, chairman and member respectively of the Board of Regents of Concordia Theological Seminary, for their generous donations which have made possible our going to press.

Kurt E. Marquart	Fort Wayne, Indiana
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St. Michael and all Angels 1985



Robert Preus, dressed as a doctor of theology of the University of Strasbourg.

Doctor Robert David Preus: An Appreciation

Robert Preus, pastor, professor, churchman, and seminary president, is above all a theologian. He is saluted here in this traditional academic way by friends and colleagues on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday—even though the actual publication falls within the bounds of one calendar year after that event, October 16, 1984.

The remarks which follow must not be understood as presumptuous efforts to anticipate the verdict of history. They are offered as a personal tribute, from a perspective, however, which, to the extent that it succeeds in reflecting a wider consensus, illuminates the high esteem in which the jubilarian is held throughout the orthodox Lutheran Church in our time.

There are of course many things that could be said, but at least three things must be said about the theology of Robert Preus. One is that this theology represents the mainstream of the orthodox Lutheran legacy. Like C. F. W. Walther, Robert Preus never tried to be “original” or idiosyncratic in his theology. Nor did he focus narrowly on one or two favorite themes. There is therefore no “Preus school,” riding pet hobbyhorses, but only a shared devotion to a common heritage. If there is an “accent,” it falls just where St. Paul and Luther put it, on “Christ alone,” against every form of synergism. And as in Walther’s case so in Preus’, we find a creative, not uncritical, appropriation of the tradition, rather than the mindless rigidity of stock liberal caricature.

This wide-angle scope is reflected in the essays printed in this book. Apart from their commitment to the substance of the Scriptures and the Confessions, there is no obvious common thread linking the various contributions. None of them, however, whether they deal with Biblical authority or Luther or the church’s mission or the “family/life” complex of issues, fall outside the domain of concerns marked out by the many-faceted theological work of Robert Preus.

No doubt the leading authority in the Anglo-Saxon realm on seventeenth century Lutheran Orthodoxy, Preus has helped to rescue English-speaking Lutherans from the paralyzing collective amnesia

induced by the lack of effective access to their theological classics. While others, especially his brother J. A. O. Preus, the former president of the Missouri Synod, Professor F. Kramer, and the Rev. Luther Poellot, provided much-needed translations of the literary output of the early and pivotal figure of the "Second Martin" (Chemnitz), Robert Preus began a comprehensive series, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, of which two volumes have appeared so far. It is hoped that as the old "sunken treasures" are reclaimed and re-enter the conscious life of the contemporary church, the taste for shapeless mush will quietly fade away.

It is of course the Book of Concord itself which prescriptively defines what Lutheran theology is. But routine lip-service and occasional ceremonial salutes to the Confessions are worse than useless, if their actual content is not known and understood. With this in view, Preus in January of 1978 organized the first Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions. This annual "Confessions Congress" has grown into a firm and popular tradition at Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne. Inter-synodical and international in participation and attendance, these meetings highlight the theological substance of the Confessions in scholarly analysis, debate, and contemporary application.

The second major point to be made has to do with the contemporary reassertion of the Reformation's Scripture-principle. One may perhaps be pardoned a personal reminiscence here. Those who were students at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in the middle and late 'fifties, will recall the confusion and controversy which attended the question of Biblical inspiration and authority in the wake of the post-World War II "neo-orthodox" *blitzkrieg*. Lip service was paid to inspiration, but that doctrine came increasingly to resemble the context-less grin of Alice's disappearing Cheshire cat. Most of the old framework had been given up, and its champions were despised as "dictation theory" scarecrows. Into this tottering world of doubletalk and shilly-shallying, so reminiscent of Yeats' 1921 lines,

The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity,

sounded the clear trumpet tones of Robert Preus' first doctoral dissertation, published as *The Inspiration of Scripture* (Edinburgh, 1955). Edward Farley has recently described this book and Volume I of Preus' *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism* (1970) as "the fullest historical studies of the seventeenth-century [Lutheran] theologians on Scripture."¹

The enlightening, settling, even liberating effects of Preus' first book were immense, at least for those of us who were as students struggling through the spiritual-theological muddles of those years. And then, in 1957, Preus became an instructor at the St. Louis Seminary, where he remained until the drama of 1974. As a faithful professor and frequent writer and essayist, he did much toward the Missouri Synod's official reassertion, under President J. A. O. Preus, of Biblical authority against historical criticism. After the famous "walkout" of the critically inclined faculty majority, Robert Preus was one of the "Faithful Five" who stayed to rebuild. At one point he combined in his person the offices of Acting President, Acting Academic Dean, and Acting Registrar! In that same year he was called to the presidency of Concordia Theological Seminary, then in Springfield, Illinois.

For Preus, as for all orthodox Lutherans, the heart and center of Scripture is Christ. Justification, not inspiration, is the linchpin holding everything else together. It is in this sense that Preus has participated prominently and fruitfully in the work of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy.²

The third and final point to be made here is perhaps the most important. Theology is practical. This is a commonplace in Lutheran Orthodoxy. It means that theology is not like mathematics or physics, but like medicine. Although physicians need technical knowledge, without which mere bedside manner is charlatany, medical knowledge is mastered not for its own sake, but as a part of the art and practice of healing. Theology is like that, except that its healing resources come from God alone, through His revealed Word, and supply eternal, not temporal life. Therefore orthodoxy defines theology as a practical, God-given aptitude, that is, the ability to apply God's Law and Gospel to people, for the purpose of incorporating them through faith into Christ and His church and tending them there with Word and Sacrament to everlasting life.

Edward Farley notes this old Lutheran understanding, citing in support Gerhard and Calov, via Preus.³ Farley's own work in this area is nothing less than an autopsy of current "mainline" Protestant seminary education in America. Farley shows that with the collapse of what he calls the "house of authority" under pressure from historical criticism, theology and theological education became fragmented into a welter of independent "scientific" disciplines, which then needed to be supplemented with (basically unrelated) "practical skills." The minister thus becomes no longer a man of God, shaped

by his immersion into the theological substance of authoritative texts, but a trained "professional" with marketable "skills." Theological learning turns into a hobby which those so inclined may pursue, but which is basically discouraged by the "reward systems" of pragmatic, success-oriented denominational machineries. Without attending to the underlying theological malaise, says Farley, all the much-discussed "curricular reform" remains a purely cosmetic exercise.

Farley's positive prescriptions are unconvincing since he advocates unconditional surrender of historic Christianity's "house of authority," by which he means mainly Scripture as God's Word, transmitting divine doctrine. But only the very naive could imagine that orthodox Lutheran seminary education is safely immune from the broad trends identified in Farley's brilliantly depressing diagnosis.

As a foremost representative of the "house of authority," Robert Preus knows very well that without clear-cut God-given truth theology is dead and seminary education bankrupt. He also knows that the "house of authority" exists not for its own sake, but for the sake of the church's divinely mandated mission. This deeply held concern for missions took Preus to Lausanne in 1974, where he addressed the World Congress on Evangelization. Preus also served on the Missouri Synod's Board for Mission Services, and has energetically pursued the cause of upgrading the missions curriculum in the institution of which he is president. In this latter capacity, Preus has striven to tip the balance in favor of theological rather than bureaucratic impulses in the shaping of pastoral training and preparation. For it is of course precisely Lutheran Orthodoxy which cannot remain content as an academic "theory" on a shelf, while "practice" apes the latest sectarian success-story.

The easy assumption that the only good orthodoxy is dead orthodoxy is challenged by the theological renewal to which Robert Preus has devoted his life. True, Biblical and Confessional integrity is embattled and lacks the Madison Avenue appeal of all "theology of glory." But has it ever been different in the church? Yet in the face of the wholesale modern abandonment of the most precious and distinctive treasures of the Church of the Augsburg Confession—need one go beyond the U.S. Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue Series III, by way of example?—the faithful old theology of the cross remains at her post and renews her youth like the eagle's.

The means of grace and their all-decisive, pivotal position are the hallmark of the Lutheran confession. Let modern social, political,

and commercial manipulation depend on the insights of the "behavioral sciences." For theology in the strict sense these insights are of no concern, even when they are trivially true. For the church lives solely and alone from Christ's own pure Gospel and Sacraments, which in turn of course are found not in "cold storage," but in living proclamation and distribution to poor, needy sinners (AC V and VII). To serve as a humble messenger of Him Whose words are spirit and are life (St. John 6:63) has ever been the highest and the only genuine ambition of Lutheran theology. It is this deepest inner vitality of the heritage itself, not any exciting qualities of individual contributions to it, which is the ultimate referent of the "lively" in *A Lively Legacy*.

K. Marquart
Fort Wayne, Indiana
Monday in the week of Trinity XIII 1985

Endnotes

¹Edward Farley, *Ecclesial Reflection: An Anatomy of Theological Method* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), p. 121, n. 10.

²See Earl D. Radmacher and Robert D. Preus, eds., *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984).

³Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), p. 46, n. 12. See also Edward Farley, "The Reform of Theological Education as a Theological Task," *Theological Education*, vol. XVII, no. 2 (Spring, 1981), pp. 93-117. The "fallout" from this explosive contribution to the journal of the Association of Theological Schools has not yet abated.

Luther's Sermons on Advent as a Summary of His Theology

1

Especially instructive for all later sermons of Luther's on Advent is one held between 1514 and 1520, dealing with the Immanuel prophecy. Christ is the stricken one, afflicted with the same misery as we are. But as an allied soldier He will deliver us from all evil and offer His help to us. In digging the trenches of defense He gives us His help not as an unconcerned observer, but in direct engagement, bearing the burden and heat of the work. Likewise as soldiers having a fellow-combatant we can say that He endures the bad and the good with us. So Christ is with us in the mud and is working "*das Ihm die haut rauchet*" [till His skin smokes]. God is with us bearing our harm and taking away the sin of the world. He put Himself under the law, the might of the devil, and the wrath of God, to overcome all these, so that we might be able to gain the same victory by believing in Him.

In the word "Immanuel," therefore, there is the greatest comfort. Luther here refers to John 16:33, Matthew 28:20, and I Corinthians 1:30. Then a passage follows which is very instructive for Luther's sermons as a whole, but especially for the Advent-sermons: Christ has not been made wise for His own sake, but He is my medicine, my *pharmakon*, even the healing bandage laid on the wound and making faith pure. In this way Christ is both medicine and doctor, as well as priest and victim (Heb. 9:28), because whoever believes in Him will not be lost but has everlasting life.

To make certain that He is Immanuel He gave Himself for an eternal testament, attested by death. As often as mass is celebrated this testament is put before us. However ridiculous it may seem to the impious that we eat our God, this is the only way of being healed to the utmost extent. So He is both, officinal herb and soap, by which we are purged. In this way God is not only exactor of justice and judge, but He is in us, healing us by His mercy. If Christ was only a man, He would not be able to help us, but the Immanuel helps us in a salvific way.¹

What is remarkable about Luther's reflections on the main lines of the text apart from the Immanuel prophecy is that there are no specific Advent features, not to mention Advent sentimentality. Instead, the totality of redemption in Christ is put before us and this in four particular accents. Christ shares all He is and has with those who belong to Him. In this way the christological facts are directly transformed soteriologically. But there is no simple identification, as is shown by the prominence given to both of the natures of Christ. For Luther Christology is not simply soteriology, as is sometimes the case in modern theology. It is Christ who overcame law, devil, wrath of God, sin, and death. He conquered the powers of evil. This is the comprehensive manner in which Luther describes sin. At the same time Christ shares His victory with those who believe in Him. In some respect the pattern of the "*fröhliche Wechsel*" (*admirabile commercium*) ["happy exchange"] appears here although that catchphrase is not used.

The second point is along the same line. Christ is both, *pharmakon* [medicine] and doctor, priest and victim. This strengthens faith, because everybody believing in Christ has the certainty of eternal life. Moreover, the sacramental mediation is significant in this early sermon. It is clear that there is for Luther no pure theology of the Word apart from the Sacraments. Finally, the confession of the unity of God and man in Christ is significant. This doctrine is represented by the Immanuel prophecy. Therefore Luther's sermons cannot be separated from the confession of the church, as is shown in this example. As a summary, all Luther has to say as a preacher is concentrated in this sermon on one point: Immanuel.

Naturally the exegesis of Matthew 21:1 ff., the Gospel for the first Sunday in Advent, is of special relevance for Luther's sermons on Advent. Generally speaking, there are three types of sermons on this subject. The first is the exegesis of Christ's entry into Jerusalem. The second type reflects the Gospel for the second Sunday in Advent (Lk. 21:25 ff.), on doomsday. Finally, there is the eschatological joy and expectation found especially in the Epistle-texts for Advent.

The first example of the exegesis of Matthew 21:1 ff. is taken from 1519. This Gospel deals with the church from the beginning until the end of the world, because the people going before and following after Christ are the crowd of the faithful in both Testaments, simultaneously singing their Hosannas and so praising God and glorifying His name. The sending of the two disciples means the preaching of the gospel as it has been commanded to the apostles. The donkey and her

foal are all of us together, who had been tied to the law as our slave-trader and dealer. Only the donkey has been broken in, but the foal has had neither rider nor load. This means that we have fulfilled the law and the works of the law only according to the outward appearance, but our heart has resisted and hated the law. Because we have been brought to Christ by the Word, preached by His apostles and preachers, the foal is willing to admit Christ as our rider. This means that we are now serving God according to the spirit and obey Him in free devotion and love. If our foal has been tamed and led by this rider, this means that our innermost desires have been changed by His grace, something which otherwise no law or tyranny could have extorted. After the foal has been broken in, which alone Christ was willing to ride on because He seeks in every work and service the heart and its devotion, then even the old donkey is willing to follow spontaneously, so that all outward and corporal things now serve and please God. So Christ is said to be riding on both donkeys according to the word of the prophet.

If, further, the coming King is gentle (Zech. 9:9), then the sum of the gospel is expressed here. This means that now only Christ and no sin is ruling in our hearts. He came to bring us His righteousness and His salvation. So this gentle King is leading us by the appearing of His grace. He commands nothing and He lays no law upon us like Moses, but He imparts the Spirit by which we fulfill the law and do all in freedom.

When the disciples help Christ to mount, having first spread their clothes over the animals, this means that the disciples are not deriving for themselves any rule, advantage, or honor from preaching the gospel. All they do is lead the believers to Christ, to seek and to increase God's honor, and not to think of their own. The clothes spread on the way are the examples of the holy prophets, in whose footsteps we have to walk. The olive branches are the words of the Scriptures proclaiming the charity of God. Finally, the palm branches, which defy the oppressors, mean the Word of God, by which we are attested, that strengthened in faith and hope, we may hold out.²

The second example, another allegorical treatment of the same text, is from 1521. Here we see the *res universa et mores ecclesiae in Christo* [the universal nature and ways of the church in Christ], the procession of those who are going with Him to the Heavenly Father and to the celestial Jerusalem. In this way the Johannine passage of the Son to the Father (16:17) has an ecclesiastical counterpart.

According to the Scriptures Christ came first to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives. This is interpreted as *domus oris* [mouth-house], which means the church, because here the living word of grace is preached and the voice of salvation resounds, which was once mute in the synagogue. So Christ came to Bethphage, that means, to the house of the living sermon, not of dead scriptures, because the church begins with His arrival and from there the witnesses are sent out to preach the gospel and to proclaim the word of life with living mouths.

What is represented [*figuratur*] by this entry into Jerusalem is Christ's first epiphany in the flesh. This is the arrival of mercy and grace, signified by the olives. The Mount of Olives is the church itself, made fertile by the oil of grace. As the apostles spread out their clothes on the donkeys and set the Lord upon them, so they are preparing people, by subduing them to His saving purpose, that Christ may dwell and rule there. The clothes spread on the way mean the examples of the martyrs and especially of the patriarchs, who precede Christ, and by whom the way of Christ's believers is adorned. The branches of palms and olives have been picked from the Scriptures, which are full of words of grace, represented by the olives, while the palms represent the overcoming power of the words of the cross. This pictures the common doctrine of the church as mortification of sin and justification of the spirit. For the palm bears the weight without giving way, even under the word of suffering and cross. The olives, whose twig was brought to the Ark by the dove, are the words of grace and of forgiveness of sins. The singing and praising multitude announces the gladness of the church at the mercy of Christ, in whom the old fathers and we all rejoice and praise the Father of mercy in the heavens, as do all other servants and ministers.

One of the donkeys signifies the new people of Christ on which He is riding to heaven. The foal expresses both the unity and the simplicity of faith. Epistle and Gospel are getting at the same thing. Both teach that we are on our way from the first Advent of Christ to the second, and that we walk honestly, putting on Christ and putting off the works of darkness. If we now turn back from the mystical exegesis [*de mysteriis*] to the text, we find it reported here that Christ, the King of the daughter of Zion, comes not in the majesty, might, and worldly pomp of the kings of this world, but in meekness. Luther then compares the entry of Christ with the entry of the law on Sinai. By total contrast, the law, according to Exodus 19:18 ff., enters in a most terrifying shape, with the whole mountain wrapped in smoke.

These terrors express what the law brings about, namely wrath, terrified consciences, consignment of all under sin and guilt, for by the law is the knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20). By the law we understand how miserable, evil, corrupt, and lost we are, deserving only of death and hell.

To put away evil, to satisfy the law, thus quieting the tormented conscience, and to turn away sin, Christ is led in. He comes in meekness, not with pressure and compulsion, like the law, but making a gift of Himself. He came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it (Matt. 5:17). He does this by making us the foal of the donkey, carrying our burden in firm faith and in loving good works. Whoever has Christ has satisfied the law and does not tremble in conscience. To have and to put on Christ means to believe in Him, that is, to believe that He is meek and is the Savior, forgiving sin and giving grace. Continuing his exegesis therefore Luther stresses the "your King" of the text. He has been promised to you, He is expected by you; you tormented Him by sin, yet have called and expected Him. He comes of Himself, graciously, in joyful love. You have not presented Him, just as it was not you who ascended to heaven. Not on account of your merits, but of Himself he comes to you, leaving all that belongs to Him and seeking you.³

Comparing both sermons, we find three common features, apart from the details of the allegoristic exegesis. These features are more pronounced in the first example, but are found, more textually, in the second one as well. Even after the Reformation break-through Luther uses allegorical exegesis broadly, no doubt using elements of tradition, which cannot be shown here in detail.

The three significant features can be put like this. The entrance of the law on Sinai and the entry of Christ into Jerusalem stand under the rule of antitypical correspondence. They represent the two types of human existence, life under the Law, and life under the Gospel.

Faith originates from Christ, who enters as the meek one. This entrance in faith means at the same time His victory over sin and death. Thus the witness of Advent is a testimony to justification through faith alone, without using that term. Justification is in this way the leading line in Luther's sermons, elucidated to the utmost by the concrete texts. This is not simply a question of theological theory, because the plain structures of Luther's sermons cannot be understood if justification is only a paragraph of dogmatics. In other words, to understand justification, it is necessary to hear the context of Luther's sermons. This means further that justification has to be

understood as the cardinal point in the Scriptures. In this way Luther's sermons for Advent are a paradigm of the gospel as well as of justifying faith.

The same is true for the relation of faith and works. By means of the Gospel of the Lord's entry into Jerusalem Luther makes clear that the entrance of the Lord includes the internal transformation of the faithful. This is the way of the new obedience (*Augsburg Confession* VI), with Christ as our rider and the church as God's new people, on whom He rides to heaven. Faith and new birth, the indicative and the imperative of faith, are inseparable. One cannot be divided from the other. Luther exalts justification, but he never forgets the fruits of faith. This is very clear in his sermons. The sharp controversies about faith and works appear in a new light when beside the theologian also Luther the preacher is heard. This shows to what extent the ecumenical discovery of Luther is a question of preaching.

Before the third, quite different type of sermon about the entry into Jerusalem is analyzed, some other examples should be given, to confirm the results obtained so far. In his "Winter Postil" of 1528, for instance, Luther returns to the two entries, on Sinai, and in Jerusalem. Both take place in a bodily way. And God still does the same every day through His servants and preachers by the word of law and gospel.⁴ Therefore both doctrines must always come together. Neither can produce a good result without the other. Law without gospel makes desperate, and gospel without law makes impudent, coarse, and insolent people.⁵

For the prophet it is not sufficient to say, "your King," but he adds that he "comes to you." This is to attract us to faith. It is not enough that Christ made us free from the tyranny and domination of sin, death, and hell, and that He has become our King, but He also gives Himself to us, so that everything that He is and has may become ours.⁶ Two points are noteworthy here, the effectual correlation of law and gospel, combined with the care of souls. Law and gospel are indissoluble not only as parts of doctrine, but in the Christian life as well. Both have the *praxis pietatis* [practice of piety] in view.

The other motif, here without the express terminology, is that of the "*fröhliche Wechsel (admirabile commercium)*" [happy (Latin: wondrous) exchange] between Christ and the faithful. This explains the meaning of justifying faith.

Another accent in Luther's sermons for Advent is what we may call the hiding-motif. Christ coming to Jerusalem hides His glory. This is connected with the *adventus verbi seu Euangelii* [coming of

the word or the gospel] as an *adventus spiritualis* [spiritual coming] according to Ephesians 2:13 ff., by which we are made the *regnum dei* [reign or kingdom of God], as those who are justified from sin and redeemed from death.⁷ As elsewhere so in the "Narrations" of 1521 Luther employs the Advent theme to display the message of justification according to Romans 3:26. When Christ enters, as the Just One, we can see how near salvation is, and how it is still approaching, for this procession and coming [*adventus*] lasts even until the end of the world. Romans 15:8, Galatians 3:18, and Psalm 118:25 ff. belong to the same pattern, bound together by the exegesis of the "Hosanna."

When in the mass we daily sing the "Hosanna in the highest," we are praying that Christ may this day lead His church in a wholesome and salutary way.⁸ Generally speaking Luther uses everywhere Bernard's scheme of the two advents; so for instance in the exegesis of the Epistle for the second Sunday in Advent (Rom. 15:4-13). The first arrival of the law includes the hope of the coming Savior. Those who accept Christ in His first advent and put Him on, bearing Him in faith and good works, meet with much trouble, by which we are driven out of the world, just as the children of Israel before us were driven out of Egypt. For the life of all is nothing other than hope in the Redeemer Christ, Who leads them, liberated from all evils, out of this life into the Kingdom of His Father in Heaven.⁹ The various advents thus combine for the ultimate liberation of God's people. The advent of the law points beyond the advent of Christ in Jerusalem to the advent of eternal glory which will deliver the faithful from all evil. In this way Luther's Advent sermons receive their characteristic eschatological accent.

A look at the "Advent Postil" of 1522 may round out the picture. The Gospel of the entry of Christ provokes and demands faith in a special way. It represents Christ in His gracious advent, which can be accepted only by faith. Pure grace, gentleness and goodness are shown here in Christ. Whoever believes in Him is saved. He rides not on a stallion, a martial animal, nor does He come in terrible splendor and power, but He sits on a donkey, which is an "*unstreytig tier*" [unwarlike animal], ready only for burdens and work to help people. Christ's coming to the Mount of Olives means that He comes in pure mercy, because oil in the Scriptures denotes God's grace. What is appropriate to His arrival are not armor or noise of battle, but pure singing, praying, being joyful, and giving thanks to God.¹⁰

Since this King comes as "your King," He differs from all other

kings. That is what makes the Advent prophecy so comforting. As things are, man is subjugated under many fierce tyrants, like the devil, the flesh, the world, sin, the law, death, and hell. A heart so beset flees at the rustling of a leaf (Lev. 26:36). But the heart which embraces the Advent King in strong faith is firm and certain, and does not fear sin, death, hell, or any evil, because this King is Master over hell and heaven, and all things are in His hands. Reason is unable to see all this, which that poor donkey-rider brings—only faith can understand it.¹¹

This faith is tied to preaching. When the gospel is preached and your King is coming, all this is pure grace. Your King is coming. That means not that you seek Him, but that He seeks you. You do not find Him, He finds you, because the preachers come from Him. In this way the arrival of Christ is totally included in preaching. But if He comes to you, then He is yours, so that you may share in His goods, as a bride does when her bridegroom adorns her with jewels. Once more the motif of the "*fröhliche Wechsel*" [happy exchange] appears. Christ comes not as He came to Adam, to Cain, in the Deluge, to Babylon, to Sodom and Gomorrah. He comes not as He came to the people of Israel on Sinai, in wrath, to judge or impose obligations, but He comes in pure goodness: "*Sihe, das heyst, meyn ich, eynem armen sundlichen gewissen trostlich ynsz hertz sprechen, das heyst recht von Christo predigt, und das Euangelium verkündigt*" [Look, this is what it means, I hold, to speak consolingly into the heart of a poor sinful conscience, that's what it means rightly to have preached about Christ and proclaimed the Gospel].¹²

Having dealt with faith in the first part of this sermon, Luther deals with works in the second. The reason is that we embrace Christ by faith also as an example of love towards the neighbor, whom we may now serve, and to whom we may do good, as Christ has done to us. To describe this unity of faith Luther uses Augustine's terms "*gratia*" [grace] and "*donum*" [gift], combining these with the "*fröhliche Wechsel*" [happy exchange]: As faith gives Christ to you with all His gifts, so love gives you to your neighbor with all your goods. And as the good works Christ does for you have no name, so in the same way our good works shall have no name. Christ gave Himself to you totally, so that nothing remains in Him or on Him that is not yours and done for you. Therefore, too, not that this is a good work that you are giving and begging alms, but that you give yourself totally to your neighbor and serve him.¹³ As was shown before, Luther in his Advent sermons connects faith and love so closely that what is seen is

not simply a forensic aspect in isolation but the complete view of a Christian faith and life.

Other sermons on the same text are of the same type, enriched with the subject of law and gospel against the background of the double command of love. It is impossible to love God in his majesty. Such a form of love does not belong to this earth. Therefore it is necessary to love God in His creatures, because He is not willing that you should love Him in His majesty. So the law is given to make me know my impotence. Since God does not allow us to love Him in His majesty, He gave the neighbor to us. Love him and you love God. Therefore we are invited to see Christ in His lowliness and to love Him. Whoever loves Christ loves God.¹⁴

In another sermon on this Gospel Luther speaks, in connection with the topic of learning the Commandments, in a rather vivid picture about the distinction of law and gospel. The gospel is the sun, the law is the moon. The moon, if she has not the sun, looks like a red cauldron. So the law, apart from the gospel, is terrible. But when the sun is shining, the moon has a bright light. So the sun gives eternal life. As long as both lights are shining, day and night can be distinguished. If both are not present, there is mere blindness and darkness.¹⁵

Luther's Advent sermons thus display the grand and consistent pattern of his theology, in that the unity of faith and love correspond to the unity of law and gospel. Each calls for the other. Luther's Advent sermons show with impressive clarity that every sort of dualism is foreign to Luther. Claims to the contrary often depend on a misunderstanding of Luther, in which distinction is mistaken for separation, in respect of *gratia* [grace] and *donum* [gift] as of faith and works or of law and gospel.¹⁶ Thus the gospel of Advent is the basic reality of faith. If today Christ does not come riding on a donkey, then He comes still more purely, because He comes in the Word.¹⁷

As was noted before, the same text receives, in the Palm Sunday sermon of 1521, an exegesis in another direction. Once more the allegory of the two donkeys is used, which here means all the people. Christ alone is riding one of the donkeys. The apostles are not riding because there is only one Rider, Christ Himself. If God wanted another person to ride our conscience, He would have ordered St. Peter to mount. But when the apostles help Christ to mount, they clearly show thereby that they are but servants. Therefore all who belong to the ministry must take care not to ride, lest they be taken

for masters. Then the picture of the donkeys is switched, so that we are now both donkeys according to soul and body. If Christ is not preached, man is simply driven about by those who trouble him. He never comes to rest, because he never does voluntarily what the law demands. All he does is done from fear of being punished still more severely. Thus he is compelled to be pious. This means that even the foal is never free and willing and allows no one to ride it till Christ comes and makes the conscience joyful and willing to do what needs to be done. Then the foal enjoys being ridden. Therefore one person has to be made out of both donkeys.

If Christ is ruling, He makes the heart pious and joyful. Then even the old donkey can only follow. In this way good works begin to help the neighbor and to follow the spirit. Thus the real Christian life is depicted here. The foal ridden by Christ means believing in Him. The other donkey, following the foal, means that good works have to be done that follow faith. Thus Christ rides in spirit and at the same time rules the body. In the end he is riding both donkeys. Therefore man is totally free, both the donkey and the foal. It is sufficient then simply to follow the foal. This means being ruled by the spirit and keeping the flesh bridled, so that it does not oppose the Spirit but obeys Him. In this way the Christian is totally free from the law.

The prophecy (Zech. 9:5) regarding the untying of the donkeys is allegorically to be understood to mean that nothing binds us except the law. Before Christ comes man is always captive, because so long as he intends to become pious by doing this or that work, he is totally bound by the works. This state lasts until the apostles come to untie the donkey, that is, until they preach the forgiveness of sins. Then Christ rides on him and is present in the heart of man. He leads the donkey, whatever the paths, even if the donkey does not perceive this guidance because it is gazing simply at the road below. Yet the donkey does feel the Rider distinctly. If Christ is in our hearts and we believe in Him, then we do not see Him, but we only feel that He leads us. If you are oppressed in conscience, He is not willing to press you. You have been bound, but He will untie you. "Your King" is no tyrant and no enemy. The real tyrant, the evil spirit, who oppresses you, does not come to you, but you come to him. Your King, by contrast, comes to you of Himself and really, before and without your planning or deserving. You are like the donkey which has no idea of inviting anybody to ride upon it. But it is necessary that Christ himself come, and He does come to you, as the prophet says, as a Poor

One, and a Helper. The word "meek" [*mansuetus*] here is of special significance, that you may not be in fear of Him, for He does not come as a severe judge or an angry master. He comes not to demand anything from you but to soothe your conscience. He comes to have mercy on you. You need only to know and accept Him, then you will be full of joy.¹⁸

We have here all the essential accents of Luther's Advent sermons. The details are very characteristic of Luther as a preacher. He can use allegory in a broader and a narrower sense. As our example shows, he finds in one pericope the whole gospel, "spilling over" the particular text. Preaching, that means preaching Christ, causes him to widen the radius. Preaching Christ cannot be confined to literal exegesis only but must treat an individual pericope as a summary of the gospel as a whole. In this way Luther is able to recognize and interpret the proper intention of the text without following it everywhere slavishly or literalistically.

The distinction of law and gospel is widened here in an existential sense. Life under the law is captivity, and that is man's condition everywhere, because he puts himself under the rule of the tyrannical and evil spirit. Man under the law is not simply an involuntary victim of fate, but he sold himself into the slavery of sin and death, from which only Christ in His Advent can free him. Luther here describes the law not in its coherence with the gospel, as in a previous example, but in the sense of the slavery which is abolished in Christ.

When the foal and the donkey are taken as representing faith and works respectively, this combines the topic of law and gospel with that of faith and works. There is here a new accent as compared with *De Servo Arbitrio* [Of the Bondage of the Will]. There man was simply the animal standing between God and Satan, to be ridden by either. But in our text the picture changes. If Christ or the Spirit is riding the foal, this is a genuine liberation, with Christ leading us according to His will.

Luther thus uses the same picture in different senses. In *De Servo Arbitrio* he sharpens the contrast between the dominion of Christ and that of Satan to the very edge of fatalism. What may be misunderstood as a total denial of free will in any sense, even in the converted, is explained differently in the earlier Advent sermon, where Luther describes the liberation effected by the dominion of Christ. This shows the importance, for a proper understanding of Luther, of reflecting on the counterpoint in each case. Two considerations are involved here, one that Luther's theology depends on the specific

situation, and the other, that a dialectical interpretation is necessary. Therefore the different positions cannot be fixed absolutely. Everywhere the counterpoint is to be heard. As I tried to show elsewhere, Luther's theology cannot be mapped with Aristotelian logic, and with the laws of contradiction and excluded middle in particular.¹⁹ Rather, the preaching of Christ requires different levels for contraries like law and gospel, *simul justus et peccator* [at the same time righteous and sinner], or the two natures in Christ. This scheme of structured polarity is especially significant in ecumenical perspective, because it often blocks the way to Luther for Roman Catholic interpreters. The reason is that Luther does not use scholastic ontology.

Finally we turn to a brief examination of the rest of Luther's Advent sermons, noting some other accents, as these are illustrated in a sermon on Romans 13:11 ff. for the first Sunday in Advent, 1545. The time has come to arise from sleep. The light here means not the sun which shines on the good and the evil alike, but another sun and another day, for Christ's sun shines in such a way that no one is able to look at its beams or its day. Where this sun does not shine, all is night and darkness. But where it rises and shines, there is the day, and there we walk in the light of day. Jews, Turks, Papists, jurists, philosophers, and false theologians do not see this sun. Therefore they are surrounded by darkness. But he who believes in the Son knows how God is minded at the bottom of His heart, because the Spirit searches all things, yea the deep things of God (I Cor. 2:10). Embrace the Son of God and Mary, hear and believe that He died for you, hear what He has to say to you, and you will see what God wills in the depth of His heart. Then Luther takes up the motif of the "*fröhliche Wechsel*" [happy exchange]. If Christ has cleansed us by His blood, then you must receive the Sacrament of the Altar not as a good work, but to strengthen your faith. When our light shines, so that we believe in Christ, then we cannot avoid putting away the works of darkness. Therefore a Christian has to be a warrior and a knight.²⁰

The stark contrast to the philosophers becomes especially clear in Philippians 4:4 ff., the Epistle for the last Sunday in Advent, which is about rejoicing in the Lord. The philosophers deny antithesis within the same subject. But for the Christian things are altogether different. So try to laugh if your wife dies of the plague. Laughing is good while dancing. But it is Christ's will that we take up the cross. How can one rhyme being both happy and sorrowful in times of plague and war? From the human standpoint it is impossible. But Christians indeed

can be happy even when their eyes are full of tears and the heart is trembling. This is possible only in the Lord. Therefore the apostle says that you must leave reason behind if you want to have peace, because the peace of God surpasses all. Later Luther says: I seize Christ who died for me and into whom I have been baptized. Since reason, like a dry leaf driven by the wind, cannot ward off sorrow, you shall say: I believe in Christ, I have been baptized.²¹

In a similar way Luther interprets the text in 1545. Christians are to be a merry people full of courage and bravery. Earthly pleasures are only pleasures of the belly, passing by like flatulences. They cannot make a person full of joy. Even though people may seem to be happy while counting money, eating, or dancing, there is not the same joy in their hearts. The world does not perceive the joy which flows from the knowledge of God. It is happy like a cow or a sow. Therefore I am not willing to exchange my joy for all the treasures of the world. For those I shouldn't offer the stalk of a pear. But how rare Christians are, who jump for joy and sing Alleluia! So we should go to Him, who is near, because the festival of His birth is near. He has settled quite nearby to you. He is Immanuel in, with, and under us. He spent His humanity for us. Therefore He says: Believe in me and you will find forgiveness of your sins; the devil has no power over you.²²

Only one aspect of the riches of Luther's sermons for Advent has been left out, and that is the cosmological-eschatological dimension, according to the Gospel for the second Sunday in Advent. To sum up, Luther's Advent sermons are a microcosm of his spiritual world.

Footnotes

¹WA 4. 608, 17-609, 30.

²WA 9. 425, 15-426, 39.

³WA 7. 475, 9-477, 38.

⁴WA 21.9, 11-16.

⁵WA 21. 12, 13-16.

⁶WA 21. 13, 23-30.

⁷WA 45. 426, 1-23.

⁸WA 7. 479, 1-480, 6.

⁹WA 7. 480, 27-35.

¹⁰WA 10 I/2. 22, 15-23, 18.

¹¹WA 10 I/2. 27, 5-28, 18.

¹²WA 10 I/2. 29, 27-32, 21.

¹³WA 10 I/2. 37, 32-38, 20.

¹⁴WA 11. 188, 37-189, 14; 190, 27-31.

¹⁵WA 37. 174, 10-20.

¹⁶This can be shown distinctly with respect to *gratia* and *donum* in Th. Beer: *Der fröhliche Wechsel und Steit. Grundzüge der Theologie Martin Luthers* (Einsiedeln, 1980), pp. 35ff. The author describes Luther on the way of gnostic dualism.

¹⁷WA 27. 483, 6f.

¹⁸WA 9. 633, 23-637, 26.

¹⁹U. Asendorf: *Luther und Hegel. Untersuchungen zur Grundlegung einer neuen systematischen Theologie*. Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte Mainz, vol. 107 (Wiesbaden, 1982), pp. 154ff., 509ff.

²⁰WA 51. 90, 10-95, 20.

²¹WA 46. 512, 16-516, 6.

²²WA 51. 100, 3-106, 18.

Was Luther a Missionary?

2

Gustav Warneck, in his *Outline of a History of Protestant Missions from the Reformation to the Present Time, with an Appendix Concerning Roman Catholic Missions*, contends that Luther was not a man of missions in our sense of the word.¹ After all, Luther never founded a modern day missionary society. Instead of accompanying Ferdinand Magellan, who was his contemporary, on a voyage to take the Gospel around the world Luther stayed at home and devoted himself, of all things, to the reformation of the Church.

However, reading around in Luther's published works, especially his sermons and exegesis on the Psalms,² in Werner Elert's *The Structure of Lutheranism*,³ as well as looking at Paul Peters' article on "Luther's Weltweiter Missionssinn" (Luther's worldwide sense of missions) in the journal *Lutherischer Rundblick*⁴ leads one to believe that most modern scholars have badly misrepresented Luther on missions.

Johannes von Walter (in my opinion) takes a more balanced view in his *Die Geschichte des Christentums* where he says: "It is only a legend that Luther failed to recognize the church's missionary duty at the time of the discoveries in America, Africa and the Orient."⁵

Luther's Theology on Missions

For Luther a theologically correct view of the world meant that everything and every person should be in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. From Colossians 1:23 and Mark 16:15 he concludes that "the Gospel is not to be kept in a corner but should fill the whole globe";⁶ from Psalm 117 that "the Gospel and Baptism must come to the whole world";⁷ from Haggai 2:7 that "it will be a precious treasure for all nations."⁸ Luther says God wants to bless "not two or three nations but the whole world."⁹

Even though Luther cannot believe that non-Christians long for the Gospel,¹⁰ he does not doubt that they are in need of it. For him

the very promise of the blessing for the heathen “bears witness that all nations are under the curse and power of the devil.”¹¹

For Luther the words: *Welt* (world) and *Wort* (word) are key concepts in his worldwide sense of missions. *Wort* is the vehicle by which the happy message is announced. *Welt* is the place and object of the message.¹²

According to Luther, Noah traversed “the entire world and preached everywhere, giving instructions concerning the true worship of God.”¹³

Luther speaks of Abraham as “preaching publicly and building a public chapel or altar.” Luther holds up Abraham as an example for instructing especially his servants and also the neighboring Canaanites concerning true religion. Abraham did not do this, according to Luther, “in some corner—for fear of the threats or the violence of the heathen—but in a public place in order that by his own example and that of his people he might lead others to the knowledge of God and to true forms of worship.”¹⁴ Luther goes on to say: “God even used hunger to drive Abraham to Egypt, so that he might enlighten some with a right understanding of God.” Then Luther applied this statement to his own time by saying: “In such a miraculous way does God act on earth, sending apostles and preachers to the nations in the twinkling of an eye before they can think of it; nor do those who are sent know whither they go.”¹⁵

When speaking of Joseph’s conversation with his brothers after they recognized him in Egypt Luther says: “Now you have recognized God, and me too. And what I told you in your ears that same thing it is proper for you to preach from the housetops (Matthew 10:27). Proclaim such things to your father and to his entire retinue in the same way that Christ demanded His disciples in Mark 16:15 to go to all the world and preach the Gospel.” Luther goes on to say that Joseph sent his brothers out saying, “Rush out to say what you have heard.” Then Luther added the admonition for his listeners and also for us: “As soon as we have received God in His Son Jesus Christ, the immediate consequences should be: go out now, be not quiet, so that it will not be only you who become holy, but also the others around you who are sustained.”¹⁶

Here Luther is speaking not only of evangelism and missions; he is also leading us to understand that the history of the people of God is as a whole the history of missions. Insofar as Israel’s

history is intimately tied up with the history of the Canaanites and Egyptians it is a worldwide history of missions. For Luther, in the words of P. T. Forsyth, "The entire course of history is an all-encompassing missionary movement."¹⁷

Luther also underscored the promise to Abraham that in him all the races of the world should be blessed (Genesis 12:3) when he said: "Here comes the right promise which we should write with golden letters, and glorify and praise in the languages of all lands. For this promise brings and offers the eternal treasures." Luther adds: "But if, as the words clearly indicate, this promise is to be extended to all nations or families of the earth, who else, should we say, has dispensed this blessing among all nations except the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ?"¹⁸

The very first part of Luther's systematic approach to missions is a description of the "kingdom." Wherever he does this the world-wide dimension of his sense of missions comes into view. According to his exegesis of Psalm 8 the kingdom of Christ is "in all lands, and yet in heaven. . . . (It) is founded and regulated, namely, only through the Word and Faith, without sword and armour."¹⁹ According to Luther this kingdom is "not a temporal, transitory, earthly kingdom, ruled with laws and regulations, but a spiritual, heavenly and eternal kingdom that must be ruled without and above all laws, regulations and outward means."²⁰ As such the kingdom, according to Luther, reminds us of the great missionary truth, "that all the heathen should praise God and become God's people."²¹ Here we see the extent to which Luther's sense of missions (missionary consciousness) is drawn from his deep understanding of the "correct way of teaching." As Luther once said it when expounding Psalm 19:4:

The days and nights will declare the glory of God and the works of His hands in the languages of all people and in all lands. . . . This was fulfilled as the apostles proclaimed the great deeds of God in many tongues and it continues to be fulfilled in the whole world, for the Gospel which was disseminated into various languages through the apostles continues to resound in those same tongues unto the ends of the world.²²

At the same time Luther also recognized together with the psalm writers that "In the wake of the preaching of the Word, Satan and so many smart people, so many holy and powerful men—in fact the whole world together with the gates of hell—would persecute the Word." Other obstacles, according to Luther, will be "the ingratitude

of the people, contempt and weariness with the Word."²³ Furthermore, according to Luther, it is so very hard for us "openly and without fear to praise the mercy of God freely . . . for it is boldness above boldness, strength above strength and courage above courage to dare to speak in public and to confess the name of the Lord." For Luther there are various motivations for closing our lips: "Sometimes the fear of danger, sometimes the hope of gain and often the advice of friends intervenes."²⁴ For Luther it is therefore clear why the Psalmist in Psalm 51:15 says: "Lord, open Thou my lips, and grant that I may confidently cry out, teach and instruct others in what I have learned, namely, that Thou alone art praiseworthy and glorious forever, Thou who dost really justify the wicked." In this way Luther encourages us to continue in the work of missions, "so that we might learn how great a thing it is to dare to speak of what we have experienced."²⁵

Although recognizing that not all would accept the witness, Luther says: "Still some from among the nobility, kings, princes and the wise of the world will join themselves to you and will accept the Word. God will have His tithe from the mass of kingdoms and peoples. . . . God always converts a few through this doctrine of faith—in spite of all reason and opinions."²⁶ In order that this might happen Luther developed a lively correspondence with several hundred princes and nobles who ruled over the various political units of Europe.²⁷ The most important thing for Luther is that God will always supply a place in which the Word of God can be taught and so Luther's sense of missions knows no bounds. For the Lord, according to Luther,

will have a kingdom not merely in the Jewish people, but also in the whole earth throughout the world. Christ will have His baptistry, His chancel, from which He teaches, and His apostles and teachers teach in cities and towns even if only one or two believe. So Christ's name and the altar on which the Sacrament is celebrated remain. They will be extended in length as well as in breadth so that Christ and His name will be found in every extremity throughout the world.²⁸

On the basis of Psalm 68:11 Luther says: "The Lord will give the Word (*ausreden*), so that there will be a great host of evangelists."²⁹ Luther continues: "This came to pass in the apostles and their successors throughout the world. God blessed the world with a host of these, dispatching them into all the world."³⁰ Luther further speaks of the apostles as "Kings of these hosts . . . , for they are the ones who converted the whole world.

Each one in his particular sphere of action led his army to Christ."³¹

How can Luther say that the apostles have "converted the whole world"? Did he actually mean to say that the apostles had converted the whole world as we know it today? Some theologians have taken it that way. They have even believed that in the apostolic age the Gospel had been planted in the Americas. But this is not Luther's view. In his interpretation of Mark 16:14-20 Luther says, "The apostles did not go to all the countries for no apostle came to us (the Germans, that is)." And since America had just been discovered during Luther's time, he was well aware that, as he said it, "Many islands have been found even in our days where there are heathen to whom no one has preached."³² Luther therefore poses a question: "How could these discoveries accord with Paul's words in Romans 10:18 (quoted from Psalm 19), your preaching has gone out to all the world, although it has not arrived in all the world?"

Luther's answer is found in his exegesis of this psalm. He says that "according to David's word God's grace will in the future be preached everywhere; . . . His kingdom will extend under all of heaven; . . . Christ will reign and rule in all the lands that will believe in Christ and that the holy Christian Church will be as broad as the world."³³ Thus Luther is speaking of the future and not limiting the preaching concerning the grace of God to the apostolic era. Rather, Luther says, "The word of the Gospel which the apostles preached . . . has run abroad in the whole world and still runs."³⁴ In his Ascension sermon Luther tells us how he wishes that this should be understood:

Their message has gone out to all lands even though it has not yet reached all the world. This going forth has begun and goes into motion even though it has not been completed or accomplished. Rather it will be preached out to an ever greater extent, in distance and breadth, until the last day. As soon as this message is preached and heard and proclaimed in all the world, then is the message complete and accomplished for all. Then will the last day come to pass.³⁵

Luther visualized it thus: the continual issuing forth of the message was like "throwing a stone into the water which makes waves, circles and streaks around itself, and the waves push each other further and further; one pushes the other, until they reach the shore." Or, he compares the message with: "The message of the emperor which has gone out from Nuremberg, or to Turkey,

even though it has not yet gotten there; in the same way are we to understand the preaching of the apostles as well."³⁶ Luther capsules it all by saying, "And so it has come, is coming and will come to us too, who live at the end of the earth; for we (the Germans) too live on the sea."³⁷

Luther and the Great Commission

Some scholars have attributed to Luther the opinion that the Great Commission was only for the apostles. Some based this on Luther's interpretation of Psalm 82:4 in which he cited Mark 16:15, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creatures" but added, "since then, however, no one has had this general apostolic command."³⁸ The context, however, shows that in this situation Luther was distinguishing between "public preaching" and "street-corner preaching." Luther wanted to call to the attention of the "street-corner preachers" that the call is holy and that the called preacher receives a clear-cut office. He is called by a defined community to carry out the ministry. With the apostles, from Luther's point of view, it was different because they were the pioneers who started the whole process that set the ongoing waves of missions into progress. Because of this they had a general call to go "to all lands" to "foreign houses" and there to preach to all people.

But this in no way changed for Luther the all-encompassing validity of Christ's Great Commission. For Luther made only one distinction between the call of the apostles and the call of their followers. The call of the apostles was direct, the call of their disciples mediated. Nevertheless, both were divine calls both as to their content and as to their power. Therefore, both the apostles and their followers have the one call to preach Christ, or as Luther expressed it in his interpretation of Psalm 45:14:

The Apostles teach about Christ. The Prophets teach about Him too. The teachers, bishops, pastors and ministers who baptize, who administer the Sacraments—all are led to Christ that they may believe and serve in faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, each one in his own way. . . . So if I am a teacher of the Gospel, I do the same thing that Paul and Peter did.³⁹

In fact, it has always been a common concept in Lutheranism that all "legitimate ministers of the Gospel are true successors of the apostles" not by virtue of their person but by virtue of their being ones whom the Lord Jesus Christ has "sent out" as wit-

nesses not only in Jerusalem but also in all Judea, Samaria and out to the uttermost parts of the world.⁴⁰

Luther did not think of missions as being primarily individuated or privatized. He thought of missions as pertaining to the Church; that is, he thought in terms of Christendom as a whole as well as of the world of nations. He thought of the people and the nations that had not as yet heard the Gospel and so he saw the Gospel moving from nation to nation, from *ta ethne* to *ta ethne*. Luther often spoke of these groups of people as "heathen." Luther, like missionary preachers of today, did not use that term in a negative sense but rather he understood the word in the sense that Christ the Good Shepherd used it when he spoke about "the other sheep."⁴¹ Or about those whose invitation to the great wedding came later and who were brought from the highways.⁴² In conformity with the Scriptures Luther takes the word "heathen" as referring primarily to non-Jews. As a result, Luther can say that the Good News is meant for "us heathen" or that "accordingly the apostles came to the heathen." Yet in the same connection Luther continues: "This has not yet been done. The time is in progress, inasmuch as the servants are going into the highways; the apostles made a beginning and are still calling us together."⁴³

Luther was not satisfied to preach only to Christians. He said, "It is necessary always to proceed to those to whom no preaching has been done, in order that the number of Christians may be greater."⁴⁴ He pointed out that this obligation rests on all Christians when he said:

The Christians should also through the Word harvest much fruit among all the Gentiles and should convert and save many, and thus they shall devour around about them like a fire that is burning in the midst of dry wood or straw. The fire of the Holy Spirit, then, shall devour the Gentiles according to the flesh and prepare a place everywhere for the Gospel and the kingdom of Christ.⁴⁵

Particularly in Luther's time this obligation to do missionary work confronted the prisoners of war among the Turks who, Luther said, by their Christian conduct should "adorn and praise the Gospel and the name of Christ" in Turkish surroundings. He said that by doing this the prisoners of war would "perhaps convert many."⁴⁶ According to Luther not only conduct should make an impression. For him every Christian in heathen surroundings, not only the prisoners of war, should be a missionary. Here the "duly called" of the church organization at home for Luther

carried no weight. According to Luther a Christian in such circumstances "not only has the right and the power to teach God's Word but has the duty to do so on pain of losing his soul and of God's disfavor." For Luther when the Christian is at "a place where there are no Christians he needs no other call than to be a Christian, called and anointed by God from within. Here it is his duty to preach and to teach the Gospel to erring heathen or non-Christians, because of the duty of brotherly love even though no man calls him to do so."⁴⁷

Now lest we suggest that Luther is leaving the duty or obligation to do mission work completely dependent on chance it will be good to listen to Luther at another time when he said: "Now if all heathen are to praise God . . . they must know Him and believe in Him. . . . If they are to believe, they must first hear His Word. . . . If they are to hear His Word, then preachers must be sent to proclaim God's Word to them."⁴⁸

In concluding this section it is fitting to note how highly Luther thought of missionary work among the heathen. He said that, "It is the best work of all when the heathen are led out of idolatry to the knowledge of God."⁴⁹

Luther the Missionary in Action

The above citations from Luther's writings have sufficiently shown us what a broad understanding the Reformer had of the propagation of the Gospel in all the world. It remains now to show that he went on to translate this sense of missions into action and that his contribution to world missions is far from negligible.

Luther himself spoke of this missionary activity of his when someone objected that he, although only a preacher in Wittenberg, was teaching in all the world through his books, and that he therefore was not staying within the bounds prescribed by his congregational call. To this Luther retorted that, "as a Doctor of Holy Scripture . . . I began, at the command of pope and emperor, to do what such a doctor is sworn to do, expounding the Scriptures for all the world and teaching everybody."⁵⁰ In this passage it comes into sharp focus how Luther and his contemporaries regarded their writings as a means of worldwide missions. Luther speaks of his task of writing as "a divine office and work" even though many "do not see how necessary and useful (these

writings) are to the world."⁵¹ In short, Luther's writing activity is to be seen as part of his worldwide missionary activity.

This is especially helpful for some of us who think only of the worldwide influence of Luther's translation of the Bible. For his activity as an author comes to a peak in his work as exegete (*Hermeneut*). Thanks to Luther's translation of the German Bible, the Apostle Paul's longing as pointed out in II Thessalonians 3:1, "that the word of the Lord might spread quickly and become known in its splendor," became a reality not only in Germany but also in the diaspora, when Bible translations into all the European languages were made with reference to Luther's German translation. As one who worked with Bible translation in Africa for several decades it is certain to me that the ever spreading circles of the influence of Luther's Bible translation and particularly his method of Bible translation, in which content took precedence over form, cannot be too strongly emphasized. In truth Martin Luther is the father of Bible translations in the vernacular languages throughout the world. At the time of the Reformation only 33 languages of the world had any part of Scripture. By 1982 some portion of the Scripture was available in 1,763 languages; 279 languages had full Bibles, 551 additional languages had New Testaments and 933 additional languages had a portion of Scripture.⁵²

Any honest look at Luther must take a clear-eyed view of the tremendous influence of his writings, including 350 published works and 3,000 letters to the people all over the globe.⁵³ Finally, as missionary writings his Large and Small Catechisms are paramount and remain effective tools in missions even today. With the Catechism, the jewel of the common school, as it was called, Luther introduced for the first time a thorough instruction in church and school in which, according to his words, "the heathen who want to be Christians are taught and guided in what they should believe, know, do and leave undone according to the Christian faith."⁵⁴ In this connection it is noteworthy that the Small Catechism was not first published in book form but in 40 inch by 24 inch posters or placards which were fixed on the walls in the homes and schools. These posters contained: Luther's Morning and Evening Prayer, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, etc. The missionary dimension of the Small Catechism is shown in the fact that it was very quickly translated into: Low German, Latin, Dutch, Friesian, Russian, Polish, Lithuanian, Wends and Prussian. Among many of these

languages it was the first book ever published. In addition, this Catechism was used in Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia, Romania, Latvia, Estonia, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Netherlands, Belgium, England, France and even in Spain and Italy.⁵⁵

In addition, one has to mention Luther's church and home postils (books of prayer and sermons) which were read by emergency preachers in various churches and were also read as devotional books in countless Christian homes.⁵⁶ With these two works Luther restored the office of preaching to its rightful place in public worship and in the Communion liturgy. One can hardly overlook the missionary impact of this step on the Church for the subsequent centuries, both at home and abroad. Johannes von Walter, in his *Geschichte des Christentums*, noted that passages from Luther's "sermons and home devotions encouraged countless Christians even up until his (Walter's) day."⁵⁷

In the third place, Luther's many pamphlets should be mentioned. As writings for instruction and edification they constituted a new tool for missionary outreach. They were distributed by many colporteurs and missionaries (A. G. Dickens calls such people "missionaries" repeatedly).⁵⁸ These pamphlets went out to families and cities and countrysides and they were read by young and old. They were also taken abroad by missionaries including the many students who came from other countries to study at Wittenberg. These pamphlets were translated into the languages of many other lands.⁵⁹

Then, too, Luther's hymns cannot be overlooked. In these hymns he invites people to worship in a totally new way. He propels them to take part in the worship service in a manner unthinkable prior to the Reformation. Among these hymns we find the hymn: "May God Embrace us with His Grace" in which we find the phrases: "Let Jesus' healing power be revealed in richest measure, converting every nation." And "May people everywhere be won to love and praise You truly."⁶⁰ The last verse in Luther's hymn: "Dear Christians, One and All" reminds of Christ's Great Commission in Matthew 28:20, "Teach them to observe everything that I have taught you." The last verse of this hymn reads: "What I on earth have done and taught guide all your life and teaching; so shall the kingdom's work be wrought and honored in your preaching." In this verse "you" (*du*) stands for "every Christian."⁶¹

In fact, it must be said that it was Luther's Reformation that put the communal song next to the church choir and thereby broke the preponderance of the standardized liturgy in a foreign language. The result was that a rich stream of hymnody flowed into the home, the school and the church; an inexhaustible spiritual well had opened up which incessantly flowed out into the life and hearts of the people. Luther's hymnological work opened the way for the great music and hymns, including the missions hymns in the vernacular that we hold so dear today. Truly Luther in a real sense is the father of the vernacular Christian hymnody which now exists around the world.⁶²

Luther's missionary activity did not exhaust itself with his effectiveness as an author. His sermons and speeches also had a great missionary impact. For his sermons were echoed by numerous preachers who sat at the foot of his pulpit and went through his classes. No fewer than 16,000 theological students enrolled at the University of Wittenberg between 1520 and 1560. Like no other university, this one trained missionaries for home and overseas services. The enrollment list at Wittenberg showed that one-third of the students came from other lands.⁶³ This means that no fewer than 5,000 students who had learned from Luther's sermons and lectures and from Luther's successors went out to spread Luther's deep desire that all should be brought to a saving knowledge of Christ even to the very end of the earth. What Luther said about preaching in the already mentioned quotation, that it is like a stone thrown into the water which creates many circles around it, thus became a reality. In Luther's sense of missions preaching was always a message taken from place to place, as Isaiah, who likened the word of the Gospel to a stream, pointed out in Isaiah 35:6. On the basis of this passage Luther said: "Thus the prophet points out through this simile that the Word will be preached richly and will be disseminated further and further and that from the Church, that is in a certain place, many others will be drawn to the Word."⁶⁴

Luther's confidence in the "endless dynamic of the Gospel" and in the "corresponding movement of the Church" likewise directed his eyes toward the non-Christian people with whom he came in contact. In this respect we should not think immediately of overseas people. For Luther the hearers were the Jews of Germany and also the Turks of the Balkans. Luther naturally had personal feelings about the first of those groups. The way that he felt

about the conversion of the Jews at the beginning of his public activity is witnessed by his energetic sense of missions; his confidence in the Gospel as the power of holiness roused in him the hope that "if one deals in a kindly way with the Jews and instructs them carefully from Holy Scripture, many of them will become genuine Christians and turn again to the faith of their fathers, the prophets and patriarchs."⁶⁵ Luther even gives advice on how to lead a Jew "who is not tainted or obdurate"⁶⁶ to Christ. And in a writing to the esteemed Jesel, a Jew of Rossheim, "my good friend," Luther informs the Jews about a "booklet" that he would like to write "if God gives me time and room." On this booklet Luther pinned the hope that "he might win over some of the descendants of the holy patriarchs and prophets and that he may lead them to the Messiah promised to them."⁶⁷ He closed this writing with the assurance that he "wished the Jews all the best . . . for the sake of the crucified Jew, whom no one is to take away from me."⁶⁸ So even in 1537, when this letter was written, Luther still sought to bring about the conversion of the Jews even though he had long before experienced how they had misunderstood his neighborly love and how they had made use of his "benevolence" for their "impenitence."⁶⁹ In another place Luther said, "We have a high regard for the Jewish people and yet they are so arrogant and proud."⁷⁰ All of this proves again that Luther craved to bring about a conversion of the Jews and that he actually took measures to this end.

Luther also turned his sights continually back to the warlike Turks who had constantly threatened the existence of Germany. At first he turned against them in his polemical works: *On the War Against the Turks*, his *Army Sermon Against the Turks*, and his *Exhortation to Pray Against the Turks*.⁷¹ However, it is noteworthy that Luther did not preach a crusade against the Turks. For Luther the sword does not serve Christ's kingdom but only the transitory kingdoms of the left in which the sword is used to create compulsory law and order. In his writings Luther never omits thoughts on missionary activities among the Muslims who were threatening the empire. His thoughts on mission activities among the Muslims have already been shared in the previous discussion on Luther and the Great Commission.

Luther's emphasis on a mission to the Turks was a seed that soon began to sprout. Primus Truber (1506-1586) and Baron Ungnad von Sonegg (1493-1564) reached out from Württemberg

to establish missions not only to the southern Slavs but also to the Turks. The successful Slovenian translation of Stephan led in 1559 to a judgment by a team of spiritual and secular experts, who said of this translation, among other things, that through it, "so we hope, the right Christian religion and the true saving Gospel will be promoted throughout Turkey, that the heart and disposition of the Turks will be renewed to the holy faith . . . and that in time our Savior Jesus Christ will be made known throughout Turkey."⁷² The matter did not stop with the written report of 1559, for in 1561 Baron Ungnad issued a call for help to the German princes "in order that thus the pure doctrine of the divine Word may also be brought into Turkey."⁷³ Elector August of Saxony, Count Christopher of Württemberg and others responded with noteworthy sacrifices to this call and to the calls of book-printer Ambrosius Frohlich of Vienna and of the preacher Blohovic. Count Ludwig of Württemberg sent the master valedictorian of his class from Knittlingen to Morocco in 1583, so that he could learn Arabic and become familiar with Islam. In such a manner Ludwig hoped that "our saving religion might be propagated among these barbarian peoples."⁷⁴ The Scandinavian princes also followed Luther's good example. King Gustavus Vasa (1496-1560) started mission work among the Laplanders and translated the New Testament into that language.⁷⁵

According to Elert it was only during the nineteenth century that the "definite breakthrough"⁷⁶ of Lutheran missionary orientation came into full fruition in the part of Christendom that was named after Luther. This is all the more reason for us, who are contemporary Lutherans and especially committed to the theological position that Luther held, to make Luther's sense of missions our own in imitation of some of the great nineteenth-century missionaries.

Conclusion

Whenever and wherever our Lutheran and Synodical fathers have been wanting in respect of missions, and certainly this has often happened, we should not condemn them, but rather ask why we ourselves have lacked the sense of missions both in the past and in the present.

Whenever and wherever this happens we should confess it, repent, and bring forth the fruits of repentance; namely, to increase our sense and longing for worldwide missions and, to the

extent that the Lord of the Church gives us strength for it, to transform this sense and desire into action both at home and abroad.

Endnotes

¹Gustav Warneck, *Outline of a History of Protestant Missions from the Reformation to the Present Time, with an Appendix concerning Roman Catholic Missions* (New York, Chicago and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1906, original German edition published in 1881), pp. 9-10: "We miss in the Reformers not only missionary action, but even the idea of missions, in the sense in which we understand them today. . . . Luther did not think of proper missions to the heathen, i.e. of a regular sending of messengers of the Gospel to non-Christian nations, with the view of Christianizing them. . . . Luther's mission sphere was, if we may so say, the paganized Christian church." To put Warneck's quotation into perspective we must recognize that he wrote it in 1881 which was right in the midst of the high tide of Protestant liberalism in Great Britain (1870-1914). He was polemicalizing against three authors of his time who very much believed that Luther had a sense of missions. They were Albert Ostertag, *Uebersichtliche Geschichte der protestantischen Missionen von der Reformation bis zur Gegenwart* (Stuttgart, 1858); Gustav Leopold Plitt, *Kurze Geschichte der lutherischen Mission* (Erlangen, 1871), and Christian Andreas Herman Kalkar, *Geschichte der christlichen Mission unter den Heiden* (Gütersloh, 1879). The first two authors were German and Kalkar was Danish. The fact that only Warneck has been translated into English puts many present day readers at a definite disadvantage when studying this period.

²Martin Luther, "Selected Psalms" in *Luther's Works*, Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann, editors (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955-1958), (cited hereafter as LW), Volumes XII, XIII, XIV.

³Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism; the Theology and Philosophy of Life of Lutheranism especially in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), Volume I:385-402.

⁴Paul Peters, "Luthers Weltweiter Missionssinn," *Lutherischer Rundblick*, XVII (1969): 162-175.

⁵Johannes von Walter, *Die Geschichte des Christentums* (Gütersloh: Verlag C. Bertelsmann, 1939), Volume II, Part 2: 441.

⁶Luther, "Die ersten 25 Psalmen auf der Koburg ausgelegt 1530, herausgegeben von G. Koffmane," in *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1913), (cited hereafter as WA), XXXI, Part 1: 339, line 18ff.

⁷LW, XIV:13. For the original see "Der 117. Psalm ausgelegt (1530)," WA, XXXI, Part 1: 232.

⁸Luther, "Praellectiones in prophetas minores (1524-1526)," WA, XIII: 525, line 4ff.: "Veniet: (from Haggai 2:7) Per evangelium proferetur desiderabile, dignitas, forma, species, quae deceat omnes gentes, 'ein köstlicher schatz,' qui sit invulgandus inter omnes gentes, non quasi desiderium omnium gentium, quia ignorant Christum, sed commendat hunc thesaurum inaestimabilem et

iucundissimum, qui est Christus per verbum praedicatus vel res quaedam iucundissima invulganda inter omnes gentes, quia vult propheta significare regnum aliud institutum, quid sit dilatandum in omnes gentes." *LW*, XVIII:382, reproduces a similar, but somewhat less mission-oriented Luther commentary on Haggai 2:7.

⁹Luther, "In Genesisin Declamationes (1527)," *WA*, XXIV:392, line 13, on Genesis 22:18. For an English translation of a later Luther commentary on Genesis 22:17-18 (1535) see *LW*, IV:151-178.

¹⁰*LW*, XVIII:382, on Haggai 2:7 (1525): "... A treasure that had to be published through the Gospel . . . of which the Gentiles were so unaware that they were unable to desire it." For the original Latin consult *WA*, XIII:541, lines 14-17.

¹¹Luther, "Lectures on Genesis (1535)," *LW*, IV:161 on Genesis 22:17-18. For the original Latin see *WA*, XLIII:252, lines 13-14.

¹²Peters, pp. 164-165.

¹³Luther, "Lectures on Genesis," *LW* II:57 on Genesis 6:9-10. For the German see *Walch-St. Louis*, I:501, and for the original Latin consult *WA*, XLII:302, lines 15-16.

¹⁴*LW*, II:333 (on Genesis 13:4). For the German see *Walch-St. Louis*, I:839, and for the original Latin consult *WA*, XLII:500, lines 14-17.

¹⁵Luther, "Auslegungen über das erste Buch Mosis (1523-1524)," *Walch-St. Louis*, III:234 (on Genesis 12:10-16). For the original Latin look in *WA*, XIV:228.

¹⁶*LW*, VIII:46 (on Genesis 45:9-11). For the German see *Walch-St. Louis*, II:1711-1712, and for the original Latin consult *WA*, XLIV:612, lines 36-37.

¹⁷Samuel J. Mikolaski, editor, *The Creative Theology of P. T. Forsyth; Selections from his works* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), p. 76.

¹⁸*LW*, II:260. For German see *Walch-St. Louis*, I:747-748, and for the original Latin consult *WA*, XLII:447.

¹⁹*LW*, XII:98. For original German see *Walch-St. Louis*, V:192, or *WA*, XLV:207.

²⁰Luther, "Psalm 117 (1530)," *LW*, XIV:14. For original German see *Walch-St. Louis*, V:1144, or *WA*, XXXI, Part 1: 233-234.

²¹*LW*, XIV:18. For original German see *Walch-St. Louis*, V:1149, or *WA*, XXXI, Part 1: 236-237.

²²Luther, "Operationes in Psalmos (1519-1521)," *WA*, V:546. For a German translation see *Walch-St. Louis*, IV:1133.

²³Luther, "Commentary on Psalm 45 (1532)," *LW*, XII:219-220. For German see *Walch-St. Louis*, V:368-369, and for the original Latin consult *WA*, XL, Part 2: 501-502.

²⁴Luther, "Commentary on Psalm 51 (1538)," *LW*, XII:393. For German see *Walch-St. Louis*, V:595, and for the original Latin see *WA*, XL, Part 2: lines 17-26.

²⁵*LW*, XII:394; *Walch-St. Louis*, V:596; *WA*, XL, Part 2: 447-448.

²⁶Luther, "Commentary on Psalm 45," *LW*, XII:290. For German see *Walch-St. Louis*, V:458-459, and for the original Latin consult *WA*, XL, Part 2: 596, lines 13-18.

²⁷Ernest Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times; The Reformation from a New Perspective* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), p. 4.

²⁸*LW*, XII:297. For German see *Walch-St. Louis*, V:468, and the original Latin is found in *WA*, XL, Part 2: 606, lines 19-27. . .

²⁹Luther, *Walch-St. Louis*, V:667. See also *WA*, VIII:12, lines 27-28. In his Bible, on the other hand, Luther translated: "Der Herr gibt Wort mit grossen Scharen Evangelisten."

³⁰Luther, "Commentary on Psalm 68 (1521)," *LW*, XIII:12. For original German see *Walch-St. Louis*, V:667, or *WA*, VIII:13, lines 9 and 10.

³¹*LW*, XIII:13; *Walch-St. Louis*, V:668. See also *WA*, VIII:13, lines 27-30.

³²Luther, "Ascension Day Sermon on Mark 16:14-20 (1522)," *Walch-St. Louis*, XI:950-951.

³³Luther, "Commentary on Psalm 19 (1531)," *LW*, XII:141. For the original German see *WA*, XXXI, Part 1: 582 or *Walch-St. Louis*, V:1335.

³⁴Luther, "Commentary on Psalm 110 (1539)," *LW*, XIII:269. For original German see *Walch-St. Louis*, V:969.

³⁵Luther, "Ascension Day Sermon (1522)," *Walch-St. Louis*, XI:951. See also *WA*, X, Part 3: 139, lines 23-26.

³⁶*Walch-St. Louis*, XI:951. See also *WA*, X, Part 3: 140, lines 1-16.

³⁷*Walch-St. Louis*, XI:955. See also *WA*, X, Part 3: 144, lines 8-9.

³⁸Luther, "Commentary on Psalm 82 (1530)," *LW*, XIII:64. For original German see *WA*, XXXI, Part 1: 211 or *Walch-St. Louis*, V:721: "Aber darnach hat niemand mehr solchen gemeinen Apostolischen befeh." "

³⁹Luther, "Commentary on Psalm 45," *LW*, XII:295. For original Latin, somewhat different from English, see *WA*, XL, Part 2: 603: "Sic Apostoli docent Christum, eundem docent Prophetas, Doctores, Episcopi, Pastores, Ministri, qui baptisant, qui porrigunt Sacramenta, Omnes adducuntur ad Christum, ut credant et serviant in fide Domini nostri Jesu Christi unusquisque in suo genere. . . . Sic ego, si sum Doctor Evangelii, idem facio, quod Paulus et Petrus faciunt." For the German see *Walch-St. Louis*, V:465.

⁴⁰Melanchthon, "Treatise," 10 in *Concordia Triglotta* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 507: "The authority of the ministry depends upon the Word of God. . . . The office of the ministry proceeds from the general call of the Apostles." The Scriptural allusion is Acts 1:8.

⁴¹Luther, "Sermon on John 10, for Sunday after Easter (1523)," *WA*, XII:540, line 2 ff.

⁴²Luther, "Sermon on Luke 14:16-24 for Second Sunday of Trinity (1523)," *WA*, XII:600, lines 11-13. See also Luther's "Sermon on Matthew 22:1-14 for the Twentieth Sunday of Trinity (1533)," *WA*, XXXVII:181, line 11 and "Sermon on John 18 for Palmarum Sunday (1534)," *WA*, XXXVII:342, line 1.

⁴³Luther, "Sermon on the Sunday before Simon and Jude, on Matthew 22:1-14 (1525)," *WA*, XVII, Part 1: 442, lines 32-37, and 443, line 1.

⁴⁴Luther, "Sermons on the Second Book of Moses—Allegory of the Twelfth Chapter (1525)," *WA*, XVI:215, lines 7-10 and 216, lines 1-2.

⁴⁵Luther, "Lectures on Zechariah (1527)," *LW*, XX:326. For original German consult *WA*, XXIII:645, lines 30-35.

⁴⁶Luther, "Heerpredigt wider den Türken (Military sermon against the Turks) (1529)," *WA*, XXX, Part 2: 194, lines 28-31 and 195, lines 1-4. See also *Walch-St. Louis*, XX:2191.

⁴⁷Luther, "That a Christian Assembly or Congregation has the Right and Power to Judge all Teaching and to Call, Appoint, and Dismiss Teachers, Established and Proven by Scripture (1523)," *LW*, XXXIX:310. For original German see *WA*, XI:412, lines 11-13, 16-20.

⁴⁸Luther, "Commentary on Psalm 117," *LW*, XIV:9. For original German see *WA*, XXXI, Part 1: 228-229.

⁴⁹Luther, "Sermons on Matthew 23 (1537-1540)," *WA*, XLVII:466, lines 5-6.

⁵⁰Luther, "Commentary on Psalm 82," *LW*, XIII:66. For the original German consult *WA*, XXXI, Part 1: 212 or *Walch-St. Louis*, V:723.

⁵¹Luther, "Predigt, dass man die Kinder zur Schule halten soll (Sermon to Give before Children in School) (1530)," in *Walch-St. Louis*, X:449. See also *WA*, XXX, Part 2: 571, lines 4-7, 20-22 and *LW*, XVIII:382.

⁵²United Bible Societies, "Scripture Language Report," *Bulletin*, No. 130/131. First/Second Quarter, 1983:168.

⁵³Peters, p. 171.

⁵⁴Luther, "The German Mass and Order of Service (1526)," *LW*, LIII:64. For original German see *Walch-St. Louis*, X:230.

⁵⁵M. Reu, *Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism. A History of Its Origin, Its Distribution and Its Use* (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1929), pp. 17-20, picture between 8 and 9, 46-56, 87-137 and Th. Graebner, *The Story of the Catechism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1928), pp. 94-110.

⁵⁶For an explanation of Luther's sermons and postils see John W. Doberstein, "Introduction to Volume 51," *LW*, LI:XI-XXI, especially XIV-XV. Volume XI and XII of *Walch-St. Louis* contain the Gospel and Epistle portions of Luther's *Kirchenpostille*.

⁵⁷Walter, II, Part 1: 221: "Abschnitte seiner Predigten als Hausandachten auch heute noch unzähligen Protestanten ans Gemüt greifen."

⁵⁸A. G. Dickens, *Martin Luther and the Reformation* (Mystic, Connecticut: Lawrence Verry Inc., 1967), 75: "In no country was the soil of the Reformation irrigated through princely channels alone. To many communities the new religious notions were brought, with or without governmental consent, by missionaries and booksellers. . . . The early missionary history of Lutheranism should not be unduly obscured by the personal story of Luther; ever inspired from Wittenberg, it remains in its own right an achievement worthy to be ranked alongside the miracles of propaganda later wrought by the Society of Jesus."

⁵⁹On Luther and pamphlet literature see Vincenz Hasak, *Dr. M. Luther und die religiöse Literatur seiner Zeit bis zum Jahre 1520* (Regensburg: G. J. Manz, 1881); Suzanne Ritter, *Die Kirchenkritische Tendenz in den deutschsprachigen Flugschriften der frühen Reformationzeit* (Tübingen: 1970) and Steven Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities. The Appeal of Protestantism to Sixteenth Century Germany and Switzerland* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975).

⁶⁰The Commission on Worship of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, *Lutheran Worship* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), Hymn 288, stanzas 1 and 3. For a different translation see *LW*, LIII:234. The German is in *WA*, XXXV:418-419.

⁶¹*Lutheran Worship*, Hymn 353, stanza 10. For a different translation see *LW*, LIII:220. For the original German see *WA*, XXXV:425.

⁶²On the impact of Luther's hymns see the bibliography found in Ulrich S. Leopold, "Introduction to Volume 53," *LW*, LIII:xx.

⁶³Peters, pp. 172-173.

⁶⁴Luther, "Kurze Auslegung über dem Propheten Jesaia (Brief Exposition of the Prophet Isaiah) (1527-1534)," *Walch-St. Louis*, VI:427. The American Edition's version of Luther's "Lectures on Isaiah," *LW*, XVI and XVII, is based on a different manuscript of these lectures which does not contain the aforementioned passage. See *LW*, XVI:x, 302-303.

⁶⁵Luther, "That Jesus Christ Was Born a Jew (1523)," *LW*, XLV:200.

⁶⁶Luther, "Schrift vom Brauch und Bekenntnis christlicher Freiheit (Writing on the Use and Confession of Christian Liberty) (1524)," *Walch-St. Louis*, XIX:1014.

⁶⁷Luther, "Letter to Jesel, Jew of Rossheim (December 10, 1537)," *Walch-St. Louis*, XX:1826.

⁶⁸*Walch-St. Louis*, XX:1829.

⁶⁹*Walch-St. Louis*, XX:1829.

⁷⁰Luther, "Tischreden oder Colloquia (Table Talk) (published in 1566)," *Walch-St. Louis*, XXII:1584.

⁷¹The first two of these works are in *WA*, XXX, Part 2: 81-197. An English version of *On the War Against the Turk* is in *LW*, XLVI:155-205.

⁷²Quoted in Elert, *Morphologie*, I:344. For the English see Elert, *Structure*, I:394.

⁷³Quoted in Elert, *Morphologie*, I:344 or Elert, *Structure* I:394.

⁷⁴Quoted in Elert, *Morphologie*, I:348 or Elert, *Structure*, I:399.

⁷⁵Elert, *Morphologie*, I:347 or Elert, *Structure*, I:397.

⁷⁶Elert, *Morphologie*, I:351 or Elert, *Structure*, I:402.

The Unity of Isaiah— A New Solution?

3

Few books in the Bible have been so torn to pieces by the higher critics as has the Book of Isaiah. J. G. Eichhorn (*Einleitung ins Alte Testament* III, 1783) and J. C. Döderlein (*Esaias*, 3rd ed., 1789) were the first to author handbooks questioning Isaiah's authorship of chapters 40–66. They pointed to historical reasons: a prophet from the eighth century could not talk about the Persian king, Cyrus (559–530 B.C.); and the enemy of Jerusalem at Isaiah's time was Assur, not Babel as in chapters 40–48. Isaiah 40–66 presupposes a plundering of Judah and an exile, which happened after 605 B.C. and especially after 586 B.C. Therefore the prophet behind chapters 40–66 probably lived about 545, when the first reports about Cyrus' success might have reached the author.

In his commentary on Isaiah of 1892, B. Duhm argued for three different authors behind chapters 40–66: a Deutero-Isaiah from 540 B.C. (most of chs. 40–55); a Trito-Isaiah from 450 B.C. (chs. 56–66); and another postexilic author of the so-called "Ebed Yahweh" songs (42:1–4 or 1–7, 49:1–6, 50:4–9, and 52:13–53:12).

The idea of a Proto-Isaiah (chs. 1–39) from about 700 B.C. as the oldest composition is now antiquated. This composition is said to comprise some of the youngest units in the book. Only two-fifths of the contents of chapters 1–39 are now accepted as genuine by many critics. H. Wildberger says that of the 1,290 verses in the whole book, only 305 verses are genuine (*Biblischer Kommentar AT X/3*, 1982, p. 1510). But the critics are not united about the divisions, their date and interpretations. B. S. Childs talks about a "breakdown in exegetical method," urging that this collapse "has been caused by the failure to take seriously the canonical shape of the book" (*Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, 1979, p. 335). The atomization of the Book of Isaiah has now gone so far that the higher criticism seems to have reached a dead end. Childs summarizes the situation thus: "Critical scholarship has atomized the book of Isaiah into a myriad of fragments, sources and redactions which were written by different authors at a variety of historical moments" (*op. cit.*, p. 324).

One Scroll

It is really a problem for the higher critics to explain why so many disparate texts and fragments from different times, authors and circles have happened to be joined together and handed on as one scroll from one prophet. O. Eissfeldt can think of two possibilities: first, that it is pure chance, or, secondly and more likely, that "similarities of style and content suggested that they were derived from the same author" (*The Old Testament, An Introduction*, 1974, p. 346). As their reason for dividing the Book among different authors, the critics have often pointed to *dissimilarities* of style and content. Now Eissfeldt points to *similarities* of style and content in order to explain why the different sections have been brought together onto one scroll! He now emphasizes that "there are marked points of relationship between lvi-lxvi and xl-lv," and that "the relationship between i-xxxix and xl-lv is not less great" (*ibid.*). Wildberger writes in 1982: "Certain lines of connection between 40ff. and 1-35 have constantly attracted attention, above all in matters of vocabulary" (*op. cit.*, p. 1514).

The atomization of the scroll of Isaiah affects the interpretation of the text to a great extent. When higher critics disregard the present context as secondary, they try to go beyond it and reconstruct the different units as they ought to be, if they had not been revised in order to fit the present context. In the absence of objective criteria, the reconstructions and interpretations vary from critic to critic. Childs has to admit that "critical exegesis now rests upon a very hypothetical and tentative basis of historical reconstructions" (*op. cit.*, p. 324).

The collapse of the critical analysis of the Isaiah scroll is, in my opinion, mainly due to the following factors: first, the misunderstanding that texts about Babel as the enemy are irrelevant in Isaiah's time; secondly, the disregard of the immense plundering and exile in 701 as the historical background to chapters 40ff.; thirdly, the disregard of the key role of chapters 36-39 in the composition of the whole Book; and, fourthly, an a priori denial of real prophecies about the future. On account of these misunderstandings, it is quite impossible to accept the Isaiah scroll as a unity and to interpret its texts in their canonical context. Therefore we have to expose and get rid of these misunderstandings.

1. *The misunderstanding that texts about Babel as the enemy are irrelevant in Isaiah's time.*

This basic misunderstanding is often overlooked even by conservative scholars. Babel plays a dominant role already in Isaiah's days and the prophet makes no distinction between a Babel run by an Assyrian king and a Babel run by a Chaldean king, and rightly so. In Isaiah's days, the great world power and enemy of Jerusalem became an Assyrian-Babylonian dual monarchy. A short historical excursus will prove this.

It was absolutely necessary for the great world power in the east to be in control of the most powerful city in the world, the city of Babel. In order to be able to exercise such a control, Tiglath-pileser III introduced "a political innovation: a personal dual monarchy" (Fischer: *Weltgeschichte* IV, 1967, p. 55). He thus took the title "king of Babel" and as such the name Pulu (Pul in I Chron. 5:26 and II Kings 15:19), in order to mark the fact that he was both the king of Assur and the king of Babel. In 729 and 728, he personally led the Marduk procession at the new year festival in Babel, whereby his Babylonian kingship acquired its legitimate sanction.

Tiglath-pileser's successor, Shalmaneser V (727-22), continued his father's Babylonian policy, wearing the "dual crown" under two different names: Shulmanu-ashared in Assyria, and Ululaja in Babylonia (Fischer: *op. cit.* IV, p. 58).

The powerful dual monarchy Assur-Babel acquired several enemies. Under Sargon (722-05), Marduk-apal-idinna (Merodach-Baladan in Isa. 39) tried to usurp the crown of Babel with the support of Elam. In 721, he succeeded in entering Babel and being crowned king, but, in 710, Sargon defeated him and took vengeance on Elam. Sargon was offered the crown of Babel and had himself crowned king of Babel (Fischer: *op. cit.* IV, p. 66). The dual monarchy was thus renewed. As the legitimate king of Babylonia, he led the Marduk procession in Babel in 709. His son Sennacherib married Naqia, a young Babylonian of Aramean descent, and hereby the union between Assyria and Babylonia was confirmed.

When Judah was confronted with Tiglath-pileser, Shalmaneser, and Sargon, it faced not only the king of Assyria but also the king of Babylonia. It was confronted with a dual monarchy, in which the powerful Babel played a dominant role.

When Sargon died in 705, Elam among others tried to take advantage of the situation and put an end to the powerful Assyrian-Babylonian dual monarchy. Marduk-zakir-shumi usurped power in Babel, but was immediately defeated by Marduk-apal-idinna, who now had himself again proclaimed king of Babel with the support of

Elam (cf. Isa. 21:1ff). This was unacceptable to Sennacherib, and in 703 he overcame Marduk-apal-idinna, who fled. Sennacherib entered Babel as victor and placed Bel-ibne, a Babylonian descendant educated in Assyria, on the throne of Babel.

But Sennacherib could not find and destroy Marduk-apal-idinna in "the Desert by the Sea," as south Babylonia is called in Isaiah 21:1. When Sennacherib went westward in 702/01, Marduk-apal-idinna was therefore able to renew his subversive activity in the south of Mesopotamia. In this context, he sent envoys to King Hezekiah (Isa. 39), probably in order to support Hezekiah and gain support for a common struggle against Sennacherib.

Thus it is incorrect to argue that Judah was not confronted with Babel until Babel got a Chaldean regime and defeated Egypt in 605. In Isaiah's days, the great enemy of Jerusalem was the Assyrian-Babylonian world power with Babel as its dominant center, the symbol for pride and enmity against God in the Bible. Isaiah thus has good reasons for using not only the term Assur but also the term Babel for the enemy of Jerusalem. He was not mistaken when he obviously calls the king of the Assyrian-Babylonian world power "the king of Babel" in Isaiah 14:4 (see my dissertation, *The Burden of Babylon*, 1970, pp. 109ff). To the prophet, the term Babel designates the world power hostile to God, regardless of whether the king of Babel is of Assyrian or of Chaldean descent. This does not mean that we ought to restrict Isaiah's prophecies against Babel to his own days at the expense of the Neo-Babylonian period. They aim at the enemy of God's Jerusalem both in Isaiah's days and later, and are thus relevant both for the prophet's contemporaries and for future generations.

2. *The disregard of the immense plundering and exile in 701 as the historical background to chapters 40ff.*

In his early ministry, Isaiah prophesied several times about destruction and exile as God's punishment for the people's sins (see 5:26, 6:11-13, 7:17-25, 8:7-8 etc.). The prophet's predictions came true not only in Nebuchadnezzar's days, but also in Isaiah's own time. Judah was heavily plundered and exiled in Isaiah's days, to the greatest extent in 701. According to Isaiah 36:1, Sennacherib "attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them." In Sennacherib's own annals we can read:

As to Hezekiah, the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke, I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts and to the countless small villages in their vicinity, and conquered [them] by means of well-stamped [earth-]ramps,

and battering-rams brought [thus] near [to the walls] [combined with] the attack by the foot soldiers, [using] mines, breeches as well as sapper work. I drove out [of them] 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, big and small cattle beyond counting, and considered [them] booty. Himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage. I surrounded him with earthwork in order to molest those who were leaving his city's gate. His towns which I had plundered, I took away from his country and gave them [over] to Mitinti, king of Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Sillibel, king of Gaza (*Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, p. 288).

Because of the misunderstanding that Babel only refers to the Chaldean dynasty in Babel, the texts about plundering, ruin, exile etc. have been interpreted against the background of Nebuchadnezzar's ravaging expeditions after 605, both by higher critics and conservatives. The conservatives say that Isaiah placed himself in this later situation and could then prophesy from a later historical context. But what was the message to his contemporaries and how could they understand him, if his predictions and teachings did not relate to their present situation?

If the historical background in Isaiah's own days had not been overlooked so much, I think that the critics would have lost their main basis for cutting the Isaiah scroll into pieces. When the critics identify the background with the Neo-Babylonian or even later times, they accordingly assign the origin of that specific section to this period and declare it to be non-genuine. The historical background for, e.g., chapters 13-14, 21 and 23 is quite clearly Isaiah's own days, but not according to the higher critics. Therefore, these chapters are treated as "alien bodies" in the book. Notice how the Lord's promise to crush Assur (14:24-27) is placed under the heading "An oracle concerning Babel" (13:1) and concludes this oracle (13:1-14:27). Notice how the details in Isaiah 21:1ff. fit into the situation in the east after Sargon's death in 705. Notice how well Isaiah 23:13 reflects Sennacherib's violent revenge on the Chaldeans, something which the conspirators against Assur in the west ought to remember.

But Isaiah's prophecies are not confined to his own time and the Assyrian ravages. He "saw" (through divine revelation) the full scope of punishments from the world power as the instrument of God's wrath, and also what would happen much later. The historical background for Isaiah 40ff. is not Nebuchadnezzar's ravages, but Sennacherib's. But the prophet knew that this was not the final plundering and exile, and in accordance with "what he had seen" (Heb.

chazon) he could include details which were more significant for a later time, not only the ruins of the cities of Judah, which were the work of Sennacherib, but also the ruins of Jerusalem, which the prophet knew would come later. Thus the prophet might use the perfect tense for future events, both for judgment (e.g., 64:10-12) and salvation (e.g., 9:1 /MT/, 53:4).

3. *The disregard of the key role of chapters 36-39 in the composition of the whole book.*

Chapters 36-39 concerning the decisive historical events which took place around 701 constitute the historical and compositional center of the Isaiah scroll. After the introduction to the whole scroll in chapter 1, which pictures the historical situation in 701 (vs. 7-9), chapters 2-35 point forward to this time, which is treated in chapters 36-39, and from which chapters 40-66 take their point of departure. Both plundering and deportation and Jerusalem's miraculous deliverance, which were prophesied in chapters 2-35, have now taken place (chs. 36-39). Now the prophet predicts new things (chs. 40-66), which just as certainly will come true. "See, the former things have taken place and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you" (42:9). "I foretold the former things long ago, . . . then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass. . . . From now on I will tell you of new things, of hidden things unknown to you" (48:3, 6). After earlier prophecies have been fulfilled (chs. 36-39), Isaiah now predicts new things: the deliverance through Cyrus, which is only a foretaste and a reminder of the real salvation through Messiah and His *satisfactio vicaria* (ch. 53).

If the critics leave their reconstructions and endless divisions aside and try to understand Isaiah's words in their canonical context, they have to say, like B. S. Childs, that "chapters 40ff. are now understood as a prophetic word of promise offered to Israel by the eighth-century prophet, Isaiah of Jerusalem. It is a basic misunderstanding simply to disregard the present context as a historical fiction" (*op. cit.*, p. 325). "The 'former things' can now only refer to the prophecies of First Isaiah. The point of Second Isaiah's message is that this prophetic word has been confirmed" (*op. cit.*, p. 329). "The whole disaster of the year 701 provides the perspective from which the whole is viewed" (*op. cit.*, p. 331). Even if, without any objective evidence, Childs continues to speak of a Deutero-Isaiah and of a canonical redaction contrary to the original historical context of many units, he emphasizes that the canonical context has to be considered for a correct understanding of the text.

4. *An a priori denial of real prophecies about the future.*

Disastrous for Isaiah studies as well as for Biblical scholarship in general is the inclusion of naturalistic presuppositions in exegetical methods. An a priori denial of vital factors for the object under study hinders a proper understanding. It is typical of the historical-critical method to trace the origin of the prophetic message only in human thinking and milieu. Data in the text about divine intervention and real predictions are ruled out a priori. Thus the prophecies about Messiah and the salvation through Him have to be interpreted in line with what it is possible to hope for without divine revelation. Thus the prophecy about Cyrus (44:24-45:13) at least presupposes reports about his first victories and therefore cannot stem from Isaiah.

So dominant are naturalistic presuppositions among higher critics that they often dare to reconstruct or reinterpret texts without any objective evidence and contrary to the context, just to get rid of the supernatural element. The interpretation of texts such as 4:2-6, 9:1-6 (2-7), 52:13-53:12 or 61:1-6 in higher critical handbooks are often governed by naturalistic presuppositions. They obscure what God clearly promised through Isaiah, namely a coming Messiah as God and Man in one Person, the Lord Himself, the guilt-offering for the sins of the whole world and who would found a worldwide but despised kingdom.

Apartheid and (the) Status Confessionis

4

It is probable that there has been no more thoroughly discussed matter among Lutherans the world over during the last eight to ten years than the attitude of the Lutheran Church towards apartheid in South Africa. At Dar-es-Salaam in 1977 a statement on apartheid by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) called all its member churches to declare themselves to be in a *status confessionis* in relation to apartheid, and very recently, in Budapest, two Lutheran churches of the LWF were excluded on the grounds that they had not acted according to the decision of 1977.

We might say that in one respect at least what has happened in 1977 and 1984 is a good thing. At least, confession is once again thought about and taken seriously. In this matter at least, confession has been more than mere talk; works have been added to faith, to use the terminology of St. James in the famous section of the second chapter of his letter. It is, to be sure, unfortunate that confession should have taken the form it did, not only because in the opinion of the present writer there are far more serious situations calling for the confession of the church, but also because it is impossible to eliminate the thought that politics and a striving for human rights and justice and equality and alien ideas of liberation have had as much to do with the earlier and the later decisions as fidelity to the Word of God and the confession of the Lutheran Church. What is to be attempted in this essay in honor of Dr. Robert Preus is an analysis of the idea of a "state of confession" and its actual relevance to the particular situation set by the policy of apartheid.

I.

One of the common demands of Christ and His apostles is that His followers should confess Him before men, as one of the most common warnings is against denying Him. One passage may stand for many. "So every one who acknowledges (confesses) Me before men, I also will acknowledge before My Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies Me before men, I also will deny before My Father who is

in heaven" (Mt. 10:32, 33). The same passage obviously also expresses most clearly the utter seriousness of such confession. It also sets before the church and all Christians the thought that confession and avoidance of denial are a continuing, ongoing privilege and duty. Confession is always called for and it is by no means something reserved for special occasions.

However, there are also occasions when confession becomes particularly pressing and urgent, when, as it were, the truth of the Gospel is at stake, when confession preserves it, while denial would give it a grievous wound and make its presence at that place and at that time doubtful. It is convenient at this point to look at the term *status confessionis*. Although it has become the common term in ecumenical circles, it is actually a misuse of the Latin. A "state" (*status*) of confession always exists for the Church, for every Christian; faith and confession belong together. However, and that is the point to be emphasized at the moment, there are times when confession is deliberately, urgently asked for: a "case" for confession exists, and the Latin phrase called for is really *casus confessionis*. That is the actual term employed when the situation described in this paragraph was first given a special tag (i.e., *Formula of Concord*, Article X, Epitome 2, in the Latin translation).

The "case" for confession is usually marked out by special difficulties for the confessor. Confessing involves the confessor in embarrassment; he may face the possibility of persecution of some kind: the loss of goods and property, maybe imprisonment, perhaps even the forfeiture of his life. Some examples from the Bible itself and from church history may make plain both the idea of a *casus confessionis* and the special features which accompany such a specific call for confession.

There is the case of Peter who, when called upon directly to confess his allegiance to Jesus, found the hostile assembly of people in the courtyard of the high priest too frightening and who simply and cowardly denied all knowledge of Him. A quite different situation faced Paul some years later, but the urgency of confession of the Gospel was there, and also the difficult situation. He was faced with the necessity of opposing in public a fellow-apostle, Peter. Peter's vacillating position in the matter of eating together with Gentiles (Gentile Christians were involved) had created a serious offense to the Christians in Antioch. Doubt as to proper action in keeping with the Gospel had sprung up, in fact, doubt also as to the actual nature of the Gospel itself. The "truth of the Gospel" (Gal. 2:14) was at

stake, and so Paul, in spite of the embarrassment he must have felt and the criticism he could expect as a result of his action, opposed Peter to his face (v. 11). The history of persecutions of Christians can recount a long list of names of men and women who, when faced with the alternative of denying Christ and His Gospel or being killed for their faith, chose the latter. History also knows of those who chose the other alternative.

These are experiences of individuals. Confessing also confronts groups of Christians, congregations, and larger groupings as well. The most pertinent example for Lutherans is contained in the Formula of Concord. A debate had raged among Lutheran divines after the Smalcald War and the subsequent Augsburg and Leipzig Interims on the question whether it was right before God and in view of His Word for the evangelical churches to adopt ceremonies in themselves neither commanded nor forbidden in God's Word—

in a time of persecution and a case of confession, especially when the adversaries are attempting either by force or coercion or by surreptitious methods to suppress the pure doctrine and gradually to insinuate their false doctrines into our churches again (Article X, Solid Declaration 3; Tappert, *The Book of Concord*, 611).

The answer of the Formula is the following:

We believe, teach, and confess that at a time of confession, as when enemies of the Word of God desire to suppress the pure doctrine of the holy Gospel, the entire community of God, yes, every individual Christian, and especially the ministers of the Word as the leaders of the community of God, are obligated to confess openly, not only by words but also through their deeds and actions, the true doctrine and all that pertains to it, according to the Word of God. In such a case we should not yield to our adversaries even in matters of indifference, nor should we tolerate the imposition of such ceremonies on us by adversaries in order to undermine the genuine worship of God and to introduce and confirm their idolatry by force or chicanery (*Tappert*, 612).

Scripture used in support of the position taken are texts from Galatians (5:1 and 2:4, 5). Both adversaries in church and state were among those before and against whom such confession was necessary.

The same combination was involved in the case of those Lutherans, pastors and their congregations, who in the years following the Prussian Union of 1817 refused to accept for themselves the so-called Agenda (*Agende*, 1822). Confessional Lutherans: Scheibel, Huschke, and others, saw in the measures of the king of Prussia an attack on the Gospel embodied in the true understanding of the

Lord's Supper. Resistance led for a time to loss of position, fines, and imprisonment. Some emigrated to Australia and founded the Lutheran Church on that continent.

In this century the best-known example of such confessing is that which led to the *Declaration of Barmen*, 1934. At Barmen, representatives of the major Protestant confessions adopted six articles that defined the Christian opposition to National Socialist ideology and practice. It was particularly directed against those in the Church who were attempting to accommodate Christianity to National Socialism. Insofar as these churchmen were supported by the government, the confession was directed also against Hitler.

All of these examples of confessing, whether by individuals or groups of Christians, show what confession means in special or particular situations, cases of confession. On the one hand, the Gospel of Christ is threatened, under attack and must be defended by the Christian person or people involved, and, on the other, confessing in such situations involves those confessing in unpleasant consequences of some kind. We may add the further thought that in all such confessing the issue for the confessors is clear. No complications exist for the Christian who knows what the faith is. The faith is quite evidently under attack. Doubts as to what is demanded cannot exist. All the examples mentioned above show this lack of complication. So it is always a case of confessing or denying. No neutral position is possible.

2.

Does apartheid represent a situation that calls for the kind of confessing that has just been described by definition and example? This is a most difficult question, and that for two reasons. First, it is not easy to define apartheid itself, particularly so because of the intense feeling the very word generates before any definition is attempted; and, secondly, it is difficult to separate apartheid as an idea, the governmental measures adopted to carry through that policy, the actual methods used to enforce the measures enacted, and the total activity of government. I shall work here with the description culled from the article on "Apartheid" in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1965 edition) and from Christoph Brandt's essay, "Our Lutheran Church in the South African Crisis—A Survey of the Situation and the STATUS CONFESSIOINIS," in *The Debate on STATUS CONFESSIOINIS—Studies in Christian Political Theology* (LWF Studies—Reports and Texts from the Department of Studies).

The encyclopedia article distinguishes between two forms of apartheid. The more moderate form opposes any policy based on racial superiority and racial domination and advocates a geographical division of South Africa into black and white states; the black states would eventually govern themselves. The other, extreme form of apartheid holds that a policy of discrimination is essential for the survival of the white group. The official governmental policy is in practice based on both of the principles just mentioned.

Brandt digs further and sees the term as having developed a very specific meaning which reaches deeper than racism or color, being rooted in the problem of identity and selfhood. The *Volk* is the root element of apartheid. It has come to express a very definite ethical ideology determined by ethnical nationalism. A definition he defends is one by Dr. W. Eiselen, one of the first apartheid policy makers. His definition is *eiesoortige Ontwikkeling*, "specific" or "particular" development. This definition takes into account the linguistic, cultural as well as ethnic connotations.

Events move more quickly than ideas, and the situation regarding apartheid in South Africa may probably be fairly summed up in two statements: 1) "Today the dream of white South Africa surrounded by prosperous, self-reliant, ethnically defined black states lies shattered" (Dr. E. Leister, quoted by Brandt); and 2) Today two different and mutually exclusive nationalist ideologies confront each other—an Afrikaner nationalism and black nationalism, and a "Laager" mentality confronts a "revolutionary" mentality. (Brandt's article, pp. 26-29, supplied the material for this summary).

It is the extreme form of apartheid with its policy of discrimination that has become dominant in South Africa. In what way does this situation present a case for special confession for Christians? This question calls for theoretical investigation first of all.

It was asserted earlier that, while confession of the Gospel and its truth is an ongoing demand on Christians, particular occasions arise when confession is imperiously demanded; when failure to confess amounts to a denial and puts the denier in jeopardy of losing his faith. It was also asserted that at such times there can be no question that the Gospel is really at stake. The choice is simple and uncomplicated.

We would have a simple situation in South Africa if the government's racial discrimination policy directly attacked the Gospel, as would be the case, for example, if government law made common worship of black and white Christians and communing at a common

altar impossible. The Church in such a situation would undoubtedly have to protest, bear witness to the government that such a law was an attack on the oneness of all believers in Christ (Gal. 3:28). Whether the Church in such a case would have to engage in direct disobedience by arranging and celebrating common worship services could be debated. An occasional such service as a direct witness to what was confessed might well be demanded by the situation, and the consequences of such a direct violation of the law of the land would have to be accepted. Such a situation does not exist at the moment. Although the Native Laws Amendment Bill (Clause 29 [c]) of 1957 could theoretically be invoked against "mixed" worship, it has in fact not been invoked. Multiracial services of worship have never been affected by this legislation (John W. de Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, pp. xi, 62).

A case for confession might conceivably be presented by the law just mentioned and other laws which cause considerable hardship for blacks and, to a lesser degree, other non-whites in South Africa. Particularly onerous laws in this connection are the Group Areas Act, legislation calling for the carrying of passes, the Mixed Marriage Acts, and the legislation affecting migrant workers. In this area of government legislation we are not concerned with the Gospel directly but with law (i.e., the Ten Commandments), and so the situation is different from the examples mentioned earlier. However, since the law is an expression of the will of God, situations where God's will is attacked, flouted, rejected, in principle set aside as His will, could very well fall within the concept of "case for confession." (Of course, it is not simple acting contrary to His will which is involved here, in which case every Christian would constitute a case for confession). For example, governmental action permitting abortion and using public money to aid mothers having an abortion may suggest urgent protest by the church or even suspension of fellowship with churches which defend this flagrant contempt for the command of the Lord, "Thou shalt not kill." In our present flight from Christianity in Western countries many other similar situations will present themselves, as some have already. Since laws on abortion are not prescriptive but permissive, nothing much can be expected in the way of a confession beyond serious protest.

Confession, as far as Lutherans are concerned, cannot go beyond such protest. The Church fights the Lord's battles *non vi, sed verbo*, not by violence but by the Word. Demands, prescriptions of the State, are met by non-compliance, disobedience; permissions by pro-

test. Beyond that the Church cannot go in its call to confess in relation to the State and its legislation. The taking of arms or other forceful measures are prohibited by the Church's Lord (Mt. 26:51-54), as His own example is quite contrary to such action (I Pet. 2:13-25). Prayers and tears are the arms of the church!

3.

No such analysis as has here been attempted is present in the statement of the Lutheran World Federation of 1977 which has suggested this study. The statement is here reproduced:

RESOLUTION ON SOUTHERN AFRICA: CONFESSIONAL INTEGRITY (DAR ES SALAAM, SIXTH ASSEMBLY OF THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION, 1977):

The Lutheran churches are confessional churches. Their unity and mutual recognition are based upon the acknowledgement of the Word of God and therefore of the fundamental Lutheran confessional writings, particularly the Augsburg Confession, as normative.

Confessional subscription is more than a formal acknowledgement of doctrine. Churches which have signed the confessions of the church thereby commit themselves to show through their daily witness and service that the gospel has empowered them to live as the people of God. They also commit themselves to accept in their worship and at the table of the Lord the brothers and sisters who belong to other churches that accept the same confessions. Confessional subscription should lead to concrete manifestations in unity in worship and in working together at the common tasks of the church.

Under normal circumstances Christians may have different opinions in political questions. However, political and social systems may become so perverted and oppressive that it is consistent with the confession to reject them and to work for changes. We especially appeal to our white member churches in Southern Africa to recognize that the situation in Southern Africa constitutes a *status confessionis*. This means that, on the basis of faith and in order to manifest the unity of the church, churches would publicly and unequivocally reject the existing apartheid system.

(In Christ—A New Community. The proceedings of the Sixth Assembly of the LWF, Dar es Salaam, 1977, pp. 179/180).

Any person of fairness and judgment, whether for the LWF or against it, would have to agree that as a statement it is a very poor one, the sort of statement produced by a committee or an assembly of many hundreds. Nothing is clear about it but the underlying antagonism to the South African government. It falls into two quite different sections but no attempt is made to weld the two together, and

the connection between the second part and the first is left to the reader to guess at. If there is any connection to be seen between the two sections, it is the naive suggestion that political and social systems which have become perverted of course present the church with a case for confessing.

No endeavor is made to specify the case for confessing, so that Christian consciences may see without doubt and uncertainty what is Christian and what is not. What is asked for is rejection out of hand of perverted and oppressive political and social systems. "This means that, on the basis of faith . . . churches would publicly and unequivocally reject the existing apartheid system"—this means in South Africa to reject the government as such. A call on Christians to reject a government is unheard of in the New Testament and the Lutheran Church. Who could imagine a St. Paul, who wrote Romans 13:1-7 and the Letter to Philemon—no protest against slavery and other attacks on human rights in the Empire—even contemplating such a statement and such an action?

The above words are of course written from the point of view of one who is not only convinced that the Lutheran teaching of the Two Kingdoms is demanded by the biblical teaching of Law and Gospel but who also holds that such a doctrine is the only view of Church and State which is consonant with sound commonsense. When a modern Christian meeting can declare, "We insist that a political system can only then be regarded as valid when it does not hinder the will of God and his plan for salvation. We insist that the dominant political system in South Africa, with its discrimination against parts of the population, its splitting up of many families, its concentration of power in the hands of one race and its curtailment of freedom is not to be reconciled with the Gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ" (*Swakopmund Declaration*), then we have nothing else but a modern version of the demands of the peasants before the Peasants' War, 1525, who also demanded all sorts of rights—perfectly legitimate in themselves—on the basis of the Gospel! The opinion of a non-Lutheran South African theologian, D. J. Smit, head of the Department of Systematic Theology at the University of the Western Cape, is highly instructive at this point. He writes:

Although many (i.e., Lutheran theologians) were completely willing to reject the system and its many facets by way of resolutions, especially in the light of the violating of basic human rights, they still judged it hardly possible to do this as a deed of confession, motivated by a threat to the gospel itself. Given the Lutheran understanding of the two kingdoms, which

always ascribes a major role to the autonomy of civil, political, and economic ways of opinion forming and decision making, a direct route from confession to politics is hardly possible. The fact that a *status confessionis* is moreover experienced as compulsory for the conscience of all Christians is totally in conflict with a Lutheran interpretation of such matters (*Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 47 [June 1984], 40).

A Lutheran committed in principle to the Lutheran teaching of the Two Kingdoms thinks politically in terms of creation, law, what is possible and rational, what makes for order in the situation. God's law concerning marriage was known to Moses, but his provision for a hard-hearted people was the only one possible, the only one that made sense in the social situation. So "Christians may have mutual political aims, but they can still differ about the most suitable political strategies in order to achieve these" (Smit, 43). Perfect justice and equity can never be attained, even in the most perfectly ordered states and societies. There will always be a big gap between the ideal and the possible. Good government is one which, while seeking for peace and justice for all those it governs, also has a strong grip on reality, and reality sets many limitations to that which is possible and immediately attainable. The present writer is convinced that the real concern behind the apartheid policy in South Africa is not racism *per se* but fear that black control in South Africa, which universal franchise would immediately bring about, would result in the loss and destruction of what the white population with the help of the black has built up over a number of centuries. The actions of black rulers throughout Africa since 1950, involving racism of the blackest hue, do not give any confidence that the same would not happen in South Africa. Christians would face what could happen with confidence in the power and mercy of God to bring good out of evil. But can one expect that attitude from the general white population of South Africa, which probably is about as godless as that of present-day Australia? So the question arises for the government: What alternative is there, when two different and mutually exclusive nationalist ideologies confront each other? People who do not live in the situation and who have no comparable racial problem are about the last to have a right to give advice.

A final word at this point on the difficulty in finding a connection between politics and confession may be supplied by Professor Smit, who was referred to earlier. Since he is not a Lutheran himself, his words carry extra weight:

Still more can be added: under normal circumstances it is a risky matter to reject a total socio-political "system" on the strength of a Christian point of

view, especially when such a rejection is interpreted as the rejection of almost any legislation, measure, or arrangement of the government in question and becomes nearly a license for all sorts of civil disobedience. To talk too easily of a government that has denied and therefore lost its God-given right to rule may be confusing and dangerously misleading. It is obvious that all this does not in the very least mean that silence must be imposed upon the Church. It only implies a serious warning against an all too direct connection between confession and politics and the uttering of all too final words (Smit, 43).

One cannot avoid the conviction that the LWF Resolution was more a result of politics than of a response to the Gospel. That this was so can be seen by the way in which the Resolution finally led to the expulsion of two Lutheran churches from the Federation.

The suspension of two white Lutheran churches in South Africa and Namibia by the LWF in Budapest 1984 was prepared for by the action of black Lutheran churches meeting at Harare, Zimbabwe, from December 8-17, 1983. The meeting was the Pre-Assembly All Africa Lutheran consultation. This consultation passed a recommendation to suspend the white churches from the LWF "until such time that they reject apartheid publicly and unequivocally and move toward unity with other member churches in the area." This in spite of the fact that the president of one of the two churches, President Christoph Brandt, declared that the white churches were in the process of preparing a clear statement opposing apartheid, and, further, that the churches were also willing to unite with other black churches. This claim was reasserted by him in April 1984, to the effect that his church had publicly and unequivocally rejected apartheid (Sources: *Lutheran World Information*, 50/83 and 32/84). The suspension decision at Budapest, in view of these assertions and a similar statement by Landesprobst W. J. Blank for the other white Lutheran church (*LWI* 28/84), show that the ground for suspension finally was that the white churches had not, in the mind of the Assembly, confessed "unequivocally enough" and had not moved quickly enough towards union with the black Lutheran churches.

Reports on the language used by Lutheran leaders at Budapest (*SELK Informationen* [No. 74], August 31, 1984) show quite clearly that the suspension was seen by them as an act of church discipline; "bitter medicine" was to be administered to the offending churches. Of course, all this was claimed to be done in the spirit of love; Christian love called for this treatment. The motives of the delegates concerned are theirs and not to be challenged by outsiders, but it is possible to say quite definitely that the spirit of the Law is what prevailed.

The Gospel spirit would have called for patience, for the spirit of Matthew 18:21, 22:

Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven."

The whole struggle before and since 1977 is one big confusion of Law and Gospel, which is exactly what must happen where the Lutheran doctrine of the Two Kingdoms is forsaken.

Thinking in terms of law and politics on this whole matter of apartheid and confession rather than in terms in keeping with the Gospel and the true mission of the Church can be seen not only in the suspension decision but also from a number of other decisions and strong trends in the Lutheran world that became evident at Budapest.

Confession, it is held by very many, cannot stop with protest against policy and disobedience to direct un-Christian demands made on the churches, but must go further. For instance, the Assembly asked LWF member churches that provide financial and personnel support for the two suspended Lutheran churches in the region to "reconsider the agreements" so that they "in no way assist those churches to continue to resist . . . change" in their attitude to apartheid (*LWI*, 32/84). By now it is common to read that one way to give teeth to the confession is by disinvestment in businesses trading with South Africa. One woman at Budapest held that a *status confessionis* similar to the declaration calling on the LWF member churches to reject apartheid should also apply to those churches which still discriminate against women (*ibidem*). The decisive position to allow women who have served for centuries also to lead requires far-reaching measures above all from some 59 of the 99 member churches which deny women access to ordination (*LWI*, 36/84). In similar vein, a Brazilian theologian, the Reverend Walter Altmann, defended the theology of liberation, and said that the problems facing Latin America were so pressing that it was time that the LWF came up with a statement on the matter as it had done on the South African issue. There is no reason at all why the LWF, on the basis of its recent decisions on the *status confessionis* should not also accept the resolution of the Federation of Reformed Churches in the Federal Republic of Germany in 1982, which declared that the possession of weapons of mass destruction brings Christians into a *status confessionis* (*The Debate on STATUS CONFSSIONIS*, 38).

It was a black delegate from Africa who addressed the "United Nations of Jesus Christ" in Budapest. He spoke more accurately than he

knew. Nine of the thirteen resolutions of the Assembly dealt with world problems, and so, as one reporter opined, one felt as if one were really attending a meeting of the United Nations. And one other delegate remarked about events in Budapest, "We throw the old law which we don't want any more out of the front door. But it goes around the corner and comes in the back door as a new law."

The situation in South Africa is bad enough without confusing some Christian consciences and confirming others in non-Christian directions by forgetting what the present aeon with its structures demands and permits and what belongs to the new aeon hidden in the disintegrating old aeon of sin and death. However hard it is for them, *Lutherans* in South Africa, for all their sympathy with the oppressed; dare not forget what their commitment to the Gospel compels them to say and to do. They are the ones faced with a clear case for confessing and one that, like all such cases, will bring them much pain and heartache. They will be as unpopular as Luther after the Peasants' War. And it may well be that the excluded churches are being called to take the lead in *this* STATUS CONFESSIOINIS.

Justification and Easter

A Study in Subjective and Objective Justification in Lutheran Theology

5

"Resurrectio eius a mortuis est nostri justificatio per solam fidem."
(WA 39:2, 237, 25)

I.

Already some of the first writings where Luther presents his newly won insights in the doctrine of justification¹ contain a few, yet not elaborate, references to the relationship between justification and Easter. Although the *Acta Augustana* are silent on this point, merely stressing that justification is offered by the means of grace, and that we are not to make Christ a liar in His absolution,² the two following documents on justification, *Sermo de duplici iustitia* and *Sermo de triplici iustitia*, involve also Easter. In the *Sermo de duplici iustitia* of 1518,³ Luther says that the "first righteousness"—contrary to the "second righteousness," identical with ethical sanctification—is "the one through which Christ is righteous and makes righteous through faith."⁴ This righteousness of Christ is explained not only through a reference to 1 Corinthians 1:30: "Who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption," but also through quoting John 11:25: "I am the resurrection and the life." Our righteousness by faith is apparently identified with the righteousness that dwells in the resurrected Christ.

This Easter reference should be seen in its context, where the atoning work of Christ is exclusively described by pre-Easter events: "This belongs to me that the Lord Christ has lived, acted, spoken and suffered and finally died, just as if I had lived and suffered the same life, action, speech, suffering and death."⁵ Christ's vicarious satisfaction is completed by His death, and the Easter Gospel, "I am the resurrection," must consequently be understood as the result and summary of these previous events. The risen Lord confers the fruits of His redemption, the righteousness dwelling in His person, through

the means of grace: "Therefore the same righteousness is given to men in baptism and whenever they are truly penitent so that man can with confidence glory in the Lord Christ and say: 'That belongs to me. . . .'"⁶

In the *Sermo de triplici iustitia* the Christian righteousness is also said to be the righteousness of Christ, a statement supported by a reference, *inter alia*, to Colossians 3:3: "Your life is hid with Christ in God," i.e., with the risen Christ of Colossians 3:1: "If ye be risen with Christ."⁷ The salvation by faith is also said to be worked by the righteousness of Him, about whom it is written: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13). This heavenly righteousness is expressly said to be a substitutionary one: "As Adam made all those guilty who are born of him, through his very own sin, which is quite alien to them, and gives them what he has, so Christ too through His righteousness makes all righteous and blessed who are born of Him. . . ."⁸ In both cases sin and righteousness exist as realities prior to the individual lives affected by them. In both cases the status of the individuals is affected by an event that has taken place in another person, who becomes the source of their relationship to God: "Just as we are condemned by an alien sin, so we are redeemed through an alien righteousness."⁹ It should be observed that the general implication of Romans 5:18 described above ("as Adam . . . so Christ") does not demand that the "all" in the second part of the Pauline parallel (showing the consequences of Christ's obedience) be taken to cover all men but is, in Luther's exposition, limited to those "who are born of Him." This limitation does not, however, affect the universality of Christ's righteousness, which is said to be "eternal" and thus without limits.¹⁰ As such it is offered in the means of grace, to be believed without any sinful hesitation.¹¹

A much more elaborate description of Easter as related to justification is found in a sermon of 1519, thus shortly after the two previous writings. The relationship between atonement and justification, between Good Friday and Easter Day is described in the following way: "You then cast your sins away on Christ when you firmly believe that His wounds and passion are your sins, that He carries them and pays for them" (Isaiah 53 follows).¹² The vicarious satisfaction is thus limited to the pre-resurrection events. Yet Luther goes on: "For on Christ they (i.e. the sins) might not remain; they are devoured by His resurrection, and you now see no wounds, no sufferings on Him, no hints of sins. So speaks St. Paul that Christ was

delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification; in His sufferings He makes known our sins and thus strangles them, but through His resurrection He makes us righteous and free of all sins, if we believe this."¹³ The resurrection of Christ gives us a Savior, whose glorification is His righteousness, which does not suffer passion and death, signs of the sin that have forever been removed. This righteousness, obtained through the vicarious satisfaction, is a substitutionary one and is offered to faith, which alone makes it effective to the individual. The resurrection of Christ is, however, not only a *condition* for a later, individual justification. It is said to *justify* us, and faith is directed towards it as faith's justifying object, a righteousness for our sake to be embraced by faith as already existing, prior to faith.

The same distribution of atonement and justification is very vividly described in a sermon of 1531, included in the House Postil: "For before three days have passed, our dear Lord Christ brings another, beautiful, healthy, friendly, joyous picture with Him, in order that we might learn the consolation that not only are our sins destroyed and strangled through the passion of Christ, but that we should be made righteous and eternally blessed through His resurrection, as St. Paul says . . ." (Rom. 4:25 follows). A little later Luther continues: "For as we see in the first picture on Good Friday, how our sin, our curse and death are put upon Christ, so we see on Easter Day another picture, where there is no sin, no curse, no displeasure, no death but only life, grace, bliss and righteousness on Him. With such a picture we should establish our hearts. Then it is shown and given to us that we should receive Him in no other way than as if God has raised us today with Christ. For as little as you see sin, death and curse on Christ, you should so strongly believe that God wants to see as little (of sin) on you for the sake of Christ, if you accept this resurrection of Christ for your consolation."¹⁴ The Christian righteousness is again identified with Christ's personal righteousness, acquired through His resurrection, and presented to faith. Faith alone makes this righteousness present in the individual, but it exists prior to faith, and individual in the resurrected Christ, whose righteousness is a substitutionary one, as His passion was too.

In 1533 Luther delivered his famous Torgau-sermons, to which later the Formula of Concord refers in its Article IX on "Christ's Descent into Hell."¹⁵ In one of these sermons Luther makes statements on the vicarious, substitutionary character of the resurrection of Christ that well correspond to what has already been found.

Luther says that Christ rose from the dead "not for His own sake but for us, poor miserable people, who had to be imprisoned by death and the devil eternally. For He was as to His own person safe from death and all misery, so that He did not have to die or to descend to hell, but as He has hidden himself in our flesh and blood and put upon Himself all our sin, punishment and misery, so that He had to help us out of it, in that He became alive again and also corporeally and according to His human nature became a lord over death in order that we too in Him and through Him finally escape death and all misery."¹⁶ Luther declares this article of faith to be the central one, so that a Christian "should not see, hear, think of or know anything else than this article,"¹⁷ and it is supported by texts such as "hath quickened us together with Christ and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:5 f.), "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:2) and "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again" (Rom. 8:33 f.). Thus this central article of faith is nothing else than the article of justification, contained in the Easter message about Christ's vicarious resurrection, in the proclamation of our righteousness in the Risen One. Luther does not speak about the future, physical resurrection of the Christians in this connection, a teaching that is given a lower rank: "For as true as Christ has risen from dead, we have already gained the best and most excellent part of the resurrection, so that the corporeal resurrection of the flesh from the grave, which still remains in the future, is to be considered insignificant compared to this."¹⁸ It is the spiritual resurrection, our justification in the justified Christ which is the meaning of the creed's *resurrexit*, its "He rose again": "If we now believe accordingly, we would have a good life and death. For such a faith would well teach us that He has not risen only for His own person, but our resurrection is so connected with His that it avails for us too, so that we may stand and be included in the *Resurrexit*; and because of that we too shall rise and live with Him eternally, so that already our resurrection and life have begun in Christ (as St. Paul also says); and this so certainly as if it had already happened, even though it is still hidden and not revealed."¹⁹

As true as it is that the risen Christ without bleeding wounds and suffering is our justification, it remains equally true that all such statements concerning Christ's victory are spoken as Gospel statements, having as their counterpart the Law, which knows of no

Christ or forgiveness: "But although hell *per se* remains hell and keeps the unbelievers imprisoned, as also do death, sin and all misery, so that they must remain there and perish; as hell terrifies and menaces us too according to the flesh and outward man, that we must fight and bite with it—yet that is all destroyed and pulled down in faith and spirit so that it cannot any longer hurt us, . . ." ²⁰ Also the Christian must meet hell and the wrath of God as realities, to be overcome by a stronger reality, never as fictions to be overcome by better insights.

With the background now given, selected from different works by Luther's hand, it is not difficult to grasp the full meaning of the epigrammatic thesis 2 in the disputation theses of the 24th of April 1543: *Resurrectio eius a mortuis est nostri iustificatio per solam fidem.* ²¹—"His resurrection from the dead is our justification by faith alone." This sentence is not a formulation made at random but a carefully worded summary of the central article of faith, where the relationship between Easter and justification gets a clear description, stressing both God's action in the Son and God's action in the believer.

II.

The first doctrinal controversy within the Lutheran church concerning the relationship between Christ's universal righteousness and its bestowal on the believer is connected with the name of Samuel Huber (c. 1547-1624), a Swiss convert from Calvinism to Lutheranism, who got into conflict with leading Lutheran theologians on the universality of predestination and justification. ²² As this conflict always is brought into the picture, whenever general and individual justification is under discussion, it well deserves a fresh treatment on the basis of the pertinent documents, where our aim will be to see whether Huber or his opponents rightly can claim to continue the doctrinal succession from Luther.

Our investigation will be limited to the question concerning justification, leaving aside other aspects. ²³ Huber's attempt to argue for the notion of a universal justification with reference to certain Scripture passages and to God's universal will to save all men was met by firm opposition from men such as Egidius Hunnius, Polycarp Leyser and Samuel Gesner. They referred to the fact that the Lutheran confessions did not know of any such concept. ²⁴ When confronted with Huber's interpretation of Romans 5:19b, where he understands "all"

to include also unbelievers, his opponents introduce a distinction, saying that "condemnation as far as it concerns the debt belongs to all men but as far as concerns its execution ("ACTU") belongs only to impenitents and unbelievers. So the offer of God's grace and Christ's merit is universal but as far as it concerns its execution ("ACTU") it is limited to believers only, who are excluded from condemnation through the benefaction of Christ, grasped by faith."²⁵ Hunnius *et alii* thus do not reject the idea of a universally valid grace. Against Huber, however, they reject the idea that somehow this grace would already be conferred on the individuals through the universality of atonement, a notion that they think to be present in Huber's works. Huber rejects this accusation as a calumny, assuring that he has only "called universal justification that whereby God, considering the satisfaction of Christ, has because of this become propitiated toward all mankind, accepting it as if everyone had made satisfaction for himself."²⁶ He assures that every individual must partake of this gift by faith in the Word and the sacraments.²⁷ On the surface this seems to be an assuring convergence of views, which explains the temporary reconciliation between the parties.²⁸

At length no reconciliation, however, was possible. The reason cannot, strictly speaking, be said to be the fact that Huber insisted on using the unusual term "universal justification" or on maintaining the idea that all mankind had been given, in some sense, part of Christ's universal, substitutionary righteousness. It is necessary to go more deeply into the confusingly rich material. According to our conviction the essential aberration in Huber's doctrine on justification was in the eyes of the faculty of Wittenberg—where the main struggle took place—its teaching a *unicam iustificationem*, only one justification, viz. the universal one, while *denying* the individual one as a *divine* action. The accusation is: "1) He affirms a universal justification, whereby all men are equally justified by God because of Christ's merit, regardless of faith. 2) He denies faith's or the believer's individual justification to be by God or a special action of God, whereby He justifies only believers. 3) He states faith's individual justification to be only men's action, whereby they apply to themselves by faith the righteousness of Christ."²⁹

This is not a mere question of phraseology: "We do not deal only with terms but mainly with realities. . . . It is intolerable in the church of Christ that he, contrary to Scripture, states that there is only one justification common to all, equally and regardless of faith. . . . Also when he affirms universal remission of sin in his sense, . . . denying

the individual one by God."³⁰ Huber's opponents have discovered that the kind of individual justification that Huber confesses to be necessary for salvation—he never embraced universalism or the final salvation of all men—was a move from man toward God, whereby the individual applied to himself the benefits of the once-forever event. No real divine justification took place in this latter action. Huber's opponents think that the opinion "tastes of pelagianism."³¹ They point to such Scripture passages as Romans 4, Psalm 32, and Acts 3:19, where the individual remission of sins is said to take place as a direct act of God. Against Huber's only one action by God they do not, however, teach a corresponding only one action taking place in the individual's justification. Rather, they teach a double set of actions, two acts by God, one in Christ and one in the believer. They stress that they "do not simply consider, approve and explain two different aspects (*nudos respectus*) but different acts of God. . . : one universal, viz. performed by Christ, another special one, consisting in an application, which is no less a work and an act of God than the former one."³² "Here Huber anew denies the individual remission of sins against Scripture's express norm. But we teach a double remission of sins and distinct acts of God."³³ The universal act of God toward mankind that Huber's opponents want to maintain is described in the following way: "The benefit of redemption has been obtained and acquired for the entire world";³⁴ "the righteousness has been obtained for us."³⁵

In order not to anticipate or weaken the individual's justification as a real, divine act, they regard the use of the word "confer" in this connection as misleading; Christ cannot be said to have "properly speaking conferred redemption on all mankind."³⁶ This expression is rejected, because "confer" in theological terminology is related to "apply" or to "accept" from the one upon whom something is conferred. Still they think that not even "confer" as such is impossible: "neither have we unconditionally rejected the expression 'confer,' even less censured it."³⁷ It is rejected only in so far as it can cover a false meaning, i.e., indicate that individual justification is no longer to be seen as a reality. This freedom of terminology permits the Wittenberg theologians to speak of double reconciliation, redemption and remission of sins,³⁸ one taking place in Christ, another one in the believer. The righteousness of Christ is equally present on two levels, as acquired and obtained for all mankind and as accepted by faith in the believer. Yet this does not permit the Wittenberg theologians to speak of a "double justification." This may be due to the fact that

Huber insists that certain Pauline statements expressly make use of a universal justification terminology, which his opponents deny: "Never does Paul teach universal justification. For as far as concerns 2 Corinthians 5, the words 'not imputing their trespasses unto them,' they are not to be understood universally about all men regardless of faith."³⁹ This exegetical conflict may have barred hypothetical recognition of a universal justification similar to that of the word "confer." A similar concession was also granted to orthodox theologians, who had spoken about a universal election, "the word taken in its broader signification."⁴⁰

Huber does not conceal his disagreement with the Wittenberg theologians. Huber himself does not uphold his own difference between general and special justification: "Answer: they are not two."⁴¹ How far he had gone in his thoughts concerning the uniqueness of general justification is possible to show through his words about the wrath of God as removed by Christ: "Truly that GENERAL REMISSION OF SINS, which has become ours through the blood of Christ, includes many, who are ungrateful toward God, and who dare to destroy and annihilate their heritage through impure lives. Therefore, although it is true that they have RECEIVED the remission of sins, nevertheless they are AGAIN condemned because of their negligence and are forced to pay for all their debts.;"⁴² Huber must reintroduce the Law through a new act of God, being the consequence of the rejection of the Gospel. His adversaries easily refuted this theological construction by pointing to John 3:36: "The wrath of God abideth on him," showing that those words imply that "the wrath of God had never, not even for a moment, been removed. Although the treasury of the expiation of sins has been obtained for them and has been offered in the Gospel, it has never been conferred upon them because of their unbelief, neither has it ever been received by them, as they lack faith, the only means to receive the forgiveness of sins."⁴³

This denial of the co-existence of Law and Gospel is aptly illustrated by the kind of pastoral advice that Huber on one occasion gave in a conversation with his antagonists, reported by them: "And to make his opinion plain enough to us, he then asked us, how we would deal with people, if we came to a place, where nothing had been taught about Christ before. Then we answered him that we would start with the Law, make it clear to them that they were poor sinners and under the wrath of God, which they should recognize with penitent hearts. If they now were sorry for their sins, God offers through the Gospel His grace and remission of sins in Christ, wishing

to make them righteous and saved, as far as they would accept it in true faith. To this Dr. Huber responded: No, this would not be the true way to preach to the unbelievers, but he would begin by saying this: You have the grace of God, you have the righteousness of Christ, you have salvation."⁴⁴ The picture of God that Huber conveys is a God who has given up His wrath in the atonement, and who reassumes it only in the case of the rejection of the Gospel. Apparently the idea of general justification in Huber's theology is utterly destructive from the point of view of classical Lutheranism represented by Huber's adversaries.

Yet it is still possible to penetrate further into the thoughts of Huber. Behind all his arguments there is a conception that dominates his theology as a leading principle. That is the idea of the simplicity of God: the perfect God knows of no tensions between Law and Gospel. "THEREFORE THIS DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE ACTS SHOULD BE UPHELD (WHICH I WANT TO BE OBSERVED MOST CAREFULLY): ONE WHICH IS CONSIDERED ONLY IN GOD HIMSELF, WHO IN HIMSELF ALWAYS REMAINS SIMPLE AND PERFECT; ANOTHER ONE WHICH COMES FROM MAN WHO APPLIES TO HIMSELF THROUGH FAITH THE USE AND EFFECT OF THAT DIVINE ACT."⁴⁵ Huber's contemporaries had already found this statement to reveal the basis for all his theology, also on other points: "In this distinction are the foundation and basis of all his nonsense on love, election, reconciliation, remission of sins, justification, sanctification, glorification, all of which things according to him are in and from GOD ONLY universals. The futility of this error can very well be seen from the foregoing."⁴⁶ In the midst of Huber's theology stands God in His naked, simple and perfect essence as propitiated.

Although Huber repeatedly refers to Luther for support of his theology, it is much too evident that he distorts what Luther says.⁴⁷ It is also striking that Christ's resurrection is not even mentioned. Certainly Huber presupposes Christ's atonement as the necessary condition of the universal justification, but faith is directed toward God "in Himself," not toward the deed of the Father in raising His Son. In by-passing Easter Huber by-passes salvation as an event turned to the world and consequently also the Gospel as the place where Easter works its effect on the believer. The Gospel in Huber's theology points to salvation and is no more the efficacious Word that justifies believers by the power of God. It also loses the Law as its counterpart, because it merely conveys the truth about the simple and

perfect God's universal justification. By defending the *two* acts of God, the Wittenberg theologians maintained the contradictory character of Law and Gospel and the efficacy of the means of grace. It can be regretted that they did not involve Easter texts in their treatment of justification, but it would in no way have changed the outcome of the controversy, and insofar there was no necessity to make statements on the relationship between justification and Easter.

III.

In the 19th century C. F. W. Walther (1811-1887), founder of the Missouri Synod, is especially connected with the theological issue under treatment in this article. Our investigation of Walther will be based on his Easter sermons (sermons on Easter Day, 2nd and 3rd Easter Day, 1st Sunday after Easter) and also on pertinent material in Walther's theological periodical, *Lehre und Wehre*, as well as other documents of relevance to our topic.

As a first observation it should be said that Walther's homiletic treatment of the relationship between Easter and justification shows no sign of a gradual development. Our material covers the period 1840-1886, and all the sermons seem to possess the same degree of dogmatic clarity. If there ever was a "young Walther" like the "young Luther" in his pre-Reformation time, he has left no traces. Already in the year 1840 we meet the sentence: "As we were co-punished in Christ's death, we are again co-absolved from our sins in His resurrection."⁴⁸ (The frame of such statements that abound during all of Walther's lifetime reveals a rhetoric of almost patristic type which stresses the excellency and importance that Easter enjoyed in Walther's eyes.)⁴⁹ In a sermon from 1843 on Romans 4:25 ("Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification") he makes this text the basis for the interpretation of Christ's resurrection as our absolution, a quotation that frequently recurs in succeeding sermons.⁵⁰ In 1844 we see an expression coined that was to become well known: "That the resurrection of Christ is the fully valid justification of all men."⁵¹ It is also said: "In Him we are exalted, glorified, justified."⁵² This kind of statement builds on the substitutionary character of Christ's resurrection, a substitution of no less importance than that of His death: "In the Crucified we were punished, in the Resurrected One we are thus redeemed."⁵³ It is even possible to say "that in the resurrection itself there is more consolation than in His death,"⁵⁴ which is based on Romans 8:34: "It is Christ that died, *yea rather*, that is risen again." In a sermon of 1855

we hear Walther make the following formulation, which aptly summarized his view of Good Friday and Easter Day in their relationship to each other: "What the *Son* had given to the *Father* on Calvary, the *Father* now in the garden of the tomb gave to the *world*."⁵⁵ In a sermon of 1856 the excellency of Easter is emphatically taught in words that may still cause a certain offense: "When the awakening sounds of Easter exultation have died away, it is even to most Christians not other than if they awoke from a sweetly intoxicating dream; they leave again the empty tomb of Christ and look anew for Mount Calvary under the shadows of the holy cross as their only refuge. Not a few regard the resurrection of Jesus Christ as no more than a beautiful addition, a brilliant decoration of the real salvatory acts of the Redeemer of the world, as a precious pearl in the crown of redemption, but not as that very crown itself. They do not know what to do with it, how to use it, how to make it useful for their faith, charity and hope. It is still an enigma to them why the blessed apostle writes: 'Remember that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.'"⁵⁶ How Walther can permit himself to use such surprising language that goes so far as to make Calvary appear less important than Easter and that contains a criticism of the pious concentration on the cross usually to be found among orthodox Christians, is understandable only by what follows: "Yet, my beloved, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is not only the highest and final consolation of all men, because not until then is the consolation of the cross and death of Christ revealed and are both of them made consoling, but because it contains a consolation in itself which is not to be found in any other work of the redemption, not even in the passion and death of Christ. Consider only the following and you will soon agree with me. Whereas the passion and death properly speaking were acts of Christ, His resurrection was, on the contrary, properly speaking the act of His heavenly Father. . . . This is, however, of the highest and most consolatory importance. . . . Whereas the passion and death of Jesus Christ was the penitence and confession of the Son of God for the entire apostate humanity, His resurrection was, on the contrary, the heavenly Father's absolution, subsequently solemnly and factually delivered in Christ to all men, publicly before heaven and earth."⁵⁷ It should be observed that Walther is not satisfied by giving Easter a revelatory role, pointing to the true meaning of the cross. He insists on the role of Easter *per se* presenting itself to the world.

The concentration on Easter as an act toward the world is described in the following way in the same sermon: "First, He expiated

the sin of all men through giving His Son into suffering and death, and after this has been done, He does not wait until we come and ask for the obtained grace; He does not keep this grace in His heart, but in order that on the part of man nothing more is necessary than that he believes in a gift already given to him, He breaks forth, raises our Substitute from the dead and thereby speaks to all men: . . . I am again your Father. . . ."⁵⁸ "For now man should not first do something in order that his sins may be forgiven, but he is only to believe that it has already happened, that in the resurrection of Christ his sins have been forgiven unto him, that the grace of God and salvation have been assured to him. As often now as the Gospel is preached, baptism, absolution and the Lord's Supper are administered and the benediction pronounced over him in church, so often the preacher only repeats what God has already done to all men through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."⁵⁹ Easter as an act toward the world in general is thus continued, repeated, in the means of grace, the Gospel in all its forms, which effectively convey the gift of Easter to individuals.

Walther supports his presentation of the Easter gospel also with references to such passages in Holy Writ where Jesus is said to have been the Messiah. In a sermon of 1851 Walther says: "The resurrection of the Son of God . . . , was thus the fulfillment of the contractual obligation on the part of the Father, for which reason Peter at the first feast of Pentecost calls out to all his listeners: 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.'"⁶⁰ The exaltation of Christ makes Him the Savior; having expiated for sin, the Son is entitled to His resurrection as substitutionary act. In a sermon of 1886 Walther points to Matthew 28:18 f.: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations . . ."; he comments: "What does Christ say by all this, especially with the little word: 'Go ye *therefore*'? Apparently this, that He has brought forth remission of sins and thereby righteousness, life and salvation for all men from His tomb, which all the apostles by virtue of His resurrection shall distribute through the proclamation of the Gospel."⁶¹ The power given to Christ is His exaltation, which is identical with His justification. This substitutionary righteousness is the reason for going all over the world with the means of grace, which effectively distribute to the individual the contents of the Easter events.

The picture given by Walther's sermons, of which a short survey has now been given, can be supported by other material. In 1860

Walther presided at the general synod of his church body. On this occasion a doctrinal discussion took place concerning several theses "On the Close Relationship Between the Doctrines of Absolution and Justification."⁶² The published proceedings undoubtedly give a clear picture of the views that Walther wished to be maintained within the church entrusted to him. During the discussions a reference was made to the fact that within the Missouri Synod it had always been preached that: "*Through the resurrection from the dead God has absolved all the world, i. e., set it free from sin; if now the world already is absolved and set free from sin, what is then the absolution or preaching of the Gospel in the church? Is it, too, a setting free, or merely a proclamation of the setting free that has already occurred? Answer: . . . precisely through the Gospel occurs the conveying of what is in God's heart. . . . a proclamation that really brings and gives the forgiveness. . . . The absolution in the Gospel is nothing else than a repetition of the factual absolution which has already happened through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*"⁶³ It is also said: "There should be no confusion between what Christ *has done* and what *has happened* to Christ. His passion, death and resurrection (*Auferstehen*) was no absolution but certainly His *being raised* (*Auferweckung*) from the dead. Our sermon and absolution are according to their moral effect nothing else than what God had done to Christ; the difference is only that God by raising His Son has absolved *the entire world*, but we, only *individuals*; e.g., preachers absolve only their parishes. . . . Our absolution is nothing else than the repetition of the act of God in His raising of Christ."⁶⁴ By stressing the passive character of the raising of the Son *by* the Father, the message character of the Easter events is underlined. This message character makes it also possible to maintain a moral identity between the visible or factual word of the raising of the Son and the audible word from the pulpit or in the confessional or in other means of grace. There is no less power in the Word and the sacraments than there was in the resurrection of the Lord.

The material quoted above was translated into Norwegian and caused conflicts within the Scandinavian Lutheran clergy in the United States, with the (mainly) Swedish pastors of the Augustana synod rejecting the contents. In 1871 Walther reprinted in his periodical *Lehre und Wehre* an article originally appearing in a Norwegian paper, where the Missourian theology on Easter and justification was defended, and the contents of the 1860 theses were upheld. We are certainly entitled to take the reprint to imply

Walther's full approval. It is said: "We do not say that one by necessity always has to use the expression: 'the world is justified in Christ' . . . for we know very well that this article of faith can be explained and represented completely and correctly by other words."⁶⁵ The aim of the article is a very moderate one, to discover "if it is true that ecclesiastical language does not permit one to speak of the justification of the world in Christ." The legitimation of such a terminology as at least possible is shown by quotations, *inter alios*, from Johann Gerhard: "absolved us in Him"; Gottfried Olearius: "with Him justified before God's tribunal"; and Johann Jakob Rambach: "that in His person all mankind was justified and absolved from sin and curse."⁶⁶ No objections can thus in principle be directed against the phraseology "the justification of the world in Christ." No other claim is made. Yet it is shown that Walther's theology and expression have their background in a doctrinal succession through the centuries within the Lutheran church. Neither formally nor materially is Walther an innovator. It is also interesting to note that the article repeats the interpretation of Romans 5:19 once used against Huber: "Both acts [Adam's and Christ's] have an equally general significance and validity. But as not all men are personally condemned, although the 'judgment came upon all men to condemnation,' so not all men are really and personally justified, although the justification has through Christ's act 'come upon all men.'"⁶⁷

Another expression of considerable repute connected with Walther's theology on Easter and justification is "objective justification" versus "subjective justification." It has been investigated as to when this terminology was first used by Walther or men like him.⁶⁸ It seems, as far as the investigations for this article permit us to see, that the terms were made known to Walther through an article in a theological paper in Germany, printed in 1867. Walther reprinted it in his *Lehre und Wehre* in the same year, and it can be said to throw clarity on the original meaning of the words.⁶⁹ The article speaks of "justification of man before God both in objective and subjective meaning." Objective justification affects "humanity as a collective (*Gesammtheit*), in which the particular individuals are not separate entities but are inherent parts of a totality, as generally the independence and distinctiveness of the individuals are only a very relative one, and the individuals, at any rate, are included in the vital unity of the whole organism."⁷⁰ Mankind in this sense has been justified by the saving death of Christ. Easter is not mentioned in this connection, to which Walther may not have paid attention, as the

stress is not on Good Friday versus Easter but on redemption versus application. "Subjective justification" is described in the following way: "Without this fact [objective justification] no justification for the individual could exist; the former is the unshakeable foundation, through which the *subjective* justification is made possible and on which it depends. For the justification on the subject (*Die Rechtfertigung des Subjectes*) is the act of God through which He cancels the verdict which has been delivered upon man because of sin, and absolves man from sin, imparting to him the merits of Christ."⁷¹ "Subjective justification" is thus from the beginning of the concept a notion which clearly avoids any "Huberianism." It signifies a real transition from the state of wrath to the state of grace through a divine act. "Objective justification" does not deprive "subjective justification" of its "objective" reality. It is possible that the terms can be abused in that direction, and the appropriateness of the terminology can always be discussed. Yet it seems safe to state that the realities behind the words are well founded in Biblical, Lutheran theology, and that the words originally were intended to convey those realities.

The essential differences between Walther's doctrine and Huber's concerning universal justification can be summarized in the following way: First of all, we do not meet the slightest hint in Walther's theology about God as being forced by His own essence to know of no contradictory tension between Law and Gospel. Walther at no place suggests that the unbeliever is no more under the wrath of God or that a second judgment is necessary to deprive the unbeliever of his first, universal justification. As early as 1846 Walther says in a sermon: "For that is indeed true: here everything depends on faith. He who does not apply to himself the victory of Christ in His resurrection through faith, upon him Law, sin, death and hell still have power. He experiences no power, no joy from this victory. For him Christ is still in His tomb."⁷² So Walther upholds the truth of John 3:36: "The wrath of God abideth on him." Within this frame all Walther's statements on Easter and justification must be understood.

A second point of divergence is the fact that to Huber justification of the world is connected merely with a change within the Godhead, effected by the atonement, but to Walther with an external act of God, the Father raising His Son, turning it toward the world. To Huber atonement and universal justification are one; to Walther they are two different acts.

This leads us to the third point, where the previous ones are con-

cretely summarized: the attitude toward the means of grace. To Huber the means of grace do not effect a real justification but rather point to the only existing justification. To Walther absolution or the gospel is the very repetition of the Easter events, having the same power as the resurrection of Christ. The identity between God's act in Christ and the believer should in no way be thought to be equal to Huber's "one act."⁷³ Huber's one act emptied the means of grace; Walther's fills them with the power that entitles the confessor in the confessional to ask the penitent in the confessional the question found in Luther's small catechism: "Do you believe that my forgiveness is God's forgiveness?"⁷⁴

Not unimportant is the fact that Walther was well aware of Huber's theology and its dangers. In his edition of Baier's *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, Walther inserted a page with very pertinent material concerning the Huberian controversy, dealing with the impossibility of saying that all mankind has received the remission of sins, pointing to John 3:36: "The wrath of God abideth on him." As a professor of dogmatics Walther thus has seriously warned his students against Huberian aberrations.⁷⁵ In his ministry as a preacher of the Word he has certainly led his parishioners on equally safe paths. Also for coming generations his presentation of the relationship between justification and Easter has a lasting value.

Endnotes

¹The much debated question about the year of Luther's new understanding of justification is not a merely church historical problem (like the one about the year of Luther's birth) but a dogmatical fight about the meaning of Luther's doctrine of justification by faith. If Luther's discovery is supposed to be more or less a variety of the Augustinian, medieval doctrine, it is natural to fix it at some early event in Luther's life (1513-1516). If, however, that discovery is admitted to be the doctrine of the Lutheran confessions, the new insight must be put later (1518/19). The present article is based on the conviction that E. Bizer: *Fides ex auditu*, Neukirchen 1958, is right when he fixes Luther's new doctrine of justification as first present in the *Acta Augustana* of 1518. U. Saarnivaara, *Luther Discovers the Gospel*, Saint Louis, 1951, traces the discovery to the somewhat later writing, *De triplici iustitia*, but in *Lutheran News*, Vol. 2, No. 22, November 2nd 1964, p. 11, Saarnivaara has accepted Bizer's date: "Bizer's result is obviously correct." No real difference exists dogmatically between Bizer and Saarnivaara.

²St. L. 15, 579 f.; WA 2, 13, 33 ff.; LW 31, 271: "Ideo si accedas ad sacramentum poenitentiae et non credideris firmiter te absolvendum in caelo, in iudicium accedis et damnationem, quia non crederis Christum vera dixisse: Quodcunque solveris etc et sic tua dubitatione Christum mendacem facis, quod est horrendum peccatum."

("Therefore, if you go to the sacrament and do not firmly believe that you are absolved in heaven, you go to judgment and condemnation, because you do not believe Christ to be right in saying 'whatsoever thou shalt loose,' and so you make Christ a liar through your doubts, which is a horrible sin.")

³When M. Brecht: *Martin Luther. Sein Weg zur Reformation*, Stuttgart 1981, p. 222, connects this sermon with Palmsunday 1518 (March 28th), he bases his date on the assumption that Luther could not deal with a Biblical passage outside its liturgical context within the church year. While accepting Brecht's general approach to the greater problem, the author of this article must maintain that Brecht's date is not only without necessary ground but also in plain contradiction to the fact that some texts later than March 1518, especially the Heidelberg disputation theses, contain an openly pre-Reformation theology. *Sermo de duplici iustitia* belongs apparently to the second part of the year 1518. WA gives through its editor (WA 2, 143) the conjecture Christmas 1518 as a possible date. Cfr. also W. v. Loewenich: *Duplex iustitia. Luthers Stellung zu einer Unionsformel des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für europäische Geschichte Mainz Band 68), Wiesbaden 1972, who leaves the problem open but dates *De duplici iustitia* earlier than *De triplici iustitia*, also a debated question, v. Walther, id., pp. 2, 12.

⁴St.L. 10, 1264; WA 2, 145, 7 ff.; LW 31, 297: "*Duplex est iustitia Christianorum, sicut et duplex peccatum hominum. Prima est aliena et ab extra infusa. Haec est qua Christus iustus est et iustificans per fidem, sicut I ad Corin: I. Qui factus est nobis a deo sapientia et iusticia et sanctificatio et redemptio. Siquidem et ipse, ut Ioan: XI. Ego sum resurrectio et vita: qui credit in me, non morietur in aeternum. Et iterum Ioan: XIII: Ego sum via, veritas et vita.*"

⁵St.L. 10, 1264, WA 2, 145, 16 ff.; LW 31, 297: "'meum est quod Christus vivit, egit, dixit, passus est, mortuus est, non secus quam si ego illa vixissem egissem, dixissem, passus essem et mortuus essem.'"

⁶St.L. 10, 1264; WA 2, 145, 14 ff.; LW 31, 297: "*Haec ergo iustitia datur hominibus in baptismo et omni tempore verae poenitentiae ita ut homo cum fiducia possit gloriari in Christo et dicere 'meum est. . . .'*"

⁷St.L. 10, 1258; WA 2, 44, 32 ff.: "*Iusticia huic contraria est natalis, essentialis, originalis, aliena, quae est iusticia Christi . . . Haec est qua nuper dixi, quod sit sors, capitale, fundamentum, petra nostra et tota substantia nostra, in qua gloriamur in aeternum, ut Apostolus ait, quod vita nostra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo. . . .*"

⁸St.L. 10, 1259; WA 2, 45, 19 ff.: "*sicut Adam uno peccato omnes ex se natos facit, eodem suo peccato proprio, illis iam alieno, reos et dat quod habet, ita Christus sua iusticia omnes ex se natos facit, eodem sua iusticia, illis aliena et immerita, iustos et salvos. . . .*"

⁹St.L. 10, 1259; WA 2, 45, 22: "*sicuti alieno peccato damnati sumus, ita aliena liberemur iusticia.*"

¹⁰St.L. 10, 1259; WA 2, 45, 25 f.: "*Solus Christus est aeternus: ideo iusticia eius quoque aeterna est, et tamen nostra.*" ("Only Christ is eternal, thus his righteousness is also eternal and yet it is ours.")

¹¹Luther gives the same interpretation of "all" in Rom. 5:18b in other contexts: St.L. 11, 510; WA 17:2, 137, 21 ff. (1522): "*gleich, wie denen die sund und tod anhanget und folget erblich, die aus Adam geporn werden, Also hanget an und folget erblich leben und gerechtickeit, die aus Christo geporn werden*" ("then as sin and death adhere to and follow hereditarily those who are born out of Adam, so life and righteousness adhere to and follow hereditarily those who are born out of Christ"); St.L. 7, 1690; WA 46, 656, 35 ff. (1537); LW 22, 138: "'also' widerumb 'durch eines,' Jhesu Christi, 'gehorsam,' der der einige Mensch in gnaden war,

werden viel gerecht. Christus, will er sagen, ist allein heilig, gerecht, voller gnaden und warheit. der thet des Vaters willen, wie im 40. Psalm geschriben . . . Dieses unsers HERREN gnade, warheit, heiligkeit und gerechtigkeit geniessen wir alle, er gibet uns sein Wort in den mund und den glauben in das hertz, das wir jm anhangen, wissen, das er uns 'reiniget durch das Wasserbad im Wort' . . . ("for 'by one man's,' *Jesus Christ's, 'obedience,' who was the only man in grace, shall many be made righteous.*" Christ, he wants to say, is alone holy, righteous, full of grace and truth; He does His Father's will, as said in the 40th Psalm. . . . This Our Lord's grace, truth, holiness and righteousness we all enjoy; He gives us His Word in our mouth and the faith in our heart, that we adhere to Him, knowing that 'He cleanses us with the washing of water by the word'"); St.L. 8, 1435; WA 2, 491, 12 ff. (1519); LW 27, 222: "Haec est iustitia liberalis, gratuita, solida, interna, aeterna, vera, coelestis, divina . . . Christi et Christiani iusticia sit una . . . Aquam, quam ego dabo, fiet in eo fons aquae vivae salientis in vitam aeternam. Ita fit, ut sicut alieno peccato omnes facti sunt peccatores, ita aliena iusticia omnes fiant iusti, ut Rho, V. dicit: Sicut per inobedientiam. . . ." ("This is a generous, free of charge, reliable, internal, eternal, true, heavenly, divine righteousness . . . Christ's and the Christian's righteousness is one thing. . . . The water that I will give will become in him a well of living water flowing to life eternal. So it will be that as all have become sinners through an alien sin, so all will become righteous through an alien righteousness"); commenting John 1:9, "the true Light, which lighteth every man" Luther refers to St. Augustine and says, St.L. 11, 186; WA 10:1, 221, 12 ff. (1522); LW 52, 71: "diesser lerer leret sie alle ynn der stadt, das ist: es ist keyn lerer ynn der stadt, denn der alleyn. Er hat alleyn alle iunger; damit wirt nit gesagt, das er alle menschen ynn der statt lere, sondern das nur eyn lerer drynnen sey, niemant von eynem andern geleret werde.—und diessen vorstand weyss ich nit tzu uorwerffen, denn auf die weyss redt auch Paulus Ro. 5: Alss durch eyniss menschen sund ynn alle menschen die vordamnis ist komen, also durch eyniss menschen gerechtickeytt ynn alle menschen die rechtfertigung ist komen, sso doch nit alle menschen durch Christum gerenctfertigt werden, aber dennoch ist er alleyn der mensch, durch wilchen alle rechtfertigung kompt. Also auch hie; ob nit alle menschen erleuchtet werdenn, sso ist doch ditz das liecht, von wilchem alleyn alle erleuchtung kompt." ("This teacher teaches everybody in the town, i.e. there is no other teacher in the town except Him alone; He alone has all disciples. That is not to say that He teaches all people, but that there is no other teacher in the town, and nobody is taught by anyone else.—and I cannot reject this understanding, for in that way St. Paul speaks Rom. 5 (19): 'For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous,' although not all men are justified through Christ, but yet He is alone the man through whom all justification comes. So here too: although not all men are illuminated, this is still the light, from which alone all illumination comes.")

¹²St.L. 11, 380; WA 2, 140, 6 ff.; LW 42, 12: "Dan wirffestu deyn sunde von dir auff Christum, wan du festiglich glaubst, das seyne wunden und leyden seyn deyn sunde, das er sie trage and bezale. . . ."

¹³St.L. 11, 581; WA 2, 140 20 ff.; LW 42, 12 f.: "dan auff Christo mochten sie nit bleiben, sie seynd durch seyn aufferstehend vorschlungen unnd sihest itzt keyne wunden, keyne schmerzen an yhm, das ist keyner sunde anzeygung. Also spricht S. Paulus, das Christus gestorben ist umb unser sund und auffersten umb unsser gerechtickeyt. das ist, yn seinem leyden macht er unsser sund bekant und erwurget sie also, aber durch seyn aufferstehen macht er unss gerecht unnd loss von allen sunden, sso wir anders dasselb glauben."

¹⁴St.L. 13a, 516; WA 52, 250, 36 ff.: "Denn gleich wie wir im ersten bild am

stillen Freytag sehen, wie unser sünd, unser fluch und todt auff Christo ligt, Also sehen wir am Ostertag ein ander bild, das kein sünd, kein fluch, kein ungnad, kein todt, Sonder eitel leben, gnad, seligkeyt und gerechtigkeit in Christo ist. Mit solchem bild sollen wir unsere hertzen auffrichten, Denn er ist uns für gestellet und geschenket, das wir uns sein anders nicht annemen sollen, denn alss hette uns selb Gott heut mit Christo aufferwecket. Denn alss wenig du sünd, tod und fluch an Christo sihest, Also solt du glauben, das Got so wenig an dir umb Christus willen auch sehen will, wenn du disser seiner Aufferstehung dich annimbst unnd tröstest.“

¹⁵Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche, 3 Aufl., Göttingen 1956, 1049 ff.; *The Book of Concord*, ed. Tappert, Philadelphia 1959, p. 610 (SD IX, 1 f.).

¹⁶St.L. 10, 1132; WA 37, 15 ff.: “Aber nicht für sich selbs, sondern für uns arme elende leute, die des tods und Teuffels ewig gefangen sein musten, Denn er war vorhin für sich für tod und allem unglück wol sicher, das er nicht sterben noch jnn die helle faren muste. weil er sich aber jnn unser fleisch und blut gesteckt hat und all unser sund, straffe und ungluck auff sich genomen, so must er auch eraus helfen, also das er widder lebendig und auch leiblich und nach seiner menschlichen natur ein Herr des todes würde. auff das auch wir jm und durch in endlich aus dem tod und allem ungluck kemen.“

¹⁷St.L. 10, 1133; WA 37, 67, 34 f.: “das er nichts anders sehe, höre, dencke noch wisse denn diesen Artikel.“

¹⁸St.L. 10, 1133; WA 37, 68, 21 ff.: “Denn so das war ist, das Christus auffstanden ist vom tode, so haben wir schon das beste stück und fürnemeste teil hinweg von der auffstehung, das die leibliche auffstehung des fleisches aus dem grabe (die noch zu künnfftig ist) da gegen geringe zurechen ist.“

¹⁹St.L. 10, 1133; WA 37, 68 6 ff.: “Wenn wir nun also gleubeten, so hetten wir gut leben und sterben; Denn solcher glaube würde us fein leren, das er nicht alleine für seine person sey auffstanden, sondern so an einander hengen, das es uns gelte, und auch wir jnn dem Resurrexit stehen und gefasset sind. Und umb oder durch dasselbe auch auffstehen und mit jm ewiglich leben müssen. das schon unser auffstehen und leben (wie Sanct Paulus auch sagt) jnn Christo angangen ist, und so gewis, als were es schon gar geschehen, on das es noch verborge und nicht offenbar ist, . . .“

²⁰St.L. 10, 1130; WA 37, 66, 15 ff.: “Denn ob wol die Helle an sich selbs die Helle bleibt und die ungleubigen gefangen hellt, wie auch der tod, unde und alle ungluck, das sie darinn bleiben und verderben müssen, Und uns auch selbs nach dem fleisch und eusserlichen menschen schreckt und drenget das wir uns da mit schlagen und beissen müssen, Doch ist solchs im glauben und geist alles zustört und zwissen, das es uns nichts mehr schaden kan.“

²¹WA 39: 2, 237, 25.

²²*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed., Oxford 1977, entry Huber, wrongly uses the term “Huberianism” to cover the doctrine of unlimited atonement, advocated by Huber when breaking away from Calvinism. This use of the word is misleading, as Huber’s name is mainly connected with the struggle about universal predestination and justification, both affirmed by Huber.

²³For the predestination struggle see G. Adam: *Der Streit um die Prädestination im ausgehenden 16. Jahrhundert. Eine Untersuchung zu den Entwürfen von Samuel Huber und Aegidius Hunnius*, Neukirchen 1970; also R. Söderlund: *Ex praevisa fide. Zum Verständnis der Prädestinationslehre in der lutherischen Orthodoxie*, Hannover 1983, especially pp. 59–62.

²⁴*Controversiae inter theologos wittenbergenses de regeneratione et electione*

dilucida explicatio D.D. Egidii Hunnii, Polycarpi Leyseri, Salomonis Gesneri. . ., s.l. 1594, fol. E 4 a.

²⁵*Controversiae. . .*, fol. E 4 B: "condemnatio, quae REATU pertinebat ad omnes homines, ACTU tamen pertinet ad solos impenitentes ac infideles: Sic oblatio gratiae DEI & meriti Christi Universalis quidem est: ACTU tamen ad solos fideles restringitur. qui Christi per fidem apprehensi beneficio damnationi eximuntur." Those words in the work by the Wittenberg theologians are part of a letter from the faculty of Tübingen, the same text in *Actorum Huberianorum Pars Prior*, Tübingen 1597, p. 109. "ACTU" refers to the Last Judgment, *Actorum Huberianorum Pars Posterior*, Tübingen 1597, p. 124.

²⁶Samuel Huberus: *Confutatio brevis, Libri, sub alieno nomine editi, de controversia in Theologos Wittebergenses, & Samuelem Huberum de ELECTIONE*, Mulhusij 1595, p. 50: ". . . qua DEUS intuens satisfactionem Christi propter illam toti generi humano factus est propitiuus, & sic acceptauit, perinde unusquisque pro seipso satisfecisset. . ."

²⁷Id., p. 52: "nondum tamen ipsa participatione in status salutis & felicitatis aeternae adducit, nisi fide per verbum & sacramenta, hoc beneficium sibi applicet, atque eo modo participet." ("Does not yet through this participation [in universal atonement] bring man to the state of eternal salvation and blessedness, if he does not apply this benefit to himself through faith in the Word and the Sacraments and participates in that way.")

²⁸A reconciliation took place on the 4th of February, 1594, in Wittenberg; cfr. Samuel Huber: *Historische Beschreibung Des gantzen Streits zwischen D. Hunnen und D. Hubern / von der Gnadewahl*, s.l., 1597, fol. m 2 a. The concession of the Tübingen theologians in a letter to the colleagues of Wittenberg that the controversy was mainly terminological, "in phrasi tamen magis & modo loquendo quam reipsa," *Actorum. . . prior*, p. 37, belongs to this early phase and cannot be used to cover the conflict in general, which is suggested by the inclusion of those words in C. F. W. Walther's edition of J. W. Baier: *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, III, In Urbe Sancti Ludovici 1879, p. 287.

²⁹*Actorum. . . posterior*, p. 10: "I. Iustificationem universalem asserit, qua Omnes homines ex aequo sint a Deo propter meritum Christi iustificati, absque respectu fidei. II. Negat, particularem Iustificationem fidei, seu credentium, ex Deo, Seu Dei actionem specialem esse, qua tantum credentes iustificet. III. Particularem Iustificationem fidei, statuit esse actum non nisi hominum, applicantium sibi per fidem Iustitiam Christi."

³⁰Id., p. 124: "Non tantum de phrasibus, sed praecipue de rebus nos agimus; . . . in ecclesia Christi intolerabilis esse diximus: Quod videlicet unicum iustificationem eamque omnibus hominibus absque respectu fidei ex aequo communem, contra Scripturam statuit . . . Similiter dum universalem remissionem suo sersu asserit, . . . particularem ex Deo . . . negat." Cfr. id., pp. 42, 129.

³¹Id., p. 114: "quod Pelagianismum sapit."

³²Id., p. 117: "Nos non tantum nudos respectus, sed duos distinctos actus Dei . . . consideramus, approbamus & explicamus: Alterum universalem, ratione videlicet a Christo perfectum: alterum specialem, in applicatione consistentem, qui priore non minus opus & actus Dei est."

³³Id., p. 122: "Hinc denuo Huberus particularem remissionem peccatorum ex Deo contra expressam Scripturae sacrae normam negat. Nos autem duplicem remissionem peccatorum & distinctos Dei actus esse."

³⁴Aegidius Hunnium: *Articulus de Providentia Dei et Aeterna praedestinatione*, Frankfurti ad Moenum 1597, fol. h 4 b: "beneficium redemptionis esse PARTUM & ACQUISITUM universo mundo."

³⁵*Actorum . . . posterior*, p. 42: "iustitia omnibus per Christum parta sit."

³⁶Aegidius Hunnius, op. cit. ib.: "PROPRIE CONTULISSE redemptionem toti generi humano."

³⁷*Actorum . . . posterior*, p. 127: "Neque nos vocabulum conferendi simpliciter improbauimus, multo minus exagitauius."

³⁸Id., p. 114: "Reconciliatio ergo . . . , si universalis accipiatur. . . . Sed praeter hanc est alia particularis reconciliatio. . . ." ("Thus reconciliation, . . . if understood as universal . . . Besides this one there is a special reconciliation"); "redemptionis, quae universalis est" ("redemption which is universal"); cfr. also note 33: "duplicem remissionem."

³⁹Id., p. 122: "Nusquam Paulus iustificationem universalem tradit. Nam quod ad locum 2 Cor. 5 attinet, verba illa: Non imputans illis peccata: non sunt universaliter accipienda de omnibus hominibus absque respectu fidei."

⁴⁰Id., p. 118: "in latiore significatione sumpto vocabulo."

⁴¹Samuel Huber: *Antwort auff die Heydelbergische Artickel*, s.1., 1595, fol. E 2 b: "Antwort. Es sind nicht zwo."

⁴²*Controversiae . . .*, fol. E 2 f., quoting Huber's thesis 270 in Tübingen: "Verum GENERALI illa REMISSIONE PECCATORUM, quae per sanguinem Christi nobis obuenit, comprehenduntur multi, qui Deo ingrati sunt, atque familiam pessundare & sternere conatur vitae suae improbitate. Quapropter licet ACCEPERINT remissionem peccatorum: propter suam negligentiam tamen ITERUM condemnantur, & ad exsolationem omnium suorum debitorum adiguntur."

⁴³Id., fol. E 3 b: "Qui non credit, inquit (sic) Iohannes Baptista, non videbit vitam, sed Ira Dei MANET super eum, Iohan. 3. Ergo qui nunquam crediderunt in filium Dei, ab iis etiamnumquam (ne ad momentum quidem) fuit ablata ira Dei. Quamvis thesaurus expiationis peccatorum fuerit eis partus, & in Euangelio oblatus, ipsis tamen per incredulitatem numquam COLLATUS, nec ab eis acceptus unquam, cum defuerit eis fides, unicum accipiendae remissionis peccatorum organon." Cfr. also *Actorum . . . posterior*, p. 125: "Quia tamen in infidelitate MANENT, meritum Christi illis nihil prodest, nec chirographum ipsis ratione USUS sublatum est: sed MANET illis legis accusatio, MANET ira Dei, MANET damnatio." ("As they still REMAIN faithless, the merit of Christ does not benefit them, nor is the handwriting blotted out as to its USE, but the accusation of the Law REMAINS against them, the wrath of God REMAINS, the damnation REMAINS.")

⁴⁴*Concilia Theologica Witebergensia*, Frankfurt an Mayn 1664, p. 554: "Und damit wir seine Meinung deutlich gnug vernehmen möchten/ fraget er ims darauff/ wenn wir an einen Ort kämen/ da zuvor von Christo nichts gelehret worden wäre/ wie wir mit denselben Leuten handeln wollten? Als ihm aber geantwortet/ wir wolten den Anfang vom Gesetz machen/ ihnen fürhalten/ sie wären arme Sünder/ und unter dem Zorn Gottes/ welches sie mit bussfertigem Hertzen erkennen solten: wenn sie nun ihnen ihre Sünde liessen leid seyn/ so biete Gott durchs Evangelium seine Gnade und Vergebung der Sünde in Christo an/ wolle sie gerecht und selig machen/ So fern sie es im wahren Glauben annehmen wolten: Darzu saget D. Huberus Nein/ das were nicht der rechte Weg bey den Ungläubigen zu predigen/ sondern er wolte es also anfangen und sagen: Vos habetis GRATIAM DEI, HABETIS IUSTITIAM CHRISTI, habetis salutem."

⁴⁵*Actorum . . . posterior*, p. 130: "VALET AUTEM HINC (QUOD VELIM STUDIO SUMMO OBSERVARI) DISTINCTIO ACTUUM: UNIUS, QUI CONSIDERATUR TANTUM IN IPSO DEO, QUI IN SESE SEMPER MANET SIMPLEX ET PERFECTUS: ET ALTERIUS, QUI ACCEDIT EX HOMINE APPLICANTE SIBI PER FIDEM USUM ET EFFECTUM ACTUS ILLIUS DIVINI."

⁴⁶Id., p. 136: "In qua distinctione fundamentum & sedes est omnis ipsius Mataeologiae, de dilectione, electione, reconciliatione, remissione peccatorum, iustificatione, sanctificatione, glorificatione: quae omnia secundum ipsum in qua & ex DEO TANTUM sunt universalia. Cuius erroris vanitas ex praecedentibus clarissime patet."

⁴⁷Samuel Huberus: *Confutatio brevis . . .*, p. 50; Aegidius Hunnius: *Articulus de Providentia . . .*, fol. i 4 b: *Actorum . . . posterior*, p. 121 f.

⁴⁸C. F. W. Walther: *Festklänge*, Saint Louis 1892, p. 219 (Easterday 1840): "wie wir in Christi Tod mit gestraft wurde, so sind wir in seiner Auferstehung von unseren Sünden auch wieder mit losgesprochen."

⁴⁹Walther draws heavily on the Ancient Church for all kinds of details which stress the importance of Easter, as they appear in liturgical customs, ecclesiastical expressions and sayings of the Church fathers; cfr. C. F. W. Walther: *Amerikanisch-Lutherische Epistel Postille . . .*, Dritte Auflage, Saint Louis 1882 (?), p. 194: "Wo ist die Zeit hin, in welcher man es für eine schwere Sünde achtete, das Osterfest in Trauer über seine Sünde hinzubringen?" ("Where is now the time, when it was considered a serious sin to celebrate Easter mourning one's sins?"), p. 205 ff., *Festklänge*, p. 260: "Gregor von Nazians nennt das Osterfest das Fest aller Feste" ("Gregory of Nazianzus calls Easter the feast of feasts").

⁵⁰*Festklänge*, p. 225.

⁵¹*Epistel Postille*, p. 211: "Dass die Auferstehung Christi die vollgültige Rechtfertigung aller Menschen sei."

⁵²Id., p. 212: "in ihm sind wir erhöht, wir verherrlicht, wir gerechtfertigt."

⁵³Ib.: "In dem Gekreuzigten waren wir gestraft, in dem Erstandenen sind daher auch wir erlöst. . ."

⁵⁴Ib.: "dass in der Auferstehung selbst noch ein grösserer Trost liegt, als in seinem Tode. . ."

⁵⁵*Festklänge*, p. 248: "Was der Sohn auf Golgatha dem Vater gegeben hatte, das gab nun der Vater im Grabesgarten der Welt."

⁵⁶Ib., p. 251: "Sind die erweckenden Klänge des Osterjubels verklungen, so ist es selbst den meisten Christen nicht anders, als ob sie aus einem süß berausenden Traume erwachten; sie verlassen wieder das leere Grab und suchen wieder ihre einzige Zuflucht auf dem Berge Golgatha unter dem Schatten des heiligen Kreuzes. Die Auferstehung Jesu Christi achten nicht wenige für nichts mehr, als für eine schöne Zugabe, für einem glanzvollen Schmuck der eigentlichen Heilthaten des Erlösers der Welt, für eine köstliche Perle in der Krone des Erlösungswerkes, nicht aber für diese Krone selbst. Sie wissen nicht, was sie damit anfangen, wie sie dieselbe gebrauchen und zu ihrem Glauben, Lieben und Hoffen anwenden sollen. Warum der heilige Apostel schreibt: 'Halt im Gedächtnis Jesum Christ, der auferstanden ist von den Toten,' das ist ihnen noch ein Räthsel."

⁵⁷Id., p. 255 f.: "Doch meine Lieben, die Auferstehung Jesu Christi ist nicht nur darum aller Menschen höchster und letzter Trost, weil erst die den in Christi Kreuz und Tod liegenden Trost geoffenbart und so beides tröstlich gemacht hat, sondern weil sie auch selbst einen Trost in sich enthält, der in keinem andern Werk der Erlösung, selbst in Christi Leiden und Sterben nicht zu finden ist. Bedenket nur Folgendes, und ihr werdet mir bald Recht geben. Während das Leiden und Sterben recht eigentlich Christi Werk war, so war hingegen seine Auferstehung eigentlich seines himmlischen Vaters Werk. . . Das ist aber von der höchsten und tröstlichsten Wichtigkeit. . . Während das Leiden und Sterben Jesu Christi die Busse und Beichte des Sohnes Gottes war für die ganze abgefallene Menschheit, so war hingegen seine Auferstehung des himmlischen Vaters darauf allen Menschen in Christo nun öffentlich vor Himmel und Erde feierlich und thatsächlich erteilte Absolution."

⁵⁸Id., p. 256 f.: "Erst tilgt er durch die Hingabe seines Sohnes in Leiden und Tod aller Menschen Sünde, und nachdem dies geschehen ist, so wartet er nun nicht, bis wir kommen und um die erworbene Gnade bitten, behält nun diese Gnade nicht in seinem Herzen, sondern, damit von Seiten des Menschen nichts nötig sei, als dass er an eine ihm schon geschenkte Gnade glaube, bricht er nun heraus, erweckt unseren Stellvertreter von den Toten und spricht damit zu allen Menschen: . . . ich bin wieder euer Vater. . . ."

⁵⁹Id., p. 258: "Denn nun soll der Mensch nicht erst machen, dass etwas geschehe, dass ihm nämlich seine Sünden vergeben werden, sondern glauben, dass das schon geschehen ist, dass ihm nämlich in der Auferweckung Christi schon seine Sünde vergeben, die Gnade Gottes und die Seligmachung zugesprochen sind. So oft nun einem Menschen das Evangelium gepredigt, die Taufe, die Absolution und das heilige Abendmahl erteilt und der Segen in der Kirche über ihn gesprochen wird, so oft wiederholt nun der Prediger, was Gott schon durch die Auferstehung Jesu Christi an allen Menschen, also auch an ihm, gethan hat."

⁶⁰Id., p. 265: "Die Auferweckung des Sohnes Gottes, . . . war daher die Erfüllung der Vertragsverbindung von Seiten des Vaters, daher denn Petrus am ersten Pfingstfest allen seinen Zuhörern zuruft: 'So wisse nun das ganze Haus Israel gewiss, dass Gott diesen Jesum, den ihr gekreuziget habt, zu einem Herrn und Christ gemacht hat.'"

⁶¹C. F. W. Walther: *Licht des Lebens. Ein Jahrgang von Evangelien-Predigten aus dem Nachlass des seligen D. Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther*, St. Louis 1905, p. 306: "Was zeigt nun aber Christus mit diesem allen an, insonderheit mit dem Wörtlein: 'Darum gehet hin? Offenbar dieses, dass er aus seinem Grabe für alle Menschen Vergebung der Sünden und damit Gerechtigkeit, Leben und Seligkeit hervorgebracht habe, welches alles die Apostel nun kraft seiner Auferstehung durch die Verkündigung des Evangeliums unter alle Menschen austheilen sollten."

⁶²"UEber den innigen Zusammenhang der Lehre von der Absolution mit der von der Rechtfertigung" in "Zehnter Synodal-Bericht der Allgemeinen Deutschen Evang.-Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u.a. Staaten vom Jahre 1860," St. Louis, Mo., 1861, p. 34 ff. The author of the theses is said to have been Rev. Th. J. Brohm; cfr. *Grace for Grace. A Brief History of the Norwegian Synod*, Mankato, Minn., 1943, p. 156.

⁶³Id., p. 42: "Durch die Auferweckung von den Todten hat Gott die ganze Welt absolviert, d. h., von Sunden losgemacht; wenn hiernach die Welt bereits längst absolviert und von Sunden losgemacht ist, was ist denn die Absolution oder Predigt des Evangeliums in der Kirche? Ist sie auch ein Losmachen, oder bloss eine Verkündigung der schon geschehenen Losmachung? Antwort: . . . eben durch das Evangelium geschieht das Bringen dessen, was in Gottes Herzen ist. . . . eine solche Verkündigung, die die Vergebung wirklich bringt und giebt . . . die Absolution im Evangelio ist nichts anderes, als eine Wiederholung der thatsächlichen Absolution, die bereits geschehen ist durch die Auferweckung Jesu Christi von den Todten."

⁶⁴Id., p. 46: "Es darf nicht verwechselt werden, was Christus gethan hat, und was an Christo geschehen ist. Sein Leiden, Sterben und Auferstehen war keine Absolution wohl aber seine Auferweckung von den Todten. Unsere Predigt und Absolution ist der moralischen Wirkung nach nichts anderes, als was Gott an Christo gethan hat; der Unterschied besteht nur darin, dass Gott durch die Auferweckung seines Sohnes die ganze Welt absolviert hat, wir aber nur Einzelne, Prediger z.B. nur ihre Gemeinden absolvieren . . . Unsere Absolution ist nichts anderes als eine Wiederholung des Actes Gottes in der Auferweckung Christi."

⁶⁵"Ein Streit unter Lutheranern über Rechtfertigung und Absolution. (UEber-

setzt aus dem *Lutheran Standard* von C.)" in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1871, p. 147 f.: "Wir sagen nicht, dass einer notwendiger Weise immer den Ausdruck brauchen müsse: 'die Welt ist in Christo gerechtfertigt' . . . denn wir wissen sehr wohl, dass dieser Artikel des Glaubens auch mit anderen Worten vollständig und correct erklärt und vorgetragen werden kann." Walther thus translates from an English translation of the original Norwegian article. A second print appears in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1905, p. 390 ff.

⁶⁶Id., p. 150: "ob es wahr ist, dass die Kirchensprache nicht erlaubt, von der Rechtfertigung der Welt in Christo zu sprechen."; p. 149 f.: "Joh. Gerhard . . . in ihm auch uns absolvirt"; "Gottfried Olearius . . . samt ihm im Gerichte Gottes gerechtfertigt"; "Joh. Jac. Rambach . . . dass in seiner Person auch das ganze menschliche Geschlecht gerechtfertigt und von der Sünde und dem Fluch absolvirt wurde."

⁶⁷Id., p. 148: "Beide Werk [Adams bzw. Christi] hat eine gleich allgemeine Bedeutung und Geltung. Aber wie nicht alle Menschen persönlich verdammt werden, obgleich die 'Verdamnis über alle Menschen gekommen ist,' so werden auch nicht alle wirklich und persönlich gerechtfertigt, obgleich die Rechtfertigung durch Christi Werk 'über alle gekommen ist.' . . ."

⁶⁸E. Reim: "A History of the Term 'Objective Justification'" in *Quartalschrift, Theological Quarterly*, April 1955, p. 83 f., draws attention to an occurrence in 1880, when Walther made use of the terms: "This is as far back as I have been able to trace the use of our term." Reim admits, however, that at that time the expressions were already "familiar and accepted terms." Walther on this occasion referred to the words as "the language of scholars ('wie die Gelehrten reden')."

⁶⁹H. Messerschmidt: "Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung vor Gott in ihrer hohen Bedeutung für das sittliche Leben" in *Zeitschrift für die gesammte lutherische Theologie und Kirche, begründet durch Dr. A. G. Rudelbach und Dr. H. E. F. Guericke, fortgeführt von Dr. Fr. Delitzsch und Dr. H. E. F. Guericke*, Erstes Quartalheft 1867, pp. 63-76. It is reprinted as "Die Lehre von der Rechtfertigung" in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1867, pp. 76-86. Walther omits—apparently for space reasons—the first page of Messerschmidt's article, which is introduced with the following appreciative words: "Wir theilen diesen Aufsatz von H. Messerschmidt aus dem ersten Quartalheft der Guerickschen 'Zeitschrift' 1867, mit, weil er gewiss von jedem wahren Lutheraner mit Freuden gelesen werden wird," id., p. 76. ("We communicate this essay . . . as every true Lutheran will read it with joy.")

⁷⁰*Lehre und Wehre*, 1867, p. 77 (= *Zeitschrift* . . . , p. 65): "eine Rechtfertigung des Menschen vor Gott sowohl im objectiven als im subjectiven Sinne"; "Das menschliche Geschlecht als eine Gesamtheit, in welcher die einzelnen Individuen nicht für sich stehende, sondern der Totalität inhärierende Theile sind, wie denn überhaupt die Selbständigkeit und Abgeschlossenheit der Individuen nur eine sehr relative ist, und die Einzelnen jedenfalls in der Lebenseinheit des ganzen Organismus mitbefasst werden."

⁷¹Id., p. 78 (*Zeitschrift* . . . , p. 66): "Ohne dieses Faktum könnte es für den Einzelnen gar keine Rechtfertigung geben; dasselbe ist der unumstössliche Grund, auf welchem die *subjective* Rechtfertigung möglich ist und beruht. Die Rechtfertigung des Subjectes ist nämlich derjenige Act Gottes, durch welchen er das Strafurtheil, welches über den Menschen um seiner Sünde willen verhängt ist, aufhebt und den Menschen von seiner Sünde losspricht, indem er ihm Christi Verdienst zuspricht."

⁷²C. F. W. Walther: *Predigtentwürfe und nicht ganz ausgeführte Predigten und Casualreden von Dr. C. F. W. Walther. Aus seinem schriftlichen Nachlass gesammelt*, St. Louis, Mo., 1891, p. 93: "Denn das ist freilich wahr: am Glauben liegt

hierbei alles. Wer sich den Sieg Christi in seiner Auferstehung nicht im Glauben zueignet, über den hat noch Gesetz, Sünde, Tod und Hölle Macht; der empfindet auch von diesem Sieg keine Kraft, keine Freude, für den liegt Christus noch im Grabe."

⁷³In 1889, after Walther's death, G. Stöckhardt in an article "Noch ein Wort über die Rechtfertigung" in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1889, p. 201 ff., made use of the notion "actus simplex" but in a way that upholds and by no means denies the efficacy of the means of grace: "Aber in Wahrheit ist das, was wir uns nur als einen zusammengesetzten Act vorstellen können, als beständige Wiederholung derselben Hundlung, ein *actus simplex*. Das ist in Gott Ein *continuum*, Ein Gedanke, Eine Anschauung, welche durch die Zeit nicht zerstückt und getheilt wird, dass er uns in Christo für fromm und gerecht hält. Wenn wir auf dem Menschen sehen, der in der Zeit lebt, die Stellung des Menschen zu Gott müssen wir freilich einen Unterschied machen. Da Gott in Christo die Welt mit sich selbst versöhnte, hat er uns sammt der Welt von Sünden losgesprochen, hat er uns gerechtfertigt, ehe wir waren und lebten. Gleichsam als ideelle Personen, die nur in Gottes Gedanken existieren, waren wir da gerechtfertigt. In *concreto* wird dann der einzelne Mensch, der auf Erden lebt, da er dem Evangelium glaubt, *actu* ein Kind Gottes." ("Properly speaking, what we can picture to ourselves only as a composite act, as a continuous repetition of the same act, is really an *actus simplex*. In God it is one continuum, one thought, one view, which cannot be broken up and divided by time, that He regards us as pious and righteous in Christ. Looking at man living in time, at the position of man towards God, we admittedly must make a difference. As God reconciled the world unto Himself, He has absolved us with the world from sin, He has justified us, before we existed and lived. As ideal persons, existing only in the thoughts of God, we were justified there. In *concreto* the individual man, living on earth, becomes *actu* a child of God, when he believes the Gospel." Walther himself also defended during his lifetime the "one act"; cfr. Reim, op. cit., p. 84.

⁷⁴BS 519, 16 f.: "Gläubst Du auch, dass meine Vergebung Gottes Vergebung sei?" *The Book of Concord*, ed. Tappert, p. 351.

⁷⁵J. G. Baier: *Compendium . . .*, p. 286. The question concerning Walther's relation to Huber has been treated by R. Söderlund in his article "Läran om den universella rättfärdiggörelsen i teologihistorisk belysning" ("The doctrine of universal justification in the light of the history of theology") in *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift*, 1979, pp. 114-129. Söderlund differentiates between universal justification which leaves room for an individual justification as a real act of God and which is legitimate within orthodox Lutheran theology, and another type of universal justification which permits no such act and is accordingly illegitimate. According to Söderlund the latter type is found with Huber, Zinzendorff, the Swedish Moravian 18th century theologian Rutström and also in Missourian theology. Missourian theology has, according to Söderlund, succumbed to Herrnhutism on this point through two channels: one through Stephan, the other through Swedish neo-evangelicalism, which is thought to have influenced Missourian theology, a statement based on *Realencyclopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche*, 3. Aufl., Leipzig 1896-1913, 3:328, entry "Bornholmer, die." The former, acceptable type of universal justification is, according to Söderlund, found with the Swedish Pietistic 18th century court preacher A. Norborg, who taught that Christ is justified as the representative head of mankind and that insofar the world was justified in Him. Yet Norborg regards individual justification as a real act of God; Söderlund, op. cit., p. 126. The material presented in our article, however, has given full proof for stating that Walther rather sides with Norborg and that his theology cannot be regarded as

the offspring of Moravianism. It should be pointed out that Norborg was not unknown to the Missourian tradition. As early as 1872, during the lifetime of Walther, the Synodical Conference, the joint representation of the synods of Missouri, Wisconsin, the Norwegians, Illinois, Minnesota and Ohio, in its dealings about universal justification approvingly referred to Norborg (mistakenly called "Rohrberg"), quoting exactly the same passages as Söderlund, where Christ is regarded as the representative of mankind in His resurrection, and where "the right middleway" is proclaimed, leaving room for an individual justification as a real act of God; cfr. "Die neue und die alte Lehre der Ohio-Synode von der allgemeinen Rechtfertigung" in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1905, p. 492 f., where the document of 1872 is reprinted. This does, of course, not mean that Walther and the men of this school were dependent on some Swedish source, neoevangelical or pietistic (as Norborg), but merely that the doctrine of Christ's resurrection as the absolution of mankind was a traditional Lutheran conviction, which Söderlund does not see, due to faulty interpretation of the classical orthodox "nos in ipso absolvit" (He absolved us in Him"); Söderlund, op. cit., p. 123.

Yet Söderlund's general observation concerning different interpretations can claim theological validity in spite of historical inaccuracies. His article is from its first lines expressly directed against the doctrine of justification proclaimed in Sweden by an American theologian, Dr. Siegbert W. Becker, whose theology Söderlund somewhat too easily—although understandably—identifies with classical Missourianism. According to our conviction Söderlund is in principle right in his charges against the kind of universal justification that is taught by Becker and his followers, e.g., when he draws attention to the description of individual justification as a "confirmation" of universal justification; Söderlund, op. cit., p. 129. If Söderlund had penetrated deeper into the material and into the systematical questions involved, he could, as we see it, have substantiated his charges more carefully by pointing to three points, where Becker and the circle around him show an apparent theological weakness: 1) Universal justification is identified with what happens in God's heart at the atonement on Good Friday, not with the justification of Christ in His resurrection as an external act of God, directed towards the world. S. Becker: *Skriften och saligheten*. Landskrona 1972, p. 55 (tr. from Swedish): "We do not differ sharply between the expressions 'universal atonement' and 'universal justification'"; S. Erlandsson: "Den rättfärdighet som gäller inför Gud," *Biblicum* 4/1974, p. 16: (tr. from Swedish): "Here in Rom. 4:25 it is stressed that if 'our justification' had not taken place, Our Lord Jesus would not have left His grave. For as certain as our sins were the cause of Jesus' being delivered to death (v. 25a), equally certain our justification was the cause of Jesus' being raised from the dead (v. 25b). The Greek original text uses the same preposition *dia* in order to indicate the cause in both cases." Universal justification thus takes place prior to Easter and is the cause of resurrection, not its result. 2) Absolution and the means of grace are downgraded to means of communication and deprived of their efficacy. S. Becker, op. cit., p. 55, interprets John 20:23: "they are remitted unto them" as a reference to what has already happened at Calvary, p. 56: "The meaning is this: 'They have been forgiven completely in the past, and they still are forgiven now. This means that when we preach the message of the Gospel, we do not effect the remission of sins through our sermon.'" (tr. from Swedish). 3) Universal justification is said to be the contents of the sermon to be delivered to the heathen without any previous reference to the Law. This striking similarity to Huber's pastoral advice to the Wittenberg theologians, quoted above in our article, is found in Becker, op. cit., p. 56 f. (tr. from Swedish): "In America it is very common that Reformed missionaries tell a man whom they try to gain: 'Are you saved?' . . . It is,

however, not likely that a Lutheran missionary would ask: 'Are you saved?', as the experience of conversion is not so important from his theological point of view. As he believes in universal redemption and in universal justification it is more likely that he changes the order of the words and says: 'You are saved,' 'Your sins are forgiven unto you.' He can say so to everyone, as he knows that it is true about everyone." Through the centuries Huber's missionary sermon: "Habetis gratiam Dei" resounds in the 20th century. Undoubtedly Söderlund's fears concerning the theology introduced through Becker into Sweden seem reasonably justified.

*Editorial Note:

Respect for the author's theological integrity forbids any substantive modification by others of his text. One of the editors, however, feels duty-bound to record his conviction that at least some of the difficulties with the short citations from the late Dr. Siegbert Becker are basically terminological, and should not be taken to reflect on his theology as a whole.

K. Marquart

The Baptism and Faith of Children

6

At the end of the 'Sixties and beginning of the 'Seventies, a vigorous debate on the baptism of children took place within the "Evangelical Church in Germany," from which none of the Territorial Churches, United and Evangelical-Lutheran alike, were exempt.¹ At that time, roughly forty clergymen declined to baptize their own children, while other clergymen made a point of baptizing no children at all.² The outcome of the theological and practical disputes has taken concrete form in the synodical decisions and enactments of canon law of the individual Territorial Churches, which can be summarized to the effect that, while the baptism of children continues to be offered, canon law no longer lays on parents the obligation of having their children baptized. This means that, without much ado, the Protestant and the Evangelical-Lutheran Territorial Churches in Germany have renounced the decision made by the Augsburg Confession in its ninth article with respect to the controversy of the Reformation era concerning the baptism of children.

The postponement of baptism, which is thus henceforth to enjoy official sanction, is conspiring with other causes to bring about a manifest increase in the number of unbaptized children in Germany. Moreover, this postponement is working together with the continuing polemics against the baptism of children to produce a change in the public consciousness. While parents' not bringing their children to baptism was formerly regarded as unchristian behavior, present conditions are paving the way for the emergence of an allegedly equally justified alternative where the baptism of children and the postponement of baptism stand in peaceful juxtaposition.

We should be wrong to see in this alternative merely an adjustment designed to accommodate the baptismal qualms of many pastors in the German Territorial Churches. We are not concerned here simply with a deterioration in baptismal practice,³ but with something whose roots lie much deeper. In the ecumenical age, even Christians who insist on adult baptism are meant to be included in ecumenical

unity. At the same time, we notice how many arguments which were already expressed by the Anabaptists in the Reformation era have, along with the Reformed doctrine of the Sacraments in general, been increasingly gaining ground in recent times. It is therefore not surprising that an alternative with equal rights is presenting itself as the future solution. What this involves for the societies which come out of the Anabaptist tradition, though, is that they should recognize the validity of child baptism, with the result that they will be obliged to desist from demanding adult baptism of converts.⁴

But the postponement of baptism has by no means resolved the problems of those churches which formerly regarded the baptism of children as a spiritual duty. Whenever child baptism is not practiced, the demand for a substitute rite invariably arises. The reasons for this are not merely sociological or even ecclesiastical-cum-sociological⁵—such factors could somehow or other be circumvented—but deeply theological. Must not, after all, an act of God take place even in children if they are to be children of His Kingdom and members of the Church? For there is no general and automatic agreement with the naive conception that little children are, on account of their innocence, without further ado in the Kingdom of God.

The blessing of children is offering its services to fill in the vacuum that has arisen through the postponement of baptism. It has already been practiced for a long time among the Baptists, and it seems to be soundly based in Mark 10:13–16. Advocacy of this position also places one squarely in the ecumenical trend. For the Lima documents on *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* have candidly recommended the blessing of children as an equally valid alternative to the baptism of children. The commentary on section twelve of the baptismal statement reads as follows: “In some churches which unite both infant-baptist and believer-baptist traditions, it has been possible to regard as equivalent alternatives for entry into the church both a pattern whereby baptism in infancy is followed by later profession of faith and a pattern whereby believers’ baptism follows upon a presentation and blessing in infancy. This example invites other churches to decide whether they, too, could not recognize equivalent alternatives in their reciprocal relationships and in church union negotiations.”⁶

Now here at the latest we must sound an urgent warning and protest, for a development is underway here whose ultimate result will be to invest the *baptism* and the *blessing* of children with the same weight. The Church, however, is not at liberty to draw this conclusion, for in Mark 10 Christ did not command that children should be

blessed but that they should be brought to Him. He promised that children who are brought to Him will have the Kingdom of God, but not that they will obtain it through a blessing of children. In other words, while the blessing of children is not a sacrament, baptism is. This difference cannot here be deepened any further. We do not by any means intend to say anything against parents' and pastors' blessing children and commending them to the grace of God. Yet the fact that Christ embraced children, laid hands on them and blessed them does not by any stretch of the imagination mean that we are permitted to embrace children, lay hands on them and bless them *as a substitute for baptism*.

Since the danger exists of withholding a sacrament instituted and ordained by Christ and putting in its place a rite of blessing developed by the Church, the question is posed all the more sharply, what then is the actual impediment to performing baptism on children? The answer commonly given specifies above all four reasons which emerged in the debate on baptism mentioned at the outset of this essay: First, in view of the great mass of unchurched parents, a general baptism of children can no longer be justified. Secondly, the baptism of children involves a presumptuous exercise of authority on the part of parents over children's freedom to decide, which we must reject. Thirdly, children are not yet able to believe. Fourthly, the New Testament demands first the proclamation of the Gospel, then faith, then baptism.

We see immediately that there is a convergence here of a number of disparate reasons which stem from the theology of baptism, from anthropology and from ecclesiology. At the same time, though, it becomes clear that these reasons are intimately bound up with the faith of children. We therefore direct our attention to the faith of children as the chief argument. Once this point is cleared up, the answers to the other arguments proceed well nigh automatically.

The Faith of Children in Luther and Today

His first public statement in support of the baptism of children, made in 1525,⁷ involved Martin Luther in a debate with the scholastics and the Waldensians. The arguments of both these groups for the baptism of children boil down to the position that, since faith comes from preaching and little children cannot yet understand preaching, they cannot yet have faith of their own and are therefore baptized—according to the scholastics—on the basis of the faith of the church, or—according to the Waldensians—on the strength of

their own future faith. Now some scholastics were of the opinion that faith is infused into the unbelieving child through the power of baptism, while others held that the child participates in grace and the forgiveness of sin in virtue of baptism entirely apart from faith. Luther decisively dismisses all these ideas and says: "Now if we could not give any better answer to this question and prove that young children themselves believe and have a faith of their own, then it is my faithful counsel and judgment that we should with immediate effect desist from this practice, yes, the sooner the better, and baptize not a single child more, lest we should mock and blaspheme the praiseworthy majesty of God with such unfounded tomfoolery and trickery."⁸

Luther would thus abolish the baptism of children unless he could prove the faith of children with good reasons. So important is the faith of children to him! In saying this, he does not mean that, apart from the faith of children, the baptism of children would be invalid and therefore tomfoolery and trickery. There was for him never any question about the fact that, because God acts in baptism, baptism is valid also as the baptism of children, regardless of whether the baptisand believe or not. Even so, without the possibility of the faith of children, the baptism of children would be trickery and a blasphemy of God, because it would then be irrefutably obvious from the outset that the effect declared by baptism—i.e., forgiveness of sins, redemption from the power of the devil, and eternal salvation—could not come about. For this effect ensues only through faith. "Faith must be present before or rather in baptism, otherwise the child is not free of the devil and sin."⁹

Luther's conception of the necessity of faith in children would be obstructed if we were to regard it simply as a postulate which the Reformer laid down on the basis of his doctrine of the sacraments, or, to be more precise, on the basis of the relationship between Word and faith which is contained in his sacramental doctrine.¹⁰ Luther's starting point here is in fact much deeper. He is not concerned merely with the right use of the sacraments, but with salvation or damnation, with whether or not people enter the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven. This is not possible without rebirth, without conversion, without saving faith. In this process, rebirth, conversion and faith are not three distinct things which operate as it were in successive stages, but they are ultimately one and the same thing. They denote the event which God works in man through the Word, and especially through baptism, the event through which a lost man

turns into a child of God and an heir of eternal life. This holds good also for children.¹¹ Luther can therefore appeal to such diverse biblical passages as Mark 16:16, Romans 1:17, and John 3:16, 18 in proposing the thesis "that no one is saved through the faith or righteousness of others, but rather through his own."¹² This is for him a fundamental statement from which we may under no circumstances depart in considering the baptism of children. Accordingly, the fact that, if children are to be saved, God acts and must act salvifically on and in children is expressed for Luther in the doctrine of the faith of children.

A glance at contemporary Lutheran theology¹³ shows that the doctrine of the faith of children has been given up along a broad front, and that Luther is being discounted here, at times with uncouth judgments. Two authors may be taken as representative of many. Helmut Thielicke speaks of the "dubious theory of infant faith," which Luther is alleged to have developed, and he considers it to be "a fantastic idea of Luther's" that faith must be present before or in baptism if the child is to be freed from the devil and sin. For him the use of the scholastic expression *fides infusa* as a designation of the faith of children is, along with the exorcism and renunciation sections of the "Baptismal Booklet," indicative of a relapse on Luther's part "into ontological thought schemes of nominalist scholasticism, which gravely distort his understanding of grace, faith and original sin. LUTHER must here be corrected by LUTHER himself."¹⁴ Nor does Werner Wiesner speak much differently when he charges that to speak of faith in the case of infants, as Luther does, is an "anthropologically and psychologically impossible construction."¹⁵

When we ask why the faith of children is so impossible, we find relatively few replies forthcoming. The impossibility of such a thing is manifestly so self-evident to these authors that they consider any detailed argument unnecessary. Their silence notwithstanding, the direction of their reasoning is becoming clear. Werner Wiesner finds these remarks of Luther in the *Large Catechism* objectionable: ". . . faith alone makes the person worthy to receive the salutary, divine water profitably. Since these blessings are offered and promised in the words which accompany the water, they cannot be received unless we believe them whole-heartedly. Without faith baptism is of no use, although in itself it is an infinite, divine treasure."¹⁶ Wiesner comments on this statement as follows: "Only what a pity that the infant does not take in any of the words that are recited and promised with the water, and hence remains without faith, so that—according

to Luther's own words—the divine treasure remains unprofitable to him."¹⁷ This means that the infant remains without faith because it cannot take in the words spoken at baptism, cannot grasp their meaning, cannot yet distinguish them from other sounds. This position makes faith dependent on verbal, articulated understanding and thinking. Faith is joined in such a way to man's verbal and therefore intellectual abilities that these become the gateway to faith, without which there is no faith.

Similar points of view can be discerned also in Thielicke and other authors. Thielicke defines the essence of faith as "taking hold of God's promise," which he unequivocally understands as an event which consists of the proclamation of the Gospel and of the personal faith and personal decision that arise therefrom. For him, faith is inseparably linked to a state of consciousness which corresponds to the event of proclamation. He rejects an immature, unconscious and wordless faith. Luther's teaching such a thing involves him, to Thielicke's mind, in a relapse into the ontological and non-personal thought scheme of the scholastic *habitus* doctrine.¹⁸ Heino Falcke's argument is not much different: "The event of baptism is a personal event in which we cannot disregard hearing faith because we cannot disregard the Lord to Whom testimony is made and Who testifies to Himself."¹⁹ The common feature of all these remarks is that they make faith unalterably dependent on the hearing and understanding of articulated speech and cannot conceive of a personal event other than in such verbal terms. Anything that lies beyond this verbal level of reality is banished into the realm of frowned-on ontological thought schemes. But is this in keeping with the New Testament and its statements on the relationship of children to Jesus and to the Kingdom of God?

The Decisive Words of Jesus

The New Testament statements which set the normative points of orientation for our theme are to be found in Mark 10:13-16 and Matthew 18:1-6 along with the parallel passages. Let us take Mark as our starting point, since this text is familiar to us from the baptismal liturgy. In this passage, children are brought to Jesus. Mark's account does not permit us to say unequivocally how old they are. Even so, the Greek word used by Luke leads us to the sure conclusion that Christ must have been dealing chiefly with infants here. *βρεφῆ* denotes children who are still in their mothers' wombs, or who are still being breastfed. These infants, along with the other children who

are brought to Jesus, are turned back by the disciples. The text does not specify the reasons for this, but we may start from the assumption that the disciples shared the general Jewish conviction of their time according to which children who are still minors do not yet have anything to do with the Kingdom of Heaven. Not until the age of twelve years do they take on themselves the "yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven," go up to Jerusalem with everyone else, and fulfill the religious duties concerning which they have already been given instruction. Jesus' attitude is entirely different. Not only does He concur with children's being brought to Him, He wills this to take place. "Let the children come to Me, do not hinder them." This is not simply the behavior of a man who is kindly disposed towards children, who also likes infants and does not reject them. It is a declaration of religious principle as can be perceived from the subsequent words, "for to such belongs the Kingdom of God." Jesus emphasizes *such* and thereby refers back to *those* children who are brought to Him. He does not express as a general rule that "the Kingdom of God belongs to children," but that it belongs to such children as are brought to Him. Any other interpretation would harmonize neither with Matthew's report of Jesus' general conception of man (Mt. 7:11 and 15:19), nor with the statement from John 3 that "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Jesus says further that the Kingdom of God *presently belongs* to such children. He does not say that they will receive it at some future date. This is also confirmed by the appended comparison with adults: "Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." This comparison presupposes that children do as a matter of fact receive the Kingdom of God; and at the same time it shows that adults enter the Kingdom of God in no other way than do children.

We can do no more than allude here to the anthropological freight of these words of the Lord. That children who are brought to Jesus receive the Kingdom of God means that they did not previously belong to this Kingdom but have now entered it. They were previously under the dominion of darkness, in the region and shadow of death (Mt. 4:16); they were "flesh" (Jn. 3:6) and—to speak with Paul—by nature children of wrath (Eph. 2:3). Now that they have received the Kingdom of God, they belong to Christ, and they have become sharers in redemption, they have forgiveness of sins and are children of God and heirs of eternal life (Col. 1:13). This change is not correctly understood if we simply think that the children have now acquired a new Lord who treats them differently

from the way in which their old lord handled them, but not that something has also changed within themselves. When the Kingdom of God is received, it is received (as corresponds most profoundly with the essence of the Kingdom of God) in the heart. This means that the heart is related to God and Christ. Moreover, it is unthinkable that the Holy Spirit is not working to fill hearts wherever the Kingdom of God has been received. The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom full of the Spirit and of Christ! All of this means that there is no such thing as a receiving of the Kingdom of God without something happening inwardly in the heart of the recipient. God has not only established a new relation with man for Himself, but has also transformed the heart of this person whom He has made to be His child. This is the same state of affairs that Christ characterizes in John 3:3, 5 with the words, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God." Entry into the Kingdom of God is unalterably connected with rebirth.

Now the decisive factor in all of these reflections is that Jesus predicates reception of and entry into the Kingdom of God of children who are clearly incapable of the articulated grasping and understanding of spoken words. By doing this He confirms the fact that the children who are brought to and blessed by Him have a spiritual relation to God and a spiritual life which has manifestly not been grasped and received through and in articulated verbal forms. We may leave on one side for the present how we might wish to label this spiritual relation, this spiritual life. At all events, though, its reality is given in the fact that children can receive the Kingdom of God.²⁰

In the other central New Testament text, Matthew 18:1-6, Jesus replies to the disciples' question concerning the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven by calling a child to Himself and saying, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."

We do not know how old the child was that Jesus here placed in the midst of the disciples. It would have been a toddler, aged perhaps between three and five years. Mark reports that Jesus embraced it, a feature which fits this age group. Now we are struck by the fact that,

with reference to such children, the Lord expressly speaks of "one of these little ones who believe in Me." What kind of faith is this? Is Jesus here referring to having preached to or instructed these children, so that they can say, albeit in a very simple form, who He is and what He does for them? The Gospels do not let us know whether Jesus did anything of this kind. Even so, the whole context would not lead us to suppose that in the case of these children a proclaiming and understanding of the Gospel took place as it is required by those who tie baptism to articulated hearing of and conscious faith in the Gospel. Nevertheless, Jesus speaks here of the little ones' faith in Him. What He patently means by this is an unlimited trust in Himself. Faith therefore here means a confident personal relatedness of the heart to Jesus which can exist without a detailed and articulated understanding of what is and must be unfolded in the proclamation.

Moreover, we would here also draw attention to a second factor. In this text too, as in Mark 10, the Lord places adults who enter the Kingdom of Heaven on the same level as the children. Nor does it make any difference whether He is here thinking of infants or toddlers. ". . . unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt. 18:3). ". . . whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child shall never enter it" (Mk. 10:15). The way in which adults enter the Kingdom of Heaven is the same as that which obtains for children. But how do they enter it? In the context of the Matthaean passage, Jesus speaks of the self-humbling and of the faith of children. They have no bargaining chips, nor do they expect anything from themselves and their own effort, but only from God and from what He does. Accordingly, one cannot work for or earn the Kingdom of Heaven, but can only receive it as a gift. It is bestowed on all, infants and toddlers and adults alike, whereby it is presupposed that all, infants and toddlers and adults alike, are able to receive and accept this gift.

This review has specified the decisive factors that affect the question of the faith of children. Children, including those infants who are brought to Jesus, receive the Kingdom of Heaven and participate thereby in the life of the Triune God, even without their being able to grasp and understand the Gospel in articulated words. This state of affairs leads to an intensification of the concept of faith in the case of children on account of the fact that it here means a relatedness to Christ, a trust in the person of Christ behind which the individual and utterable elements of the deposit of faith recede. Even for adults,

there obtains in principle no other way to enter the Kingdom of Heaven than for children and infants: faith in Jesus.

The Consequences for the Faith of Children

Armed with these findings from the New Testament, let us return to the assertion that little children cannot believe because they cannot yet understand and grasp words. This claim certainly holds good with regard to the proclamation of the Gospel; but the very words of Christ make it yet more certain that little children are nevertheless in a position to receive the Kingdom of God and to have in their heart a relationship of trust to God and Christ. Is this not, however, precisely the decisive element of faith? For the fact that the child cannot yet put this personal relationship of trust into words does not at all mean that it is flatly incapable of it. Nor does it mean, furthermore, that this personal relationship of trust can only come about where conscious words and articulated speech can already be used.

We ask leave at this juncture to make reference to certain insights of child psychology—not in order thereby to render the Lord's words acceptable, but to afford a little aid to understanding. We know today how children—and not only they—take in many things without their needing to be verbally articulated, without the use of consciously understood words. How it experiences its detachment from its mother at birth, how people treat it in the first days, weeks and months (including what is given verbally), is absorbed by the child in a way which will determine its entire life. Thus already from birth onwards there comes into existence a personal relationship to the "relational person" of the mother, whom it is thoroughly capable of distinguishing from other people. The child is capable of a "primal trust," and, where this is not developed but held back, it sustains severe personality damage. This "primal trust" is not first developed through heard and understood articulated words, but in a personal mode which is other than verbal and which can indeed dispense with the verbal dimension. A child "knows" that it is loved and whom it can trust long before it can understand the words "I love you." Thus it is a person and also capable of personal relationship even without its being able to use intelligence and articulated words.

These insights can help us not to reject a relationship to God on the part of the infant brought to Jesus simply because it cannot yet understand articulated speech. The argument that children cannot yet believe because they cannot yet understand appears from this perspective also as an inappropriate intellectualization of the

existence proper to children. What is decisive, though, is that the Lord Himself ascribes reception of the Kingdom of God to them and, in their case as in that of adults, speaks of faith.

A few further reflections are necessary at this stage, in order to achieve a correct systematic arrangement of what has been said.

The position advocated here raises the question of the relationship between faith as trust of the heart and faith as verbally articulated cognition and conscious knowledge.²¹ Now the Lutheran fathers spoke of the fact that saving faith consists in *notitia*, *assensus* and *fiducia*. Are we not here severing *notitia* from trust, with all the consequences that this can have? For *notitia* means that faith as trust does not point to itself, but has a counterpart, namely, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Would not a total disregard for *notitia* render this counterpart superfluous? Does not a firm adherence to *notitia* bring to expression the fact that faith as trust is worked by the Gospel, which comes to us from outside and which does not derive from ourselves?

Before these questions are answered, some counter questions are to be posed. If we insist that *notitia* as articulated and conscious cognition forms a part of faith, do we not make faith dependent on articulated understanding and thinking in such a way that it can neither exist nor come about without these things? In this case, saving faith would indeed only be something for people of a particular age and of particular intellectual capabilities. If this is so, then we must either exclude little children and the mentally handicapped from the Kingdom of Heaven or we must postulate for them another way to Heaven than the one that holds good for both adults and children. Both alternatives, however, are dismissed by Jesus' words. The further question arises whether faith ceases when the conscious functions of articulated understanding and thinking cease, as happens, for example, in the case of the dying. Do we not notice in such instances how faith as trust in Jesus Christ satisfies the heart much more deeply than any amount of articulated understanding? Are not conscious decision and confession rather a fruit than an ingredient of faith? We must adopt and honor the biblical truths that are contained in both series of questions. This takes place when we reflect on the following factors.

The customary manner of Christ's working is, without doubt, the spoken Word. Through the Word He teaches and reveals Himself and the Father, through the Word He works His great deeds and Messianic signs. Even so, this process does not absolutely and invari-

ably presuppose that the spoken Word is the only effective agent and not also perhaps a gesture or an action, or that Christ's working takes place only through the heard and understood Word. Apart from the fact that Jesus' Word works not only on the living but also on the dead, indeed on the extra-human creation, a story such as the healing of the deaf mute (Mk. 7:32-35) also demonstrates that hearing with understanding can be an effect of Jesus' Word and not a presupposition for the effectiveness of His Word. Faith as the articulated understanding of words may therefore not be turned into an absolute presupposition which holds good even in borderline cases. If Jesus does not do it, who are we to carry through such a principle in an unqualified fashion?

Nor can we, on the other hand, disregard the fact that the one who acts in this way by word and deed also on deaf people and infants is not just anyone, but the one and only Jesus of Nazareth, the only begotten Son of the Father, who has come to seek and to save the lost. The child which receives or accepts the Kingdom of Heaven accepts this one Jesus of Nazareth and stands in a personal relationship of trust to this Jesus Christ and to no other. Perhaps another comparison may be helpful here. When a newborn child is placed on its mother's breast and perceives her heartbeat, it knows its mother even though it lacks the knowledge that she has a particular shape, lives in a particular town, was born on a particular day and has experienced a particular destiny. If it remains with its mother, it will (in a certain sense, it must) get to know all these things, but already at birth it has thoroughly laid hold of this its mother and stands in a full personal relationship to her. In a similar way, a child below the age of reason can also stand in a relationship to God and Christ, it can receive and accept Him, and this without knowing what He has done, being ignorant of the detailed features of His Person and Work.

The answer which takes the biblical truths of both series of questions into account consists in the perception that the Person of Christ, who acts in word and deed on us people and also on children, can be known in a personal relationship of trust, a relationship which can be sustained without its being necessary that all the things that can be known about Him, and which adults indeed must know, must already be known and perceived in articulated words. Faith as knowledge, as it is summarized and expressed in the Creed (*fides dogmatica*), hangs together with faith as trust (*fides fiducialis*) in such a way that the former knows the Person in a verbally articulated

way, while the latter lays hold on the Person. It is always one and the same Person who acts on us through His words and deeds, yet He can be known without the knower being consciously cognitive of and able to put into words the manner of His acting and the nature of His Person. In this process, *fides fiducialis* which still lacks *fides dogmatica* continually remains dependent on the Word and on the Means of Grace, nor is it a *fiducia* without a counterpart, since the acting person is its counterpart and it of course remains perpetually embedded in the reality which is expressed and known in word and deed in the *fides dogmatica* on the basis of the proclamation. The child thus believes and hangs on the Christ of the Creed without its knowing this Creed. As the child grows, though, there must also be a growth in the realm of knowledge, if that personal relationship of trust in Christ is not to be destroyed.

The Consequences for the Baptism of Children

What implications emerge for baptismal practice out of what has been said here? We begin with an anthropological insight. The third argument mentioned at the outset of this essay, namely that children may not be baptized because they cannot yet understand and believe the meaningful content of the spoken words of the Gospel and therefore have no spiritual profit from baptism, cannot be upheld on good biblical grounds. This opinion narrows down man's capacity for relationship with Christ and for accepting the Kingdom of God by making it dependent on articulated understanding in a way which does not correspond with the actual working of Christ. At the same time it identifies the concept of personal relationship with linguistic articulation and with conscious decision, thereby curtailing the reality of personal human existence. (Might this be a delayed effect of the Greek definition of man as the being possessed of language?)

A further insight also arises from these considerations, being both an answer to the fourth argument and also important with respect to the doctrine of the mediation of salvation. The opponents of the baptism of children constantly refer to the biblical order according to which the proclamation of the Gospel, from which faith arises, takes place first, with baptism following it. At the center of this concept we almost always find the concept that in the end of the day God only works salvation by speaking an articulated Word, whose meaningful content is understood and believed by the hearer. We can observe this concept at work especially in the doctrine of baptism. Lutheran formulations are presently being adopted in a wrongful sense, so that

baptism is being understood as a Word-event, in which baptism is thought to be administered through proclamation, so that faith comes from preaching.²² The actual agent is then not baptism as a washing with water in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but rather the proclamation of the Word, which is merely illustrated, confirmed or declared in a certain way through this washing. At bottom this is a Reformed view of baptism, which, because it can make nothing of Luther's formulation about the "gracious water of life," an expression which grew out of such texts as Acts 22:16, John 3:5, Ephesians 5:26, and Titus 3:5, swiftly consigns it into the area of magic. Nevertheless, just as we are certain that God has spoken to us in articulated words through prophets and finally through His Son, so likewise are we now certain that the Son purifies the Church through the washing of *water* in the *Word*, and that the lost soul is reborn by *water* and *Spirit*. These passages make it clear that the sequence: proclamation of the Gospel, faith, and baptism, which is thoroughly meaningful and obvious in the context of mission to adults, is wrongly interpreted when it is presented as the parent of the Reformed understanding dependent on the baptisand's capacity for articulated understanding. This very interpretation of the sequence: Gospel, faith, and baptism as proof of the notion that God communicates His salvation in no other way than through the articulated *and* understood Word is refuted by the fact that in Mark 10 Christ works and wills to work on the hearts of children even without their understanding His Word. Thus a juxtaposition of Mark 10 and the doctrine of baptism leads to the spiritual duty of the baptism of children. Four reasons can be urged in support of this contention. First, Christ wills to have children brought to Himself, and to have them thereby enter the Kingdom of God. Secondly, according to His Word, even little children are in a position to accept the Kingdom of God. Thirdly, in baptism Christ Himself acts on hearts with His Word and Spirit through the water, which demonstrates that He does not restrict baptism to adults on principle.^{23, 24} Fourthly, Christ expressly says that no one enters the Kingdom of God without being born again of water and the Spirit. If Christ thus makes baptism the means of entering the Kingdom of God, and if He wills and promises that children also shall enter it, who can justify not baptizing children?

By way of conclusion, let us address further the first of the arguments listed above. We do not counter the abuse of child baptism in the "folk church" by regarding pedobaptism as an improper admin-

istration of baptism or by abolishing it outright, but by administering it properly. After all, a fundamental characteristic of all arguments for child baptism in terms of Mark 10 is that children are brought to *Jesus*. A baptism where a child is not brought to Jesus, but a civil rite is desired, is an abuse of baptism, and in such a case we cannot be certain of a blessed reception of the Kingdom of Heaven on the child's part. When, therefore, such an abuse can be detected, baptism must be denied, not because a *child* is being brought to baptism, but because those who wish to have the child baptized are not bringing it to *Jesus Christ*. Of course, such a refusal of baptism is meant to lead to repentance, to conversion to Jesus. It must therefore be joined to an offer of instruction of parents and godparents, in which the parents not only learn what baptism is but are also exposed to the Christian faith in general. On that basis, they can then know and decide whether they themselves want to come to Jesus, and therefore whether Jesus' promise shall hold good for their children also: "Let the children come to Me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the Kingdom of God."

Endnotes

¹The concept of the baptism of children is here understood to include the baptism of infants.

²Cf. the report on the discussion of baptism within the "Evangelical Church in Germany" offered under the title "Kindertaufe oder Erwachsenentaufe—eine falsche Alternative," *Evangelische Kommentare* 1969, pp. 559-565.

³Cf., e.g., Gotthold Müller: "Antwort an Ulrich Asendorf," *Lutherische Monatshefte* 1970, p. 370: "What are we to do with the veritable army of unchurched parents who have their infants baptized (and that no longer even out of the churchly convention, but solely for the sake of a 'good nosh-up and booze-up')?"

⁴The inability of the Baptists to declare themselves ready for this compromise was, in 1981, the sole obstacle in the way of church fellowship between the Baptists and the Lutheran Territorial Churches of the VELKD! Cf., *Texte aus der VELKD Nr. 17*, 1981: *Baptisten und Lutheraner im Gespräch*.

⁵E.g., can a church have members who are not baptized?

⁶*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry. Faith and Order Paper No. 111* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982), p. 5.

⁷WA 17 II. 78, 30-88, 7. On the Gospel for the Third Sunday after the Epiphany, Mt. 8:1ff, from the *Lenten Postil* of 1525. For an ET, see John Nicholas Lenker, ed.: *The Precious and Sacred Writings of Martin Luther* (Minneapolis, MN: Lutherans in all Lands Co., 1906) vol. XI, pp. 70-91. Important statements of Luther on the baptism of children are to be found, apart from in the *Large Catechism*, chiefly in *Von der Wiedertaufe an zwei Pfarrherrn*, 1528 (WA 26. 154, 1-162, 16; ET LW 40, 229-262); *Matthäus 18-24 in Predigten ausgelegt*, 1537-1540 (WA 47. 326, 20-336, 19); Sermon on the Gospel for Trinity Sunday, Jn. 3:1-15, 1526, from

Cruciger's *Summer Postil* (WA 21. 536, 18-537, 2. For secondary literature, cf. Karl Brinkel: *Die Lehre Luthers von der fides infantium bei der Kindertaufe* (E. Berlin, 1958).

⁸WA 17 II. 82, 22-26, *Lenten Postil*, 1525 (for ET, see Lenker: *op. cit.*, p. 84).

⁹WA 17 II. 81, 17ff., *Lenten Postil*, 1525 (for ET, see Lenker: *op. cit.*, p. 82).

¹⁰So, e.g., Helmut Thielicke: *Der Evangelische Glaube III, Theologie des Geistes* (Tübingen, 1978), p. 366: "The basic tenor intrinsic to his sacramental doctrine, which produced the arc of connection between Word and faith, leads him to the postulate of the *fides infantium*."

¹¹"For here stands a plain statement, which is of universal validity and a divine ordinance, that all who wish to enter the Kingdom of God must be born anew of water and the Spirit . . . so Christ does certainly not will that young children be excluded from this, but will have them also included in this statement and, so that they shall enter the Kingdom of God, He wills that we should communicate and administer baptism to them. For He wills that they too be born anew, and He wills to work in them, just as He elsewhere commands that they be brought to Him and says that to such as are brought to Him the Kingdom of Heaven shall belong" (WA 21. 536, 22-33; on Jn. 3:1-15, from Cruciger's *Summer Postil*). Cf. also the identity of sense between Jn. 3 and Mt. 18 in the same sermon as it is also recorded in WA 20. 419, 29-32: "Therefore Christ says just as much here with, 'Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God,' as He says in Mt. 18 with, 'Except you turn and become like children, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven.'"

¹²WA 17 II. 79, 1f. (for ET, see Lenker: *op. cit.*, p. 79).

¹³With respect to Roman Catholic theology, according to its traditional doctrine it does not need the faith of children. Cf. Ludwig Ott: *Grundriss der katholischen Dogmatik* (Freiburg, 1981), p. 431: "According to Catholic teaching, faith, since it is not an efficacious cause of justification but merely an act of the disposition, can be absent, just as can other acts of the disposition. The faith that is absent in the child below the age of reason is, according to the doctrine of Augustine and scholasticism, made up for by the faith of the Church."

¹⁴*Der Evangelische Glaube III*, p. 366f. On Luther's understanding of the expression *fides infusa*, all one need do is examine the *Resolutio disputationis de fide infusa et acquisita* of 1520 (WA 6. 88-98) in order to see just how untenable is Thielicke's reproach.

¹⁵Werner Wiesner: "Dogmatische Anmerkungen zur Säuglingstaufe," *Evangelische Theologie* 1969, p. 504.

¹⁶*Large Catechism IV*, para. 33f; Tappert, p. 440 (*Bekennnisschriften*, p. 696).

¹⁷Wiesner: *ibid.*

¹⁸Cf. n. 14.

¹⁹Heino Falcke: "Katechumenstaufe. Die Säuglingstaufe als Problem evangelischer Tauflehre und Taufpraxis," *Evangelische Theologie* 1969, p. 494.

²⁰Characteristic of Karl Barth's inability to grasp the essential point of Luther's argument for the baptism of children is his exposition of Mt. 18:1ff. and Mk. 10:15 as figurative speech: "But the honor paid to a child, indeed precisely to a small child, documented in these passages, is manifestly figurative speech. . . . That an infant is meant or is able to drink the milk of the Word of God in the direct, physical sense of the word—or, in the language of that Logion, to enter the Kingdom of God—this is definitely not intended by the talk of the absolute new beginning as the beginning of the Christian life" (*Kirchliche Dogmatik IV*, p. 198f.).

²¹We are not concerned with the relationship between faith and reason, to the extent that by reason we mean, along with the perception of words and the under-

standing of their content, above all the judging of what has been perceived, which man accomplishes according to the measure of the insights which he has gained from his perception and from his thinking. Reason in this last sense is not the subject of the present discussion, for our concern is with faith, which comprises the three named aspects of *notitia*, *assensus* and *fiducia*. Hence we cannot dismiss the argument that children cannot yet believe because they cannot yet understand simply by referring to the godlessness of reason. This factor can, but does not have to be involved in this argument. The meaning of the argument is simply that children cannot grasp an essential component of faith, namely *notitia* from the Gospel, and therefore cannot believe.

²²Heino Falcke: *art. cit.*, p. 488f.

²³According to the apostolic directive, this is different in the case of baptism. Here it is presupposed that those who receive Holy Communion can examine themselves and distinguish the eucharistic food from other food.

²⁴At this juncture the question whether the primitive church baptized small children is, of course, important. The question cannot be discussed here. Nevertheless, I venture to pass on an *argumentum e silentio* which, in my opinion, offers food for thought: If children were not baptized in the New Testament churches, does not the importance which baptism has in the New Testament for entering the Kingdom of God and membership in the Body of Christ make it highly striking that the question when children are to be baptized is nowhere posed in the writings of the New Testament, which range over so many decades?

²⁵We shall not here deal with the idiotic argument that the baptism of children represents a presumptuous exercise of authority by parents over children.

Luther on Teaching Christian Ethics

7

Why did Luther, obviously a dedicated son and servant of the Roman Catholic Church, reject the philosophical dynamic of medieval ethics after he had become a *doctor in Biblia* and a professor at the new University of Wittenberg in Saxony?

Our plan is to discuss (a) Luther's preparation for his reformatory dissent; (b) his reasons for rejecting medieval Aristotelianism; and (c) his teaching of a God-directed Christian sanctification on the principle that "we should fear, love, and trust in God above all things."

Quickly to read the above formulation of the issues as subtopics of the theme of this brief essay will undoubtedly prepare the reader for the conclusion that this can be little more than a summary of a topic capable of absorbing very large portions of his time and effort if he were disposed to pursue it. Moreover, the reader's conclusion would be correct.

I.

Our sources for Luther's training in the medieval university curriculum at Erfurt are first of all his own comments on those years, which many writers since his time have quoted. In the 18th century, as the Enlightenment gathered force, scholars like Heumann (1719), Elswich (1729) and Bruecker (1743) tried to offer a less committed evaluation of Luther's experience with Aristotle. During the Enlightenment, interest in Aristotle as well as in Luther declined. In his outstanding study of the history of Aristotelianism in the Protestant universities of Germany, P. Peterson tells us that this decline did not include Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, *Poetic*, or *Ethics*. Perhaps Luther's own recommendations of these works of Aristotle in his famous tract *To the Christian Nobility* promoted the study of Luther's own preparation for his study of ethics. Undoubtedly, the best study of Luther's preparatory education is Otto Scheel's well-known *Martin Luther* (vol. I, 1916 and vol. II, 1917). Many subsequent students of Luther's early years acknowledge their dependence upon this outstanding study.¹

Erfurt was a "young" university. The city had received a papal *privilegium* in 1379 to open a university, but the school did not become fully operational until 1392, when it began the school-year with an enrollment of 523 students. Luther entered in 1501 and finished his studies for the *magister* in 1505. Then he became a novice in the Black Cloister of the Augustinian Hermits. They had the reputation of being the center for the cultivation of the ethical ideal. One aspect of the intense discipline to which he subjected himself was a detailed study of the Bible. In 1507 Luther was ordained a priest and was ordered to resume his advanced studies according to the theological curriculum offered by the Black Cloister. In 1508, he was assigned to a position at the newly established university of Wittenberg. Here he lectured on Aristotle's *Nichomachian Ethics* for four hours each week. In 1509 he returned to Erfurt to devote himself to his theological studies as well as lectures on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. He left Rome toward the end of that year and returned to Erfurt during the following year to resume his lectures and studies. In September of 1511, Staupitz ordered Luther to prepare himself for the comprehensive disputations required for a doctorate. Luther passed his examinations in the fall of 1512 and was accepted formally into the permanent staff of the faculty. As *doctor-in-Biblia* he began his lectureship immediately, on Monday, October 25, 1512. The topic was the book of Genesis.

What had Luther studied in preparation for his doctorate? We know that his preparation for his *magister artium* had required a thorough comprehension of the works of Aristotle—eight months of those four years were devoted to the *Nichomachian Ethics* and six months to the *Politics*. His orientation was that of the *via moderna*, since his teachers—Trutvetter, Usingen, Johan Reynhardt von Schmalkalden, Johannes Grafenstein, and others—were altogether followers or students of Gabriel Biel of Tuebingen. Luther was taught to regard the teachers of the *via antiqua* (the Thomists and Scotists) as bunglers and dabblers. We may suspect that the partisanship of the faculties transcended historical realities. Luther could say of his attitude at that time that he, the student of Augustine, regarded Platonists and Scotists as heretics like the Hussites.

It has also been argued that Luther accepted the Erfurt theory of knowledge, derived from Ockham, as a student and retained it throughout his life. Rational knowledge is limited to the physical world, and the supernatural world is mediated by faith. *Scientia* is the construction of the human *ratio*. But theology is not *scientia*. It is

not the product of the creaturely perception of man, but the revelation of God concerning His will and actions.

Studying Gabriel Biel, Luther learned that Aristotle's writings may be acknowledged as the *scientia* of the natural world, but the authority of revelation must be preserved against Aristotelian *scientia*. After all, it must be remembered that Ockham had been serious and determined to preserve Catholic principles of authority without reservation.

Since Luther's training in moral philosophy had been thoroughly Aristotelian, he also had accustomed himself to distinguish between Aristotle's theological assumptions (final causes) and his practical recommendations. Later in life, Luther could call the fifth book of the *Nichomachian Ethics* "wonderful" because Aristotle "beautifully described" how the law should be kept. In his tract *On Secular Authority*, he recommends the *Politics* of Aristotle to those who would rule well. Aristotle's practical advice is excellent, but he did not understand the *Endursache* (final cause) because he did not know the Scriptures which alone give us that insight.

II.

Strong evidence is available to support the argument that Luther could not help but become hostile to Aristotle's naturalism. What Luther learned about moral philosophy from his masters at Erfurt was thoroughly rooted in the dualism presupposed in medieval Roman Catholic dogma. It combined an Aristotelian theory of knowledge with the Occamist tradition of faith as the higher and more certain knowledge compared to the *scientia* of Aristotle. This agrees with Otto Scheel's findings that the Erfurt Occamism treated theology as an area of practical (in contrast to speculative) knowledge, and therefore not as *scientia*. It did necessarily lead to a strong dualistic emphasis and developed a position in contradiction both with the pre-Christian philosophic tradition as well as that of the Western church until the 13th century.

Ancient Greek philosophy of religion had assigned precedence to speculative knowledge (*theoria*), an outlook reinforced by ancient Christian church fathers who had been content to work with this classification, and they bequeathed it to the medieval fathers. To illustrate this, one may point to Augustine's notion of the "vision of God," which begins with the "intelligible world" and finally lives in the blessedness of seeing God Himself. The process starts with a

turning away from the world of sensation to the contemplation of the harmonies of the cosmos and, transcending the swiftly changing pictures of the flux of things, moves to the grasping of the beautiful, eternal, unchangeable world of the Logos of God, the Christ, who is the door to the highest good and the way to everlasting blessedness. For Augustinian theologians, obviously, theology must also be a speculative *scientia*. Perhaps the argument has merit that this perception was determined by elements of Augustine's own neo-Platonic training before he became a Christian.

The view that theology is speculative (*scientia*) has support in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, chapter 2. It is well-known to students that Thomas Aquinas justified his understanding of the speculative character of theology in his *Sentences* as well as in his *Summa*.

But this is not the end of the matter. Medieval theologians found ways to use Augustine's thoughts in one of his sermons regarding "the praise of love," teaching that whoever nurtures or maintains love in the conduct of his life can in fact possess everything revealed or hidden in the Scriptures. They concluded, according to Hervaeus Natalis, that theology deals essentially with the acquisition and cultivation of love. That means: theology is a form of practical knowledge.

Was Luther's theological development accomplished independently of others or did he find "guides and helpers who directed him, even preceded him on the lonely path which he trod like a sleepwalker, unhesitatingly, yet without a clear knowledge of his goals?" Boehmer discusses this question² and concludes that in some respects Luther remained an Occamist all of his life. But the point must not be overstated. Luther in fact did "overcome" Ockham and Biel both in his interpretive methodology and in his understanding of the doctrinal content of the Bible. The fundamental thought of the Reformer, his theological conception of sin and evil, of the remission of sin and guilt, and of the meaning of God's grace, of the distinction of Law and Gospel, of the revelation of justification and sanctification, of piety as a religious and moral attitude of the forgiven sinner—all these insights and more were attained in a struggle against Occamist theology. It must be remembered that his study of the Bible, imposed on him by his calling, turned Luther against Occamist theology. This is also made clear in his statement of his doctrinal position against Aristotelian scholasticism in almost complete outline—his Ninety-seven Theses of September 4, 1517—a theological document far more important for the understanding of Luther's theological development

than his famous Ninety-five Theses of October 31, 1517, which dealt mainly with some theological and ethical aspects of deceptive fundraising.

Luther's objection to medieval ethical teaching can be summed up in a descriptive sentence: Aristotelian naturalism had successfully invaded scholastic theology. Not only did it lead to distortions of the doctrine of God and creation, but most dangerously also to falsifications of the doctrine of man, the fall of man, the redemption of man, and topics of ethics.

Intellectuals of the middle ages certainly knew that Aristotle did not work with insights and faith derived from the Scriptures. But they were persuaded that he understood nature and its processes in a manner superior to other teachers. So they deliberately "co-opted" Aristotle's works for Christianity. In their attempt to "Christianize" the Stagirite, medieval Christian theologians were victimized by his theory of knowledge, interpretive methodology, and by their unwitting or deliberate refusal to "let God be God."

III.

The amazingly powerful influence of Aristotle's *Ethics* upon Christian medieval theology and education forced Luther to give that book his detailed attention even after he had repeatedly lectured on it. Perhaps this is also the place to offer the reminder that it is necessary to distinguish between Luther's outright rejection of Aristotle as "the principal teacher" of the universities and Luther's selective praise of some aspects of Aristotle's teaching. We remember his eloquent recommendation for the reform of the universities in his tract *To the Christian Nobility*, that Aristotle's *Ethics* should be completely discarded along with the rest of the books that boast about nature, although nothing can be learned from either about nature or the Spirit."³

In his *Exposition of Galatians* of 1519⁴ Luther writes, and his view seems remarkably contemporary:

Since the apostle had no knowledge of Aristotelian philosophy, he does not call these faults conditions in the soul; he calls them actual works, to all of which he ascribes one condition, namely, the flesh, that is the whole man descended from Adam. For to this very day those people are searching for the basis of vices and virtues and have not yet discovered whether these are to be located in the rational or irrational part of man.

A precise understanding of Luther's Biblical interpretation of sin and "flesh" is of the greatest importance for the student. Medieval

theology interpreted "flesh" to mean sexual sins. "Sin" was taken to mean "debt," which could be paid by good works or by drawing on the inexhaustible treasury of the medieval church. Luther's point of departure for the teaching of Christian ethics was his Biblical understanding of fallen man, summarized by him in neglected paragraphs of his Smalcald Articles (Part III, I):

Here we must confess what St. Paul says in Rom. 5:12, namely, that sin had its origin in one man, Adam, through whose disobedience all men were made sinners and became subject to death and the devil. This is called original sin, or root sin.

The fruits of this sin are all the subsequent evil deeds which are forbidden in the Ten Commandments, such as unbelief, false belief, idolatry, being without the fear of God, presumption, despair, blindness—in short, ignorance or disregard of God—and then also lying, swearing by God's name, failure to pray and call upon God, neglect of God's Word, disobedience to parents, murder, unchastity, theft, deceit, etc.

This hereditary sin is so deep a corruption of nature that human reason cannot understand it. It must be believed because of the revelation in the Scriptures (Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12ff.; Exod. 33:20; Gen. 3:6ff.). What the scholastic theologians taught concerning this article is therefore nothing but error and stupidity, namely,

1. That after the fall of Adam the natural powers of man have remained whole and uncorrupted, and that man by nature possesses a right understanding and a good will, as the philosophers teach.

2. Again, that man has a free will, either to do good and refrain from evil or to refrain from good and do evil.

3. Again that man is able by his natural powers to observe and keep all the commandments of God.

4. Again, that man is able by his natural powers to love God above all things and his neighbor as himself.

5. Again, if man does what he can, God is certain to grant him his grace.

6. Again, when a man goes to the sacrament there is no need of a good intention to do what he ought, but it is enough that he does not have an evil intention to commit sin, for such is the goodness of man's nature and such is the power of the sacrament.

7. That it cannot be proved from the Scriptures that the Holy Spirit and his gifts are necessary for the performance of a good work.

Such and many similar notions have resulted from misunderstanding and ignorance concerning sin and concerning Christ, our Savior. They are thoroughly pagan doctrines, and we cannot tolerate them. If such teachings were true, Christ would have died in vain, for there would be no defect nor sin in man for which he would have had to die, or else he would have died only for the body and not for the soul inasmuch as the soul would be sound and only the body would be subject to death.⁵

What point does Luther make, directly or by implication? “. . . sin is so deep a corruption of nature that human reason cannot understand it. It must be believed because of the revelation in the Scriptures.” Luther specifically named “hereditary” sin here. Sin in every aspect is beyond rational understanding for fallen man, and therefore must be believed, because all sin is sin against God alone (Ps. 51:5). God alone is the norm of righteousness. Hence the universal disposition of man to be his own god in all his thinking and doing had produced for fallen man all the consequences historically experienced. This condition of man cannot be reversed by man. It requires the redemptive action of God in the person and work of Christ. He alone works the forgiveness and justification of the sinner before God (Rom. 5:12ff.).

The teaching of Christian ethics is the teaching of Christian discipleship. There can be no genuinely Christian ethical teaching apart from the person and work of Jesus Christ in the behalf of mankind. The teacher of Christian ethics must therefore maintain the proper sequence and distinction between two inseparable actions of God (Heb. 10:7; 13:21), the justification and the sanctification of the sinner. They are indissolubly linked and yet clearly distinguished. The justification of the sinner is exclusively the work of God through the person of Jesus Christ. But the work of sanctification confers on man “dead in trespasses and sins” the power for a new spiritual life. Having received this new life, man becomes God’s “co-operator” in doing His will, an essential characteristic of the holiness also descriptive of the Messiah whom His disciples follow.

Luther taught Christian ethics as the revelation of God’s will for those who are or want to be Christians. This is the undeviating imperative of Luther’s catechisms and lectures: “We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.”

His “God-directed” ethical principles need consistent comment regarding their proper application for the issues of the moment. Repetition of the words “fear, love, and trust in God above all things,” without intelligible explanations of their specific doctrinal and practical relevancies, is likely to produce in any audience a normal indifference customarily reserved for mere academic generalizations. Whatever his or her place, function or condition in life, a hearer must in some way genuinely hear the words of the prophet Nathan to David: “Thou art the man.” Christian ethics can be taught a hearer who will hear with a repentant heart.

In this sense, the Reformation movement sought to prepare Chris-

tian believers for the long, patient waiting and service to God and neighbor required of them until “all things are ready,” and not for the “liberation” which some hope will usher in a secular utopia. Luther taught no reversal of the fall of man in this present world or age, no moral perfection to be achieved by individual or communal efforts, no special route or device for the achievement of a God-pleasing holiness. First, God must make people holy through the divine person and sacrificial work of His Messiah, our Redeemer and Lord, Jesus Christ. Then Christians, in their spiritual regeneration, receive power to do holy works. They must indeed work constantly during their time in this present age “to patch and mend” the deficiencies, failures, offenses, and disappointments of this life, both in their personal lives and in the structures of their societies. They are admonished not to tire of serving in a failing and fading age of diminishing hope because it is their assignment thus to remain as God’s witnesses in a corrupt and evil world—steadfast and undeviating of purpose like Noah after God called him to be His witness to the age under judgment and at the same time diligently “work out his own salvation,” to echo the apostle Paul, Ephesians 2:10 and Philippians 2:12, 13, building the ark. To be sure, it is an assignment most frustrating to impatient believers, but God is pleased to have us wait thus for a new life with Him in the righteousness of a “new heaven and a new earth.”

In the theological terms he used, Luther taught Christian ethics to instruct the Christian disciple who knows himself to be a forgiven sinner or *simul justus et peccator*, and who asks the question, “What will you have me do, Lord?” In the language of Reformation theology, sanctification has its proper sequence in the “order of salvation” as the necessary consequence of God’s justification of the sinner. Confusion resulting from a careless or undiscerning use of these theological terms can be easily discovered. In Luther’s theological formulations, *Heilsordnung* (*ordo salutis*) and *Heiligung* (sanctification) do not converge conceptually in their broad and inclusive use. In his teaching, the former is that which God has given, and still provides, for the ultimate sanctification of the Christian. He understands this as the *ordo salutis* of the Ecumenical Creeds, familiar to Christians, and includes the gift of the justification of the sinner without any contribution on his part, conferred and received in and by the gift of faith, which also confers the desire and power to do good works pleasing to God.

Endnotes

¹There is no intention to slight the contributions of other scholars, e.g., H. von Schubert, "Luthers Frühentwicklung (bis 1517/9). Eine Orientierung." *Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte*. 124. Leipzig 1916.

Reinhold Seeberg, "Die religiösen Grundgedanken des jungen Luther und ihre Verhältnisse zu dem Ockhamismus und der deutschen Mystik." *Greifswalder Studien zur Lutherforschung und neuzeitlichen Geistesgeschichte*, Nr. 6. Berlin-Leipzig 1931.

Gordon Rupp, *Luther's Progress to the Diet of Worms 1517*. London 1951.

Wilhelm Link, *Das Ringen Luthers um die Freiheit der Theologie von der Philosophie*, München, 1955.

E. Stracke, "Luthers groszes Selbstzeugnis über seine Entwicklung zum Reformator historisch-kritisch untersucht." *Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte*. 140. Leipzig 1926.

²Heinrich Boehmer, *The Road to Reformation*. London: G. Bell and Sons, transl. from the 5th German edition, distributed in the U.S.A. by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich., p. 62.

³*Luthers Sämtliche Schriften*, St. Louis ed., X, 336.

⁴LW 27, 367.

⁵*The Book of Concord*, Tappert ed., p. 302.

The Enduring Witness of the Old Testament

8

Exegetes have interpreted Matthew 5:18, "For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled," as meaning everything from insistence on strict adherence to Jewish laws to an ironic expression regarding the difficulty of doing away with those laws. Even Confessional Lutherans have differed from each other as to whether our Lord is referring to the Scriptures or to the moral law.¹ It is the position of this paper, however, that, in its context, Matthew 5:18 must mean the enduring witness of the Old Testament to the person and work of Jesus. In fact, together with the preceding verse, it illustrates what Robert Preus defines as the relationship between the Scriptures and the Gospel:

The Gospel we preach and teach and confess is set forth in the Scriptures and normed by them. At the same time, the Scriptures, inspired by God, were written for the sake of the Gospel.²

In order to establish this conclusion we will divide our discussion of verse 18 into three parts: (1) 5:18a—the connection to verse 17; (2) 5:18c—the enduring quality of the Old Testament's witness; and (3) 5:18b and 5:18d—the duration of that witness. Verse 18 is, of course, connected to the preceding one by the particle γὰρ, "for." Obviously, one cannot press the connection since γὰρ can indicate cause, inference, explanation, or continuation of thought. Since there are no other clear signs in the text as to which of these is the best choice, we are safest in choosing the mildest signification for γὰρ, viz., just a continuation of thought. In this way, the particle alerts us to expect more about what our Lord starts to discuss in verse 17, i.e., His relationship to the Old Testament.³

That we are to take most seriously what Jesus says in verse 18 is the burden of the rest of the clause, ἄμην . . . λέγω ὑμῖν ("verily I say unto you"). This clause (with γὰρ) appears only in Matthew (5:18; 10:23; 13:17; and 17:20), but ἄμην—a transliteration from the Hebrew—is found frequently and only on the lips of Jesus in all four Gospels (31 times in Matthew; 13 in Mark; 6 in Luke; and 25 in

doubled form in John) as the introduction to a saying as here in 5:18. This usage is practically unique. Elsewhere in the New Testament (besides Revelation which has its own peculiarities, e.g., ὁ ἀμήν in 3:14), the use of ἀμήν conforms to what we find in the Old Testament, a word of assent or agreement at the end of a liturgy or doxology. The LXX usually translates it by γένοιτο, but does retain ἀμήν in a few instances (1 Chron. 16:36; Neh. 5:13; and 8:6 [Esdras 15:13 and 18:6]).⁴

But what does Jesus intend by ἀμήν at the beginning of a saying? Just this: it is an indication of the seriousness He attaches to what He is about to say. He speaks the truth with authority; He speaks as the God with us: ἀμήν—I say to you! Arndt and Gingrich (p. 45) suggest “truly” as a translation but perhaps in our vernacular “positively” or “emphatically” would be the more appropriate word for what Jesus intends. Perhaps, too, His prefixing ἀμήν to the saying indicates the expected response from His hearers. They are to assent by giving their ἀμήν to what Jesus says.

Our Lord often heightens the authority with which He speaks in the Gospels by the use of such introductory phrases. In Matthew 5:20, for example, we find λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν (“For I say unto you”) and in the antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν (“But I say unto you”) (5:22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44). In each instance the introductory phrase summons Jesus’ hearers to note that it is His Word they are to heed. Just as the Father singles Him out as the One to whom men should hearken (Mt. 17:5), so Jesus asserts that authority when He speaks. In the New Testament age, His is the last word. All must now listen to what He is about to say.

This high Christology connects verse 18 to verse 17, for in the latter our Lord maintains that the Old Testament points to Him, and is fulfilled by Him so that its goal and purpose have been met: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill.” This is not the only point of contact between the two verses, however, since in verse 18 Jesus continues to speak about the Old Testament: ἰῶτα ἐν ἡμῖα κεραία οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου (5:18c). By these words Jesus promises to preserve the text and words of the Old Testament.

Many exegetes within and without the Lutheran tradition consider νόμος in this verse to be the normative contents of the Old Testament or a part thereof, particularly the Torah, and ἰῶτα and κεραία to be commandments of the Law.⁵ But this view presents immediate problems, since in the antitheses of the Sermon on the Mount which

follow in Matthew 5, Jesus does modify Old Testament ordinances regarding divorce (5:31–32) and revenge (5:38f.) and elsewhere laws regarding defilement (Mt. 8:7; 15:1f.) and the Sabbath (Mt. 12:1f.). Accordingly, some of its advocates try to reduce *νόμος* to the moral law⁶ or the law of love⁷; others call the saying a hyperbole⁸; others see *νόμος* as the law in its entirety, not in its details⁹; others the law as transformed by the teaching of Jesus¹⁰; and still others, by interpreting 5:18b and d appropriately, restrict the applicability of verse 18 to the time before Jesus' death and resurrection.¹¹

It is easy to see why so many take *νόμος* as the normative content of the Old Testament, given its setting in the Sermon on the Mount; but since this interpretation forces one to take *ἰῶτα* and *κεραία* figuratively and involves one in the morass (described above) of trying to explain why the Law does not remain in force if that is what 5:18 actually means, it is better to take *ἰῶτα* and *κεραία* literally and *νόμος*, therefore, as the Scriptural text itself—if the context of the verse lends any support to this interpretation at all.¹²

But that is precisely what we find in verse 17 which shows the relationship of the Old Testament to Jesus. "The law or the prophets" is God's old revelation, valuable even in its normative character as that which points forward to Christ—His person, His work, and even His word. Without Him the Old Testament is lacking something, it is incomplete, it needs fulfilling. But with Jesus—now that He is here—it has reached its goal and completion. This does *not* mean that its norms remain binding to the last letter any more than that its messianic predictions continue to point to the future. Not at all, for norms and predictions have been fulfilled in Jesus; however, that is precisely their continuing value in the New Testament age. They are witnesses to the fact that He, whom God has promised and for whom the people of God were longing, has come.

Is this not exactly how Matthew employs the Old Testament in his Gospel—as a witness to Jesus? The prophecies are fulfilled by what Jesus does. Old Testament history is repeated in His life (2:15; 4:1–11); Abraham's and David's descent culminates in His birth (1:1); Old Testament law points forward to His teaching (5:21–22, 17–18); and departures from Old Testament rules are justified by His coming (12:1–8). Consequently, since Jesus is now the center of God's revelation, the norm of piety, and the object of all hope, the Old Testament retains its value for God's people primarily as witness nonpareil to Christ. Therefore, in 5:18 Jesus promises that in His age the Old Testament will endure—as indeed it does to this day—in

order to give its witness to Him—as indeed it does in the Gospel of Matthew.

One might argue that νόμος in verse 18 should be interpreted more narrowly, i.e. as just the Pentateuch, in that elsewhere Matthew does so use the term (12:5). However, it is also true that in the New Testament νόμος is used for the Old Testament in general. Thus, John (10:34; 12:34; and 15:25) cites the Psalms, Isaiah, and Daniel and calls them νόμος; and likewise Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:21 (citing Isaiah) and Romans 3:19 (a catena of quotations from the Psalms and the Prophets). Furthermore, when in Matthew 22:36 Jesus is asked regarding the greatest commandment in the νόμος, He concludes His answer by noting that on the two commandments cited depends the whole Law and the prophets (22:40). In other words, a question about the Law He associates with the entire Old Testament. Similarly, verse 17 mentions the Law and the Prophets, not just the Law. Since verse 18 is specifically attached to verse 17 by γὰρ, it seems natural to take νόμος in its wider sense as the entire Old Testament.

There is a synoptic parallel to verse 18—Luke 16:17—and, of course, critics have enjoyed discussing the two in concert and speculating about their original form and context in their supposed source, Q.¹³ For our purpose of interpreting 5:18, however, Luke 16:17 is not much help. The wording differs as does the context; but it does present somewhat the same problem in that Luke 16:16 refers to the Law and the Prophets but verse 17 to the Law only. In other words, we must do the best we can on the basis of Matthew alone; and that means that νόμος in 5:18 is most likely the Old Testament.

With respect to ἰῶτα ἐν ἡ μίᾳ κεραία we are on more certain ground regarding the meaning of the words—but not absolutely sure. Ἰῶτα is clearly a letter of the Greek alphabet,¹⁴ but what does it mean in connection with the Hebrew Old Testament? Likewise, κεραία is a part of the letter¹⁵ but what part? To be sure, it is not vital that we know precisely which letters or parts of letters are here intended since the point is clear: Christ promises that the Old Testament will remain even in its smallest elements.

With respect to ἰῶτα, Robert Gundry suggests five possibilities: (1) the small projections distinguishing certain Hebrew or Aramaic letters; (2) the letter *waw*; (3) the letter *yodh*; (4) the hook at the top of the ancient *yodh*; or (5) scribal ornamentation of certain letters. But he concludes that “as an editorial insertion aimed at Greek readers ‘iota’ probably does not refer to the *yodh* or to any other Hebrew feature of the Old Testament.”¹⁶ Most other commentators,

including the lexicons, are content to apply ἰῶτα, the smallest letter in the Greek alphabet, to *yodh*, the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet.¹⁷

This last possibility seems all the more probable, since in the rabbinical literature *yodh* is used to express the enduring validity of the Torah. Thus, Strack-Billerbeck (cited also in Meier) quotes several versions of a story in which the Book of Deuteronomy complains to God that Solomon, by changing a *yodh*, is altering Deuteronomy 17:17, which forbids the king to have multiple wives, in order to permit the king many wives. To this God responds that Solomon and a thousand others like him will pass away, but *ein Wort von dir wird nicht vergehen*. The Law retains its value right down to a single word for Solomon and for all.¹⁸

The literal meaning of the word *κεραία* is "horn" or "projection." With respect to Greek letters, it is used to denote accents and breathings as, for example, in Apollonius Dyscolus (2nd century A.D.) and Plutarch (1st and 2nd centuries A.D.). However, it can also be used figuratively for something quite insignificant. Thus, Plutarch, *Mor.* 1100a, writes about squabbles as *ζυγομαχεῖν περι συλλαβῶν και κεραίων* and Philo, *In Flacc.* 131 (1st century A.D.) speaks of things written not just by syllables but even by *κεραία*: *τα γράμματα κατὰ συλλαβήν, μᾶλλον δὲ καὶ κεραίαν ἐκάσθην*¹⁹

The Greek usage indicates then that *κεραία* refers to something apparently insignificant in the Hebrew alphabet. Thus Strack-Billerbeck suggests the little hooks, crowns, or marks which a letter of the Hebrew alphabet might have as an ornament (*als Zierat*) and rejects the idea of these small strokes which often distinguish one letter from another, e.g., *daleth* and *resh* or *beth* and *kaph*. Many accept the latter view; but "ornaments" rather than "marks distinguishing letters" (and therefore sense) seems more closely connected to the Greek usage of *κεραία*.²⁰

In any case, with respect to both ἰῶτα and *κεραία*, the intent of our Lord's words is to draw attention to the smallest parts of the Scriptural text and promise that not a single one shall pass away. And He does so in a most emphatic way, for He uses "οὐ μὴ" which, with the aorist subjunctive (as here *παρέλθῃ*), is the most decisive method of stating a negative regarding the future. Jesus uses it 20 times in Matthew. It occurs on His lips frequently in other Gospels (9 times in Mark; 17 times in Luke; 14 times in John); but only 15 times in Acts and the Epistles. We have here then another indication of Jesus' authority. Even when he speaks about the future, He does so in a most definite and decisive manner.²¹

Emphasis in this clause (5:18c) also comes from the repeated numeral, ἕν . . . μία; the numeral with the negative instead of οὐδέεις; and the chiasmic arrangement (noun numeral conjunction numeral noun). It is difficult to see how Jesus could have stated any more definitely that not a single part of the Old Testament would pass away. Obviously, He indicates His great respect for the Old Testament (as indicated also by οὐκ . . . καταλύσαι in 5:17); but, as the rest of the Gospel demonstrates, Jesus respects the Old Testament as witness to Him and not as source and norm of scribal rules and Pharisaic customs.

The verb in this clause, παρέλθη, is exactly the same as in 5:18b and has the same meaning: "pass away, disappear, end." Both Demosthenes and Theocritus use the word in this sense; and the LXX also has a couple of instances where παρέρχομαι is used similarly to 5:18c. Psalm 148:6 has πρόσταγμα ἔθετο, καὶ οὐ παρελεύσεται; Daniel 6:13 (Theodotion), Τὸ δόγμα Μήδων καὶ περσῶν οὐ παρελεύσεται; and especially Esther 10:3b, Ἐμνήσθη γὰρ περὶ τοῦ ἐνυπνίου, οὐ εἶδον περὶ τῶν λόγων τούτων: οὐδὲ γὰρ παρέλθον ἅπ. αὐτῶν λόγος." In each of these the concern seems to be that the decree or words will remain not just physically, but in their value and purpose.²² In the New Testament παρέρχομαι is used similarly for the "passing away" of laws and words in Luke 16:17 and Matthew 24:35. So here, too, in 5:18 Jesus is not promising just that the physical text will survive, but that it will survive and accomplish its purpose. The Old Testament will remain in force. But what is the purpose of the Old Testament? Verse 18 does not tell us but verse 17 does: the Old Testament points to Christ, for He has come to fulfill it.

The Old Testament is christological down to its last letter and even to an insignificant part of that letter. In both its predictions and its imperatives it pointed to Christ before Christ came. Even after His coming, however, it retains its christological value as witness to the Christ who has come. True, Christ has carried out its predictions and has transcended its laws; but still it gives its witness to Him as the One come from God to fulfill it. As the evangelist writes his Gospel, the Old Testament does precisely that for him; and 5:18c tells us that it will continue to do so for us.

Furthermore, 5:18b and d tell us that this witness will continue until the end of time: ἕως ἂν παρέλθῃ ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ . . . ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται. In 5:18b we have παρέλθη exactly as in 5:18c. Thus our Lord places the survival of the Old Testament and the universe on the same plane. Of course, the emphasis with respect to the latter

is physical; with respect to the former it is in its value. But still the effect of repeating the word *παρέλθῃ* is striking: as long as heaven and earth continue so long shall the Old Testament word remain. *Παρέρχομαι* for the physical passing away of the heaven and earth is frequent in New Testament usage (Mt. 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 16:17; Luke 21:33; and 2 Peter 3:10). The LXX uses it in nature similes for the passing away of men (Ps. 89:6 [90:6] and Wisdom 2:4) as does also James 1:10; but the eschatological usage seems to be absent. Daniel 7:14 [Theodotion] does say that the kingdom of the Son of Man "*οὐ παρέλεσεται*"; but now in 5:18 we find also that the Word which testifies of that kingdom will also not pass away.

An unusual feature in verse 18 is the existence of two *ἕως* clauses—one attached to the beginning of the main clause and the other to the end. In grammatical form they are exactly alike—*ἕως* + *ἄν* + the aorist subjunctive—which is a normal way of expressing the end of a period of time and that the occurrence of one event is dependent on another. In English we use the temporal conjunctions "till" or "until." The odd thing here is that we have two *termini ad quos*: not a jot or a tittle of the Law shall pass away until heaven and earth pass away *and* until all things happen.²³

To many critics this suggests different sources behind the two clauses and most probably a Matthean redaction behind one of them²⁴; but this is, at best, guesswork and does not help to explain what they *mean* as we have them here in the pericope and in the Gospel of Matthew. In attempting to interpret them, however, some have tried to render the second *ἕως* clause as final rather than temporal. A. M. Honeyman has suggested that the second *ἕως* clause is the translation of an Aramaic phrase meaning "so that (on the contrary) all will be fulfilled." This is an attractive solution except for its methodology. We don't have an Aramaic text but a Greek one; and in Greek *ἕως* means "until," not "so that."²⁵

Schweizer argues that *ἕως* may be translated "in order that" and therefore that 5:18d is a purpose clause. Other passages cited by him include Matthew 14:22 and 26:36 (par. Mark 6:45 and 14:32) and Luke 13:8 and 17:8.²⁶ Unfortunately, none of these examples is precisely parallel (they all omit *ἄν* and each can easily be understood as temporal clause by translating *ἕως* as "while," even as Arndt and Gingrich suggest for two of them (Mark 14:32 and Luke 17:8)²⁷ and Blass and Debrunner for the same two and two more (Mt. 14:22 and Luke 13:8).²⁸ Moreover, Matthew's usage tells against this view in that not only does 5:18b use precisely the same construction in a

temporal clause but also 24:34 repeats the entire clause with a meaning that is clearly temporal, οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ ἢ γενεὰ αὕτη ἕως ἂν πάντα ταῦτα γένηται, i.e., this generation shall not pass from existence *until* all the eschatological events of which Jesus was speaking happen.

Accordingly, we cannot find the key to interpreting both ἕως clauses by treating one as final, for both are temporal. But do they point to the same time? It is clear that 5:18b points to the eschatological events at the end of time. Some have tried to argue that this clause really means “forever” on the grounds that the universe is an apt symbol for permanence and stability. This seems to be the usage in Philo, *De Vita Mosis II*, 14 where the laws of Moses are described ὡς περ ἄ θάνατα and are so immovable that they will remain ἕως ἂν ἥλιος καὶ σελήνη καὶ ὁ σύμπας οὐρανός τε καὶ κόσμος ᾗ. Furthermore, there is a strong tradition in the rabbis that the Law is permanent and will endure forever. This cannot be the case in 5:18, however, since it is clear that the heavens and the earth will be destroyed. Not only does 5:18b conform to New Testament eschatology (Mark 13:31; Rev. 20:11 and 21:1; Heb. 12:26 [quoting Haggai 2:6]; Heb. 1:10–12 [quoting Psalm 101:26–28]; and 2 Peter 3:10–12); but Matthew also explicitly says that the heavens and earth will pass away: ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ παρελεύσεται (24:35; cf. also 24:29). Therefore 5:18b points to an actual *terminus ad quem* for the present age.²⁹

But what are we to make of 5:18d, ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται? Does it, too, refer to the end of time or does it point to a time before the end as if to say, “As long as heaven and earth endure, the Old Testament will endure—but only until all things happen”? Both Davies and Meier argue forcefully for the second interpretation by connecting 5:18d to verse 17, i.e., the Law will remain in force only until everything in it has been fulfilled in Jesus’ life and ministry. This final fulfillment takes place in His death and resurrection; and subsequently the Old Testament Law loses its binding character.³⁰

The problem with this argument is that it really fails to fit the verse as we have it in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus does not insist on the jots and tittles of the Law up until His death—He changes them already in the antitheses. Furthermore, 5:18c says “until all things happen,” not “are fulfilled.” True, as Meier points out, Matthew’s fulfillment passages often speak of something “happening” (using a form of *γένομαι*) in order that the Scriptures be fulfilled, e.g., 1:22; 21:4; and 26:54, 56; but it is also true that Matthew frequently uses

γένομαι in other contexts (75 times in all). Indeed, he uses a phrase similar to 5:18d, *ἕως ἂν πάντα ταῦτα γένηται*, in 24:34 to refer *not* to fulfillment of the Old Testament word but to the taking place of Jesus' Word, specifically His description of the last times.

In fact, 24:34, 35 is an important parallel to 5:18 in general. We have already noted that verse 35 clarifies 5:18 by specifically stating that heaven and earth will pass away. We should also note, however, that in the New Testament age it is the words of Jesus—not the Old Testament—which remain to be done and which will survive forever. In verse 34, our Lord offers a sign of His veracity: the generation of His opponents shall not pass away until all the things He has been speaking of take place; and in verse 35 He asserts that His words are more permanent than the physical universe for they shall never pass away. In 5:18, however, Jesus places the Old Testament only on a par with the universe: the Old Testament will not pass away until the universe does, but what then? Verse 18 does not really say that the Old Testament will be destroyed but it leaves the possibility open, unlike 24:35 which affirms the validity of Christ's words even after the end of the universe. His Word is at center stage, not the Old Testament.

The phrase *ἕως ἂν πάντα γένηται* in 5:18 does not refer, then, to the Old Testament but rather to *all* that must happen, i.e., to everything which Jesus reveals and about which He speaks. The Old Testament is God's preliminary revelation and is now fulfilled by Christ; but Jesus is His final revelation and in this age His word remains to reach its goal before the end shall come. Even in the context of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks of things to come, things that must happen, particularly the last judgment with its rewards and punishments, e.g., the Beatitudes and 7:13–27. Moreover, in this last judgment Jesus' words are of decisive importance, for it is obedience to them which permits a man to survive (7:24).

Therefore, 5:18d functions as a reminder that in the age of Jesus, it remains for Jesus to keep His word and for Jesus's disciples to follow it. The Old Testament remains as a witness to Christ and will do so until the end of time; but until then much remains to be done, for the end shall not come until all things happen. These are things that Christ teaches in his Word. They are to take place. In this age the disciples must live by them, for our Lord shall surely keep His Word and come again. In this way, all things will happen and be done.

Thus, in Matthew 5:18, our Lord asserts the enduring value of the

Scriptures, especially the Old Testament, on account of their relationship to Jesus. In the preceding verse, He tells us that the Old Testament has Jesus Himself as its goal and object, for He fulfills it. However, in verse 18 Jesus speaks with divine authority and promises that the word He is fulfilling will remain until the end of time so that it can continue to give its witness to Him. In this way, Jesus affirms the Scriptures since they affirm Him.

Endnotes

¹Many form critics have argued that v. 18 represents the position of Jewish/Christian legalism. This is the conclusion of Edward Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), p. 105; Gerhard Barth, "Matthew's Understanding of the Law" in Günther Bornkamm, Gerhard Barth, and Heinz J. Held, *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew* (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 65; and Rudolf K. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), p. 138. That v. 18 is irony is the position of Thomas W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1957), p. 25. Among Lutheran theologians, those who contend that it refers to the moral law are Martin Chemnitz, *Harmonia Quatuor Evangelistarum*, 2 vols. (Geneva: Ex Typographia Petri Chouet Sen., 1655) 1:436-39; Matthias Loy, *The Sermon on the Mount* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1909), p. 109; and Martin H. Franzmann, *Follow Me* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1961), pp. 43-44. Others, however, think that it refers to the Scriptures, particularly the Old Testament, cf. John Gerhard, *Loci Theologici*, 9 vols. (Berolini: Sumptibus Gust. Schlawitz, 1863) 1:54-55, 144-45; John A. Bengel, *Gnomon Novi Testamenti* (Stuttgart: J. F. Steinkopf, 1915), p. 40; Paul E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible: The New Testament*, 2 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1923) 1:26; and Richard C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel* (Columbus, OH: Wartburg Press, 1943), pp. 207-209.

²Robert Preus, *Getting into the Theology of Concord* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1977), p. 27.

³William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 151; F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, translated and revised by Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 235-36; and A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919), p. 1190.

⁴Arndt and Gingrich, p. 45. For good discussions of the uniqueness of Jesus' ἀμῆν-usage see John P. Meier, *Law and History in Matthew's Gospel* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976); Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 9 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1974), s.v. "ἀμῆν," by Heinrich Schlier; and David Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: Athlone Press, 1956), pp. 388-92. Daube, in particular, argues convincingly that Jesus' usage is a natural development in Hebrew speech.

⁵E.g., Richard S. McConnell, *Law and Prophecy in Matthew's Gospel* (Basel, Fr. Reinhardt Kommissionsverlag, 1969), p. 23; and Manson, p. 154.

⁶E.g., Chemnitz, p. 439. This is a possibility but seems unlikely inasmuch as

"jots and tittles" direct our attention to the apparently minor details, not to major moral principles.

⁷E.g., Edward Schweizer, "Matth. 5, 17-20-Anmerkungen zum Gesetzesverständnis des Matthäus" *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 77 (1952):482-84. Schweizer bases this reduction on 5:18d in connection with his understanding of 5:17, viz., that Christ fulfills the law by teaching the law of love. Thus, the Law remains valid as it is fulfilled in love. The question remains, however, what about the "jots and the tittles"?

⁸E.g., W. D. Davies, "Matthew 5, 17-18" in *Melanges bibliques rediges en l'honneur de Andre Robert* (Paris: Bloud et Gey, 1957), pp. 428-456. This is perhaps the most honest position if once we accept νόμος as the commanding content of the Torah; but my argument is that we do not have to accept νόμος in this way at all.

⁹E.g., Henrik Ljungmann, *Das Gesetz erfüllen* (Lund: Gleerup, 1954), pp. 40-41. Details, however, are precisely what "jots and tittles" suggest.

¹⁰E.g., Robert J. Banks, *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 218. We are still faced with the difficulty of the Law's details. It is simply not correct that Jesus preserved, even in some transformed or fulfilled sense, the normative content of the OT. The antitheses make this clear.

¹¹E.g., Meier, p. 64. This is certainly an attractive possibility; but does Jesus ever indicate this when He is actually setting aside OT details, e.g., Mt. 5:32; 5:38f.; 15:1f., or 19:3f? He never argues that the change is dependent on His future death and resurrection.

¹²This is the approach taken by Gerhard 1:144-145 and Lenski, pp. 208-209. Arndt and Gingrich, pp. 544-545, suggest either the Pentateuch or the entire OT.

¹³Cf. Meier, pp. 57-65; Robert J. Banks, "Matthew's Understanding of the Law," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 93 (1974):226-42.

¹⁴Arndt and Gingrich, p. 386. Ἰῶτα is found written as a word as early as Aeneas Tactitus (4th century B.C.).

¹⁵Ibid., p. 429.

¹⁶Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew, A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 80.

¹⁷Besides Arndt and Gingrich, p. 419, those who hold to ἰῶτα as *yodh* include: Meier, p. 50; Lenski, p. 208; and Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament*, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, & Co., 1874) 1:43.

¹⁸Herman L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, 4 vols. (Munich: Beck, 1922) 1:244-245; and Meier, pp. 50-51.

¹⁹Arndt and Gingrich, p. 429.

²⁰Strack-Billerbeck 1:248-249. Those arguing for the distinction between letters include Alford, p. 43; Lenski, p. 208; and Marie-Joseph LaGrange, *Evangile selon Saint Matthieu* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1948), p. 94.

²¹Arndt and Gingrich, p. 519; and Blass and Debrunner, p. 184.

²²Arndt and Gingrich, p. 631; Alford, pp. 42-43; and Kittel, s.v., ἔρχομαι by Johannes Schneider.

²³Arndt and Gingrich, p. 334; Blass and Debrunner, pp. 193-194; and Robertson, pp. 975-976.

²⁴That Matthew has added 5:18d is the opinion, for example, of Meier, p. 58; and McConnell, p. 23. However, Ulrich Luz, "Die Erfüllung des Gesetzes bei Matthäus (Mt. 5:17-20)" *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 75 (1978): 417-418, suggests that 5:18b came from Matthew's pen; and Michael D. Goulder, *Midrash*

and *Lectio in Matthew* (London: SPCK, 1974), p. 284, thinks that both clauses were written by Matthew and reminds us, "Let him who has never changed the drift of a sentence in the writing throw the first stone."

²⁵A. M. Honeyman, "Matthew V. 18 and the Validity of the Law" *New Testament Studies* 1 (1954):141-142.

²⁶Schweizer, *Good News*, pp. 107-108.

²⁷Arndt and Gingrich, p. 334.

²⁸Blass and Debrunner, pp. 193-194.

²⁹Philo *De Vita Mosis* 2. 14, Loeb Classical Library, p. 456; and Strack-Billerbeck 1:244-247. See also David Hill, *The Gospel of Matthew* (London: Oliphants, 1972), p. 118, for the argument on the basis of Jewish literature that 5:18b means "forever."

³⁰Davies, "Matt. 5:17-18," pp. 451-455; and Meier, pp. 61-63.

The Reformation Roots of "Objective Justification"

9

The term "objective justification" has only recently come into standard Lutheran usage.¹ The reality, however, is part and parcel of Lutheranism's very vital center. The terminology grew out of the challenge posed by the attacks of Roman Catholicism on *grace alone*, of Calvinism on *universal grace*, and of both on the *means of grace*.

The heart of the Book of Concord is the Augsburg Confession, and the heart of the Augsburg Confession is the indissoluble unity of Articles III (Of the Son of God) and IV (Of Justification).² This "heart of hearts" of the Lutheran Confessions, with the closely allied Art. V (Of the Ministry), already contains what was later meant by the term "objective justification."

Keeping in mind that in the Lutheran understanding justification is quite the same thing as forgiveness of sins,³ we may begin by noting a certain oddity in the wording of AC IV: "We receive forgiveness of sin . . . if we believe . . . that sin is forgiven us for His sake" (German), or: "They are justified . . . when they believe . . . sins to be forgiven for the sake of Christ" (Latin). Logically there is here at least the suggestion of a circle: On the one hand forgiveness is the result of faith, and thus comes after faith, and on the other hand it is the object of faith and therefore goes before faith.

One way of resolving the paradox would be to say that by forgiveness as object of faith here is meant not anything actually existing before faith, but simply the principle of how sin is or will be forgiven, namely by grace through faith. Forgiveness then would not in any sense exist before faith. It would occur as soon as faith accepted the principle that forgiveness occurs in this way. Thus, forgiveness as the object of faith would not be anything past or completed, but something essentially future or present. This line of reasoning, however, suggests another "feedback circuit": "I am forgiven when I believe that I am forgiven when I believe that I am forgiven, etc."

There is of course an important element of truth in this stress on the dependence of forgiveness on faith. For, as the final sentence of AC IV puts it, "This faith God will consider and impute for

righteousness before Him, as St. Paul says in Romans 3 and 4" (German). But this is not the whole truth. While forgiveness does, in a sense, depend on faith, in a deeper sense yet faith depends on forgiveness, according to the Augsburg Confession. Perhaps the most decisive statement here is that which describes faith as "born of the Gospel, or of absolution" (XII, 5, Latin) or as believing "the Gospel and absolution (namely, that sin has been forgiven and grace has been obtained through Christ)" (German).⁴ It is very clear here that forgiveness, in the form of the absolution, exists before and independently of faith, and creates or gives birth to it. Forgiveness or absolution (that is, the Gospel itself) creates faith; faith merely receives or accepts forgiveness. Absolution can exist without faith (although its benefits of course go to waste unless faith receives them), but faith cannot exist without absolution.

One of the strongest statements in the central Reformation documents of the past, completed aspect of forgiveness is undoubtedly that of St. Ambrose cited in Art. IV of the Apology:

. . . when the Lord Jesus came he forgave all men the sin that none could escape and by shedding his blood cancelled the bond that stood against us (Col. 2:14). This is what Paul says, "Law came in, to increase the trespass; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Rom. 5:20) through Jesus. For after the whole world was subjected, he took away the sin of the whole world, as John testified when he said (John 1:29), "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" . . .⁵

Nor is this simply a perfunctory repetition of traditional material. The Apology adds this remarkable judgment: "If you pile up all the commentators on the *Sentences* with all their magnificent titles . . . they contribute less to an understanding of Paul than this one pronouncement from Ambrose."⁶

All this must be kept in mind when tracing the notion of "special faith"—as distinct from "general faith"—in Apology XII:

For to believe in the Gospel is not to have the general faith that even the demons have (James 2:19), but, in the true sense, to believe that for Christ's sake the forgiveness of sins has been granted us; this is revealed in the Gospel. . . .

When our opponents talk about faith and say that it precedes penitence, they do not mean justifying faith but the general faith which believes that God exists, that punishments hang over the wicked, etc. Beyond such "faith" we require everyone to believe that his sins are forgiven him. We are contending for this personal⁷ faith. . . .⁸

It was at this point of "special" (or personal) faith that the oppo-

nents of the Reformation sensed a fatal weakness and self-contradiction. How can you be forgiven by faith, they asked, if your "special faith" must believe that you already are forgiven? If you are already forgiven before faith, and if faith must believe this, then how can you be forgiven by faith? John Gerhard labored at length to answer this argument of Robert Bellarmine's.⁹ But by the time of Abraham Calov (died 1688) Lutheran theology had evidently developed a simple and standard explanation of this difficulty. Calov wrote in his classic commentary on the Augsburg Confession:

[Justification] is the *object* of faith in that it is offered by God in the Gospel; it is the *effect* [of faith], to put it thus, in so far as grace having been apprehended by faith, the forgiveness of sins happens to us by that very act.¹⁰

Carpzov's celebrated *Introduction to the Symbolic Books of the Lutheran Churches* explained the same distinction in greater detail:

The forgiveness of sins is considered in a *twofold manner*. *First*, as it has been *acquired* by Christ and is *offered* as a benefit *promised* and intended by God for sinners, to be sought and had in the Word and Sacraments. *Afterwards* [forgiveness is considered] as it has already been *accepted* by faith, has been applied, and is possessed. . . . In the *first manner* the forgiveness of sins is the *object* of faith *insofar as it justifies*. . . .¹¹

This "twofold manner" of considering the forgiveness of sins, first as object and then as "effect" of faith, is precisely what was later meant by the distinction between objective and subjective justification.¹² It remains to "color in" these sketchy outlines with concrete Reformation content. And if *objective justification* is forgiveness as it exists prior to faith, then its two elements, the *past* acquisition of forgiveness by Christ and its *present* proclamation and distribution in the means of grace, suggest a natural division of the material.

Objective Justification as PAST Event

It is a commonplace that for Luther justification was the most basic, central, and decisive article of the entire Christian faith. What may not be so obvious today is that for Luther this crucial truth of justification was essentially a matter not so much of the Third as of the Second Article of the Creed. It is of this Second Article that Luther writes in his Large Catechism: "Indeed, the entire Gospel that we preach depends on the proper understanding of this article. Upon it all our salvation and blessedness are based, and it is so rich and broad that we can never learn it fully."¹³

To be sure, faith, which is itself a divine gift, is always either ex-

pressly named or taken for granted as the only means by which the salvation gained by Christ can and must be received. Here we have the deep inner connection between the Second and Third Articles. Althaus therefore puts it like this:

Thus in matters of justification, Christ and faith cannot be treated as two different things and set in opposition to each other. Christ is what he is for me in God's judgment only in that faith in which I "grasp" him; and faith is meaningful in God's judgment only because Christ is present with a man. Luther therefore means the same whether he says that we become righteous on account of Christ or that we become righteous on account of faith in Christ.¹⁴

It must be clear, however, that faith has a completely subsidiary, humble, passive function in justification. It neither creates nor enhances the gift, but merely receives it. Therefore the accent must always fall on the gift itself, on the work of Christ, not on faith as such. Luther's classic formulation in the Smalcald Articles is the great model here:

The first and chief article is this, that Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, "was put to death for our trespasses and raised again for our justification [German: righteousness]" (Rom. 4:25). He alone is "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). "God has laid upon him the iniquities of us all" (Isa. 53:6). Moreover, "all have sinned," and "they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, by his blood" (Rom. 3:23-25).

Inasmuch as this must be believed and cannot be obtained or apprehended by any work, law, or merit, it is clear and certain that such faith alone justifies us, as St. Paul says in Romans 3. . . .

Nothing in this article can be given up or compromised, even if heaven and earth and things temporal should be destroyed. For as St. Peter says, "There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). "And with his stripes we are healed" (Isa. 53:5).

On this article rests all that we teach and practice against the pope, the devil, and the world. Therefore we must be quite certain and have no doubts about it. Otherwise all is lost, and the pope, the devil, and all our adversaries will gain the victory.¹⁵

It is important to underscore the fact that Luther's justification doctrine is dominated from beginning to end by its Christological content. Modern pseudo-Lutheranism's notion that one can surrender the Christology of the Creeds and Confessions to historical criticism and still keep the Lutheran doctrine of justification¹⁶ mistakes a bloodless ghost for Luther's actual teaching. Wilhelm Maurer has said it well:

The Lutheran Church's doctrine of justification rests on the understanding of revelation as it is laid down in the great dogmas of the ancient church up to and including Augustine. If the doctrine of justification is severed from this foundation, if it is even made into a critical principle with the aid of which one wishes to destroy the foundation, then this doctrine itself withers in an abstract notionalism, then it loses its religious earnestness and the ability to produce the conviction of Christian faith.¹⁷

The impression is often given today that Luther concentrated on the "for me" of justification in a way which left to that doctrine only a superficial and perfunctory connection with the ancient Trinitarian-Christological dogma. Maurer argues convincingly that the opposite was the case. He shows that Luther's famous "*simul justus et peccator*" (at the same time saint and sinner) arose ultimately out of Christological considerations. Before Luther saw the "*simul*" in the person of the Christian, he saw it in the person of Christ: ". . . in Him were at the same time (*simul*) the highest joy and the highest sorrow,"¹⁸ precisely because of His substitutionary role.

There is of course much more to Maurer's argument than can be indicated here with one or two references. His conclusion is noteworthy, however, that "the doctrine of justification is the fruit, not the root of Lutheran theology and churchliness."¹⁹ The implication of this possibly startling sentence is simply this, that Luther's justification doctrine arose not out of the arbitrary, subjective speculations or wishful thinking of a sixteenth century monk desperately in search of forgiveness, but out of an earnest appropriation of the biblical teaching of what God has done for mankind in His Son. In this way, by going behind the dry, sterile abstractions of medieval scholasticism, to the living Trinitarian faith of the ancient church (e.g. St. Athanasius!), and by seeing this heritage again in the undimmed light of New Testament soteriology, Luther reappropriated the ancient Creeds in an extraordinarily vital and dynamic way which went far beyond any mere mechanical restorationism. It is Maurer's judgment that

Luther's Reformational discovery thus appears as the summing up, crowning, and decisive continuation of the Christian history of dogma generally. The Lutheran Church thereby gains an immediate relation to the ancient church. She steps independently beside the two great Catholic churches of the East and the West, with the claim of possessing and administering the undivided heirloom of ancient Catholicism in its authentic understanding.²⁰

Thus, as Maurer wrote elsewhere, Luther "made the ancient church's Christological dogma the ground of all theology."²¹ More's the pity

that his modern followers prefer Erasmus: "The historical-critical relativism and scepticism of Erasmus have defeated [Luther] in his own church."²²

Luther's Christology is far from being a neat and placid arrangement of pedantic formalities. Its whole thrust is towards the crowning scandal that Jesus was made "sin" (2 Cor. 5:21) and a "curse" (Gal. 3:13) for us. In this ultimate meaning of the Cross, so offensive to scholastic ears, Luther gloried.²³ In connection with this "happy exchange" Luther stated the vicarious or substitutionary satisfaction in the strongest possible terms:

He sent His Son into the world, heaped all the sins of all men upon Him, and said to Him: "Be Peter the denier; Paul the persecutor, blasphemer, and assaulter; David the adulterer; the sinner who ate the apple in Paradise; the thief on the cross. In short, be the person of all men, the one who has committed the sins of all men. And see to it that You pay and make satisfaction for them." . . . By this deed the whole world is purged and expiated from all sins, and thus it is set free from death and from every evil.²⁴

Therefore He truly became accursed according to the Law, not for Himself, but, as St. Paul says, [for us]. . . . By this fortunate exchange with us He took upon Himself our sinful person and granted us His innocent and victorious Person. Clothed and dressed in this, we are freed from the curse of the Law. . . .²⁵

It is difficult to see therefore how some scholars, like Gustaf Aulen, can deny that Luther taught the doctrine of the vicarious satisfaction.²⁶ In view of Luther's theological development, recently traced again in Lowell Green's most valuable book, *How Melancthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel*,²⁷ it is at least understandable that some confuse Luther's mature views on justification with his earlier views.²⁸ It should be clear, however, that for Luther's mature theology, which is reflected in the church's Confessions, justification is strictly forensic, since it is the same as forgiveness or acquittal.²⁹

Luther is at pains to show that Christ's redemptive, justifying work was not any sort of partial, or incomplete payment, but was an intensively and extensively perfect satisfaction for all sins of all men, past, present, and future:

If the sins of the entire world are on that one man, Jesus Christ, then they are not on the world. But if they are not on Him, then they are still on the world. . . . Not only my sins and yours, but the sins of the entire world, past, present, and future, attack Him, try to damn Him, and do in fact damn Him. . . . Thus in Christ all sin is conquered, killed, and buried; and righteousness remains the victor and the ruler eternally.³⁰

If *all* sins of *all* men have been truly and successfully expiated by Christ, then forgiveness is more than a possibility. The world's sin has been decisively dealt with, and in that sense forgiveness is an accomplished fact. Luther therefore can have no hesitation in translating the participles in 2 Corinthians 5:19 as if they were finite verbs: "For God was in Christ, and reconciled the world with Himself, and did not impute to them their sins. . . ."

For Luther as for the New Testament (note the equation of "redemption" and "forgiveness" in Colossians 1:14 and the aorists and perfect in Colossians 2:13-15) forgiveness, that is, cancellation of sin, or the change from divine wrath to divine grace, "has happened" in a way in which it has not happened either for Roman Catholicism or for Calvinism. In the Roman view, as worked out at the Council of Trent,³¹ redemption follows what may be called a benevolent father-in-law pattern: Christ earned for us the chance to earn salvation. Not the gift itself is given but the opportunity to merit it. Rome, then, denies that Christ's redemption was intensively perfect; Calvinism, with its limited atonement, denies that the redemption was extensively perfect. Luther takes with utmost seriousness the "it is finished" (completed, perfected) of St. John 19:30. And, like the ancient church, Luther does not divide the Cross and the Resurrection.³²

However, in the midst of Luther's most fervent celebrations of the objective, accomplished nature of world-forgiveness, he never forgets that only faith can receive all this: "But where there is no faith in Christ, there sin remains."³³ If this seems paradoxical, one needs to remember Luther's deep understanding of the difference between the *acquisition* of forgiveness, and its *distribution*. To this distinction we must now turn.

Objective Justification as PRESENTLY Available Treasure

Since justification equals forgiveness, we may say that for Luther justification (forgiveness) has been acquired by Christ for the whole world. This world-forgiveness or what we now call "objective justification" is a past, completed event, achieved by Christ's perfect life, suffering, and death, and signalled by His resurrection. Saying no more than this, however, would be very misleading. For it would suggest that "objective justification," like the sun that shines on the good and the bad alike, is somehow generally and directly available and accessible to men, whether they believe it or not. Rather, for Luther this general world-forgiveness which Christ has obtained is

like a "chest full of gold and treasure buried or preserved in a certain place."³⁴ This poses a problem: "I might think myself to death and experience all desire, great passion, and ardor in such knowledge and remembrance of the treasure until I became ill. But what benefit would all this be to me if this treasure were not opened, given, and brought to me and placed in my keeping?"³⁵ Then Luther explains the crucial distinction:

We treat of the forgiveness of sins in two ways. First, how it is achieved and won. Second, how it is distributed and given to us. Christ has achieved it on the cross, it is true. But he has not distributed or given it on the cross. He has not won it in the supper or sacrament. There he has distributed and given it through the Word, as also in the gospel, where it is preached. He has won it once for all on the cross. But the distribution takes place continuously, before and after, from the beginning to the end of the world.³⁶

This means that to receive forgiveness we must run not to the cross but to the means of grace:

If now I seek the forgiveness of sins, I do not run to the cross, for I will not find it given there. Nor must I hold to the suffering of Christ, as Dr. Karlstadt trifles, in knowledge or remembrance, for I will not find it there either. But I will find in the sacrament or gospel the word which distributes, presents, offers, and gives to me that forgiveness which was won on the cross.³⁷

Here is the great watershed which divides evangelical faith and churchliness from all Reformed, spiritualizing styles of piety. Luther's reply to Karlstadt and the "heavenly prophets" is uncannily relevant to our modern revivalistic and "charismatic" frenzies. What does it mean, for instance, to be invited to "come to the Cross" or "to Calvary" if the final destination is not baptism, absolution, or the body and blood of the Lamb of God, as we sing, "I come, I come," but "trained counselors" and "decision cards"? Compare this with Luther's approach:

Christ on the cross and all his suffering and his death do not avail, even if, as you teach, they are "acknowledged and meditated upon" with the utmost "passion, ardor, heartfeltness." Something else must always be there. What is it? The Word, the Word, the Word. Listen, lying spirit, the Word avails. Even if Christ were given for us and crucified a thousand times, it would all be in vain if the Word of God were absent and were not distributed and given to me with the bidding, this is for you, take what is yours.³⁸

Dr. Karlstadt's spiritualizing, by contrast, is a "fantasy": The more touchingly he speaks of "experiencing" Christ, the more "he mocks us

and does not bring us any farther than showing the health-giving treasure in a glass or vessel. We may look and smell until we are satisfied, but as in a dream. He gives nothing, opens nothing, lets us have nothing."³⁹

The distributing Word which Luther urges is of course the Gospel or, to say it most pointedly, the absolution, whether in verbal or sacramental form. Since by God's own arrangement He has placed the whole of Christ's saving work into the Gospel for distribution, there is no other access to this saving work except in the Gospel. Hence Luther's vehemence: "We should and must constantly maintain that God will not deal with us except through his external Word and sacrament. Whatever is attributed to the Spirit apart from such Word and sacrament is of the devil."⁴⁰ Nor is it an accident that the 19th century U.S. Lutheran controversy about Objective Justification began with a dispute about the nature of absolution: Is it a real imparting of forgiveness, or only a wish or reminder?⁴¹ A genuinely Lutheran treatment of Objective Justification simply cannot leave the subject hanging in air, as it were, without at once connecting it with the Gospel which alone mediates it—not the Law, nor reason, philosophy, experience or anything else. The Gospel in fact links Objective Justification, which it proclaims, offers, distributes and communicates, with Subjective Justification, where the miracle of faith, and thus of personal appropriation of the treasure, is "born of the Gospel or of absolution" (AC XII).

This Gospel or absolution offers "subjective" effects and benefits only because it carries "objective" content, value, and power. It is not a theory or report about how sins are forgiven. Rather, the Gospel is itself the actual communication of forgiveness, being "the power of God for salvation" (Rom. 1:16). Neither Rome, with its "monster of uncertainty"⁴² nor a Geneva always seeking to flutter beyond the ambiguous external Gospel and (in the name of "reason itself") "to climb higher and to examine into the secret energy of the Spirit"(!)⁴³ knows an objective absolution in Luther's sense. Of course Luther, too, knows that faith is necessary to receive the Gospel's benefits. But he insists that the Gospel, as the life-giving treasure of Christ's grace, has its own power, validity, and dignity, before, apart from, and independently of faith or unbelief. Faith depends on the Gospel, not the Gospel on faith. Our subjective fluctuations, whether of faith or unbelief, cannot make God's Key doubtful or "wobbly":

We are not talking here either about people's belief or disbelief regarding the efficacy of the keys. We realize that few believe. We are speaking of what the keys accomplish and give. He who does not accept what the keys give receives, of course, nothing. But this is not the keys' fault. Many do not believe the gospel, but this does not mean that the gospel is not true or effective. A king gives you a castle. If you do not accept it, then it is not the king's fault, nor is he guilty of a lie. But you have deceived yourself and the fault is yours. The king certainly gave it.⁴⁴

What Luther says here about absolution is not restricted, in the manner of "priestcraft," to absolution as a formal ecclesiastical rite. It refers in principle to the Gospel—the essence of which is absolution—in its various forms. Thus Luther sees the individual Gospel narratives or pericopes not simply as histories, but as "sacraments," that is, as "sacred signs through which God works in believers whatever these histories describe." Christ's words "are to be mediated as symbols, through which that very righteousness, power, and salvation are given which these very words show forth."⁴⁵

Without Luther's "lively" understanding of the means of grace, without his stress on the centrality of the concrete Gospel words and sacraments as sole purveyors of the treasures of Christ, Objective Justification can only be misunderstood and misrepresented. Our Lutheran forefathers never severed the acquisition of the treasure from its distribution in the Gospel.⁴⁶ But in our anti-sacramental age the theological doctrine of Objective Justification is easily twisted into a general popular optimism to the effect that there is no more wrath of God, and that what we need is not forgiveness itself, but only reminders and assurances from time to time of the general fact that everyone and everything is always forgiven anyhow. Luther himself was painfully aware that the Reformation was being distorted into "this rotten, pernicious, shameful, carnal liberty."⁴⁷ He and Melancthon solemnly warned, in the Saxon Visitation Articles, against the smug, easy-going sort of caricature of the Gospel which simply takes forgiveness for granted:

There neither is forgiveness of sins without repentance nor can forgiveness of sins be understood without repentance. It follows that if we preach the forgiveness of sins without repentance that the people imagine that they have already obtained the forgiveness of sins, becoming thereby secure and without compunction of conscience. This would be a greater error and sin than all the errors hitherto prevailing. Surely we need to be concerned lest, as Christ says in Matthew 12[:45], the last state become worse than the first.⁴⁸

Luther was always deeply conscious of the wrath of God as a terrible, continuing reality.⁴⁹ He never suggested that this wrath had

simply evaporated into non-existence. No, "in Christ," and there alone, it was decisively overcome and reversed—yes, for all men. But outside of Christ and the Gospel, if one spurns the "in Christ" gift freely given in the Word, one remains under judgment and wrath. "For while the act has taken place, as long as I have not appropriated it, it is as if it had not taken place for me."⁵⁰ Therefore "outside the Christian church (that is, where the Gospel is not) there is no forgiveness. . . ." ⁵¹

There is no "cheap grace" (Bonhoeffer) here. Although she glories in Objective Justification as none other can or does, the church of the Lutheran Reformation does not present this evangelical jewel as a pretext for not bothering about serious repentance. The Reformation did not abandon the awesomely realistic understanding of penitence from which it had sprung.⁵² Nor did Luther reduce the Fifth Petition to an empty sham when he wrote: "Not that he does not forgive sin even without and before our prayer; and he gave us the Gospel, in which there is nothing but forgiveness, before we prayed or even thought of it."⁵³ For he added at once: "But the point here is for us to recognize and accept this forgiveness." What is needed is not a mere reminder of forgiveness, but the thing itself. It is precisely because our need for forgiveness is so radical and constant that it cannot be confined to times of conscious petitions for forgiveness: "Let no one think that he will ever in this life reach the point where he does not need this forgiveness. In short, unless God constantly forgives, we are lost."⁵⁴

Far from being a mere reminder or "assurance"⁵⁵ of a forgiveness which we already have in some other way, the Gospel is God's actual—and only—means of granting forgiveness: "The keys truly forgive sin before him. . . . Therefore we must believe the voice of the one absolving no less than we would believe a voice coming from heaven."⁵⁶

When these various elements are taken into account, it is very evident that "Objective Justification," far from being a pedantic technicality or a "Missourian" specialty, is in fact theological shorthand for that "thickest," most central region of the fabric of Lutheran theology, where its most precious and distinctive evangelical themes come together in an indissoluble, "triple-bonded" unity: grace alone, universal grace, and the means of grace.⁵⁷

Endnotes

¹The terminology "objective" and "subjective" here is not altogether happy since "subjective justification . . . is every whit as objective as objective justification" (Henry P. Hamann, *Justification By Faith In Modern Theology*, Graduate Study Number II [St. Louis: School for Graduate Studies, Concordia Seminary, 1957], p. 60). The older Missouri Synod literature, in German, often spoke of a "general (*allgemeine*) justification." On the other hand, C. F. W. Walther's edition of Baier's *Compendium Theologiae Positivae* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1879) cites the rejection by orthodox faculties of S. Huber's contention that justification was "universal" and that Christ's redemption had properly speaking and in actual fact been conferred on all men (III, V, 286-287). The rejection of Huber's language, however, was generally understood to be due to his other errors, principally about the election of grace. Further, it was always understood that in standard ecclesiastical usage "justification" meant subjective justification ("About the Doctrine of Justification," *Synodical Conference Proceedings*, 1872, p. 68. My translation of this essay is available from Concordia Theological Seminary Press under the title, *Justification: Objective and Subjective*).

²For an attempt to divide Art. III from Art. IV in order to scuttle the latter under historical-critical pressure, see John Reumann, "The Augsburg Confession In Light Of Biblical Interpretation," in *Confessio Augustana 1530-1980, Commemoration and Self-Examination, Lutheran World Report*, 9 (1980), 3-34.

³"Forgiveness of sins is the same as justification" (Apol. IV, 76, Theodore Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959], p. 117. This definition holds also in the much disputed Ap. IV, 72, since the "making righteous" is given the sense of receiving the forgiveness of sins). The biblical basis for this is Ps. 32:1 (cf. Rom. 4:1-8). Also, "We believe, teach, and confess that according to the usage of Scripture the word 'justify' means in this article 'absolve,' that is, pronounce free from sin" (Formula of Concord, Ep., III, 7; Tappert, p. 473).

⁴Tappert, pp. 34-35.

⁵Tappert, pp. 121-122. See also FC SD III, 4: "As God and man he has by his perfect obedience redeemed us from our sins, justified and saved us" (Tappert, p. 540).

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁷Latin: *specialis*

⁸Apol. XII, 45. 60. Tappert, pp. 187-188, 190.

⁹Johann Gerhard, "De Objecto Fidei," *Loci Theologici* (Tuebingen: I. G. Cotta, 1768), Loc. XVII, cap. III, sec. IV, pp. 181-182.

¹⁰Abraham Calov, *Exegema Augustanae Confessionis* (Wittenberg: 1665), p. 4.

¹¹Quoted in Walther-Baier, *Compendium*, III, 285. Italics in Walther-Baier.

¹²Note the crucial Thesis 3 of the 1872 essay (Note 1 above): "In the pure doctrine of justification, as our Lutheran church has presented it again from God's Word and placed it on the lamp-stand, it is above all a matter of three points: 1. Of the doctrine of the general, perfect redemption of the world through Christ. 2. Of the doctrine of the power and efficacy of the means of grace, and 3. Of the doctrine of faith."

¹³Large Catechism, Creed, 33, Tappert, p. 415.

¹⁴Paul Althaus, *Die Theologie Martin Luthers* (Guetersloh: Guetersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1963), trans. Robert C. Schultz, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 231. However, Althaus' approval of Preter's claim that "the 'subjective appropriation' of reconciliation is not something which follows an 'objective' work of God . . ." (*ibid.*, p. 213) is mistaken.

¹⁵Smalcald Articles, II, I, Tappert, p. 292.

¹⁶See John Reumann's essay, cited in Note 2 above. Luther: "Here you see how necessary it is to believe and confess the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. When Arius denied this, it was necessary also for him to deny the doctrine of redemption. . . . Hence those who deny the divinity of Christ lose all Christianity and become [pagans] and Turks through and through" (*Lectures on Galatians in Luther's Works* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963], vol. 26, pp. 282-283).

¹⁷Wilhelm Maurer, "Die Anfaenge von Luthers Theologie," in his *Kirche und Geschichte*, edited by Ernst-Wilhelm Kohls and Gerhard Muller (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1970), vol. 1, p. 32.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 29.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 32.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 26.

²¹Maurer, "Die Einheit der Theologie Luthers," *op. cit.*, p. 20.

²²*Ibid.*

²³*Luther's Works*, vol. 26, pp. 276-291.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 280.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 284.

²⁶Note Althaus' refutation of Aulen in *op. cit.*, pp. 218-223.

²⁷Lowell C. Green, *How Melancthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel* (Fallbrook, Calif.: Verdict Publications, 1980).

²⁸Althaus seems to grant too much to Karl Holl here, *op. cit.*, pp. 226-228, 234-242.

²⁹Lowell Green, *op. cit.*, pp. 201ff,

³⁰*LW* 26, 280-281.

³¹Note the theological experts' "hard line" on merit at Trent, against Seripando's attempt to steer a more Augustinian course (Hubert Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent* [London: Thomas Nelson, 1961], pp. 249-260).

³²Althaus, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-211.

³³*LW* 26, 286.

³⁴"Against the Heavenly Prophets," *LW* 40, 213.

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 213-214.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 214.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 212-213.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 213.

⁴⁰Smalcald Articles, III, VIII, 10, Tappert, p. 313.

⁴¹George O. Lillegard, ed., *Faith of Our Fathers 1853-1953* (Mankato: Lutheran Synod Book Company, 1953), pp. 101-104. Cf. Justification essay, Synodical Conference *Proceedings*, 1872, pp. 20, 45, 57-64.

⁴²*LW* 26, 386-387.

⁴³John T. McNeill, ed., *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion I*, in *The Library of Christian Classics* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), vol. XX, p. 537.

⁴⁴"The Keys," *LW* 40, 367.

⁴⁵*WA* 9, 440.

⁴⁶See references 10, 11, and 12 above.

⁴⁷Large Catechism, Preface, Tappert, pp. 358-359.

⁴⁸*LW* 40, 274.

⁴⁹Wilhelm Maurer, "Suende, Schuld, Strafe. Bemerkungen zu Luthers Theologie," in Maurer, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-185.

⁵⁰LW 40, 215.

⁵¹Large Catechism, Creed, 56, Tappert, p. 418.

⁵²See Apol., XII, Penitence, esp. par. 28-60, Tappert, pp. 185-190.

⁵³Large Catechism, Lord's Prayer, Tappert, p. 432.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*

⁵⁵See Calvin's discussion in John T. McNeill, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 636-637, 638-639, 644-645, 648-649, and *passim*.

⁵⁶Apol. XII, 39. 40, Tappert, p. 187.

⁵⁷See the splendid discussion in F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, v. II, pp. 15ff., quoting Melancthon's statement: "Grace is nothing else than the condonation or remission of sin." Also Luther's judgment that the Papacy and the Anabaptists both "separate forgiveness of sins from the Word."

Ethical Reflections on the Contemporary IVF Technology*

10

1. Introduction

In the year 1978, on July 25th, the world was informed by means of sensational media reports of the birth of the first "test-tube baby." The phrase "test-tube baby" was coined by an English journalist and will stay with us. It is ironic that this "sensational medical breakthrough" has come to a world which does not hesitate to abort more than 60 million preborn human beings annually. It is even more ironic that the very small embryonic human being in a glass dish or test-tube on the day of his or her birth (after a certain period of gestation) is called a "test-tube *baby*." During the last two decades we have been told that abortion is "a woman's right to choose" and that preborn babies cannot really claim the protection of the law because they are not "legal persons." We have seen the moral confusion and theological corruption among those to whom the churches turn for theological and moral leadership, i.e., their theologians and bishops. The secularization of moral thought is no longer confined to the "world." It has captured the mind of many who still want to be regarded as Christian theologians, philosophers, ethicists, pastoral leaders and advisers. The commandment, "You shall not kill," seems to be no longer applicable to the defenseless child in the womb (or in the laboratory dish). The crying need for a clear and prophetic witness has become obvious to many. Why turn to Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) to find the truth about the human predicament while we have the Scriptures, the Confessions and a vast pastoral inheritance? Huxley's bitter social satire is certainly worth reading but it does not give us the liberating answers of the ultimate truth of the unchangeable Word of our sovereign Lord, who is and who was and who is to come (Rev. 1:4).

Contemporary IVF and related technology demand serious reflection on the part of the church. We owe this to the people of God. We cannot escape the ethical demand placed upon the theological leaders of our church(es) to inform them of the outcome of their ethical ap-

*In Vitro Fertilization

praisal of the technological revolution which is progressing at high speed towards the ultimate goal of creating a "pharmacological, genetic and womb-free paradise" (Paul Ramsey). We have to remember, though, that in such a man-made paradise there is neither poetry nor "does a baby have the right to be a surprise."

The seriousness and the complexity of the moral, social, legal and other problems are being recognized and the present writer trusts that this contribution in honor of an outstanding theologian and friend may help to clarify the thinking of those who are called to be preachers, teachers, counsellors, healers, missionaries, and leaders both in Christ's church and God's world.

2. In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) and Embryo Transfer (ET) Today

During the III World Congress of In Vitro Fertilization and Embryo Transfer which was held in Helsinki on May 14-17, 1984, and which the present writer attended and addressed, the participants received an official statement on the "current state of the art" prepared by the president of the congress, Dr. M. Seppälä. This brief statement read as follows:

A questionnaire was sent in advance to potential participants of the III World Congress of In Vitro Fertilization and Embryo Transfer, Helsinki, 1984, asking about their current practice and results on IVF by the end of January 1984. Replies were received from 58 teams. A total of 24,037 oocytes were reported to have been retrieved in 9,641 cycles. Embryo replacement has been done in 7,733 cycles yielding 590 births from 517 confinements, 570 ongoing clinical pregnancies, 316 clinical and 233 biochemical abortions. Success rate was a function of age. It was 7.2% for women over 40 years of age, 11.7% for those between 35 and 39 years, 12.7% for those under 35 years, and 13.7% for those under 30 years of age.

Normal semen yielded higher success rates than abnormal. The number of embryos replaced also had an influence on the success rate. After replacement of one embryo, the success rate was 9.7%, after two embryos 14.7%, three embryos 19.4%, and four or more embryos 23.8%.

Treatment by IVF of secondary infertility yielded better results than that of primary infertility. Among the 517 confinements there were 56 twins (10.8%), 7 triplets (1.4%), and two quadruplet pregnancies. Caesarean section rate was 49%. Only one child was reported to be born with a chromosome anomaly (21 trisomy), yielding an incidence of 0.17%. Eight fetuses from spontaneous abortions were reported to have a chromosome abnormality, but chromosomes of all aborted fetuses were probably not examined. The incidence of other types of severe fetal defects was 1.5% (9 cases).

Results of this collaborative study show that IVF is widely accepted for treatment of infertility, and it does not carry any increased risk of fetal abnormality."

Careful reading of the statement of this eminent scientist based on a questionnaire containing 25 questions and which had to be completed and returned by April 15, 1984, shows that the scientific initiation (ex corpo) of the natural event of conception does no longer belong to the realm of science fiction but to the visible and tangible realities in hospital, university and private fertility or family planning clinics.

It also shows a rapid expansion of this technology which is no longer confined to the realms of the animal breeding industry. The history of IVF and ET began in the 1890s when Walter Heape successfully transferred embryos between rabbits.¹ However, unequivocal evidence of IVF was provided in 1959 by M. C. Chang in experiments on rabbits. Their achievements were the result of the work of scientists in the fields of anatomy, embryology and microscopy. Their work "spanned many centuries." While Walter Heape has been called "the patron saint of embryo transfer," the Oldham gynecologist Patrick Steptoe and the Cambridge scientist Robert Edwards may rightly be called the patron saints of external human fertilization and human embryo transfer. Louise Joy Brown, the first "test-tube baby," was "conceived" in a small glass dish and born in the Oldham General Hospital in England. Her conception and birth were (humanly speaking) the successful outcome of scientific initiation (ex corpo), imitation (of the natural environment), application (ET), and monitoring of the natural processes of fertilization, implantation and gestation.

IVF and ET technology was developed to help couples who wanted to have a child or children in cases where childlessness was due to tubal infertility. It has become evident that the technique at the present time has wider applications. The extent to which IVF will develop is yet unknown. However, a newly established quarterly journal called *IVF Journal of In Vitro Fertilization and Embryo Transfer* (Plenum Press, New York and London) which appeared in March 1984 contains scientific articles which show the current status and future prospects of IVF and related technology. The journal also lists in vitro fertilization programs which have registered with the editorial office of the publication. In the issues which have appeared so far the present writer counted the number of registered programs on the various continents:

Africa and Asia:	2
Australia:	3
Europe:	14
North America:	30

These numbers do not accurately reflect the actual numbers of existing programs. In Australia there are at present at least 8 IVF units: Victoria 2, New South Wales 1, South Australia 2, Queensland 1, Western Australia 1, Tasmania 1.

A recent report on "In Vitro Fertilization Pregnancies, Australia 1980-1983," published by the National Perinatal Statistics Unit of the Commonwealth Institute of Health, University of Sydney (1984), gives the reader an insight into the current state of external human fertilization.

The summary at the beginning of this 32-page report states that "reports on 309 IVF pregnancies completed in the period 1980-1983 were received from seven IVF units."

There were: 65 (21.0%) biochemical pregnancies (evidence of pregnancy is derived only from specified serum levels measured no earlier than day 16 of the luteal phase); 22 (7.1%) ectopic pregnancies (pregnancy outside the uterus); 79 (25.6%) spontaneous abortions; 4 (1.3%) pregnancies resulting in stillbirths; and 139 (45.0%) pregnancies resulting in live births.

It is also noteworthy that 83 mothers (out of the 309) had one previous pregnancy; 39 mothers had two previous pregnancies; 26 had three previous pregnancies, and 10 mothers had four or more previous pregnancies. Detailed information was not available concerning the outcome of any previous pregnancies. It can therefore not be stated whether a couple had any children before the IVF pregnancy (*Report*, pp. 9 and 10).

The causes of infertility were listed as follows: 204 (66.0%) were tubo-ovarian causes, i.e. previous ectopic pregnancy, sterilization, pelvic infection and others; 37 (12.0%) suffered from endometriosis; 61 (19.7%) were given as infertility caused by sperm abnormalities.

In more than 50% of all pregnancies either two or three oocytes were collected; in 16.5%, 4; in 11.0%, 5; in 3.2%, 6; in 3.6%, 7; in 5.8% of all pregnancies, 8 or more oocytes were collected.

The application of ET techniques ("embryos replaced") had the following results:

1 embryo replaced:	59	live birth:	29
2 embryos replaced:	115	live birth:	54
3 embryos replaced:	83	live birth:	30
4 embryos replaced:	40	live birth:	21
5 embryos replaced:	9	live birth:	3
6 embryos replaced:	1	live birth:	1
not stated:	2	live birth:	1

It should be noted here that after careful calculation we arrive at the fact of knowing that at least 751 human embryos were "replaced" in the uterus of women after IVF resulting in a total of 139 live births. This implies that 612 embryonic human beings out of a total of 751 (81.5%) died before birth.

Further details could be mentioned regarding "gestational age of spontaneous abortions," "plurality of pregnancies and number of embryos replaced, live births and stillbirths," "method of delivery" (Caesarean section ended 32.1% of single pregnancies; 33.3% of twins pregnancies, and 60.0% of triplets pregnancies or 3 out of 5), "birthweight" and "congenital malformations." However, it may suffice to state that at the present time IVF and ET technology (including the freezing and thawing of human embryos) is accompanied by a huge loss of embryonic human life.

Since Australia is well advanced in the application of IVF and ET technology including embryo freezing and thawing techniques, the data presented above cannot be dismissed as being the result of a lack of technological expertise. Australia's IVF scientists are experts in their field and it is therefore even more urgent to evaluate this complex technology in terms of its social implications, its legal boundaries, and last but not least, its moral or ethical permissibility.

Related issues, e.g. the use of donor gametes, surrogate motherhood, experimentation on human embryos, prenatal adoption, freezing, storing, thawing, use and destruction of human embryos, etc., ought to be considered in the context of the current development of biotechnology and its bioethical evaluation.

On the one hand we face the propaganda for birthcontrol by means of contraceptives (including the newest "five-year implant contraceptive" Norplant), abortifacients, sterilization, and abortion (including the newest abortion pill RU-486), while on the other hand we are asked to provide resources, skills, means and support for those who suffer certain kinds of infertility problems (many of those are caused by venereal diseases, sterilization, abortifacients and abortion) which may be by-passed by giving people a chance to become the parents of a "test-tube baby" (or a "frozen test-tube baby"). At this point we should realize that IVF may cause a profound change in our understanding of parenthood. Fathers may be genetic fathers only (sperm donors); mothers may be genetic mothers only (ovum donors); fathers may be social fathers only (if his sperm cannot be provided or used); mothers may be social mothers only (if she cannot provide an ovum); women may become surrogate or host mothers

("wombs-for-hire") until the birth of their temporarily adopted pre-born baby; and so on. The present writer realizes that the AID (Artificial Insemination Donor) practice has already caused dishonesty (in completing birth registration forms), emotional and other problems (because of the absence of a genetic bond between father and AID child which in turn may cause friction between husband and wife, the latter being both genetic and social parent of the child), and possible psychological difficulties in the life of AID children when they are informed of their biological status.

IVF and ET today are causing traumas to the "unsuccessful participants," to those of us who fear the consequences of a technology which by its very nature violates the moral status of countless embryonic human beings, and to those men and women who are in a position of sociomoral, sociomedical and sociolegal leadership and responsibility.

3. Legislative Proposals

In a number of countries attempts are being made to formulate adequate legislative measures, provisions or regulations with regard to the development and application of IVF and ET technology. Many government committees have been appointed to investigate this field of biotechnology and to report their findings to their respective government or parliamentary authorities.

The most widely known committee is the English "Warnock Committee," i.e. the "Committee of Inquiry into Human Fertilization and Embryology" which was established in July 1982 and worked under the chairmanship of Dame Mary Warnock DBE. Its report was presented to Parliament in July 1984. The 103-page report is very controversial. A number of recommendations may be referred to in order to show why this report has caused much controversy in and outside the United Kingdom.

The Committee recommends that AID should be available on a properly organized basis and subject to licensing arrangements (p. 23). The semen donor will have no parental rights or duties in relation to the child (p. 25). The Committee recommends for the present a limit of ten children who can be fathered by donations from any one donor (p. 27). The service of IVF should continue to be available, subject to licensing and inspection, within the NHS (National Health Service). Egg donation should be accepted as a recognized technique in the treatment of infertility (subject to licensing and controls similar to those of AID and IVF). The relevant recommendation states (p. 37):

The principles of good practice we have already considered in relation to these other techniques should apply, including the anonymity of the donor, limitation of the number of children born from the eggs of any one donor to ten, openness with the child about his genetic origins, the availability of counselling for all parties and informed consent.

The committee also recommends embryo donation as a treatment for infertility (p. 40). Surrogacy agreements are illegal contracts and therefore unenforceable in the courts (p. 47). The clinical use of frozen embryos may continue to be developed under review by the licensing body (p. 54). It is further recommended that legislation be enacted to ensure there is no right of ownership in a human embryo (p. 56). The embryo of the human species should be afforded some protection in law (p. 63). No live human embryo derived from in vitro fertilization, whether frozen or unfrozen, may be kept alive, if not transferred to a woman, beyond fourteen days after fertilization, nor may it be used as a research subject beyond fourteen days after fertilization (p. 66). Trans-species fertilization involving human gametes should be a criminal offense except when it is used as part of a recognized programme of alleviating infertility or in the assessment or diagnosis of subfertility. It should be subject to license and a condition of granting such a license should be that the development of any resultant hybrid should be terminated at the two cell stage (p. 71).

The list of the 63 recommendations appear on pages 80-86 of the *Report*. Expressions of dissent concerning the use of human embryos in research appear on pages 90-94.

The text and recommendations of this report will have great influence on the formulation of legislation covering AID, IVF, ET and related practices, not only in England but also in other countries within and without the Commonwealth of Nations.

At the time of writing the British Parliament is in the process of debating "A Bill to make provision relating to human embryos by in vitro fertilization, and for connected purposes" (The Unborn Children [Protection] Bill 1985). This Bill prohibits the fertilization of a human ovum in vitro except for embryo insertion. The Bill has passed the first and second readings and is now in its committee stage (February, 1985).

4. Ethical Considerations

The unanimous conclusion of a 10-person study group of lawyers, theologians and doctors convened by the Lutheran Council's Division of Theological Studies—completing a 2½ year study of the

moral and theological implications of IVF—said that the process “does not in and of itself violate the will of God as reflected in the Bible” as long as the wife’s egg and husband’s sperm are used (Madison, Wisconsin, June 16, 1983; reported in “Lutheran World Information 23/83, p. 19).

This “conclusion” reminded the present writer of a recent article by Allan W. Loy, “In Vitro Fertilization: Ethical Issues.”³ The writer says that “IVF may claim ethical viability in that in effect it seeks to restore the all-important relation between sexual love and procreation even while it affirms and works with the distinction and independence of the two in relation.” This argument is related to the question of the ethical acceptability of the separation of the moral act of marital intimacy from the amoral event of conception. “Knowing”—conception—and giving birth (cf. Gen. 4:1) belong together in the context of God’s gift of unitive and procreative human love between husband and wife. IVF and ET practices do not simply correct an existing inability of bringing the procreative aspect of marital love to fruition. The laboratory dish as imitation of the natural environment and as correction of a diseased or unsuitable natural environment offers the possibility of “conception” to a certain group of infertile couples if both husband and wife can produce healthy gametes.

The present writer believes that one can make a case in favor of the moral legitimacy of trying to achieve parenthood by using the results of IVF and ET technology. However, the procedures are not as simple as for instance AIH (Artificial Insemination Husband). The husband needs to collect his sperm (usually by masturbation) and the wife has to undergo one or more laparoscopies (egg extractions or “egg pick-ups”). The whole procedure often causes great distress and is endured because of the burning desire for a child. A compassionate understanding is surely an ethical demand for all of us.

IVF and ET are not simple solutions to the serious problem of infertility and its inherent sorrow. Those who believe that in vitro fertilization technology provides an uncomplicated and easy answer to the question of morally responsible means to achieve pregnancy are mistaken.

Serious ethical considerations cannot avoid the question whether IVF technology is aiding, correcting or violating nature. If it can be established that IVF is aiding or correcting nature without violating the universal moral law (or natural law or the laws of humanity) one can legitimately accept IVF as a cure for infertility.

If we belong to the school of deontological ethicists who believe that all moral rules should reflect our obedience to God's will (e.g. Orthodox Jewish Ethics) we may have to come to terms with infertility in the context of our earthly calling and ultimate destiny. Furthermore, we could not deny that God Himself has joined together the unitive and procreative aspects of the act of marital intimacy. Contraception has effectively separated the gift of life from the gift of love. The anticipation of receiving God's blessing of a new life following the coital embrace belongs to God's design of the loving interaction between husband and wife.

The myth of the responsible use of contraceptives has exploded in our faces during the last decades of sexual anarchy and immoral behavior on the part of those who proclaimed the hour of total liberation from the moral shackles of a religious past.

It belongs to the moral contradictions of our time that the right to abort a child is placed in juxtaposition with the right to conceive and to give birth to a child. It is also true that the practice and acceptance of abortion gave way to the pursuance of IVF and ET technology.

While one may concede, within a framework of teleological and utilitarian ethical theories, the possibility of a moral acceptance of external human fertilization within the (necessarily extended) boundaries of the ethical mandates of married and family life pertaining to the nature, expression and purpose of mutual love, care and responsibility, one could not possibly accept the reality of the wastage of embryonic human beings unless he or she completely abandons the solid four-in-one foundation of evangelical ethics, i.e. Law, Gospel, Apostolic Exhortations and Faith.

The argument that "natural wastage of human embryos" often occurs without our knowledge does not justify the deliberate destruction of human embryos in the laboratory. It is customary for many people to talk about "fertilized ova." However, fertilized ova do not exist. When conception (fertilization) takes place the sperm and ovum are no longer in existence. A newly formed cell (zygote) has come into being (which never existed before!) This single-celled zygote is a living person with an enormous potential for further development. In philosophical terms a person can be "defined as a whole individual being which has the natural potential to know, love, desire, and relate to self and others in a self-reflective way." Personhood is not the result of biological development. Biological development is the outward expression of the existing inner reality of human personhood which is present as from the moment of our genesis.

"The zygote is a single cell that is a whole body in itself. From within it comes all the rest of the individual, including the strictly intra-uterine functional organs of the placenta, amnion, and chorion, as well as the rest of the body that is naturally destined for extra-uterine life. The sperm and ovum are not potential life. They are potential causes of individual human life. In the fertilization process they become causes of the new human life."⁵

Ethical considerations should not exclude the rather poetic description of our human existence as from conception: ". . . there is hope that in the wisdom of both East and West we will come to realize how we can learn from the prebirth child concerning the meaning of human existence. Eventually, people could come to see, within the studies of fetology and ontology, many points of convergence and mutual resource. And through cooperative endeavors in these and other disciplines, we could learn very much from our prenatal brothers and sisters as we ourselves continue to gestate within the premortal womb of space and time."⁶

We may even learn to understand the meaning of Psalm 139, the classic psalm in praise of God's creative work through Him who is the "craftsman of God's creation" (cf. Prov. 8:30).

5. A Lutheran Appraisal

As a Lutheran ethicist the present writer would like to remind his readers of the "3 e's" of Lutheran Ethics, namely, that ethics is at once eschatological (both God and the evil powers are at work), existential (I am at work in the decision-making process), and evangelical (the Gospel is at work through which I know who God is and who I am). Furthermore, the classic Lutheran understanding of the "Two Kingdom" concept, namely, that of God's redemption and creation ("interacting" realms), prevents us from fleeing from our "sacred secularity" which is marked by serving the other and the other's good.

The kingdom of redemption exists by virtue of the Divine indicative of God's grace. The Kingdom of creation exists through the Divine imperative of God's law. Luther has written on many subjects (not on IVF and ET) related to the "Christian in society" (cf. *L.W.*, vols. 44-46). William H. Lazareth says in his Introduction to "The Christian in Society" (*L.W.* 44:xv):

"When our secular occupations among men are faithfully acknowledged to be part of our religious vocation under God, then love provides law with its ethical content and law provides love with its social form."

This statement is relevant in the context of this brief appraisal. We

do not look for a Christian biotechnology. We search for Christian biotechnologists. The secular bears a sacredness in itself. We do not need Christianized politics, economics, science or arts. We look for Christian politicians, economists, scientists or classical scholars.

For Luther "justification determines the Christian ethos" by what it rules out and by what it affirms. Since bioethics has its *raison d'être* in the birth of biotechnology, i.e., taking life into human hands (C. Grobstein), it must take into account the realities and possibilities of this kind of technology, including the enormous implications of genetic engineering. The modification, transmission, expression and effects of the genetic structure of a living organism may be deliberately influenced and interfered with by man. Gene technology will give us good, questionable and bad practices. The interaction between scientists and ethicists is very necessary. The theologian/ethicist and the philosopher/moralist have something to say to scientists if they are prepared to listen and they in turn are prepared to learn from the latter. The scientist cannot ignore the moral dimensions and implications of his actions. He is personally involved—he involves others and most likely in the field of biotechnology he involves the society in which he lives (within local, national, and even global boundaries).

A Lutheran appraisal on the contemporary IVF technology should begin with a reference to the natural law and the laws of nature. In our evaluation of existing sociomedical ethics, in our formulation of responsible bioethical principles, and in our presentation of findings, views, and recommendations to scientists, the community and its legislators, we should be prepared to testify to the authority of the universal moral law. Lutherans should present a bioethics which will help us all in arriving at a moral decision both in health care and biomedical labors which does not violate the laws and common good of humanity.

A sociomedical ethics, advantageous to the common good of all, is based on "natural law" (the universal moral law, the laws of humanity) while not violating the laws of nature. Lutheran ethics should have something to say about life (including its good and value), justice, rights, authority, law, responsibility and obligation.⁷

A Lutheran appraisal of IVF and ET must point to the sanctity of human life and the sanctity of the institutions of marriage and the family. It must view the contemporary biotechnologies in the light of the moral mandates of the natural law, while searching the Scriptures, Confessions and the church's pastoral tradition for the purpose

of gaining a deeper insight into the nature and dimensions of these moral mandates.

In summary, a Lutheran appraisal appreciates the words of Max Charlesworth, professor of philosophy at Deakin University:

"The principle that human life has intrinsic value (value as an end in itself) and not merely instrumental value (value as a means to an end) is not so much *an* ethical principle . . . ; it is *the* principle which makes all other ethical principles possible. . . ."

However, we ought to add that the 'intrinsic value' of human life receives greater splendor when viewed in the context of the church's doctrine of creation (Psalm 8) and an even more glorious worth when we realize that Christ died for us all, including all our embryonic fellow human beings.

Adelaide, South Australia
In the Week of Invocavit

Endnotes

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²Overduin, D. Ch. and Fleming, J. I. (1982). *Life in a Test-Tube*. Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, South Australia, p. 62.

³Loy, A. W. (1984). "In-Vitro Fertilization: Ethical Issues." *Colloquium* 17:1-10.

⁴Joyce, R. E. (1978). "Personhood and the Conception Event." *The New Scholasticism* 52:97-109.

⁵*Ibid.*, 52:107.

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What Is Involved in "The Infallibility of Jesus Christ"?

11

We have to do here with a topic which is, alas, of current concern in certain circles. For behind this question there somehow always lurks one's appraisal of the authority of Holy Scripture. If I confess Jesus of Nazareth as True Man, but not at the same time as True God, then He was obviously not infallible, but will have been afflicted with errors just like each of us. In this connection we do not maintain that "error" simply presupposes ill will, but are thinking rather of our dependence on the world picture which prevails at a given time, of our dependence on our conception of State, society and culture and perhaps on the *Zeitgeist* and similar things. All of these mold our thinking in advance and perhaps they cause many things to appear in our day in a light of truth and reality which in the future will prove to be incorrect, even erroneous. If Jesus is merely a man and not at the same time True God, then we might assume that He was capable of error and indeed that in several areas He probably actually did err.

Things look different if we confess with Holy Scripture that Jesus Christ is the Incarnate Son of God. Since this involves His being omniscient, the conclusion follows that He does not err but is infallible. As is well known, this has always been the confession of Christendom.

Much has changed here in our age. Since the Enlightenment, people have on the whole no longer been prepared to accord the Biblical writings an authority which goes beyond that ascribed to profane historical documents. Instead, they are exposed to a criticism identical to that employed on every other writing. According to Christian Wolff, we are to proceed in scholarship "etsi Deus non daretur—as if God did not exist." This principle turns human reason *de facto* into the supreme authority, to which everything is subject. And since human "ratio" is always dependent on its state of knowledge at a given time, on its cultural area and on its picture of the world and man, this as it were automatically brings about a change-over from a Christian to a religious understanding of Christianity.

Jesus thus becomes an outstanding personality, a founder of a religion, a superman. In this scheme, He is not True God and is judged to be a model rather than the supreme authority. As a consequence of these developments, people delve into the Biblical writings—which are now regarded as the primary documents of religious faith—to extol whatever facets of Jesus are understood in various epochs as especially important, crucial and stimulating for personal religiosity. Whoever, because he takes the statements of the Biblical books literally, counters this trend by holding fast to Christ as True God and True Man in the sense of the Nicene Creed seems to exist on a different planet. Such a person is not only the object of hostility, but is simply not understood. While he may be a Christian, the field of theological scholarship is manifestly closed to him. Were this to be otherwise, he must be prepared to work on the sacred texts before him with the categories and methods of profane scholarship and to employ these techniques to derive from them their “actual” message, their “kerygma.”

For those who approach the Biblical statements in this way the infallibility of Christ no longer poses any kind of problem because the very concept is nonsensical. Attention has long since passed from such issues, which are regarded as “played out,” to the contemporary agenda. Indeed, it seems scarcely possible to continue in theological discussion with this group. For in the end of the day a “Christianity” understood along subjectively religious lines here stands against a theology which clings to the revelatory character of Christianity, and which would rather surrender a reputation for scholarship than part with the clear content of the Biblical statements, which it holds to be of divine authority.

In the churches, however, we are nowadays dealing by and large not merely with this group, but also with people who both intend to adhere to the fundamental content of the Christian Faith and wish to be theologically scholarly in the modern sense. The prevailing opinion in these circles has been that giving up Holy Scripture as the infallible Word of God is not identical with spurning the authority of the Word of Christ, which in every case is held to possess enduring authority. The Church’s Confessions are invoked in favor of this opinion, and the viewpoint is advocated that supreme authority rests not in fact with the Biblical writings, but with the Incarnate Son of God, and that one can adhere to His authority without being obliged to ascribe inerrancy to the Biblical writings. For several decades this attitude has bred in many people the impression that the dispute con-

cerning the character of Holy Scripture has absolutely nothing to do with faith in Jesus, and that one can be a good Christian without professing the verbal inspiration of the Old and New Testament Books. The opinion has arisen, then, that the place of Christ and confession of Him are not affected by the debate on the character of the Bible.

We do not dispute the fact that something along the lines of a "felicitous inconsistency" has been present in the minds of many theologians who have held this conviction, and that they have perhaps been blissfully unaware of the tensions and contradictions in which they have thereby become entangled. But we can no longer skirt around the problem contained in the fact that Christ's words are not restricted to statements about His saving work. On the contrary, His utterances are unequivocally bound up with statements which deal with the world-picture and with the realms of natural science or history. Are we obliged in such statements to adhere to the divine authority of Jesus, or are we to distinguish between content which pertains to our salvation and content which only expresses time-conditioned beliefs?

We tend nowadays to encounter the viewpoint that the Kenosis involved in the Incarnation of the Son of God went so far as to include even the capacity for error in the realms of natural science and history. Jesus' alleged accommodation to the convictions of His age should accordingly no longer be binding on us, since we are supposed to have a different—and, of course, more correct—world picture. For this reason, it is argued, we cannot speak of Christ's being infallible in the realms of natural science and history. A better way of expressing this way of thinking might be to say that the issue is not the errorlessness of the Son of God, but His accommodation to the conceptions of that particular epoch and cultural area in which He walked on earth. This fallibility is said to pertain as it were to the divine Condescendence.

No amount of verbal gymnastics can obscure the fact that one thing is becoming noticeable about this cast of mind: we are no longer dealing with a merely formal dispute about Holy Scripture, but have much rather stumbled unawares into the center of our Christian Faith. The issue at stake is the Person and the Work of the Redeemer. Even if it seems to be only a tiny "slice"—and perhaps an insignificant looking "slice" at that—which is being cautiously cut off, it can no longer be denied that the authority of the Son of God is in the balance. It is becoming patently obvious that one's appraisal of the Biblical writings and the content of one's confession of Jesus

Christ are much more closely interconnected than those circles which have hitherto lived in the aforementioned "felicitous inconsistency" have been willing to admit. For their sake we wish to tackle the question: what is involved in confessing the infallibility of Christ in this context?

I.

We can certainly say that a certain accommodation to conditions in the Galilee and Judea of that time had a place in the Incarnation of the Eternal Son of God. By this I do not mean merely language and things of this sort, but also the social and political situation. The report of Jesus' readiness to pay taxes (cf. Mt. 17:24ff.) must be placed under this heading, while His direction "Render to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God" (Mt. 22:15ff.; 21) contradicts the viewpoint of the Jewish public.

Jesus also set Himself in opposition to Jewish divorce customs and to the current understanding of the Sabbath, and the positions which He took in both these cases had extraordinary social and even political consequences. His accommodation thus ceased wherever the divine Law was infringed or thrown off course. Christ's diatribe against the Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes (Mt. 23) makes it clear that there could be no accommodation for Him in cases where the correct understanding of God's revelation was at stake. This principle affected not only the Commandments, but the whole extent of the Old Testament. The Lord accordingly appealed not only to the Law—the "Torah"—but also to the Prophets (Mt. 5:17), for He came to fulfill both. From this perspective we can understand how he could refer to Jonah, for example, as an historical person and prophet of God, as someone who was for Him not a figure of Old Testament legend (Mt. 12:39ff.).

"The Law" (Mt. 5:17f.) is not made up of the Commandments alone, but comprises the five Books of Moses. The Creation account, then, belongs to the Law, and it is to this account that Jesus appealed when the Pharisees asked whether a man can get divorced: ". . . He who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'" (Mt. 19:4ff.). This passage at once rules out the possibility of forging a compromise between the theory of evolution and the first two chapters of the Bible. For the first people are here named as historical persons and not as a symbolic depiction of an unknown event of remote

antiquity. If this were not so, no binding moral rule could be derived from Jesus' reference to them. Our Lord's emphasis lies on the words, "who made them from the beginning," that is, on God Himself, "who made . . . and said." Yet with this statement Jesus was precisely not accommodating Himself to His age's picture of world and society, but rather was launching a direct attack upon it. To put it differently: The Creation of the universe reported in the first two chapters of the Bible took place, as far as Jesus was concerned, just as is stated in the account, which is fully authoritative and binding. For God Himself acted here, and He acted just as the account says. What He said about Adam and Eve is therefore literally valid also for the people who lived at the time of Jesus, and, of course, for the people of all succeeding times too.

Concerning the Creation as a statement of "natural science" we refer to a second Word of Jesus, taken from His eschatological discourse: ". . . there will be such tribulation as has not been from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, and never will be" (Mk. 13:19). The literal translation from the Greek text is ". . . from beginning of creation which God created." Jesus' prophecy is set in the context of a description of actual history. Just as the catastrophes and ghastly conditions of the last times of this world are not a "legend" or intended in a symbolic sense, even so the same is true of the beginning: Almighty God Himself made the universe, which will experience this fate at a particular point in time. In making these statements, God's Incarnate Son was not obliged to accommodate Himself to any conceptions of His age. On the contrary, His picture of the future did not dovetail into the patterns of thinking of that time, whether in the realms of "natural science" or religion; it was, at best, offensive and scandalous.

When we ask what was the prevailing opinion concerning the Creation of the world held by Jesus' interlocutors, it would seem at first glance that virtual unanimity reigned among them: Almighty God created heaven and earth just as is described in the first two chapters of Moses. On closer inspection, though, we can ascertain various greater and lesser differences of opinion. Thus what is reported concerning the time prior to the creation of man was thought to belong to the "secret accounts," whose details ought not to be pressed too far, and which were given for the sake of the non-Jewish peoples etc. And the view early arose that the first man was bisexual until God divided him into male and female etc. (with two faces etc., back to back). Jesus did not get involved in these discus-

sions, but simply appealed to the wording of the Biblical accounts whenever He was challenged to do so. An accommodation to the conceptions and interpretations just mentioned did not take place, even though they would to some extent have underscored the teaching of Jesus, for example with regard to the lack of justification for ending a marriage through divorce.

We therefore cannot acknowledge the necessity for Jesus to accommodate Himself to the ideas of His contemporaries in His pronouncements on history and so-called "natural science." There was no need for Him to name the Prophet Jonah as an historical personage, and all the more so since the Sadducees considered the prophetic writings of the Old Testament to be of merely secondary importance. And with respect to the disputes with the Pharisees, it might be more appropriate to say that Jesus precisely did not accommodate Himself to the notions of His environment, but rather unequivocally appealed to the actual Word of the Bible.

Hence we find no support for the view that the Incarnate Son of God accommodated Himself to His time and world in the case of statements on history and natural science which were unimportant for the message of salvation.

Furthermore, we venture to pose the question whether it is really possible consistently to separate Christ's salvific activity and message from those aspects of His teaching which bear on history and natural history. I am of the opinion that theologians such as Rudolf Bultmann and Willi Marxsen have done us a service in seeing where these efforts lead. Assuredly, none of us will follow the thesis that the Virgin Birth, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, along with His miracles etc. are "passé" because they flatly contradict our present-day world-picture. Here we shall all, so I think, remain unreservedly committed to the clear Biblical statements, and there is no need to produce any long drawn-out demonstration that these events are uncovered by Jesus' words. The problem arises when Marxsen asks the question: why do people want to hold fast to the facticity of these events when at the same time they are prepared to take in a non-literal sense those parts of Scripture which bear on natural science, such as, for example, the Creation account? We might, of course, say in reply that the way of reaching conclusions implicit in this theologian's questioning is based on philosophical logic and is not binding for theological confessions. Even so, the question remains open why we should adopt a different procedure in the case of the Bible's statements on Creation when there is no theological reason for doing so.

If there are valid grounds for this way of thinking, they are not theological in nature, but are rather of extra-Biblical provenance. We do not maintain that all parts of the Biblical revelation are of equal value, that is, that they are of precisely the same importance for our salvation. They are nevertheless God's Word and this can in no circumstances be called in question by human convictions, motives or perceptions. If a person should do this, then the whole content of his or her faith must not of necessity immediately go up in smoke, but the history of theology does show that this is precisely what happens after a certain period of time. The beginning of this process always seems to be thoroughly innocuous and to all appearances it seems only to affect marginal portions of the divine revelation. Things do not remain stationary at this point, though, but develop further. Hence when there is no convincing and Biblically founded reason for distinguishing between the salvific truths of the Bible and its pronouncements on history and natural science and for treating the latter as less binding in nature, it is well for us to refrain from doing so. If people come to the opinion that in this area Jesus accommodated Himself to the ideas of His age, so that His words on these matters cannot be binding, then we are faced with an assault on essential propositions concerning the Person of Jesus Christ. This raises the question whether we can rely on His Word.

II.

It is helpful to go a step further by taking a look at the terminology of the New Testament with respect to the word and the matter of "error." We swiftly establish that the concept applied here—*πλάνη*; *πλανῶ*—cannot be designated as ethically neutral either in its meaning or in the context in which it stands. As becomes especially noticeable in Eph. 4:22 (*ἄπᾶτη*), it always contains the element of deception. As verb and as noun, "error" always contains the dimension of guilt; I John 4:6 even speaks of the "spirit of error," which is opposed by the "Spirit of truth."

A factor which strikes me as highly significant is that when it is said that Jesus Christ "in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15), no possibility of error or erring is given in this sinlessness of the Son of God. When Christ accommodated Himself in this way to the people of His age in His humiliation—even to the extent that He actually grew in wisdom (Lk. 2:52) or did not "know" when the End of the world would be (Mk. 13:32)—this

process never went so far as to involve the Son of God's becoming an "erring person," that is, a sinner.

We can examine the same point from a different aspect. Even in His humiliation, the Son of God says that "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father" (Mt. 11:27 and similarly Jn. 3:35; cf. Jn. 5:20; 17:2). When He "acts" as the Father acts (Jn. 5:19), this activity cannot take place on the basis of a time-conditioned world-picture and of a time-conditioned knowledge of history. Instead, even at that time He exercised His power in accordance with how the universe really is from its Creation to the end of days. What is at stake here is not mere variable knowledge; on the contrary, Scripture's statements about God always involve at the same time His concomitant activity. It goes without saying that this divine activity cannot be based upon knowledge in the fields of history and "natural science" that is capable of error. It ought to be just as obvious that erroneous knowledge concerning nature and so forth is highly dangerous, as we are very clearly noticing at the present time. The facts of the matter, then, rule out the possibility that, for the sake of accommodating Himself to the conditions of this world—"in the likeness of men [and] being found in human form" (Phil. 2:7)—Christ should also adopt errors in the areas of history and "natural science," whereby He would confirm fateful misconceptions entertained by the people who lived in the Galilee and Judea of that time. We realize afresh that "error" belongs in the realm of sin and that we meet it ultimately at the point where we will not let God speak to us. We should therefore ascribe error, as does the First Epistle of St. John, to the devil's attempts to deceive.

III.

The Confessions of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church likewise address the issue of Jesus' being without error. This occurs in the setting of refuting Reformed views concerning the relationship of the divine and human Natures of Christ to each other. Thus we read in the eleventh affirmative thesis of Article VIII of the *Epitome* of the *Formula of Concord*:

According to the personal union He always possessed this majesty. But in the state of His humiliation He dispensed with it and could therefore truly increase in age, wisdom, and favor with God and men, for He did not always disclose this majesty, but only when it pleased Him. Finally, after His resurrection He laid aside completely the form of a slave [Phil. 2:7] (not the human nature) and was established in the full use, revelation, and

manifestation of His divine majesty. Thus He entered into His glory in such a way that now not only as God, but also as man, He knows all things, can do all things, is present to all creatures, and has all things in heaven and on earth and under the earth beneath His feet and in His hands [Jn. 13:3], as He Himself testifies, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me" [Mt. 28:18], and as St. Paul states, He ascended "far above all the heavens that He might fill all things" [Eph. 4:10]. He exercises His power everywhere omnipresently, He can do everything, and He knows everything.¹

What is said here is that Christ possessed all the divine attributes even after His Incarnation. In the state of His humiliation, though, He did not always disclose them, and for this reason it is true that He did actually grow in all wisdom and grace with God and men. With the end of His state of humiliation, however, He began to use His divine majesty completely "in such a way that now not only as God, but also as a man, He knows all things etc." These observations may provoke the question: was there in the case of the Incarnate Son of God such a thing as a growth of knowledge—what today is called a "learning process"—which was based on human knowledge and which was taught to Him? And does this not mean that a particular world-picture was transmitted to Him, which subsequently came to expression in His words?

This conclusion would not be apposite. The authors of the *Formula of Concord* were very well aware that, alongside Luke 2:52, we can find a whole host of statements in the Gospels according to which, in the state of His humiliation, the Son of God made use of His divine knowledge (cf. Jn. 2:25; 13:11; 16:30; Mt. 9:4; Lk. 7:39ff.). This is why they could say in the passage that we have just quoted that "He did not always disclose this majesty, but only when it pleased Him." Consequently, His "learning process" as He grew up in the state of His humiliation by no means included anything that would militate against the knowledge of His divine Nature and therefore be erroneous. The Fathers of the *Formula of Concord*, in company with the theologians of their age, would hardly have conceived the idea that such a possibility could be associated with the state of humiliation or even be considered to be its content.

We accordingly make mention of the seventeenth through the nineteenth antitheses of the *Epitome* of Article VIII of the *Formula of Concord*, in which the following false teachings concerning the Person of Christ are condemned:

17. That according to His human spirit Christ has certain limitations as to how much He is supposed to know, and that He does not know more than is fitting and necessary to perform His office as judge.

18. That Christ does not as yet have a perfect knowledge of God and all His works, though it is written that in Him are hid "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" [Col. 2:3].

19. That according to His human spirit Christ cannot know what has existed from eternity, what is happening everywhere today, nor what will yet take place in eternity.²

IV.

Instead of offering a summary of the foregoing, we would offer some remarks concerning the gracious condescendence of God. First, this divine condescendence takes place in the interest of our salvation. For this reason the Lord speaks with His people through the Prophets, that is, through His revelation of Holy Scripture. And for this reason, supremely, He sent His Only-Begotten Son to us. This condescendence went even so far as the point which Paul describes with the words: "He was made to be sin for us" (II Cor. 5:21). This involved His becoming our Substitute, that is, His permitting Himself to be punished for our sin. Secondly, we should nevertheless misunderstand God's condescendence in Jesus Christ and the Son of God's humiliation to the "form of a servant" (Phil. 2:7; Isa. 53:2-5) if we forget the words "who knew no sin" (II Cor. 5:21). The gracious condescendence of God did not overstep the boundary that is set to sin. The condescendence of Jesus Christ led to His becoming a substitutionary sacrifice for our sin, but not to His accommodating Himself to sin. This factor must not be left out of consideration if we do not wish to stray dangerously along the paths of error. And error in the sense of Holy Scripture is sin.

We close with a quotation from Article VIII of the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord:

But we believe, teach, and confess that God the Father gave His Spirit to Christ, His beloved Son, according to the assumed human nature (whence He is called Messiah, or the Anointed) in such a way that He received the Spirit's gifts not by measure, like other saints. The "Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might and knowledge" [Isa. 11:2; 61:1] does not rest upon Christ the Lord according to His assumed human nature (according to the Deity He is of one essence with the Holy Spirit) in such a manner that as a man He therefore knows and can do only certain things in the way in which other saints know and can do things through the Holy Spirit who endows them only with created gifts. Rather, since Christ according to the Godhead is the Second Person in the Holy Trinity and the

Holy Spirit proceeds from Him as well as from the Father (and therefore He is and remains to all eternity His and the Father's own Spirit, who is never separated from the Son), it follows that through personal union the entire fullness of the Spirit (as the ancient Fathers say) is communicated to Christ according to the flesh that is personally united with the Son of God. This fullness demonstrates and manifests itself spontaneously with all power in, with, and through the human nature. The result is not that He knows only certain things and does not know certain other things, or that He can do certain things and cannot do certain other things, but that He knows and can do everything. The Father poured out upon Him without measure the Spirit of wisdom and power, so that as a man, through the personal union, He really and truly has received all knowledge and all power. In this way all the treasures of wisdom are hid in Him [Col. 2:3], all authority is given to Him [Mt. 28:18], and He is exalted to the right hand of the majesty and power of God [Heb. 1:3]. The histories [written probably around 535-40] tell us that during the time of Emperor Valens there was a peculiar sect among the Arians, called the Agnoetes, who taught that the Son, the Father's Word, indeed knows all things, but that according to His assumed human nature many things are unknown to Him. Against this sect Gregory the Great also wrote.³

Endnotes

¹*The Book of Concord* (ed. & tr. T. G. Tappert; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 488f.; cf. *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 821.

²*Op. cit.*, p. 491; cf. *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 825f.

³*Op. cit.*, p. 605f.; cf. *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 1041f.

The Holy Eucharist: At the Center or Periphery of the Church's Life in Luther's Thinking?

12

While competent scholars unanimously agree that the doctrine that the consecrated elements are the very Body and Blood of the Incarnate Son of God was a constant component of Luther's understanding of the Eucharist, much secondary literature in this area might nevertheless lead its unsuspecting readers to suppose that, until 1523 at any rate, the Real Presence of our Lord's Sacred Body and Blood stood at the periphery, not the center, of the Reformer's sacramental theology. Hans Grass summed up a widespread perception of the overall balance of the young Luther's eucharistic theology when he urged that, in *The Venerable Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ* of 1519 and *The Treatise on the New Testament, that is, the Holy Mass* of 1520, the Real Presence stood "at the margin" of the Reformer's appreciation of the Holy Supper. Grass rightly states that the chief focus of Luther's concern in the first of these writings is the notion of "communion" with Christ and His saints, and that in the second his attention fastens chiefly on the *verba* understood as Jesus' "testament" bequeathing forgiveness of sins to His people. Questionable is his view that the present and distributed Body and Blood play no instrumental role in the bestowal of these benefits.¹ The correctness or otherwise of Grass's assessment is not of interest merely to the professional Luther scholar immersed in the immensity of the Weimar Edition, for, if Grass is correct, there existed a Luther for whom the eucharistic doctrine of the *Book of Concord* was not crucial, and therefore a Lutheran Reformation prior to the composition of the Confessions for which the Real Presence might just possibly be a disposable part of the Church's dogma. In the mid-1980's, nominally Lutheran church bodies might find such a conception of the young Luther highly useful as they fall over each other to negotiate our Lord's Body and Blood away from His altars in order to extend the fruits of the Prussian Union across the globe. The purpose of this essay in honor of Dr. Robert Preus is to re-examine

Grass's conclusions respecting the function of the Real Presence in Luther's earliest eucharistic publications, and, more particularly, to demonstrate that the Reformer's conception of the Sacred Body and Blood as instruments of spiritual (including bodily) blessings in *That These Words "This is My Body etc." Still Stand Firm* of 1527 and in the *Large Catechism* of 1529 represents a continuation, and not a break, with his position at the outset of the decade.

Medieval theology had followed St. Augustine in defining a sacrament as the sign (*signum*) of a sacred reality (*res*),² identifying the former with the outward appearances of bread and wine, and urging that the latter is of twofold nature. The first reality, namely the Sacred Body and Blood, is both signified and contained by the bread and wine, which signify but do not contain the second reality, namely the mystical union of Christ and His Church.³ Should we suppose that the young Luther uncritically employed this scheme, and thereupon unreflectively race through his early sacramental writings, then we shall undoubtedly concur with Grass's conclusions. For example, in the opening paragraph of his sacramental Sermon of 1519 Luther distinguishes between the "sacrament, or sign" (*tzeychen*) and its "significance" (*bedeutung*).⁴ The second paragraph states that "the . . . external sign consists in the form or appearance of bread and wine," while the fourth alleges that "the significance or effect of this Sacrament is fellowship with all the saints," which occurs through incorporation into Christ's spiritual Body.⁵ Should Luther's distinction between "sign" and "significance" be perfectly congruous with the customary medieval distinction between "sign" and "reality," then we should be faced with the embarrassing discovery that, both here and in his other early sacramental writings, the Reformer conspicuously fails to list the Real Presence under the rubric of the "reality" of the Sacrament of the Altar. And, if the Sacred Body and Blood do not pertain to the "reality" of the Holy Supper, then they are surely expendable and may without a qualm be calmly negotiated away from our altars!

Should the "sign" in the eucharistic sermon of 1519 denote nothing more than mere bread and wine, then we may marvel at the glorious results which Luther ascribes to the eating and drinking of these ordinary mundane elements. What Grass has overlooked in his treatment of this writing is that the Reformer is here moving towards a definition of "sign" which embraces the Sacred Body and Blood, so that, if we are to compare his scheme with that of the Middle Ages, we are bound to conclude that what the medieval Church listed under the

first dimension of the "reality" of the Sacrament is brought by Luther under the heading of "sign," and that what the antecedent tradition considers as the fruit of the primary "reality" is now treated under the rubric of the "significance" of the Sacrament, that is, as the salutary effect of the Sign, viz. the present and distributed Body and Blood. In paragraph sixteen, the Reformer teaches that the "sign" is completed and perfected by the presence of Jesus' "true natural Flesh in the bread" and of His "natural true Blood in the wine."⁶ Application of this definition of "sign" to other occurrences of this term in this writing opens up a rich conception of the function of the Sacred Body and Blood in the most intimate of the Means of Grace. Thus, when we read that the Sacrament "signifies the complete union . . . of the saints,"⁷ we should err gravely by understanding "sign" as a Zwinglian *nudum signum*; rather, the "sign" that we have here is *signum efficax*, an "efficacious sign," and we shall not go far wrong by translating *bedeutet* not with "signifies," but with "effects." The key is already given in paragraph four, whose quotation of I Corinthians 10:17 conspires with the account of "sign" advanced here to make it unmistakably clear that the Mystical Body is constituted through participation in the eucharistic Body and Blood.⁸ In paragraph fifteen, the agent which effects union with Christ can be nothing other than the sacred Body and Blood, and Luther here conceives this union as geared to and consummated in our conformity with Christ in the life of the world to come. A careful reading of this paragraph leads to the inescapable conclusion that the Reformer did not begin only in 1527 to present the Sacrament of the Altar as the "medicine of immortality."⁹

Our interpretation of "sign" is secured by the exposition given this concept in the writings of 1520, *The Treatise on the New Testament, that is, the Holy Mass* and *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*. In the first of these works, the Body and Blood appear as the "sign and seal" attached to the Words of institution which impart forgiveness of sins to believers.¹⁰ Luther stresses that the eucharistic gift is the living Body and Blood of Christ, urging that, when the host is elevated, the Body of the Lord is held before the people as "the seal and sign of the testament in which Christ has bequeathed to us the remission of all sins and eternal life."¹¹ The Reformer's understanding of "sign" as equivalent to Real Presence is continued in *Babylonian Captivity*, where the Body and Blood are designated as the "sign and memorial" or "memorial sign" of Jesus' enduring promise.¹² In both treatises, Luther's reticent manner of expression makes it difficult to

determine precisely the relationship between the present and distributed Body and Blood and the forgiveness of sins, which is highlighted as the chief spiritual gift imparted through the Sacrament. But, since in his eucharistic writing of the previous year the Reformer had understood the Body and Blood to be the sign which effects the unity of Christians with Christ and each other, it is hardly likely that by 1520 Luther has relegated the Body and Blood to the role of an impotent and therefore disposable decoration. In fact, the *Treatise on the New Testament* portrays the "true Flesh and Blood" as a "powerful (*krefftiges*) and most noble seal and sign";¹³ and it is reasonable to suppose that the "powerful sign" plays an instrumental role in effecting the blessings of the Supper. With all desirable clarity, the *Large Catechism* depicts the Body and Blood as "a great treasure, through and in which we obtain the forgiveness of sins," stressing how the Word here uncovers the blessings latent in the Sacrament.¹⁴ Word and Real Presence here operate in harmony, the Word instructing the soul so that both it and the body may profit from the bodily communication of the lifegiving Flesh of Christ. While, in 1520, chief stress is placed on the Word as the transmitter of the forgiveness of sins, only subliminal Zwinglian prejudice would cause one to sever the Body and Blood from the Word, thus excluding them from the divine salutary action. That the instrumentality of the Body and Blood in the bestowal of forgiveness was not an insight vouchsafed only to the Luther of the sacramental conflict is proved by the occurrence of this teaching in the Reformer's Maundy Thursday sermon of 1521: "I am to have forgiveness of all sins through Thy Body and Blood, which I eat and drink in this Sacrament."¹⁵

The Reformer begins the third paragraph of the *Treatise on the New Testament* by stating that "Christ abolished the whole Law of Moses, and, so that He might give no further cause for sects and divisions, He instituted in return for His own people no more than one custom or law, that is, the holy Mass."¹⁶ While Baptism occurs "but once," the Mass is to be "observed throughout one's life" (*ein Übung des gantzen lebens*),¹⁷ so that "henceforth there is to be no other outward mode of worshipping God than the Mass."¹⁸ Should we ponder the full import of these words, and understand them in the context of Luther's proposal to transform the Mass from a propitiatory sacrifice offered by the officiating clergyman into the Communion of the people and of the appeals made in these early writings for frequent reception of the Body and Blood,¹⁹ then the Reformer's advice to Lazarus Spengler in 1528, in which he recommends at least weekly celebra-

tion of the Sacrament,²⁰ will strike us as the unforced corollary of Luther's understanding of the Supper. The viewpoint expressed in the letter to Spengler is taken into *CA* and *AP XXIV*, where at least weekly eucharistic celebration is proposed as normative, a position which, since Pietism and Rationalism exerted their destructive effect on the worship life of our Church, has represented a sadly unfulfilled *desideratum* of the Lutheran Confessions.

While the Reformer can enjoin weekly celebration of the Sacrament on the clergy, he noticeably refrains from ordering the laity to commune weekly. His reticence here perfectly parallels his softly-softly approach towards accustoming the laity once again to receive the Supper in both kinds. Age-old custom can be overcome only gradually, and just as it would take time for the laity to get used to receiving the Chalice, so likewise gentle pastoral care and unremitting instruction would be needed in order to make inroads into the medieval habit of communing only once or thrice a year. But Luther's refusal to dragoon the laity to the altar must not be so interpreted that we fail to mark his clear longing for frequent Communion to be the rule and not the exception of congregational life. His statement, in the preface to the *Small Catechism*, that the clergy should so preach that the laity will not only desire the Sacrament but even compel its administration,²¹ is matched by the stipulation made in some of the early *Church Orders* that the weekly celebration of the Sacrament be supplemented by weekday celebrations following the daily offices, whenever the people so desire.²²

The Reformer's longing for frequent Communion to be restored to the heart of the Church's life proceeds directly from his understanding of the Person and Work of Christ, which is the central theme of his whole theology.²³ It is a great pity that the *Catalog of Testimonies* has become a largely unread appendix in original language editions of the *Book of Concord*, and that it has been regarded as so irrelevant for American Lutheranism as to warrant its total exclusion from the Tappert edition. In fact, the *Catalog* represents Chemnitz' consummation of Luther's reappropriation of the rich Christology of Holy Scripture and the ancient Greek fathers; and, since this Christology is not merely an occasional vein in the *Book of Concord*, but rather the ontological foundation for all that our Symbols teach concerning the restoration of fallen mankind through Christ, there would be ample justification for printing the *Catalog*, as a commentary on the ancient Creeds, at the very outset of the confessional writings. Nowhere is the fruitfulness of Luther's Christology more apparent than in his

reply to the blasphemy of Karlstadt and Zwingli, who could ridicule our Lord's bodily presence in the Sacrament because they included His Flesh under His own statements that "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (Jn. 3:6), and "the flesh is of no avail" (Jn. 6:63). On the contrary, urges Luther, Christ's Flesh, which is "the most holy Thing,"²⁴ is the "bodily dwelling place of the Spirit, through Which the Spirit comes into all others";²⁵ it is "a God's Flesh, a Spirit's Flesh."²⁶ Since it unrestrictedly receives the very life of God through the hypostatic union, our Lord's Flesh can impart this life to those who participate in it.²⁷ This perception, which is brim full of rich implications for our appreciation of the Supper, echoes the eleventh Canon of the Council of Ephesus of 431, to which allusion is made in *SD VIII*, 76,²⁸ and which is explicitly quoted in *Catalog III*, whose purpose is to demonstrate that "the human nature has in deed and in truth received, and uses, this [divine] Majesty."²⁹

When establishing the essence of the Sacrament of the Altar, the Reformer permits his mind to be shaped solely by the *verba testamenti*, but, since "Sacred Scripture is its own interpreter," he freely ranges through the Gospels for the purpose of indicating the benefits that accrue to believing participation in the Sacred Body and Blood. Our Lord's physical presence is shown to have benefited the Blessed Virgin Mary, the shepherds of Bethlehem, the woman with the flow of blood, and Simeon in the Temple;³⁰ and in the third of these cases, the spiritual benefit clearly included a physical effect. These saints were benefited in a variety of ways because their physical touching or other contact with Incarnate God took place in the setting of their faith in Him. The Mother of God's physical and spiritual pregnancy with the same Fruit thus makes her the paradigm of the worthy communicant, who partakes both sacramentally and spiritually in the Body of Christ. While John 6 speaks directly of the "spiritual eating," since "the same Flesh" is the subject of both the "spiritual" and the "sacramental" eating,³¹ and since the Supper is meant to be the point at which the "spiritual" and the "sacramental" eating coincide,³² the mature Luther was able to interpret John 6 as shedding light on the Eucharist.³³

Nowhere does the Reformer restrict the benefits of believing participation in the Sacred Body and Blood to the forgiveness of sins; but, if forgiveness is not the sole benefit of the Supper, it is certainly the matrix of all benefits as the life of Incarnate God is here imparted to His indigent brothers and sisters. "Union with Christ" is the rubric under which we might subsume Luther's view of the benefits follow-

ing forgiveness which are given to the believing communicant.³⁴ But we should be wrong if, in reaction to some theologians' restriction of eucharistic benefits to forgiveness alone, we were to take the Reformer to propose a series of disconnected benefits, supposing perhaps that, in the *Large Catechism*, Luther teaches in turn a "justification," "sanctification" and "glorification" benefit (LC V, 21-22, 23-27, 68). Rather, he maintains that what is given in the Supper through the present and distributed Body and Blood is a reality known to faith but hid from the world until the Last Day, namely, the forgiveness of sins and the full conformity to the Risen Jesus which flows from it: Absolution as the renewal of the life of Christ within us (LC V, 21-22), Absolution as the driving force of the life of Christ within us which triumphs over temptation (LC V, 23-27), and Absolution whose bodily corollary is the resurrection of the dead (LC V, 68), in virtue of the "secret power and benefit which flows from the Body of Christ in the Supper into our body."³⁵

The Reformer's delight in following the ancient Fathers by witnessing to the eschatological, bodily benefits of the Holy Supper has not been emulated by many modern students of his thought. While frankly acknowledging the existence of this strand of Luther's eucharistic theology, Hans Grass has maintained that its upshot is to "set us at odds with the reformational principle that God's revelatory action upon us occurs in a strictly personal mode—*streng personhaft geschieht*."³⁶ For Grass, then, the "personal" rules out the "ontological" and the "substantial" aspects of God's saving dealings with us. One may justly doubt whether Grass's "strictly personal mode" is actually rooted in the Lutheran Reformation, for his self-distancing from the Reformer would seem to owe much to Martin Buber's I-Thou philosophy and to Karl Barth's loathing of the *analogia entis*. In fact, Luther's whole understanding of the ongoing communion of the natures within the hypostatic union both presupposes and crowns the notion of an *analogia entis* between divine and creaturely being, utterly refusing to be accommodated within the deficient framework of the tritely reductionist Ritschlian-existentialist scheme into which Paul Althaus, for example, sought to set his account of the Reformer's Christology.³⁷ Luther's "ontological-substantial" Christology is the parent of a similarly "ontological-substantial" understanding of the formation of the new man in Baptism, and of his continuing nourishment through the Holy Communion. Here, supremely, Christ unites Himself with His brethren not only "personally" but also "by nature." In his great eucharistic work of 1527,

Luther quotes the fourth-century St. Hilary of Poitiers to this effect;³⁸ and the same doctrine is expressed through the lips of St. Cyril of Alexandria in *Apology X*.³⁹ Refusal to follow the Reformer and the Confessions at this point must ultimately proceed from a defective Christology. For what we have in Luther's conception of the blessings of the Holy Supper is the flower of a whole theology of the Incarnation which is sorely needed by the whole of Christendom, and which has been bestowed by Almighty God on His Lutheran children, not to be hidden under a bushel, but to be pondered, preserved and proclaimed.

Endnotes

¹*Die Abendmahlslehre bei Luther and Calvin* (2nd ed., Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1954), pp. 19-29. The late Dr. Hermann Sasse seems, but only seems, to say something similar in *This is My Body. Luther's Contention for the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar* (rev. ed., Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1977), p. 83. According to Sasse, what was implicit prior to 1523 becomes explicit thereafter.

²The definition "Sacramentum est sacrae rei signum" is found in Peter Lombard: *Sententiarum libri quattuor IV*, dist. 1, 2 (MPL 192, 839). It builds on such statements of St. Augustine as are found in *Sermo 272* (MPL 38, 1247), *de civ. Dei X*, 5 (MPL 41, 282), and *EP. 138*, 7 (MPL (33, 527).

³Peter Lombard: *Sententiarum libri quattuor IV*, dist. 8, 4 (MPL 192, 857).

⁴WA 2. 742, 7-8. cf. LW 35, 49.

⁵WA 2. 742, 15-16; 743, 7-8. cf. LW 35, 49-51.

⁶WA 2. 749, 7-10. cf. LW 35, 59.

⁷WA 2. 742, 33-743, 1. cf. LW 35, 50.

⁸WA 2. 743, 7-26. cf. LW 35, 51.

⁹WA 2. 748, 27-749, 6. cf. LW 35, 59.

¹⁰WA 6. 358, 22. cf. LW 35, 85.

¹¹WA 6. 359, 18-25. cf. LW 35, 86f.

¹²WA 6. 515, 24; 518, 10-11. cf. LW 36, 40 & 44.

¹³WA 6. 359, 4-6. cf. LW 35, 86.

¹⁴*Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* (8th ed., Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), p. 711, 38-712, 5; 713, 1-23). cf. *The Book of Concord* (tr. & ed. T. G. Tappert, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p. 449f.

¹⁵WA 7. 695, 6-7.

¹⁶WA 6. 354, 18-22. cf. LW 35, 80.

¹⁷WA 6. 354, 22-24. cf. LW 35, 81.

¹⁸WA 6. 354, 24-25. cf. LW 35, 81.

¹⁹WA 2. 747, 4-6; 6. 354, 18-25; 358, 32-34; 372, 22-373, 5; 373, 9-25. cf. LW 35, 56; 81; 86; 104; 105.

²⁰"Should anyone request my counsel in this way, then I would give this advice: . . . Secondly, that you should celebrate one or two Masses in the two parish churches on Sundays or holy days, depending on whether there are few or many

communicants. Should it be regarded as needful or good, you might do the same in the hospital too. Thirdly, you might celebrate Mass during the week on whichever days it would be needful, that is, if any communicants would be present and would ask for and request the Sacrament. This way we should compel no one to receive the Sacrament, and yet everyone would be adequately served in an orderly manner. If the Ministers of the Church would fall to griping at this point, maintaining that they were being placed under duress or complaining that they are unfitted to face such demands, then I would demonstrate to them that no merely human compulsion is at work here, but on the contrary they are being compelled by God Himself through His Call. For because they have the Office, they are already, in virtue of their Call and Office, obliged and compelled to administer the Sacrament whenever people request it of them, so that their excuses amount to nothing; just as they are under obligation to preach, comfort, absolve, help the poor, and visit the sick as often as people need or ask for these services" (WABr 4. 534, 14-533, 34; Aug. 15th, 1528). Günther Stiller's study of *Johann Sebastian Bach and Liturgical Life in Leipzig* (tr. Herbert J. A. Bouman, Daniel F. Poellot, and Hilton C. Oswald, ed. Robin A. Leaver; St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), which tells the heartening story of a liturgical revival in 18th century Leipzig that ran counter to the Pietistic tide, focuses vigorously on "the fundamental importance the Sacrament had in the life and thought of the evangelical Christians in the age of orthodoxy. The Lutheran Church was then still the church of Word and Sacrament. Beside the proclaimed Word stood the Sacrament of the Altar at the very center of the Sunday and festival day main service as 'the most sacred mystery of the body and blood of Christ' and the 'true source of grace and inexhaustible fountain of mercy'" (op.cit., p. 138).

²¹*Bekenntnisschriften*, p. 506, 4-7; cf. *Tappert*, p. 340f.

²²See, e.g., Emil Sehling, ed.: *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: O. R. Reisland, 1902-1913; 4 vols.) I, p. 429 (Church Order of Augustus, Duke of Saxony, 1586); and Emil L. Richter, ed.: *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des sechszehnten Jahrhunderts, Urkunden and Regesten zur Geschichte des Rechts und der Verfassung der evangelischen Kirche in Duetschland* (Weimar: Verlag des Landes-Industriecomptoirs, 1846; 2 vols.) I, p. 44 (Johann Brenz's Church Order of 1526 for Schwäbisch-Hall).

²³The foundational "chief article" of Smalcald Articles II, 1 cannot stand without the Trinitarian and Christological affirmations of Part I, which are no mere formality for the Reformer, but rather the ontological basis of everything asserted in Parts II and III; just as CA IV is simply the appropriation of the content of CA III through the Means specified in CA V. cf. the sage judgments of the late Dr. Wilhelm Maurer: "Die Einheit der Theologie Luthers," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 75 (1950), pp. 245, 251.

²⁴"Das doch das aller heyligst ist": WA 18. 193, 3-4. cf. LW 40, 203.

²⁵WA 23. 192, 4-5. LW 37, 95 understands the masculine pronoun "er" personally as a reference to our Lord Himself, but the "er" of the German text can just as easily be taken as referring back to the antecedent "*Christus leib*—Christ's Body."

²⁶WA 23. 242, 36. cf. LW 37, 124.

²⁷WA 23. 242, 36-244, 2. cf. LW 37, 124f. see also WA 23. 250, 20-23; cf. LW 37, 129f.; and WA 23. 150, 13-24; cf. LW 37, 68f.

²⁸*Bekenntnisschriften*, p. 1042, 39-1043, 6; *Tappert*, p. 606.

²⁹Canon XI is cited in *Bekenntnisschriften*, p. 1119, 36-41; see *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 1129.

³⁰WA 23. 172, 21-174, 22; 184, 7-186, 22. cf. LW 37, 82-83; 89-91.

³¹WA 23. 202, 31-33. cf. LW 37, 100.

³²WA 23. 178, 7-16. cf. LW 37, 85.

³³WA 23. 154, 35-156, 2. cf. LW 37, 71. This is the first time in the work of 1527 that Luther picks up the "medicine of immortality" motif, and one wonders whether his assertion will stand without a perception of a eucharistic dimension in John 6. In WA 23. 202-204 (cf. LW 37, 100), one cannot but be struck by the ease with which Luther passes from John 6:27, 51 to sacramental participation in the Body of Christ. Again, in WA 23. 236, 32-238, 6 (cf. LW 37, 121), Luther approvingly quotes St. Hilary's eucharistic application of John 6:55. For a wholehearted eucharistic interpretation of John 6 in the Orthodox period, see the XVIIIth and XIXth of Johann Gerhard's *Sacred Meditations* (tr. C. W. Heisler; Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1896), pp. 98-107.

³⁴See, e.g., Luther's Maundy Thursday sermon of 1525, in which he can use John 6 to hammer home the eucharistic union with Christ: "I most certainly have the Body and Blood of Christ through the Word of God: 'This is My Body, which is for you,' 'This is My Blood, which is shed for you' etc. The reason why Christ thus gives me His Body and His Blood is so that I may have them for ever. If this then be true, and likewise this, that the righteousness of Christ and all that He has are mine, and if this is much more certain than that my body and blood are my own, then it is necessary that I believe that the Body was given for me and the Blood shed for me. And this is what Christ is saying in John 6: 'Whoever eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood abides in Me and I in him.' For Christ and I are being baked into each other in such a way that my sin and death become His and His righteousness and life become my own. In short, a most blessed exchange is taking place here" (WA 17 I. 174, 21-175, 10).

³⁵WA 23. 258, 6-7. cf. LW 37, 134.

³⁶*Die Abendmahlslehre bei Luther and Calvin*, p. 109.

³⁷see his *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 179-198.

³⁸WA 23. 236, 10-16. cf. LW 37, 120.

³⁹*Bekenntnisschriften*, p. 248, 21-33; Tappert, p. 179.

Martin Chemnitz and SD VII, 126

13

Martin Chemnitz (1522–1586) is generally recognized as the principal author of the Formula of Concord. This judgment is based on the fact that while several theologians of Northern Germany made some contributions to the Saxon-Swabian Confession (the chief precursor of the Formula), it is nevertheless agreed that the bulk of the document was the product of Chemnitz. In addition, Chemnitz was present at all three decisive meetings which put the finishing touches to the Formula: May 1576 at Torgau; March 1–14, 1577 at the Bergen Abbey, when he together with Andreae and Selnecker revised the Torgau Book on the basis of the suggestions received by the Elector during the preceding year; and the final meeting at the Bergen Abbey, May 19–28, 1577, when these three, with the addition of Chytraeus from Rostock, and Musculus and Koerner from Frankfort-on-the-Oder, made the final revisions of the document which is now the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord.

Besides this, the influence of some of Chemnitz's major writings on the Formula becomes apparent when one compares wordings of the Formula with the concepts and sentences found in some of Chemnitz's chief works, such as *The Two Natures in Christ* (1570), *The Examination of the Council of Trent* (1565–1573), and *The Lord's Supper* (1570). Luther, of course, is the theologian whose words are repeatedly quoted.¹ One of the most striking parallels between Chemnitz's private writings and the Formula is *SD VII, 126*:

Likewise, the teaching that the elements (the visible forms of the blessed bread and wine) are to be adored. Of course, no one except an Arian heretic can or will deny that Christ himself, true God and man, who is truly and essentially present in the Supper when it is rightly used, should be adored in spirit and truth in all places but especially where his community is assembled.²

The content of this antithesis is taken from the *Examination*, Part II (*Ex. 2, 277–281*), which has been telescoped into the two sentences in the Formula. The last sentence of this condemnatory clause has been lifted almost word for word from Chemnitz (*Ex. 2, 279*). These last two antitheses (*SD VII, 126, 127*) of the sixteen directed against the Sacramentarians are of a different nature from the previous ones,

in that they do not deal with specific Sacramentarian errors, but rather reject false accusations made against the doctrine of the true Lutherans. They are disavowals that the Lutherans ever countenanced the adoration of the visible elements, and that they permitted any kind of thinking which regarded the sacramental union as consisting of a circumscriptive "comprehensible, corporeal mode of presence as when He [Christ] walked on earth and vacated or occupied space according to His size" (*SD VII*, 99; see also *LW 37*, 222 and *TNC 448*).

The first sentence of *SD VII*, 126 reads, "Likewise, the teaching that the elements (the visible forms of the blessed bread and wine) are to be adored." At first blush this seems to be directed against the Roman Catholics, and one wonders why these careful, systematically-thinking Lutheran theologians did not place it among the antitheses against the Papists, that is, somewhere within *SD VII*, 108-110. Here there are three condemnatory clauses: rejection of transubstantiation; of the Sacrifice of the Mass; and of the retention of the cup from the laity. With respect to the first of these three, it not only rejects the idea that the bread and the wine have been annihilated so that only the body and blood remain, but also that after the consecration there results the continued presence of the body and blood of Christ "apart from the action of the Sacrament" (*SD VII*, 108). Further, it should be noted that besides rejecting transubstantiation this carefully constructed antithesis speaks *only* about the adoration outside the prescribed action which had already been defined in *SD VII*, 84: consecrate, distribute, and eat and drink. *SD VII*, 85 and 86 make it evident that the terms "action" and "use" are regarded as synonymous in this context. One cannot help seeing how clearly the *Solid Declaration* here follows the exposition of Chemnitz. He always carefully defined the action to which the command and promise are bound in words like these, "When the bread is taken, blessed, distributed, and eaten" (*Ex. 2*, 280). He then adds the clarifying statement, "Let us diligently ponder in the fear of God what and what manner of act it is to set this bread, *apart from its proper use*, before the people to be adored, although we have no word of God concerning it that it is the body of Christ!" (*Ex. 2*, 280; emphasis added). And this is all that Chemnitz and the formulators have said with regard to the adoration in *SD VII*, 108. There is no rejection of the veneration within the prescribed use.

In the *Examination* Chemnitz then makes clear the difference between the Roman and the Lutheran positions:

It does not follow that if in the *true use* of the Lord's Supper Christ is rightly worshipped, then a particular cult or worship should be instituted *apart from this use*, as when it is carried about or reserved. . . . And there is no Word of God about the bread of the Eucharist being reserved or carried about in procession; in fact, it conflicts with the Words of Institution when the bread which has been blessed is not distributed, not received, not eaten. (Ex. 2, 280f.; emphasis added)

To return to *SD VII*, 126, it is apparent that this antithesis is not condemning the veneration within the prescribed action, but rather that it has something else in mind with the words, "Likewise, the teaching that the elements (the visible forms of the blessed bread and wine) are to be adored." Chemnitz said the same thing in the *Examination* in a somewhat fuller way, "Because the Eucharist consists of two things, an earthly, and a heavenly, worship and veneration is not to be directed to the earthly elements, bread and wine, but to Christ, God and Man, who in this action decreed and promised His presence in a particularly gracious manner (Ex. 2, 280).

A closer look at the second sentence of *SD VII*, 126, will reveal how fully the Formula agrees with Luther and Chemnitz on the veneration of the Sacrament, "Of course, no one except an Arian heretic can or will deny that Christ himself, true God and man, who is truly and essentially present in the Supper when it is rightly used, should be adored in spirit and in truth in all places but especially where his community is assembled." This sentence, as has already been noted, compresses into one several paragraphs of the *Examination* (Ex. 2, 277-279). Keeping in mind the precisely defined concept of the prescribed action of this Sacrament one can better understand Chemnitz's examination of Chapter V and Canons VI and VII of the Tridentine Decree Concerning the Sacrament of the Eucharist (October 11, 1551). These deal with the cult and the veneration of the Sacrament (Ex. 2, 276f.)

The startling thing which immediately hits the eye of the modern Lutheran reader is that at the very outset of his analysis of this point Chemnitz insists that we must know what has been placed in controversy, for he acknowledges that a "number of things are not in controversy; these I willingly concede" (Ex. 2, 277). Then in a brilliantly conceived presentation which sets Chemnitz apart from the Sacramentarians and the Melancthonians, both of whom denied the possibility of the venerating of the Sacrament, Chemnitz makes three points:

1. That Christ, God and man, is to be worshiped, no one but an Arian denies. (Ex. 2, 227)

2. That also His human nature, because of its union with the divinity, is to be worshiped, no one but a Nestorian calls into question. (*Ex. 2, 277*)
3. That no one therefore denies that Christ, God and man, truly and substantially present in His divine and human nature, *in the action of the Lord's Supper*, should be worshiped in spirit and in truth, except someone who, with the Sacramentarians, either denies or harbors doubts concerning the presence of Christ in the Supper. Neither can the *Anamnesis* and the proclamation of the death of Christ in the Supper be rightly done without the worship which is done in spirit and in truth. (*Ex. 2, 279*; emphasis added)

Point three and SD VII, 126b are virtually identical. The differences are of no significance. Of the heretical groups that cannot accept the veneration of the Sacrament (that is, the Arian, the Nestorian, and the Sacramentarian), the SD names only the first, thereby putting all three into the same category. The SD text also employs the term "when it [the Supper] is rightly used," where Chemnitz has "in the action of the Supper." But both phrases are identical in meaning, as can be seen from SD VII, 84–87. This striking similarity tempts one almost to see a copy of the *Examination* in the Torgau conference room in 1576. That this is not a far-fetched thought is evident from Chemnitz's dedicatory epistle in the 1578 edition of *The Two Natures in Christ*. There he modestly speaks of the first edition of the TNC (1561), "Two years ago at the Torgau Castle [May 28-June 3, 1576], where this little volume received rather favorable mention, a careful and diligent study of the statements dealing with this subject was undertaken" (TNC, 21).

Chemnitz, of course, confesses that the final purpose of this Sacrament is the oral reception of the body and blood of Christ in which "the whole treasury of all the benefits which Christ the Mediator procured by the offering up of His body . . . [are] certainly communicated to him [the believer], and firmly given and pledged to him" (*Ex. 2, 232*). But he also concedes that it is a permissible practice to worship Jesus Christ who is present in the definitive mode in the prescribed action of the Supper. One notes also that at the very beginning of the discussion of the veneration he confesses these three points: "Lest someone should suspect that we called into doubt whether Christ, God and man, *who is present in the action of the Supper*, should be worshiped" (*Ex. 2, 279*; emphasis added).

There can be no question that Chemnitz believes that the consecration in a valid observance of the Supper achieves the Real Presence, and he could not for theological reasons accept the position that we cannot fix from Scripture within the Sacramental *usus* when the Real

Presence of Christ's body and blood begins. Throughout all his writings he assumes that the consecration effects the Real Presence and that these elements are to be distributed and received as the body and blood of Christ. Christ's words in Matthew 26:28 make this certain for Chemnitz: We are to eat and drink "because this is my blood" and not because it is merely a "common cup" (LS 99). In *The Lord's Supper* he recognizes that the controversy with the Sacramentarians does not have to do with an absolute and unchanging presence "outside of their use," since "both parties disapprove of these practices on the basis of Scripture" (LS 37; emphasis added).

He acknowledges that the Ancient Church used several synonyms for the consecration: sanctification, blessing, receiving its name from God, etc. (Ex. 2, 225). To explain his own doctrine Chemnitz often quotes Irenaeus, "Just as that which is bread from the earth, when it receives the call of God, is no longer common bread but the Eucharist, consisting of two parts, the earthly and the heavenly" (LS 169). The consecration, as the church had recognized from the beginning, is performed with the speech of Christ, that is, with the Words of Institution (Ex. 2, 226). The basis for the recitation of the Verba is for Chemnitz the command of Christ, "This do in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:23-25). The Verba are the powerful creative words of Christ because of Christ's command and promise:

Christ adds the command: "Do this"; that is, what had been done at the first Supper should be done afterward or in the future until the end of the world (as Paul explains). If this command had not been handed down by Christ, no man would have dared or ought to have imitated what was done at the first Supper. (Ex. 2, 403)

The Formula explicitly rejects transubstantiation (SD VII, 35) but it does confess the "sacramental union" (SD VII, 35), that is, that in the Supper, by means of the consecration, two distinct things are joined together to make a complete sacrament. Chemnitz explicates this point with a quotation from Augustine, "Our bread and cup become sacramental by a certain consecration; it does not grow that way" (Ex. 2, 225). He then adds his own comment to Augustine's, "Therefore what is not consecrated, though it be bread and cup, is food for refreshment, not a religious sacrament" (Ex. 2, 225). Lest there be any misunderstanding, Chemnitz has added the explanation, "The meaning is not that the blessed bread which is divided, which is offered, and which the Apostles received from the hand of Christ, was not the body of Christ but becomes the body of Christ when the eating of it is begun" (Ex. 2, 248).

The end result of this doctrine is that the consecration has achieved

the sacramental union, so that Jesus Christ is present according to both natures with His body and blood. This is to be believed, declares Chemnitz, because we have an express promise "that He wills to be present with His body and blood in the observance of His Supper as it is celebrated in the gathering of the Church here on earth in accord with His institution" (TNC 432). Chemnitz then draws the inevitable conclusion, "Therefore, if we believe that Christ, God and man, is present with a peculiar mode of presence and grace in the action of His Supper, . . . it neither can nor should happen that faith would fail to venerate and worship Christ who is present in this action" (Ex. 2, 277; emphasis added).

Chemnitz has carefully chosen the word "faith" in the preceding statement, "that faith would fail to venerate." That he is not thinking primarily of external observances is evident, for he states categorically "that the assumed outward appearance of worship, without the inner spiritual impulses, does not please God," citing as examples for this declaration Christ's words in Matthew 15:8.9 (Ex. 2, 281). First, there must be "true, inner spiritual worship." This worship "is comprehended in these words 'Do this in remembrance of me.' Likewise, 'You proclaim the Lord's death'" (Ex. 2, 282). This means that "you do this" when

the heart believes and thinks rightly, piously, and reverently about the essence and use of this sacrament, according to the Word . . . ; when with a thankful mind we faithfully ponder, and with the heart and mouth praise these immeasurable benefits of the Son of God, the Mediator. . . ; when we call in ardent prayer upon Christ, God and man, whom we believe to be truly and substantially present in that action, that He would be our Mediator, Propitiator, Advocate, Intercessor, Justifier, and Savior, that we may because of His death be received and preserved in the covenant of the New Testament . . . ; likewise when faith in prayer interposes the sacrifice of Christ the Mediator between our sins and the wrath of the Father. . . . (Ex. 2, 282f.; emphasis added).

As Chemnitz writes these words, he no doubt has in mind Luther's fundamental point in defending the adoration, namely, that inward adoration must precede any outward adoration. Luther in his *Adoration of the Sacrament* asserted that the important thing to remember is that "true worship can be nothing else than faith; it [worship] is faith's sublimest activity with respect to God. . . . In a word, where there is none of this heartfelt trust and confidence that comes from a true and living faith . . . , there can be no true worship because God is not recognized with a heartfelt confidence of faith" (LW 36, 293). Chemnitz concurs with Luther when he declares that after this inner

spiritual worship, "the true external indications of inward reverence finally and rightly follow (*Ex. 2, 281*).

Keeping these background thoughts in mind, it becomes clear that the condemnatory clause embodied in *SD VII, 126* is placed at the end of the Sacramentarian antitheses only to disavow the charge that the true Lutherans were guilty of idolatry. This accusation was an incessant refrain chanted by the Sacramentarians and the Melancthonians who did not believe that the consecration effected the sacramental union. Luther, Chemnitz, and their followers, vehemently denied that they adored the external elements (the visible forms of the blessed bread and wine). But at the same time they readily confessed that Jesus Christ, true God and man in one person, was sacramentally united with the bread and wine through the Words of Institution, and that when the Supper was rightly used, He was to be adored there "in spirit and in truth" (*SD VII, 126*).

History does repeat itself, at least to the extent that one can recognize parallel situations that have arisen within the church. Three hundred years after *SD VII, 126* was written, confessional Lutherans in the United States were confronted with the same problem that plagued Chemnitz and his fellow Lutherans: the need to deny false accusations. During the controversies preceding the Formula of Concord, the phrase "Crypto-Calvinism" was coined to designate those within the Lutheran Church who secretly held to the Calvinist doctrine of the Lord's Supper as formulated, for example, in the *Exegesis Perspicua* (1573). In the 1880's in the United States the term "Crypto-Calvinism" was revived and widely used, but in a different context. The charge was raised against the Synodical Conference Lutherans that they were secretly introducing Calvin's absolute decree of election and reprobation. While these synods publicly repudiated ever teaching any kind of Calvinism, and insisted that they confessed the *gratia universalis* with all seriousness, the accusation of "Crypto-Calvinism" persisted into the twentieth century. The result was that in 1932, when the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod adopted its "Brief Statement," they publicly and unambiguously repudiated the charge of Calvinism:

On the basis of these clear statements of Holy Scriptures we reject every kind of *Synergism*, that is, the doctrine that conversion is wrought not by the grace and power of God alone but in part also by the cooperation of man himself. . . . On the other hand, we reject also the *Calvinistic perversion* of the doctrine of conversion, that is, the doctrine that God does not desire to convert and save all the hearers of the Word but only a portion of them. . . . Our refusal to go beyond what is revealed in these two Scriptural

truths is not "masked Calvinism" ("Crypto-Calvinism") but *precisely* the Scriptural teaching of the Lutheran Church as it is presented in detail in the Formula of Concord. ("Brief Statement," par. 12, 13, 15).

The situation confronting the Synodical Conference Lutherans with their need to reject untrue accusations was not unlike that which had confronted Chemnitz and his brethren in the faith. They had never taught that the elements in themselves were to be venerated, but taught only a sacramental union between the earthly and heavenly elements, so that one truly says of the consecrated elements, "This is the body of Christ." They also rejected the veneration of the sacrament outside the prescribed use but did hold to the permissibility of it within the prescribed action. Their reason for this was that they believed the Words of the Savior, "This is my body," etc. The sacramental union was achieved by the consecration, so that Jesus Christ, true God and man, was present in the consecrated elements in the *definitive mode*. For these Lutherans it was also "certain that the worship of God is not restricted to either time or place (John 4:21; 1 Tim. 2:8)" (*Ex. 2, 277*). It is indeed true that "Jacob (Gen. 28:16-22), Moses (*Ex. 34:8-9*), and Elijah (1 Kings 19:4f.), doubtless did not have a special commandment that they should worship God in these places; but because . . . they were sure that God is truly present under these external and visible signs and that He there reveals Himself by a peculiar mode of grace, they certainly worshiped that God whom they believed present there; neither would it have been true faith if invocation and worship, that is, honor owed to God, had not followed" (*Ex. 2, 277*).

The true Lutherans who authored *SD VII, 126* would not deny the permissibility of even externally venerating Christ "who is truly and essentially present in the Supper when it is rightly used" (*SD VII, 126*), for, as Chemnitz informs both Romanists and Sacramentarians,

it belongs to a genuine confession that we also bear witness publicly both with voice and with outward signs of faith, devotion, and praise. . . . By these we show what we think about the substance and fruit of this Supper, with what great reverence and devotion of mind we come to it, what food we believe we receive there. With such external confession we separate ourselves from the Sacramentarians and from the Epicurean despisers of these mysteries. . . . (*Ex. 2, 283f.*)

Endnotes

¹*The Two Natures in Christ*, translator, J. A. O. Preus, St. Louis: CPH, 1971 (TNC); *The Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II, translator, Fred Kramer,

St. Louis: CPH, 1978 (Ex. 2); *The Lord's Supper*, translator, J. A. O. Preus, St. Louis: CPH, 1979 (LS); *Luther's Works*, American Edition, CPH and Fortress Press, 55 volumes, 1955-1973 (LW).

²*The Book of Concord*, tr. and ed., Theodore G. Tappert. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959.

The Future Possibilities of Theology in Brazil in View of the Present Predicament

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At the Brazilian Congress of Theology, which met from September 6th to 9th, 1983 in São Paulo, Brazil, many theological positions were taken in view of the present predicament with its accent on the "theology of liberation." The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Brazil was invited to participate, and did so through representatives from its seminary. The following essay was offered at a panel discussion at the end of the Congress.

Theological issues require careful reflection, starting with the reading of Sacred Scripture. In this essay, we wish to show how Lutherans read the Bible, and how they engage in theological reflection in view of the present predicament. Discussion of the pertinent issues will be organized according to twelve theses.

1. The present predicament in Brazil, where there is a clear "option for the poor," summons theology to a reflection which is determined by a fundamental modesty.

Concern with the "poor" is praiseworthy and natural, but we cannot define the "poor" exclusively in the sense of those suffering from physical or financial poverty. According to Scripture, the "poor" can be one who suffers, as well as one who humbles himself before God. And the rich man who worships his idols can also be "poor." All these poor people awaken the concern of theology, since the key issue of theology is man who is estranged from God, and who is bound to his idols, of whatever kind they may be.

Theology should recall that already in the past radical paths have been taken on which the Church made her options for partial solutions which did not commend her before the court of history. We need only to recollect the following episodes: the era of Constantine, when Christianity was forced on people by governmental decision; the insolent adventure of the Crusades; Augustine's utopian proposal of the "City of God," which Calvin wished to establish in Geneva, burning his opponents at the stake as he did so; or the Holy Inquisi-

tion, through which, in the name of theology, both Jews and Christians were persecuted. Even the heirs of the Reformation, Calvinists and Lutherans alike, already made their mistakes when they made their wrong options in the time of Hitler's Germany. A theological solution aimed at resolving a social concern was also tried out by Jim Jones in the Guyanas. In the present predicament, where social concerns once again stand in the foreground, theology requires reflection marked by a basic modesty whose effect would be to exclude radicalizations of every kind.

- 2 Modesty is not a corollary of its "option for the poor," but is the expression of its own existence, for theology, in its proper sense, is a practical charism which one either does or does not receive from God.

Theology's starting point is not a matter of indifference, for a theology which begins with "praxis" manifestly does not reach the revelation of God. Theology has to begin "from above," that is, with the revelation of God in the Holy Scriptures and with the gift of faith. There is no viable theology which begins "from below" and is based on human capacity. Theology as such, in its proper sense, is the affirmation of what God reveals concerning Himself and man. Theology is a practical charism given by God whereby one confesses the faith which God creates through the Gospel. Theology identifies the God Who reveals Himself and Who relates personally to man through His love revealed in Jesus Christ. Theology is the expression of a profound modesty, since it places man in dependence on God: theology must be given by God and received in faith. Luther put this as follows: "We are beggars. This is true."

3. God-given theology brings people into the "Kingdom of God," which "is not coming with signs to be observed," but "is in the midst of you" (Lk. 17:20-21).

As a gift of God, theology is at the same time a revelation of God and an intervention by God in the life of man. Through His revelation, God acts in such a way that He begins His "Kingdom," His dominion, in man. This is a gracious dominion, for which He conquers man through faith. The Greek original may be translated with both "in the midst of you" and "in you." "In the midst of you" is God's revelation of His gracious reign through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. "In you" is God's gracious reign through faith, when He changes a man's heart and gives him "a willing spirit" (Ps. 51:10-12).

The Kingdom of God is not identical with the Church. When, in Matthew 18, Jesus teaches His disciples to deal with the erring brother, He can say, "Tell it to the Church" (v. 17), but He could not have said "Tell it to the Kingdom." The Kingdom of God is an event, namely, the power of God that transforms hearts through faith. The Church is the communion of all those in whom God reigns through faith. Kingdom is, therefore, prior to Church. The Kingdom creates the communion of saints and calls for the existence of the Church. While the Kingdom is a vertical relation with God, since it is God Who reigns, the Church is primarily a horizontal relation, since it is the communion of all believers. Even so, the Lutheran Confessions (*Apology* VII, 16 and 18) recognize a certain equation of Kingdom and Church, since the Church is the place where God exerts His reign. Moreover, it is through the Church that the Kingdom is recognized and proclaimed.

The Church proclaims that Jesus Christ neither died for His political convictions nor was crucified by accident, but that He offered Himself as the Savior of mankind. He died because, as True Man, our Substitute, He declared Himself to be also True God, our divine Savior Who reversed man's alienation from his God. He reversed this alienation precisely through His death, which He died in our stead.

4. Being brought into the "Kingdom of God" demands a fundamental modesty, because it requires the recognition of the lack of authentic humanity when man is measured by the standard which God reveals through His eternal Law.

This is the most modest place in theology, where man has to recognize his alienation from God. When God confronts man with His eternal Law, He does not find the authentic humanity which He proposed for man at the Creation. God's initial plan was that, "I am your God. You are My people," but man became "non-people" by his opposition to God. Now, in its primary theological use, "the Law always accuses" (*Apology* IV, 38 et al.) man in his alienation. This led Luther to formulate the first of his 95 Theses as follows: "The life of the Christian has to be a continuous repentance."

5. Being brought into the "Kingdom of God" demands a fundamental modesty, namely, the transformation of the will by means of the engrafting into Christ through the faith which is revealed and offered in the Good News of the Gospel of the Kingdom.

The solution for our alienation cannot be found in man, in his deep roots, in a secularized praxis, in a supposed free will, or in the natural tendency towards love which is claimed for humankind. The solution demands modesty, the modesty to receive everything as a gift of the grace of God through Jesus Christ. Through this "Good News" of the Gospel, the Holy Spirit creates faith and transforms both the will and the capacity of the man alienated from God. In this faith, man returns to the "people of God" and takes part in the "Kingdom of God." But this return is permanent only with the continuous return to God in daily repentance and faith in Christ. This faith is not given once for all, but has to be constantly upheld and nurtured by the Gospel. The Gospel is, therefore, not merely a topic of Systematic Theology but also and primarily the power of God; the Gospel is the Means of Grace whereby God sustains, strengthens and upholds His reign of faith. Faith and Gospel are correlatives. Christian theology is fundamentally modest, because it receives from God and reaffirms the power of God's grace in the Gospel.

6. Since the Kingdom "is not coming with signs to be observed," its manifestation bears the marks of modesty: the theology of the Kingdom in the present age is a theology of the cross, not of glory, as we learn from the parable of the leaven (Lk. 13:21).

The "theology of the cross" can be verified in the humility of even the Lord Jesus Christ, Who, being God, lived with us as Man. The "theology of the cross" is verified in Scripture, which, although written by men, is the Word of the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:25-26). The "theology of the cross" is verified in the Sacraments, where God offers His grace, His forgiveness and faith through very modest earthly means (water, bread and wine). The "theology of the cross" is verified in Christian people, who, even though they are under God's reign, still have to live from God's daily forgiveness. Luther learned this truth from the letter to the Galatians, where he saw that the Christian is always *simul iustus et peccator*: totally holy through forgiveness in Christ (the Gospel), and totally sinner by nature (the Law). For this reason, eschatological glory is not yet revealed in the Christian who lives under God's reign in this present age. Even so, the Christian acts as a divine leaven in the secularized dough of the present predicament. The outward aspect may not always change, but the joy, peace and love which come from faith will demonstrate that a radical change has happened in the Christian person. Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon and did not abolish slavery as a social

fact, but Onesimus' slavery became an empty concept when he and Philemon became brothers in faith and co-participants in the "Kingdom of God." The same change happened also in the drama presented at this Congress: a poor family needs everything to celebrate a happy Christmas, when a poor pregnant girl arrives at their house, has her baby, and dies. The poor family adopts the child at Christmas. The poor became poorer, but their lives became richer with the love that entered their home and with the new perspective they found in Christ.

7. The "theology of the cross" does not permit us to forget that solutions arrived at under the "Kingdom of God" in the present age can only be penultimate, since even in the face of the divine "promise" (the Gospel and faith), decisions made in the Christian life can only be "sober, upright and godly" in the present world (Tit. 2:12).

The "theology of the cross" limits the solutions available to Christian Ethics. It is a theology for those "who are on the way," and not for those who have arrived at glory. The only solution is the one given by Christ through faith: we have a gracious God Who accepts us and forgives us. Christ alone is our perfection. We cannot surpass this imputed perfection in the present age. Even though Jesus Christ has assumed and forgiven our guilt and has made us perfect in faith before God, nevertheless the "punishments" (*Apology IV*, 268, 278) or consequences of alienation remain in the saints. The perfect forgiveness in Christ does not remove all the results of human imperfection. There thus remains an ongoing "theology of the cross," which teaches the Christian even to suffer. But it also teaches the joy, peace and love of the Christian in the midst of this imperfection of human decisions. For this reason the Apostle recognizes that in the present age we shall only have penultimate solutions and that our Christian decisions have to remain "sober, upright and godly."

8. According to the "theology of the cross," the "Kingdom of God" is carried out in two Governments: that of "the Right Hand of God," in which God reigns with Law and Gospel in hearts, and that of "the Left Hand of God," in which God reigns through the "orders of creation" to preserve the world from chaos.

In the Government of the "Right Hand of God," there are final and invariable directives: God governs with Law and Gospel. Through

the Law, which is primarily revealed in the Ten Commandments, God calls to repentance and reveals His immutable will. Through the Gospel, God forgives and integrates us into the "Kingdom of God" through faith. This new existence in Christ is lived by the Christian in the Government of the "Left Hand of God," where, besides the invariable Law of God, there are the variable laws in the different "orders of creation." These "estates" or "conditions," in which people carry out their "vocation," are "orders" of God, through which He preserves the world from chaos: marriage, family, economy, government, honor. While the laws of these "orders" may vary from place to place and from time to time, they always remain valid under the critique of God's invariable Law, namely, the Ten Commandments. The "orders" are, as Luther sees it, "God's masks," since all authority is only a "concession" from God to preserve the world from chaos and make life in society possible.

9. In "Law and Gospel" God has provided the basic solutions for the person alienated from himself, from his neighbor and from God.

Through "Law and Gospel" God reintegrates man into His fundamental covenant: "I am your God. You are My people." Through the Gospel people recognize themselves as children of God and are liberated from alienation from God. As heirs of God, they have no need to guarantee themselves. They are free for their neighbor, enabled, as representatives of Christ in this world, to be "paracletes," people who provide consolation (Jn. 15:26-27; Rom. 12:8): Christians "are available" for others, for their brother, for their neighbor. Their lives are no longer their own, but are there at the service of Christ for their neighbor. Christians do not initially know "what" their neighbor needs, but they do know "whence" (the new existence in Christ) and "how" (with love, "as serving the Lord," Col. 3:23) they want to serve with "a willing spirit" (Ps. 51:12).

10. The "orders of creation" (marriage, family, economy, government, honor) are governed by reason: there are no Christian principles or standards for supposed ideal orders.

Even in the absence of theology, God rules the world through the "orders," where He governs through reason, which itself recognizes a "natural law." The fact that the theologian recognizes this "natural law" in the Decalogue revealed in Scripture demonstrates that the "orders" are not autonomous, but exist under the constant critique of

theology. Although the Decalogue is fundamentally a censure of man, Luther understood that if, on the one side, it reproves man's faults, so, on the other side, God would expect the contrary of what He reproves. Thus, in his interpretation of the Ten Commandments, the Reformer demonstrated that there is a positive side to the Law of God, which serves to direct Christians in their life in the "orders." This is the third, or didactic, use of the Law, which directs Christians' reason to make decisions in a "sober, upright and godly" manner. Although God offers many *paraeneses* or ethical exhortations in the Scriptures, besides the *prohibitiva* or prohibitions for the Christian, He does not reveal an ideal standard to establish an institutionalized Kingdom of God in this world. The action of the Christian will always remain "open," because when we have completed one service of love to our neighbor all the other works of love are already waiting for us, since "love has infinite external duties to men" (*Apology* IV, 226). Christians will perceive the "what" of the things they have to do in a given historical moment in the setting of their specific "vocation." The process of making decisions will never end for the Christian person: one cannot simply appeal to an ideal solution, since the circumstances of one's "vocation" will continue to vary, just as the life of the neighbor whom one has to serve in love is itself variable.

But Christians have an advantage over the world in the decisions which they make in the same "orders." They start from the reality of being "new creatures" through faith in Jesus Christ: their problems are solved by the promise of God, by His forgiveness, by their faith in the Lord Jesus. Christians know that this world is God's world and that, if they will continually "seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness," all "these things" will be theirs as well (Mt. 6:33). Being "new creatures," Christians freely put their life at the disposal of the neighbor whom they will serve "as to the Lord," since they know with Luther that "in the mask of our neighbor Christ goes through the world." In this sense, the "orders of creation" follow the Gospel, since they are the place where God puts His people in order to make with them the "exercise of faith" (*Apology* IV, 314). Therefore, even though they are controlled by reason, the "orders of creation" are never autonomous, but remain under the continuous critique and direction of theology.

11. Since Christians can only live their lives in their vocations in the different "orders of creation," they serve as a "leaven" which enriches the orders through love.

When Jesus Christ said that “the Kingdom of heaven is like leaven” (Mt. 13:33), He called attention to two details of the “Kingdom of God”: that its concrete form is modest, but that its power of transformation is immense. For this reason, theology does not understand itself as destined to develop systems according to which the “orders of creation” are to be administered. Theology finds itself invited to testify to the transforming power of the Gospel. Where the Gospel transforms and frees hearts, Christians have a definite motivation to live a “faith active in love.” When Christians live their faith in love, they transform their society and enlighten the “orders of creation” in the place where they have been stationed by their “vocation.” It cannot be dark in the place where Christians remain as “a light to the world” (Mt. 5:14). In such places, Christians act as the leaven of the “Kingdom of heaven,” in the modesty of people who know that they are transforming the world from within.

12. The task of theology is to attest the value of the structures which defend us against chaos, and to enrich them with the love and righteousness that come from faith through the message of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Fortunately, theology has not been called to accomplish all the tasks which God wants to develop in His “Government of the Left Hand.” To this task He has called parents, teachers, employers, and the government. In his explanation of the Fourth Commandment, Luther calls attention to the great blessing which comes about when these structures work as “God’s masks.” He even suggests that employees might give back part of their salaries in view of the joy of having employers (LC I, 144). In this perspective, a “class conflict” is a fiction which is neither rational nor theological. It can only be understood as a manifestation of the natural tendency towards chaos. If the structures of the “orders of creation” are “God’s masks,” then theology has the task of defending their value as a divine protection against chaos. On the other hand, theology has the task of enriching the structures with the love, peace and righteousness that proceed from the power of the Gospel which transforms hearts through faith. Theology has, in this present predicament, a critical and counselling task (which comes from God’s Law) in relation to the structures, but also a task of peace, of righteousness, and of love, which come from the proclamation of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

While the “Kingdom of God” is a spiritual reign of God in man

through faith, it is also a reign with consequences in the material world. This became clear already when the King Himself entered the history of mankind on a certain night in Bethlehem. His disciples feel the impact of His reign in their bodies, when the King gives them a "willing spirit." People are only guests in God's world, but they have the task of letting others see and feel the love and the peace and the righteousness that they have received under God's kingship. The whole of life is changed when the Kingdom is near and shows its signs in personal and community life. The great liberty brought by the Gospel into people's lives manifests itself also in their families, in their cities, in their countries, in their business, in their work, their home and their love. Assuredly, the Kingdom of God cannot be institutionalized, it can never become secular. We cannot conquer it, nor make it our own project. The Kingdom of God is God's gracious reign in man. Any institution, even the organized Church, is not this Kingdom, but part of God's other form of government where people are called to administer the world with the use of reason. Since the human reason has to be used, it can be demonized, and hence transformed into an anti-Kingdom. Whenever we use reason to decide what the Gospel has decided, or whenever we use the Gospel to decide what reason has to decide, we are passing from the Kingdom to the anti-Kingdom. Although there is already the great dominion that God exercises in the lives of Christians, the Kingdom will continue to exist as a modest mustard seed. But it is a seed which has a future.

*Prophet, Priest, King, and Teacher?
The Old Testament, Intertestamental,
and Hellenistic Antecedents For Jesus'
Role as Rabbi and Teacher*

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Introduction

In the Synod's *Shorter Explanation to Luther's Small Catechism* (Concordia, 1943), the treatment of The Second Article focuses on the fact that Christ was anointed for the threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King. These offices, of course, were defined and displayed in the Old Testament figures of Moses (Deut. 18:15), Melchizedek (Gen. 14), and David (2 Sam. 7). That the disciples recognized and acknowledged Jesus as the antitype to which these types pointed has long been recognized.

This essay seeks to explore for those antecedent men or institutions which would have provided the first Christians with their awareness that Jesus was also their "Rabbi" or "teacher" (cf. Mt. 23:7, 8; 26:25, 49; Mk. 9:5; 10:51; 11:21; 14:45; and Jn. 1:39, 49; 3:2, 26; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8). Beyond the possible historical origins of the Rabbinic model, the significance of viewing Jesus in this manner will be explored, i.e., what sorts of associations and assumptions would have attended the word "Rabbi" when it reached the ears of a first century Palestinian Jew?¹

This study of ancient teachers and their role is presented to Dr. Robert Preus, whose love of Post-Reformation Lutheran Theology and mastery of its texts have combined to inspire seminary students over three decades. The years erase the memory of those pedagogues who were only professionals; they simultaneously enlarge the place and lengthen the shadow of those teachers whose classrooms mirrored the commitments of their Christian confession.

The Historical Roots of the Rabbinate

The immediate contribution of the Old Testament to the formation of the Rabbinate appears minimal. There does not seem to be any Old Testament office, such as prophet or priest, which directly anticipated or generated the position of Rabbi.²

While **רַב** is used in several Old Testament contexts to designate a prominent person (2 K. 18:17, 25:8; Est. 1:8; Dan. 1:3), it nowhere has the sense of teacher.³ In fact, the Septuagint translators employ *διδάσκαλος* only twice (Esther 6:1 and II Maccabees 1:10).⁴ The context of Esther 6:1 strongly suggests that *διδάσκαλος*, in this instance, means no more than reader.⁵

The broader concept of teaching (*διδάσκω*) is, of course, widespread.⁶ The Hebrew roots which convey aspects of the teaching process are especially plentiful in Deuteronomy, Psalms, Job, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs.⁷ It is difficult to generalize specific contours in the usages of these word groups, though there is frequent emphasis on practical instruction in how to live in accord with God's will (Dt. 11:19, 20:18).

It is even more difficult to determine what types of educational processes and institutions existed in Israel. Van Rad comments:

It would be a great help if we could deduce from the Old Testament something about education in Israel. But several careful examinations have produced rather negative results.⁸

The varied use of **רַב** lends support to Von Rad's analysis. It can mean a "foreman" (Exodus 5:6), an elder (Num. 11:16), an army officer (Dt. 20:5), or a judge (I Chr. 23:4).

It is probable that during the monarchy, the Levitical scribes were employed in the fiscal management of the temple.⁹ Before the exile, the primary usage of **רַב** seems to be more "secular." Hence, Shaphan, the scribe, functions as a type of financial minister (II Kings 22:3ff.), or, Shebna serves as a state official (Is. 36:3).

There is a scholarly consensus that the events of the exile decisively influenced the direction and importance of Scribal circles within Israel. Perhaps the most weighty role is assigned to them by Eduard Lohse:

The history of Judaism in the Hellenistic period was linked critically to the profession of the scribes which, in effect, determined the various groups which were developed in the second century B.C.—the Sadducees, the Pharisees, the Essenes, and the Qumran community.¹⁰

The fact that the function of a scribe was dramatically influenced by the exile is widely acknowledged.¹¹

While an effort to assess the theological impact of the exile on scribal circles would take us far afield, two suggestive works have touched on aspects of the question: Dr. Joseph Blenkinsopp's *Prophecy and Canon* and James A. Sanders's *Torah and Canon*. These major studies describe some of the forces which led to the shaping of a new identity in Torah and its proper interpretation.¹²

The importance of scribal work during this period is particularly emphasized by Sanders:

The traumatic experience of the exile and the existential necessity for Israel to seek her identity in the midst of disintegration brought about a *flurry of literary activity* which resulted in a very early stage of "canonization" of the Law and the prophets. . . .¹³

Can the origin of this emphasis on Torah knowledge be further defined? Von Rad has suggested that Deuteronomy 6:4-9 points in this direction.

The demands made in vv. 6-9 attract attention by the intensity of their spiritualization, and also by a certain intellectualization. For here the concern with Moses' words appears already as an end in itself, as something which ought to claim the whole of a man's mental and spiritual powers and to occupy him completely.¹⁴

It is likely then that already in Deuteronomy there was, at least in inchoate form, the ideal of Torah study.

Another significant indication of the role which Torah played is the so-called Torah Psalm—Psalm 1, 19:8-15, and 119. It is commonly held that Psalm 1 functions as an introduction to the whole Psalter. "Psalm 1 has been positioned at the head of the Psalter as a preface or introduction."¹⁵ If we accept this view, or, if Westermann's thesis that Psalms 1 and 119 may have bracketed an earlier collection is correct, then the focus on Torah is clear.¹⁶

The role of Ezra in determining the theological direction of the post-exilic community was crucial. In Ezra, chapter 7, he is described as:

v. 6 ? הוּא - סַפֵּר אֶת לְוִי אֶת עֲבָדָיו אֲשֶׁר אֵלָיו אֵלֶּם

v. 10 כִּי עָרָא הָאֵלֶּיךָ אֶת לְוִי וְאֶת עֲבָדָיו אֲשֶׁר אֵלָיו אֵלֶּם

אֶת עֲבָדָיו ? הוּא וְלִצְדָק אֶת וְלִצְדָק

בְּיָמָיו אֵל חֹסֵה וְאֵינֶשֶׁת
 v. 11¹⁷ לְעֹזֵר אֵל לֹא יִשְׁכַּח

לְעֹזֵר אֵל לֹא יִשְׁכַּח

In Ezra 10, shorter designations occur with only the name or the phrase "Ezra, the Priest" (vv. 10, 16). In its canonical form, Ezra 7:27 through 9:15 is first person testimony from Ezra himself. In Nehemiah 8:1-13, Ezra is portrayed as the "scribe" (vv. 1, 4, 13; also 12:36), or the "priest" (v. 2), or "priest and scribe" (v. 9, and 12:26).

The precise meaning of **כֹּהֵן** and **סוֹפֵר** in these texts is much discussed. Few would question, however, that Ezra's responsibilities included both political and religious dimensions. Jacob Myers writes:

The more significant aspect of Ezra's dual role is that of scribe. Schaefer thinks Ezra was secretary for Jewish affairs in the Persian government, but Mowinckel disputes this idea as a misconception. That Ezra occupied an important position cannot be doubted, since he was entrusted with a special mission by the king. He appears to have had political as well as religious responsibilities.¹⁸

In Nehemiah, Ezra is included among the chief priests who accompanied Zerubbabel and Jeshua in their return from exile (chapter 12). The same chapter lists him as the head of a priestly family (v. 12ff.) and places him at the front of Nehemiah's joyful procession on the wall of Jerusalem (v. 36).

Even more striking is Nehemiah 8 and its record of the reading of the law before the people. Ezra, in this chapter, is called a priest (v. 2—**כֹּהֵן**), the scribe (v. 4—**סוֹפֵר**), and clearly orchestrates the instruction and worship.¹⁹ For our purposes, it is significant that the figure of Ezra, as described in these texts, exercised such influence on subsequent literature. His work and character are described from all these perspectives:

- (1) leader of a return to Jerusalem from Babylon (Ezra/I Esdras)
- (2) priest who offers prayers and sacrifices (Ezra/I Esdras)
- (3) scribe and enthusiast for assiduous study of Torah (Neh., Epiph.)
- (4) champion of endogamous Jewish marriage (Ezra)
- (5) restorer of Jewish Scriptures after destruction of the temple (4 Ezra)
- (6) originator of a new type of Hebrew letters (4 Ezra, Rabb. trad.)
- (7) "prophet" (Ezra, Gk Apocal. Esdr.)
- (8) recipient of apocalyptic secrets (4 Ezra)

(9) miracle worker (Apocr. Jer.)

(10) companion of angels (Apocr. Jer., 4 Ezra, 5 Ezra)²⁰

I and II Chronicles end their history with the Decree of Cyrus (538 B.C.) and thus complete the intention of "showing that the true Israel was the one perpetuated in Judah from the period of David to Ezra."²¹

Hence, the figure of Ezra casts a long shadow. He not only embodies the ancient traditions, but establishes a paradigm for the scribal office. His pivotal place is underscored by R. B. Y. Scott:

Ezra was thus chief of a group of scribes, professional students of and authorities on the law of Moses. Henceforward such scribes were to play a dominant role in the religion of Judaism.²²

If we focus our attention on the long history of wisdom-related works, it is striking that they often display such divergent viewpoints. For example, a juxtaposition of Koheleth with Ecclesiasticus or Ben Sira reveals an obvious difference in emphasis in their views of God and the world about them.²³

In Ben Sira, however, we possess a lengthy text that many scholars regard as influential in the formation of the later Rabbinate.²⁴

Not so he that applieth himself to the fear of God, and to set his mind upon the law of the Most High, who searcheth out the wisdom of all the ancients, and is occupied with the prophets of old.

Who heedeth the discourses of men of renown, and entereth into the deep things of parables;

Searcheth out the hidden meaning of proverbs, and is conversant with the dark sayings of parables.

Who serveth among great men, and appeareth before princes; who travelleth through the lands of the peoples, testeth good and evil among men;

Who is careful to seek unto his Maker, and before the most High entreateth mercy; who openeth his mouth in prayer, and maketh supplication for his sins.

If it seem good to God Most High, he shall be filled with the spirit of understanding.

He himself poureth forth wise sayings in double measure, and giveth thanks unto the Lord in prayer.

He himself directeth counsel and knowledge, and setteth his mind on their secrets.

He himself declareth wise instruction, and glorieth in the law of the Lord. His understanding many do praise, and never shall his name be blotted out: his memory shall not cease, and his name shall live from generation to generation.

His wisdom doth the congregation tell forth, and his praise the assembly publisheth.
 If he live long, he shall be accounted happy more than a thousand; and when he cometh to an end, his name sufficeth.²⁵

The high profile which Ben Sira gives the scribal-teaching office is clear (cf. 1:1-10, 6:18-37, 24, and 51:13-30). M. Stern comments:

One of the features of the religious and social development of the Second Temple era is undoubtedly the rise of the sages, the interpreters of Torah. . . . It is certain that we can already discern the influence and activities of the sages in the second century B.C.E. As the direct heirs of the scribes of the previous period Ben Sira displays his sympathy to them (Sir. 39).²⁶

Martin Hengel suggests that Ben Sira occupies a distinctive place in the development of the scribal-teaching office:

His admonitions are accordingly often addressed to young men, who were in special danger from the attractions of Hellenistic civilization. A decisive key concept for him is *musar*, which his grandson reproduces as *παιδεία*. Here the "zeal for education" in Jewish wisdom and the Hellenistic world come together.²⁷

Several features of Ben Sira's description of the scribal-teaching office are noteworthy for our purposes. The scribal vocation is portrayed as an application of the Divine will to the present situation.²⁸ There is an assumption that the scribe-teacher will analyze a challenge such as that which Hellenism posed.²⁹ He presents a detailed apologetic for Jewish theology and life.³⁰

There is a strong probability that Ben Sira was forged in the same historical crucible which was molding the elements of the Rabbinate:

Here we come up against an inner transformation of the old institution of the *soper*, which was to be significant for the further development of Judaism and also for primitive Christianity. The "wisdom teacher" becomes the man "learned in Scriptures," in that his activity is concentrated more and more on the holy Scriptures of Israel. . . . From this point the development could go in two directions: either to a new "prophecy" founded on the inspired interpretation of the law and the prophets, as in Essenism, among the Zealots, and in primitive Christianity, or to the institutionalization of exegesis, among the Rabbis.³¹

The emphasis in Ben Sira on the scribe's right interpretation of Torah leads, in later literature, to a description of the office which is analogous to that of the classical prophet.

If the prophets of the classical period are at root no more than interpreters of the Law, speaking with the authority of the Spirit and charged to unfold only what the Law contains, then they differ only in degree and not in kind

from the wise. Both prophets and wise men belong to the same series, and there arises the chain of bearers of the "oral law" (Pirke Aboth).³²

It is also probable that the close of Ben Sira (51) alludes, for the first time in Jewish texts, to an actual school of instruction.³³ While there is no unequivocal evidence, both Goldstein and Schurer assume the presence of a teaching office in the synagogues at an early date by suggesting that Antiochus forbade their functioning as a part of his prohibitions.³⁴

The complexity of the data for this period makes it very difficult to meaningfully describe how the scribal-teaching office functioned within the various groups of Judaism—The Hasidim, Essenes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and others not known to us.³⁵

While it is possible to say that the scribal office took on new significance with Ezra's mission, and in its interaction with Hellenism, it is most difficult to develop a tidy line of development. Not only are the texts limited, but those which we possess are hard to interpret. One body of literature which merits examination is that of the Pseudepigrapha. Since much of this writing comes from the very period in which we are seeking the roots of the Rabbinate, it invites further study.

In a penetrating, almost encyclopaedic article on "A History of Pseudepigrapha Research: The Re-Emerging Importance of the Pseudepigrapha," James Charlesworth states: "Two reasons for the re-surgency importance of the Pseudepigrapha, therefore, are the dating of some fifty documents, or portions of them, to the extremely fecund period that separates the 'Old' from the 'New' Testaments; and the recognition that the central thought of these documents, apocalyptic, is at once central to intertestamental Judaism and nascent Christianity."³⁶

The investigation of these texts is entering a new period. Even the specialist faces a formidable methodological challenge:

We are learning to see how diverse were the thoughts, even hopes, of that time. No longer can we enunciate the criteria that distinguish Palestinian Judaism from Alexandrian or Antiochene Judaism, display the characteristics that disclose the sect behind a document, or articulate the features that prove the probable Jewish or Christian origin of a composition.³⁷

Given this state of our historical knowledge, it would be extremely speculative to infer possible social settings for the authors of these documents, even if we assumed that they regarded themselves as "scribes" in some sense.

Thus, the Old Testament and Intertestamental texts yield very modest results for the inquiry into possible historical antecedents to the Rabbinate. The following points must suffice as a summary of our survey:

- (1) Our earliest glimpses of the scribal office suggest something quite different from the Rabbinate. They were more like state or cultic officials.
- (2) While its precise nature cannot be determined, there must have been some sort of scribal-educational process operative from pre-exilic times.
- (3) The exile, with its separation from the Jerusalem temple, directed the scribal-priestly office toward reflection on Torah.
- (4) Ezra-Nehemiah-Chronicles portray Ezra as both Priest and Scribe. It is understandable that some posit a linear development from him to the later Rabbinate, but, historically, it is difficult to demonstrate. In fact, it seems that he was represented in a variety of ways in later literature.
- (5) The works of Ben Sira do provide us an extended description of the scribal office by one who was concerned with the infiltration of Hellenism into Jewish theology and life.
- (6) The influence of wisdom circles (*hakamim*) is also highly likely, but the precise nature of this development cannot be defined.

Qumran

Do the texts from Qumran provide a description of an office which anticipated the later Rabbinate? No clear historical link can be forged between "The Teacher" and the later Rabbis. There can be no doubt that certain parallels obtain between the forms of some Qumran texts and some Rabbinic materials, yet there are striking differences. In describing this relationship, one scholar suggests:

The commentaries are evidently a compilation of the sect's interpretive traditions, reaching back to the Teacher himself and covering events from a century of the sect's history—from the Teacher's conflict with the Wicked Priest to the Roman occupation of Palestine. The commentaries are the earliest examples of a literary genre that became popular in rabbinic circles in the second century C. E. and later. Certain similarities are evident: the technique of commenting on lengthy blocks of Scripture; the format of quotation and interpretation (although the rabbis did not use the same formal introduction to the interpretation); and the quotation of parallel passages from Scripture. The differences, however, are just as significant and help us to understand the peculiar nature of the Qumran commentaries. The rabbinic commentaries concentrate on Torah and the Writings. The exposition is of two types: halakhic (how the laws are applied in specific circumstances) and haggadic (largely homiletical comments). The commentaries compile the opinions of many rabbis, who are mentioned by name. In the Qumran commentaries the interpretations are anonymous and reflect community interpretation.³⁸

The phrase "Teacher of Righteousness" is not based upon any forms of ג ר . Rather $\text{רַב־טוֹבִיטַּרְטַר־טוֹבִיטַּרְטַר}$ consistently appears, as, for example in 1 QpHab II.2.³⁹ The many efforts to establish close ties between the office and work of the "Teacher" and Jesus of Nazareth or the Rabbis have not produced any assured results.⁴⁰

Judaica

Immense methodological questions attend the interpretation of the rabbinic texts. One's exegetical posture, whether conceptual, critical, or dialectical-critical in nature, directly influences the text's standing as an historical document.

Hence, a very basic step, which many conceptual or traditional writers have taken, is the assumption that rabbinic Judaism was normative and without significant Jewish competition in the first century. Jacob Neusner stresses how dramatically this tilts the historical data when he writes:

The most blatant instance is S. Safrai, ed., *The Jewish People in the First Century* (Philadelphia, 1975), in which the Dead Sea Scrolls, assuredly testimony to the condition of Judaism of at least one first-century community, are ruled out as evidence in favor of medieval rabbinic compilations produced eight to ten or more centuries thereafter. But Safrai's volume contains little to suggest knowledge of contemporary historical method and thought.⁴¹

William Scott Green expresses the problems of applying the canons of historical research to Talmudic texts in these words:

Our understanding of the construction and ideologies of rabbinic documents is still primitive. The systematic, critical investigation of Mishnah is just now under way.⁴²

To illustrate the distance between contemporary Jewish scholars, the view of S. Safrai, who posits an almost unbroken line of development from the time of Ezra-Nehemiah, through the Intertestamental Period, to first century institutions will first be cited:

The national assemblies in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah were definitely oriented to public instruction (Neh. 8:31). During the Second Temple period, and even more after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 C.E., the entire Jewish community, from its public institutions to the individual families, developed into an education-centered society.⁴³

This view of the Talmud leads to the conclusion that we have the names of "many sages who were active in the two centuries B.C.E. and in the first century C.E."⁴⁴

In sharp contrast to this is the conclusion of Ira Jeffrey Schiffer:

This analysis of the traditions concerning the Men of the Great Assembly suggests that the name was created by Mishnaic masters interested in establishing a continuous chain of authority from Moses to the Pharisees. The early Amoraic masters then identified this name with the assembly described in Neh. 8-9.⁴⁵

For a non-specialist to evaluate this debate seems presumptuous. Nonetheless, since the literature bears so directly on our topic, it is necessary to represent both the traditional portrait of the Rabbinat's origin and function (drawn from the pre-critical methodology of Talmudic study), and the more modest claims of recent critical Talmudic study. After both models and their results are reviewed, an effort will be made to evaluate them in terms of their contribution to our topic.

The Conceptualist Reconstruction

Pride of place among traditionalist histories of Jewish education goes to the often quoted work of Nathan Drazin—*History of Jewish Education from 515 B.C.E. to 200 C.E.*⁴⁶ The historical development in the teaching office of Judaism is presented as a direct succession of groups, from the Soferim (515-200 B.C.), to the Zugot (200 B.C. to A.D. 10), and the Tannaim (A.D. 10 to 200). This last period saw the application of the term "Rabbi" to an office of long standing:

With the beginning of the period of the Tannaim the titles Rabbi (my master) for the ordained teachers and Rabban (our master) for the president of the Sanhedrin came into common usage. These titles are prefixed to the proper names of the spiritual masters of this period whenever their sayings are recorded in the ancient literature of the Jews.⁴⁷

The typology of the Rabbi-disciple relationship which emerges in this work contains many interesting details. The centrality of Torah, the exemplary piety of the Rabbis, their frequent poverty, their discipline, and numerous Talmudic texts pertaining to all the attendant circumstances are thoroughly discussed.⁴⁸

It is noteworthy that the traditional historian finds a mechanism for ordination already in place by the end of the first-century A.D.

After a student has completed satisfactorily his college education, he was ordained a Rabbi in Israel. This was a simple ceremony. The master would officially lay his hand on the head of the student and declare him ordained. This ordination, *smicha* in Hebrew, gave to the student the title of Rabbi, master, or zaken, elder.⁴⁹

The detail with which traditional scholarship reconstructs the lives of the early Rabbis is striking. Every attribution, whether a saying or an episode, is accepted.

An illustration of the shifting attitude toward the study of Talmudic texts is the prolific scholarly career of Jacob Neusner. In 1962, Neusner published *A Life of Yohanan ben Zakkai CA. 1-80 C.E.* (Leiden, Brill). This initial study followed, in outline, the traditional approaches, and produced, as a result, a sharply defined portrait of the "historical" Yohanan. A second edition (1970), was completely revised in accord with a more critical reading of the texts. The preface to the abridged form of the second edition, written in 1975, states:

This book does not offer a full-length portrait of Yohanan ben Zakkai. Such a portrait is not possible, for, as I said, the sources do not provide us with adequate information. Moreover, we have not yet found a convincing way of isolating earlier from later traditions about him except in a few instances and we have no way of determining their historical accuracy.⁵⁰

At this juncture, it is necessary to offer at least a "working" methodology for our own study. Neusner's approach in *A Life of Yohanan ben Zakkai* (2nd edition) and in his three-volume *The Rabbinic Traditions About the Pharisees Before 70* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971) recommends itself for the following reasons. First, he faces squarely the historical problems. Secondly, he has formulated preliminary techniques to determine the relative likelihood of a saying's authenticity. Since this is an important development, the following brief quote concisely represents his methodology:

Treating Mishnah (with its supplement, Tosefta) as the beginning of the matter, we have to ask how we may assess these relative probabilities. The answer is to ask (1) whether what is attributed to an authority assumed to have lived before 70 is prior in logic to what is attributed to an authority assumed to have lived after 70, (2) whether what is attributed to the one intersects with what is attributed to the other, and (3) whether what is attributed to the latter depends upon and develops what is attributed to the former. If these three conditions—chronological sequence, intersection, and logical sequence—are met, then we have reason to believe that what is assigned to the authority before 70 in substance (only) is prior to what is assigned to the authority afterward. It then will follow that we have established a credible sequence of ideas in a document which took shape nearly two hundred years after the events and men of whom it claims to speak.⁵¹

Thirdly, Neusner's approach gives place to the antiquarian interest of the tradents. As the previous quotation indicates, Neusner feels that

the probable outlines of the teachings of Jamnia and Usha can be reconstructed, though not uncritically.⁵²

Another factor in evaluating the traditions concerning the Rabbi-Disciple relationship is the parallel in Greek educational models. If, as will be suggested in our study of Greek and Hellenistic texts, there was an abiding stability in the teacher-disciple relationships, despite varied cultural settings and adaptations, then one might suspect a similar continuity in the Rabbi-disciple relationship.

Thus, with Neusner's relative confidence in re-constructing the position of the historical "houses" at Yavneh and Usha, it is possible to be more confident that one can construct the approximate shape of the Rabbinate than assign a particular saying to a particular sage.

A final methodological note. Due respect is to be given to the anti-quarian orientation of the ancient world whether Greek or Jewish:

In other words, in the study of Halakot, the inherited views are the preferred views. Who is a great scholar? He who knows how to justify the views of the earlier sages. Note that it is not only Rabbi Eliezer who leans in that direction—from Eliezer ben Hyrcanus we would expect it; Rabbi Joshua too is uncomfortable with *debar hiddush*, and regrets he is unable to think of a refutation. Even a bold spirit like Akiba undertakes to confirm "the view of the Sages." Allow me to quote Marrou again, this time in his description of secondary Hellenistic education, because his remarks are apt also for much of the study of the Oral Law, and the Halakot in particular: "Classical culture did not know any romantic need to make all things new, to forget the past and be original; it was proud of its inherited wealth, proud of its pedantry, proud of being what our modern pedantry—whose only sign of progress seems to be that it has replaced literary scholarship by technical science—would call the victim of a culture complex."⁵³

If this methodology is applied to Talmudic texts, can we formulate an approximate composite of what the Rabbi-disciple relationship was like in the first century A.D.? Neusner, especially in the second edition of *Johanan ben Zakkai*, answers. "Yes."

The following typology of Rabbi-Disciple relationships, while qualified by the methodological problems which we have enumerated, is representative of a broad variety of Talmudic texts:

- (a) The closeness of the relationship between master and disciple is attested by the fact that the rabbi often addressed his disciples as "sons."⁵⁴
- (b) The master is, at times, placed before the father in priority of obligation "because his father brought him only into this world, but his teacher, who taught him wisdom, brings him into the world to come."⁵⁵

- (c) The disciples came to the Rabbi for more than factual knowledge; they came to learn a way of life. "Entry into the rabbinical circle, like initiation into a mystery cult, marked the end of an old existence, and the beginning of a new life, a new being. The disciple did not simply learn things; he was converted from one way of living to another."⁵⁶
- (d) The disciple was expected to treat his master with reverence and respect. Pirke Aboth 4:12 is emphatic, especially the last strophe which compares the honor due one's teacher to the honor due to God.

לְרַבִּי אֵין מִשְׁכָּל הַמַּלְאָכִים וְלֹא מִשְׁכָּל הַמַּלְאָכִים
 מִשְׁכָּל הַמַּלְאָכִים וְלֹא מִשְׁכָּל הַמַּלְאָכִים
 מִשְׁכָּל הַמַּלְאָכִים וְלֹא מִשְׁכָּל הַמַּלְאָכִים
 מִשְׁכָּל הַמַּלְאָכִים וְלֹא מִשְׁכָּל הַמַּלְאָכִים

- (e) The disciple was to render a wide variety of services to the master, analogous to those rendered by a son to his father.⁵⁸
- (f) No fee was charged by the Rabbis to their student at the advanced level, though exceptions do seem to have occurred.⁵⁹
- (g) The disciple accompanied and attended his master when the latter traveled. "Another common duty—usually performed by senior students—was to accompany the master wherever he went, so as to enable him to lean for support on one or two of his disciples—not necessarily because of the infirmities of age, but because this was a privilege which the teacher enjoyed by virtue of his position."⁶⁰
- (h) The Rabbi, besides a thorough knowledge of Torah, was to have good manners and a full complement of social graces. Typical is: "A scholar is recognized by his conduct as regards money, and drinking; also by the control of his temper, by his dress, and, some say also, by his speech. Four things are unseemly for a scholar: to walk out at night, to smell of scent in the street, to be among the last to enter the synagogue, to dally much with the Amme ha-Aretz. Let the scholar be seemly and quiet in his eating, drinking, bathing, anointing, tying his shoes, his gait, his dress, his voice, and his charitable deeds."⁶¹
- (i) Pre-eminent in the Rabbi-Disciples relationship was the place of Torah Study. R. Me'ir said, "Whosoever labours in the Torah for its own sake merits many things; and not only so, but the whole world is indebted to him: he is called friend, beloved, a lover of the All-present, a lover of mankind; it clothes him in meekness and reverence: it fits him to become just, pious, upright and faithful; it keeps him far from sin, and brings him near to virtue." R. Joshua b. Levi said, "No man is free, but he who labours in the Torah."⁶²
- (j) The good Rabbi's dedication to his students, and cultivation of their abilities was widely praised.⁶³
- (k) The death of a Rabbi was a major trauma for the circle of disciples. The death of a teacher was a major disaster for his students—both former and present—all of whom would observe many of the mourning customs associated with the death of a close relative. The

grief of the disciples would sometimes take extreme forms such as rending all or most of one's garments, and beating one's flesh until the blood flowed. The loss of a great teacher was, indeed, irreparable, and students would at times find themselves unable to solve halachic problems once their teacher had passed away. It was a matter of course for disciples to attend their master's funeral or even to bury him themselves.⁶⁴

- (l) The Rabbis were drawn from a broad spectrum of social classes and from localities both in Palestine and the Diaspora.⁶⁵
- (m) The settings in which the Rabbi and his disciples considered the Torah were widely varied, though often the synagogue gatherings and meal assemblies served to focus the study in a more formal manner.⁶⁶
- (n) The acknowledgement of the Master's name in presenting a halakic opinion was often obligatory. "Great importance was attributed to naming the master whenever a statement of his was quoted: 'Whoever says anything in the name of its author brings deliverance into the world.' . . . Accurate quotations and the naming of authors were regarded as acts of piety towards teachers whose highest ambition it was that their words should be cited in synagogues and houses of study. This was particularly necessary in the case of scholars who had departed this world; for it was only thus that the names and teachings of the masters could be immortalized, 'making their lips to move in their graves.'"⁶⁷
- (o) The mode of instruction was generally oral and the method that of question and answer.⁶⁸
- (p) The earliest structure of instruction in Babylonian Jewish circles was that of the Rabbi-Disciple grouping. It displays many parallels with the work of Rabbis in Palestine.⁶⁹

This typology, while far from exhaustive, provides representative traits from Talmudic texts. Great care must be used in positing this whole description to first century persons or institutions. On the other hand, where the most ancient texts (e.g. Tannaitic or New Testament) display a similar pattern, the probability of such a social grouping being in place during a certain period increases.⁷⁰

Josephus

The interpretation of the writings of Flavius Josephus is complicated by his liberal use of literary devices in the service of his larger apologetic aims.

The literary portraits of the Pharisees and their role in the social and political life of first century Palestine must be filtered through something like Attridge's assessment of the *Antiquities*:

As we suggest at first, and as our analysis confirmed, the connection of Josephus with particular segments of Judaism is largely irrelevant to his literary product in the *Antiquities*. Whether his particular form of hellen-

ized Judaism is representative of any wider group of Jews is difficult to determine. The fact that personal factors loom so large in the forces operating on the Biblical paraphrase may suggest that what we find in the *Antiquities* is a very individual production.⁷¹

However difficult it may be to determine the historical value of these texts, various authors have noted a development in his portrayal of the Pharisees. In the *War*, the Pharisees do not play a significant role, and the incidents in which they do participate result in an uncomplimentary profile. By contrast, the material of *Antiquities*, written some twenty-years later, presents them as pre-eminent.⁷² It does appear then that the *Antiquities* offer the Pharisee as the logical choice to serve as representatives of the people over against the Roman authorities.⁷³

Beyond this, Josephus, who claimed to be a Pharisee, asserts several things about the conflicts between the Pharisees and other groups within Second Temple Judaism. The one item that may inform our study at this point is the inference, drawn by Ellis Rivkin, that a comparison of Josephus' description with the silence of *Ben Sira* and other documents, leads one to the conclusion that the Pharisees were a revolutionary class, particularly in their conviction that the oral Torah was normative.⁷⁴ Since the later Talmudic typology of the Rabbi-Disciple relationship stresses oral teaching, Rivkin's reconstruction would place this development at least as far back as the second century B.C. While certainty is not possible, his argument does present a plausible interpretation of the texts:

Josephus is forthright in affirming that the twofold law of the Pharisees was operative prior to its annulment by John Hyrcanus after his break with the Pharisees (Ant. XIII:288-98); that its abrogation was followed by the insurrection of the masses; that the long reign of Alexander Janneus (103-76 B.C.E.) was marked by a bloody civil war which ended only after his death, when Salome Alexandra (76-67 B.C.E.) restored the Pharisaic twofold law. Thus we have conclusive evidence that the Oral Law of the Pharisees was *operative* in the early Hasmonean period, and that not even a Hasmonean dared abrogate this Law without inviting violent, bloody insurrection. . . . When we turn from Ben Sira to all other writings that have survived from the pre-Hasmonean period—no insignificant number—the non-existence of the Pharisees, and their distinctive concepts and institutions is confirmed. In vain does one search through Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Job, Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah, Ruth, Esther, Daniel or the Song of Songs. Indeed, the very Ezra who was to become a venerated hero of the Pharisees is depicted in the book that bears his name as the champion of Pentateuchal literalism who knows nothing of an Oral Law or a non-Aaronide ruling class. (Emphasis his)⁷⁵

Another aspect of Josephus' writings which is noteworthy is his use of *μαθητης*. He uses it of Joshua in his relationship to Moses (Ant. 6, 84); of Elisha (*μαθητης και διακονος*—Ant. 8, 354) in his relationship to Elijah, and of Baruch in his relationship to Jeremiah (Ant. 10, 178).

The fact that Josephus, in this usage, is more indebted to Greek and Hellenistic models of the *διδάσκαλος-μαθητής* relationship than to distinctively Jewish ideas is generally acknowledged.⁷⁶

An interesting support for the usefulness of Josephus comes from the archaeological quarter with the claim that "Josephus is reliable on many matters of geographical detail."⁷⁷ Thus, we can be neither credulous, nor completely skeptical, but must endeavor to interpret Josephus as one witness alongside the other ancient texts.

Philo

Philo's works provide the most detailed portrait which we possess of a Hellenistic Jew in Alexandria. As with Josephus, the use of Philo in reconstructing the historical situation in first century Palestine is beset with methodological questions.

The two Philonic works which speak most of Palestinian Jewry are *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium*. Both of these works describe the persecutions of the Jews in the time of Gaius Caligula. They were written after the accession of Claudius (A.D. 41) and endeavor to demonstrate "the just retribution which had come upon the enemies of the Jews. He undoubtedly intended both to encourage the Jews and to instill into the heart of the non-Jewish reader the feeling that it is neither fitting nor expedient to attack the Jews and assail their rights."⁷⁸

No texts in these two works refer to the role of the Rabbis. Perhaps the most helpful aspect of Philo's writing is the synthesis of Hellenism and Judaism which it offers.

Archaeological Factors

The relationship of archaeological data to our topic may appear rather oblique. Yet, several finds, besides an ossuary which may provide the earliest substantiation for the use of *ῥαββί* as a term for a teacher in the first century A.D. (cf. footnote 94), shed rays of light into the contexts in which the Rabbis are said to have done their work.

For instance, until recent times there was only minimal evidence for the presence of synagogues in first century Palestine. Since the

Rabbis, and Jesus of Nazareth, are often associated with this institution, it is significant that new excavations have provided more tangible support for its existence at that time:

Although previous generations of scholars assumed the existence of distinct physical structures in this period, documentation for them was virtually nonexistent. To be sure, literary as well as epigraphic support for supposing such a reality was always great, and only the excavations which produced the first-century c.e. prayer houses at Masada, Herodium, Magdal, and Gamala have necessitated a reevaluation of the question of how and where Jews prayed during this formative period. While Herodium and Masada might be understood to represent only a limited strata of society, one in close relationship with Jerusalem royalty, Magdala on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee and Gamala in the Golan reveal edifices created by thriving rural communities quite independent of the royal house.⁷⁹

Another remarkable piece of evidence is the burial ground at Beth She'arim in Western Galilee. The inscriptions on the great catacombs reveal how thoroughly pious Jews had begun to use Greek. By this time, some eighty-five percent of the epitaphs were in Greek with the remainder being Hebrew or Aramaic.⁸⁰

A final help is provided by the extensive evidence for the presence of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek in the milieu of first century Palestine. While it is difficult to say which segments of society would have been bi- or trilingual, the ossuaries, papyri, and related archaeological finds have demonstrated that the linguistic picture is multiplex.⁸¹

Classical and Hellenistic Influence

A variety of studies have addressed the portrayal of the Jews by Greek and Latin authors.⁸² A survey of these texts reveals the whole spectrum of attitudes—from admiration to enmity—toward the Jews:

A scrutiny of texts from the earliest period of Hellenic-Judaic contacts shows that at that time Greek writers regarded Judaism with sympathy and respect. The period meant is the latter half of the fourth and the beginning of the third centuries B.C., and the writers are the explorers, historians, philosophers, who accompanied Alexander the Great and his immediate successors on their campaigns in the East and produced the first books of Hellenistic writing.⁸³

On the other hand, Tacitus displays sharp hostility. Whatever the origin of his thinking, he regards Judaism, or any other competitor

with traditional Roman religion to be the enemy of the state and a good earthly order (Annals 54, 44).

There was, in general, a deterioration in understanding and sympathy, from the fourth century B.C. to the first century A.D. These texts make no contribution to our study for two reasons. First, most of the Latin texts are written by authors (e.g., Cicero and Tacitus) who, in all likelihood, had no direct knowledge of Judaism. Secondly, even in earlier texts, the questions are of a more generic nature, namely, "What is this people like?"⁸⁴

The one aspect of classical culture that must be considered more closely is its educational system. It is in the Greek world that we find a system of education that most closely approximates the pattern of the Rabbi-disciple relationship.⁸⁵

The eminent classicist Moses Hadas posits close affinities between Hellenistic higher education and Rabbinic instruction:

We shall notice that certain usages of the Rabbis—the dialectic method, the explication of ancient texts, the expansion of ancient stories, the system of "difficulties and solutions," the relationship between teacher and taught—were parallel to Greek usages, and shall suggest that since they were introduced after the spread of Hellenism, they might actually have been inspired by Greek practice.⁸⁶

The Greek *διδάσκαλος* was to embody his teaching. An abstract quality like "virtue" was to be exemplified not only in the substance of the teaching, but also in the life of the teacher.⁸⁷

Plutarch (ca. 50-120 A.D.) has an extensive discussion of ancient educational models. His farmer-soil analogy is viewed as the essence of educational theory by classicists:

Most fortunately, Plutarch has given us not only the "educational trinity" which is otherwise known to be sophistic in origin, but also a continuous discussion of it which illustrates the lasting influence of the sophistic ideal of culture. His source illustrates the relation between the three elements by the examples of agriculture, which is the chief instance of the cultivation of nature by human art for a definite purpose. Successful agriculture requires, first, good soil, then a skillful farmer, and lastly good seed. In education the soil is human nature, the teacher corresponds to the farmer, and the seed is the instruction and advice imparted by the spoken word. When all three conditions are perfectly fulfilled, the product is outstandingly good.⁸⁸

Basic educational theory and practice seems to have remained fairly constant through the period of Hellenism. If, as classical scholars suggest, the ideal was to imitate the older models of classical Athens, then the implications for the impact of Hellenism upon modes of teaching in Palestine are significant.⁸⁹

The Rabbi-Disciple Relationship In The Gospels

Two aspects of the Gospels' narratives will be addressed. First, the rather narrow question of how *ῥαββί* is used and what significance this usage might have will be examined.⁹⁰ Secondly, the broader portrait of the life of Jesus of Nazareth will be investigated for episodes which display a Rabbinic flavor.⁹¹

ῥαββί, and its longer form, *ῥαββουνί*, occur seventeen times in the New Testament corpus. Their distribution is: *ῥαββί*—Matthew 23:7, 8; 26:25, 49; Mark 9:5, 11:21, 14:45; and John 1:38, 49; 3:2, 26; 4:31; 6:25, 9:2, 11:8; *ῥαββουνί*—Mark 10:51 and John 20:16.⁹² Its Greek equivalent, *διδάσκαλος*, occurs some fifty-nine times in the New Testament and its verbal form, *διδασκω*, some ninety-seven times.⁹³

In Mark's Gospel, Jesus is designated *ῥαββί* at 9:5, 11:21, and 14:45.⁹⁴ The form *ῥαββουνί* at Mark 10:15 is now also attested in an early Targum.⁹⁵ A common feature of these usages in Mark is that they are all on the lips of disciples.

Διδάσκαλος, on the other hand in Mark, is on the lips of the crowds (Mk. 9:17, 10:1), a scribe (Mk. 12:32), the Pharisees (Mk. 12:14), the Sadducees (Mk. 12:18), and also the disciples (Mk. 4:38, 10:35, 13:1). It does not seem to attribute any significance to Jesus other than his leadership as a teacher.

An interesting feature of Mark's Gospel is that he preserves an interesting usage of *ῥαββί*. In 9:5, where the transfiguration narrative is in view, one would expect Peter to use a more weighty Christological appellation:

It is strange to find Jesus addressed as "Rabbi" in such a narrative as this. The use of the word emphasizes the primitive character of Peter's words. Mark's explanation, *οὐ γὰρ ἤδει τί ἀποκριθῆ ἔκφοβοι γὰρ ἐγενοντο*, almost amounts to an apology, revealing his sense of the incongruousness of the remark.⁹⁶

Matthew has the word *κύριε* and Luke has *ἐπιστάτα*.⁹⁷

In Matthew *ῥαββί* occurs only in contexts where a pejorative overtone can be attached. Hence in Matthew 23:7, 8, where Jesus is pronouncing "woes," verse 7 displays the term as a hollow, laudatory title, and verse 8 precludes the disciples from being called *ῥαββί*, "for you have only one Master and you are all brothers." The two usages in chapter 26 are both on Judas' lips in the context of the betrayal (vv. 25 and 19). In Matthew the normal form of address for Jesus is *κύριε*.⁹⁸ This title is clearly freighted with Christological

meaning, since Jesus' disciples or those who possess faith use it as much more than a polite form of address (e.g., 7:21, 22; 8:2, 6, 8). *Διδάσκαλε* is the designation of those who have not come to a realization of Jesus' true nature (e.g., 9:11, 12:38, 17:24, 19:16, 22:16).

Luke's Gospel lacks any usage of *ῥαββί*. This is usually explained as a part of his larger tendency to omit all Hebrew or Aramaic words.⁹⁹ Still, on six occasions he uses the term *ἐπιστάτα* instead of *διδάσκαλε* to translate *ῥαββί*. Besides the example which we cited from the Transfiguration narrative, a similar usage occurs in 5:5, 8:24, 45, 9:49 and 17:13. *Ἐπιστάτα* is used in contexts where Jesus is asked to display his full power. Hence, it is probable that *ἐπιστάτα* stresses the extraordinary nature of Jesus' person in Luke's Gospel.¹⁰⁰

John's positioning of *ῥαββί* brings another perspective to the discussion:

In John the frequency of the terms "rabbi" and "teacher," used by the disciples in addressing Jesus, seems to follow a deliberate plan: these terms appear almost exclusively in the Book of Signs (1:19 to 12), while in the Book of Glory (13 to 20), the disciples address Jesus as "kyrios." In these forms of address John may be attempting to capture the growth of understanding on the disciples' part.¹⁰¹

The pattern which emerges from the Gospels' use of *ῥαββί* suggests that it is one of the most primitive of the titles for Jesus of Nazareth, and that, as the process of theological reflection continued, a preference developed for titles with larger Christological implications.

If a plausible case can be made for the primitive nature of *ῥαββί*'s use, a parallel probability can be posited for its appropriateness in describing the mission and work of Jesus of Nazareth. Even Bultmann, who in other respects drives such a wedge between Judaism and the kerygma, writes:

And his (Jesus') critical interpretation of the Law, in spite of its radicality, likewise stands within the scribal discussions about it, just as his eschatological preaching does within Jewish apocalyptic.¹⁰²

It must immediately be added that this assertion is not undisputed. Scholars such as K. H. Rengstorf and Martin Hengel suggest that the distance between the Rabbinic method and Jesus' teaching was considerable.¹⁰³ It is hard to understand the complete disparity that is often posited.

Hence, Martin Hengel, writing of Jesus' role as a teacher, states: "He was more like a wonder-worker and preacher than a Rabbi."¹⁰⁴

The response of Viviano engages this issue:

While everyone would be willing to admit such affinities in a general way, many authors are at pains rather to emphasize the differences between the learning relationships which were obtained among Pharisees and those characteristic of Jesus and his circle. This emphasis has two motives. The first is Christological. If Jesus is indeed the incarnate Word of God, how dare we reduce him to the level of a Pharisaic teacher, even if we suppose (what no one denies) that he was a religious genius? Would not this be to flatten out the mystery, to lose the pearl of great price? The second motive must regrettably be described as theologically anti-Semitic in character. (Note the qualification: theologically.) If the heart of the Gospel is understood to be freedom from the law, and Judaism is understood to consist of fidelity to the law, then Judaism becomes the incarnation of everything wrong in religion. The corollary follows naturally that Jesus must be kept as distant as possible from any taint of affinity with his fellow Jew.¹⁰⁵

Not only Christian, but Jewish scholarship as well, has advanced an array of possible affinities between the methodology of Jesus and that of the early Rabbis. Representative of the Rabbi-like character of the Gospel's portraits are the following:

- (a) It is possible that Jesus wore a caftan with the prescribed fringes.¹⁰⁶
- (b) He attended the synagogue service on the Sabbath and read the Scriptures (Luke 4:16, 17).
- (c) The presupposition of His whole ministry is the Torah and prophets of Israel.¹⁰⁷
- (d) His teaching is framed in Rabbinical categories: "His ethical message was also aimed at all and sundry, as were also his parables a form of homiletic teaching commonly used by rabbinic preachers."¹⁰⁸
- (e) The Gospels describe His procedure at the Paschal meal of Passover night in a manner that reflects Rabbinic practice.¹⁰⁹
- (f) The way in which Luke portrays His association with the Pharisees, suggests that He frequented their ritually pure table fellowship, and was acknowledged by them as a teacher (Luke 7:36, 11:37, 14:1; and 12:13).¹¹⁰

These characteristic descriptions could be complemented by the manner in which the disciples conducted themselves. They performed many tasks and behaved as one might expect the disciples of a Rabbi to act:

Nevertheless, the evidence presented probably justifies us in thinking of the Jesus of history as having a kind of "school" around him; not a strictly rabbinic school, but yet one that had rabbinic traits.¹¹¹

Summary and Possible Implications

It would appear that the Rabbi-disciple relationship was a distinctive synthesis of various antecedents. From the Greek and Hellenic

world it derived its distinctive form—a teacher attended by a circle of pupils. From the heritage of Israel, and especially that priestly piety which focused on Torah—explicated by scribe and wise man—it received its content.

The nature of the historical documents through which we learn of this social configuration makes its precise typology for first century Palestine somewhat speculative. No texts from the classical world of Greece or Rome provide a commentary on its place in society. Philo and Josephus are not helpful in filling in any details concerning this institution. They do provide access to that form of Jewish thinking which resulted from the interaction of Hellenism with Judaism. Talmudic texts, in some respects the richest source of information, present significant methodological problems, especially when one seeks the precise shape of the Rabbi-Disciple relationship in the period of the first century A.D.

If these methodological intricacies and historical difficulties are acknowledged, what implications can still be drawn from the descriptions of the Rabbi-Disciple relationship?

Some modest, but probable conclusions from this survey of the texts and literature, would include:

- A. The Rabbi-Disciple relationship, whether well-defined, as is likely in the late first century A.D., or in a variety of inchoate forms, as is probably in the pre-70 period, would have occupied a most significant and strategic position in first century Palestine.
- B. Particularly in Palestine, where the Rabbi-Teacher would be received by much of the populace as a spokesman with scribal-sage authority and knowledge of Torah, this social configuration controlled the interpretation of the Old Testament.
- C. Since these groups were operative prior to our modern distinction between secular and sacred, they possessed the potential and actual means to foster social change. Illustrative of this was Rome's recognition of Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai:

When Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai escaped from Jerusalem to the Roman camp, he asked permission to establish a rabbinic school at Jamnia, and his request was granted without demur. The choice of Jamnia was of some significance. The city had declared for the rebels but had been recovered by Vespasian in 67, apparently without serious damage, as it was then used as a home for loyal Jews who surrendered. Johanan's surrender put him in the loyalist camp, and when he asked to join the loyalists in Jamnia, Vespasian was ready to sanction the foundation of a rabbinic school there which might form the nucleus of a substitute for the Jerusalem Sanhedrin as a future organ

of local self-government. The school at Jamnia was thus set up as a legitimate Jewish authority, with Rome's knowledge and consent, during the war, to prepare to play its part in the post-war reconstruction.¹¹²

- D. It is probable that the differences in the teachings of the Rabbis would have first emerged in the contrasting halakic practices of their respective disciples. Since the scope of halakic matters is so inclusive, the potential for social discord would have been immense. The conflict of Jesus and His disciples with other groups over such matters fits this setting.
- E. A reconstruction of the social world of first century Palestine should posit more such groupings than are known to us from the Jewish and Christian canonical traditions. The discoveries at Qumran, though of a very different order, and the multiplication of pseudepigraphic works which are now placed in the Intertestamental period by scholars, suggests the existence of numerous conventicles.
- F. The view that the Rabbi or teacher was to embody his teaching, and then be imitated by his disciples, also informs our understanding of Jesus and the disciples in their social milieu and setting.¹¹³

If the nature of our historical sources renders a fuller set of inferences impossible, there can be no doubt that the Word Incarnate spoke "with an authority" that had never before been heard by His audiences. May those words, delivered by the prophets and apostles, even now "teach us all things!"

Endnotes

¹It is necessary to acknowledge, from the beginning, the selective and preliminary nature of this study.

²While a few scholars seek to find the Rabbi-disciples relationship inherent in the "sons of the prophets" or anonymous prophetic circles (so, M. Aberbach, "The Relations Between Master and Disciple in the Talmudic Age," in H. Dimitrovsky (ed.), *Exploring The Talmud* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1976), p. 203), it is more probable that the educational antecedents are found in Hellenism. "If the term is missing, so, too, is that which it serves to denote. Apart from the formal relation of teacher and pupil, the OT, unlike the classical Greek world and Hellenism, has no master-disciple relation. Whether among the prophets or the scribes we seek in vain for anything corresponding to it." K. D. Rengstorf, *μαθητης*, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament IV* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967), p. 427. Or, Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), p. 81: "Even the master-pupil relationship in the Rabbinate, bound up with the principle of tradition, has its model less in the Old Testament, where it is not known, than in Greece."

³Gerhard Lisowski, *Konkordanz zum Hebraischen Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: Wurttembergische Bibelanstalt, 1958), pp. 1306-9. Typical is Esther 1:8—

יְסֵד וְנִשְׁבְּרָהּ יָצַל כְּלֵי-רַב בְּתַסּוֹ לְבַשׂוֹת כְּרָצוֹן
אִישׁ - נִשְׁבְּרָהּ

⁴Edwin Hatch and Henry A. Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint I* (Graz, Austria: Akademische-Druck-U. Verlagsanstalt, 1954), p. 316.

⁵MT:
בְּבִשְׂמֵי הַלְּבָשִׁים הַלְּבָשִׁים הַלְּבָשִׁים
וַיִּשְׁבְּרָהּ לְהַרְבֵּי אִישׁ - חֵסֶד פָּרַח לְהַרְבֵּי רִשְׁתָּהּ
רַבְרָבִי - הַלְּבָשִׁים וְהַרְבֵּי בְּקִרְבָּיִם לְפָנָי הַלְּבָשִׁים

LXX: ὁ δὲ κυριος ἀπέστησεν ὕπνον ἀπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως τὴν νύκτα ἐκεῖνην, καὶ εἶπεν τῷ διδάσκῳ αὐτῷ εἰσφέρειν λράμματα μνημόσυνα τῶν ἡμερῶν ἀναγινῶσκειν αὐτῷ.
(Septuaginta—Vol. VIII, 3, Esther. Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1966), p. 175.

⁶It occurs some hundred times and translates a variety of Hebrew roots:

אלף, פֶּרֶשׁ, סִכַּךְ, יִרְדָּה, יִצְאָה, יִדְוֹל, בִּין

Hatch and Redpath, op. cit., p. 316.
⁷E.g.: Dt. 4:1, 10, 14; 5:28; 6:1; Ps. 18:34; 25:4; 51:13; 94:10; 119:12; Prov. 5:13; 30:3; Ecclesiastes 12:9.

⁸Gerhard von Rad, *Wisdom In Israel* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1972), pp. 17-18. For a similarly cautious statement of our knowledge, cf. James L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), p. 28: The existence of a professional class of sages in Israel has been postulated for various reasons: analogy with Egypt and Mesopotamia, the presence of a literary corpus which reflects sapiential concerns, attacks upon the wise within prophetic texts, and general probability, that is, the likelihood that a royal court would need the particular talents which sages possessed. Although such arguments are hardly decisive they lend considerable weight to the hypothesis that a special class of sages did exist in Israel."

⁹Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel* (1961), pp. 353-5. Contexts where scribes seem to be government officials are 1 Chr. 27:32, 2 Ki. 25:19, and pasim. It is only from the time of Ezra that the term takes on the more pointedly "scribal" meaning. So, J. Jeremias, *γραμματεὺς Theological Dictionary of the New Testament I* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1964), p. 740. No generalizations on the meaning of **סוֹפֵר** should be ventured. David Daube writes: "It follows that, when translating *γραμματεὺς* or sopher, we can arrive at the exact nuance only by an examination of the context: *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: The Athlone Press, 1956), p. 211.

¹⁰Eduard Lohse, *The New Testament Environment* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1974), p. 115.

¹¹J. M. Myers, "Scribe," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible IV* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 246.

¹²Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Prophecy and Canon* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), pp. 78-9.

¹³James A. Sanders, *Torah and Canon* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), p. 91.

¹⁴Gerhard von Rad, *Deuteronomy* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966), p. 64; Joachim Begrich, "Sofer und Mazir," *Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 58 (1940), pp. 1-29, suggests that the ultimate origins lie in the court-circles of David and Solomon.

¹⁵Hans Joachim Kraus, *Psalmen I* (Zwickau: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961), p. 2; or, Ackroyd, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

¹⁶Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction To The Old Testament As Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p. 513.

¹⁷The Septuagint's renderings of these descriptive phrases are:

v. 6 . . . αὐτός γραμματεὺς ταχύς ἐν νόμῳ Μωσῆ.

v. 10 . . . ὅτι Εὐδρας ἔδρακεν ἐν καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ ζητῆσαι τὸν νόμον καὶ ποθεῖν καὶ διδάσκειν ἐν Ἰσραὴλ προστάγματα καὶ κρίματα.

v. 11 . . . τῷ Εὐδρα τῷ ἱερεὶ τῷ γραμματεὶ βιβλίου λόγων ἐντολῶν κυρίου καὶ προσταγμάτων αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραὴλ.

¹⁸Jacob M. Myers, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1965), p. 60.

¹⁹Morton Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics That Shaped the Old Testament* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p. 120.

²⁰Robert A. Kraft, "Ezra' Materials in Judaism and Christianity," *Aufstieg und Niedergang Der Römischen Welt* II 19.1 (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1979), pp. 119-36.

²¹Jacob My. Myers, *I Chronicles* (New York: Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1965), p. XL; and *II Chronicles* (New York: Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1965), p. 224.

²²R. B. Y. Scott, *Proverbs-Ecclesiastes* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1965), pp. xxxvi-xxxvii.

²³The contribution of wisdom circles to the development of the Rabbinate is often acknowledged, but specifying the precise nature of that contribution is difficult. H. R. N. Whybray's *The Intellectual Tradition in the Old Testament* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1974), p. 33.

²⁴John G. Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 3-4.

²⁵R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha And Pseudepigrapha I* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1913), pp. 455-6. Charles entitles the section "The Ideal Scribe Described" (p. 455). Snaith comments: "Ben Sira probably intends an ideal self-portrait, including his highest aspirations for his own work and position, and the passage should be read together with such passages as 1:1-10; 4:11-19; 6:18-37; 14:20-15:10; 24 and 51:13-30 to make up Ben Sira's comprehensive picture of true wisdom and its teachers; in no one place is it described fully." *Op. cit.*, p. 191.

²⁶M. Stern, "Aspects of Jewish Society: The Priesthood and Other Classes," *The Jewish People in the First Century* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), p. 619.

²⁷Martin Hengel, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

²⁸Ben Sira 34, 36.

²⁹Ben Sira 33.

³⁰Ben Sira 44:3-9.

³¹Martin Hengel, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-6.

³²R. Meyer, *προφήτης*, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* VI (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmanns, 1968), p. 818.

³³James Crenshaw, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

³⁴Jonathan A. Goldstein, *I Maccabees* (New York: Doubleday, 1976), p. 139.

Emil Schurer (Vermees & Millar, eds.), *The History of the Jewish People In the Age of Jesus Christ* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1973), pp. 502-16.

³⁵M. H. Pope, "Hasidim," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible II* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1962), pp. 528-9; Goldstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-89; and Hengel, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-218.

³⁶James H. Charlesworth, "A History of Pseudepigrapha Research: The Re-emerging Importance of the Pseudepigrapha," *Aufstieg Und Niedergang Der Römischen Welt II* 19.1 (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1979), pp. 76-7.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 88.

³⁸George Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between The Bible and The Mishnah* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), pp. 127-8.

³⁹*Die Texte Aus Qumran* (München: Kosel-Verlag, 1971), p. 228. For a concise summary of Scribal activity at Qumran with commentary on how their work shaped later textual developments, cf. J. P. Siegel's, *The Severus Scroll and IQIs^a* (Missoula: SP, 1975), pp. 67-85.

⁴⁰William High Brownless, *The Meaning of the Qumran Scrolls for the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), especially chapter 6, "The Teacher of Righteousness and the Uniqueness of Christ," pp. 126-51.

⁴¹Jacob Neusner, "The History of Early Rabbinic Judaism: Some New Approaches," *History of Religions* 16 (1977), p. 218, footnote 4. Gershom Scholem underscores the selectivity of the normative tradition: "Tradition is not simply the totality of that which the community possesses as its cultural patrimony and which it bequeaths to its posterity; it is a *specific selection* from this patrimony which is elevated and garbed with religious authority." *The Messianic Idea In Judaism* (New York, 1971), pp. 285-6.

⁴²William Scott Green, *Approaches To Ancient Judaism* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), p. 87.

⁴³S. Safrai, "Education and the Study of Torah," *The Jewish People in the First Century II* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), p. 946.

⁴⁴M. Stern, *op. cit.*, p. 621.

⁴⁵Ira Jeffrey Schiffer, "The Men Of The Great Assembly," *Persons and Institutions In Early Rabbinic Judaism* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), p. 270.

⁴⁶Nathan Drazin, *History Of Jewish Education From 515 B.C.E. to 220 C.E.* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1940).

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, *passim*.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 70-1. A more recent example of the portrait which emerges from a traditional portrayal of an early rabbi is Joshua Podro's "A First Century Jewish Sage," in *Understanding The Talmud* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, Inc., 1975), pp. 198-215). Its subject is Rabbi Joshua, a disciple of Yhanan ben Zakkai.

⁵⁰Jacob Neusner, *First-Century Judaism In Crisis* (New York: Abingdon, 1975), p. 13. The basic categories of "conceptual," "critical," etc., under which we have discussed recent research in Judaica, are drawn from D. W. Halivni's, "Contemporary Methods of the Study of the Talmud," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 30 (1979), pp. 192-201.

⁵¹Jacob Neusner, "First-Century Pharisaism," in *Approaches to Judaism: Theory and Practice* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), pp. 222-3. From a slightly different perspective, H. Loewe states: "The following table attempts to supply approximate dates to some of the passages cited in the anthology. The task is one of extreme difficulty, because the method of editing Rabbinical books differed in many ways from modern methods and because, as has been stated before, Rabbinical

traditions were intended to be preserved orally. . . . Here, again generalizations must be avoided. The reliability of Rabbinic tradition is attested in many ways. It is the essentials, the subject-matter, that are transmitted with care. Chronology was not always regarded as an essential. But when we take Halakah and history into account, we have sure criteria as to antiquity." H. Loewe, "The Dating of Rabbinic Material," pp. 709-13, in C. G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology* (New York: Schocken Books, 1974). Two other studies which display a similar attitude, though with slightly different emphases, are: Renee Bloch's "Methodological Note For The Study of Rabbinic Literature," in W. S. Green (ed.), *Approaches To Ancient Judaism I* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1978), pp. 51-75, and W. S. Green's "What's In a Name?—The Problematic of Rabbinic 'Biography?'" in the same volume, pp. 77-96.

⁵²Jacob Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions About The Pharisees Before 70* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), pp. 301-319.

⁵³J. Goldin, "Several Sidelights Of A Torah Education In Tannaitic and Early Amoraic Times," in Haim Dimitrovsky, *Exploring The Talmud* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1976), p. 16.

⁵⁴M. Aberbach, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

⁵⁵J. Neusner, *First Century Judaism In Crisis*, p. 95.

⁵⁶C. G. Montefiore & H. Loewe, *op. cit.*, pp. 490. Also, Benedict Viviano, *Study As Worship* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), p. 100.

⁵⁷B. Viviano, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

⁵⁸M. Aberbach, *op. cit.*, pp. 205.

⁵⁹Eliezer Ebner, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-58.

⁶⁰M. Aberbach, *op. cit.*, pp. 206-7.

⁶¹C. G. Montefiore & H. Loewe, *op. cit.*, pp. 479-80. (486)

⁶²*Ibid.*, p. 140.

⁶³N. Drazin, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74.

⁶⁴M. Aberbach, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

⁶⁵M. Stern, *op. cit.*, p. 620.

⁶⁶S. Safrai, "Education and the Study of Torah," in *The Jewish People In The First Century II*, pp. 945-68, and A. Buchler, "Open-Air Learning and Teaching," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* (n.s.), Vol. 4 (1913-14), pp. 485-91.

⁶⁷M. Aberbach, *op. cit.*, pp. 220.

⁶⁸S. Safrai, *op. cit.*, pp. 966: "The teaching in schools of the sages was entirely oral. The various notebooks and lists of halakoth only served the personal use of the sage or his disciple. The sage directed the lesson, and the pupils could ask questions. In fact, the entire teaching was directed towards encouraging their participation. Some sages were in the habit of putting questions to their students."

⁶⁹It is widely acknowledged that Palestinian Rabbis initiated this development.

⁷⁰Any generalizations like this run the risk of distortion. It would be wrong to suggest that the many groups within first-century Palestine held such a "typology" before them, and then sought to imitate it faithfully. Rather, the manifold forces of Hellenism, together with the economic and cultural situation, and the Jews' own heritage, must have combined in endless variations to shape particular groups.

⁷¹Harold W. Attridge, *Antiquities—The Interpretation of Biblical History in the Antiquitates Judaicae of Flavius Josephus* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976), p. 68.

⁷²Morton Smith, "Palestinian Judaism in the First Century," in *Israel: Its Role in Civilization*, ed. Moshe Davis (New York: Harper & Row, 1956), pp. 75-76.

⁷³Neusner comments: "Having accounted for Josephus' picture of the Pharisees, are we able to make use of any elements of that picture in an account of their

history? We must discount all of his references to the influence and power of the Pharisees, for, as Smith points out, these constitute part of his highly tendentious case in behalf of the rabbis of Yavneh, the Pharisee's heirs, and not objective data about the pre-70 party." *From Politics to Piety* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1973), p. 65. For a more positive view of Josephus' historical worth, cf. Ellis Rivkin, *A Hidden Revolution* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978), pp. 71-5.

⁷⁴Ellis Rivkin, "Pharisaism And The Crisis Of The Individual In The Greco-Roman World," in *Essays in Greco-Roman and Related Talmudic Literature* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1977), pp. 500-26.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 505-6.

⁷⁶K. H. Rengstorf, *μαθητής*, *Theological Dictionary of The New Testament IV* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1967), p. 440.

⁷⁷Eric M. Meyers, "The Cultural Setting Of Galilee: The Case of Regionalism and Early Judaism," *Aufstieg Und Niedergang Der Römischen Welt* 19.1 (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1979), p. 701.

⁷⁸M. Stern, "The Greek and Latin Literary Sources," *The Jewish People In The First Century I* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), p. 9.

⁷⁹Eric M. Meyers and James F. Strange, *Archæology, The Rabbis, And Early Christianity* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), p. 140. Joseph Gutmann reviews the data which was available in 1972 and is a bit more cautious: "The Origin of the Synagogue," *Beiblatt zum Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 87 (1972), pp. 36-40. Two related in *Aufstieg . . . 19.1*: Alf Thomas Kraabel, "The Diaspora Synagogue: Archaeological And Epigraphic Evidence since Sukenik," pp. 477-510; and James F. Strange, "Archæology and the Religion of Judaism in Palestine," pp. 646-685.

⁸⁰J. Strange, *op. cit.*, p. 661.

⁸¹E. Meyers and J. Strange, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-91.

⁸²Pride of place among these works must go to the encyclopaedic work of Menahem Stern—*Greek and Latin Authors On Jews and Judaism*—2 Vols. (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1974). This work contains the Greek or Latin texts with English translations.

⁸³B. Wardy, "Jewish Religion in Pagan Literature during the Late Republic and Early Empire," *Aufstieg . . . 19.1*, p. 636.

⁸⁴An illustration of how slanted the Latin and Greek authors were in their analysis of Judaism is the Greek view that they had discovered a nation of philosophers: "This constant study of the law by the Jews was mistaken by the first Greeks as metaphysical speculation, and was thought to be such an outstanding feature, that they concluded that all Jews were philosophers. Another feature of Jewish life, which caused some Greek writers to believe that philosophical meditation was characteristic of the Jews, was their exclusive monotheism which in Greek thinking was a pure philosophical concept." *Ibid.*, p. 636.

⁸⁵H. Rengstorf, *op. cit.*, pp. 427ff. Gary Porten comments on how a close study of midrash reveals the influence of Hellenistic devices: "The methods and terminology employed by the Tanna'im, on the other hand, do suggest dependence on the Greek rhetoricians. Daube has shown that Hillel's exegetical principles are similar in style and nomenclature to those employed by Cicero among others. That the midrashic activity finds parallels in the non-Jewish Greco-Roman world should not surprise us. From the period of Ezra-Nehemiah, if not before, the Palestinians had come into close contact with the Greek world and Hellenistic culture. Jews spoke in, wrote in, and thought in Greek forms. As Bickerman has shown, the rabbis were similar to the Hellenistic philosophers. The rabbis in their schoolhouses discussing,

'correcting,' and explaining the Bible were not greatly different from the scholars in the museum in Alexandria. Both groups formed communities which were religious in character. The main difference was that the rabbis were interpreting a text revealed to the Jews by the same God who created the world and who promised a reward to those who faithfully followed His will. There are other contacts between midrash and Hellenistic thought; scholars have consistently noted the stoic, epicurean, platonic, and cynic elements in rabbinic midrash." "Midrash: Palestinian Jews and the Hebrew Bible in the Greco-Roman Period," *Aufstieg* . . . 19.2, p. 134.

⁸⁶Moses Hadas, *Hellenistic Culture* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1959), p. 71.

⁸⁷Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), pp. 194-204. An interesting usage of *paideia* occurs in the prologue of Ben Sirā: "We must give Israel praise for instructions (*paideia*) and wisdom." Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 316.

⁸⁸W. Jaeger, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

⁸⁹F. A. G. Beck, "Education," *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1970), pp. 369-73.

⁹⁰Paul Feine, Johannes Behm, Werner Kummel, *Introduction To The New Testament* (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1966), pp. 33-106.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, pp. 70-1.

⁹²*Computer Konkordanz zum Novum Testamentum Graece* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1980), columns 1671-2.

⁹³*Ibid.*, columns 394-8.

⁹⁴Solomon Zeitlin has suggested that appearance in the Gospels is an anachronism. Hershel Shanks has argued for the plausibility of its usage during the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Their dialogue appears in four articles in Haim Dimitrovsky's *Exploring The Talmud*, pp. 164-188.

⁹⁵Matthew Black, *An Aramaic Approach To The Gospel And Acts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967—third edition), pp. 23-4.

⁹⁶Vincent Taylor, *The Gospel According To St. Mark* (London: MacMillan, 1966—2nd edition), p. 391.

⁹⁷K. Aland, *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum* (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1964), p. 237.

⁹⁸*Computer Konkordanz*, columns 1074-6.

⁹⁹G. B. Caird, *The Gospel Of St. Luke* (Middlesex: Penguin, 1965), p. 15.

¹⁰⁰Otto Glombitza, "Die Titel διδάσκαλος und ἐπίστάτης für Jesus bei Lukas," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 49 (1958), p. 275.

¹⁰¹Raymond R. Brown, *The Gospel According to John I* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., 1966), p. 75.

¹⁰²Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), p. 35. James Robinson honors his teacher and provides a supportive argument with his article "Logoi Sophon: On The Gattung of Q," *op. cit.*, especially pp. 128-9. The distance between New Testament scholars on this basic question is often considerable.

¹⁰³K. H. Rengstorf, διδάσκαλος, *Theological Dictionary to the New Testament II* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), pp. 148-165; Martin Hengel, *Nachfolge und Charisma* (BZNW, 34; Berlin: Topelmann, 1968), especially pp. 46-63.

¹⁰⁴M. Hengel, *Nachfolge und Charisma*, p. 59.

¹⁰⁵Benedict T. Viviano, *Study As Worship* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978), p. 159.

¹⁰⁶Asher Finkel, *The Pharisees and The Teacher of Nazareth* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964), p. 131.

¹⁰⁷Samuel Sandmel, *Judaism and Christian Beginnings* (New York: Oxford Uni-

versity Press, 1978), p. 393: ". . . that Jesus was a Jew and a son of the Synagogue, is beyond doubt."

¹⁰⁸Geza Vermes, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

¹⁰⁹"First, he prepared a place for the feast where he could be counted as the member of the group. On the night of the feast he began with the sacramental wine —this sign symbolizes the start of the holy day. Then he continued with the dipping in the dish, the breaking of the bread, and the distribution, the blessing over the wine after the meal, and concluded with the recital of the Hallel." Asher Finkel, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-2.

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 133.

¹¹¹W. D. Davies, *The Setting Of The Sermon On The Mount* (Cambridge: At The University Press, 1964), p. 424.

¹¹²Mary Smallwood, *The Jews Under Roman Rule* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), p. 348.

¹¹³Joachim Wach, "Master and Disciple: Two Religio-Sociological Studies," *The Journal of Religion* XLII, No. 1 (Jan. 1962), pp. 1-21.