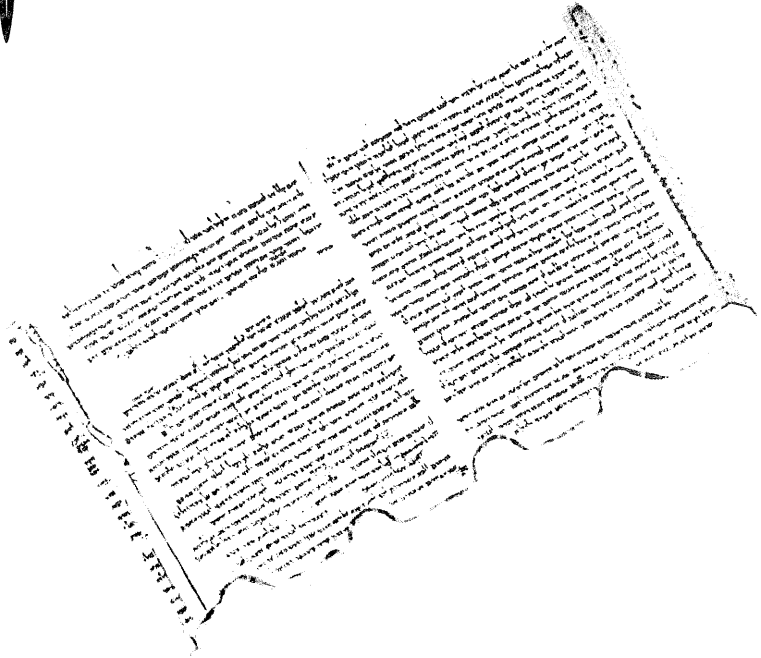




December 1985

Vol. XXV No. 4

ISSN 0360-9685



The
Lutheran
Synod
Quarterly

LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY

Theological Journal of the
Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Edited by the Faculty of
Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary
Mankato, Minnesota

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Subscription Price: \$5.00 per year

Address all subscriptions and all correspondence to:

LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY
Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary
447 North Division Street
Mankato, MN 56001

F O R E W O R D

In this issue of the Quarterly, we are pleased to bring you the 1985 Reformation lectures which were delivered at Bethany Lutheran College on October 30-31, 1985. These annual lectures are sponsored jointly by Bethany College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. The lectures this year were given in memory of Martin Chemnitz, whose theological leadership after Luther's death no doubt saved the Reformation.

The guest lecturers were Dr. Eugene Klug, Professor of Systematic Theology at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Dr. Jacob Preus, past president of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. The reactor was Professor Arnold Koelpin, instructor of religion and history at Doctor Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota.

Dr. Klug lectured on Chemnitz and Authority. He is also the author of several articles and essays and is best known for his book From Luther to Chemnitz on Scripture and the Word. Dr. Preus is remembered for his valuable contribution in translating Chemnitz' De Duabis Naturis and De Coena Domini into English. He is currently working on sections of his Loci Theologici. Dr. Preus' lecture was on Chemnitz and Justification. The lectures are preceded by a biographical sketch of the life of Martin Chemnitz by the editor.

Also included in this issue is a sermon delivered by the editor at the 1985 fall General Pastoral Conference communion service. The Conference met at Bethany College and the communion service was held at Mt. Olive Lutheran Church in Mankato.

We take this opportunity to wish all of our readers a blessed Christmas and a happy and healthy new year in Jesus' Name.

--WWP

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Martin Chemnitz
1522-1586

Martin Chemnitz was born on November 9, 1522 in Treuenbrietzen, Germany, a small town located fifteen miles northeast of Wittenberg. His father was a wool merchant who died when young Martin was eleven years. The local schoolmaster, Laurentius Barthold, recognized him as a lad with superior gifts and persuaded his mother to send him to Latin school in Wittenberg. It soon became apparent that he was not ready to be away from home and so he returned.

Soon thereafter he started reading the Latin writings of Laurentius Valla and even translated one of the apocryphal books from German into Latin. As time went on his friends persuaded his mother to send him to Magdeburg where for three years he concentrated on Latin grammar and became proficient in writing Latin. He also studied Greek and astrology.

After Magdeburg he wanted to attend the university, but because of a lack of funds he became a tutor. He saved enough money to enroll at the university at Frankfurt, where he studied for a year. When his funds were depleted he became a schoolmaster.

From Frankfort he went to Wittenberg to study under Melanchthon, who advised him to study Greek and mathematics. He also developed an interest in astrology, which led to a friendship with Duke Albert of Prussia. Chemnitz came to Wittenberg in 1545, one year before Luther's death. It does not appear that he knew Luther personally, but he did have opportunity to hear him preach and lecture.

When the Smalcald War disrupted the University of Wittenberg temporarily, Chemnitz went to Koenigsberg, where he tutored Polish students and earned the degree of Magister, similar to our Master's Degree today. It was here where he developed a deep interest in theology and became disillusioned with astrology. He applied for a librarian position and got it. This stimulated his interest in theology. During the next three years he studied the Bible, the apocrypha, and all of the commentaries of the Bible that were available.

When the Osiandrian controversy broke out Chemnitz took public issue with Osiander, who was a favorite of Duke Albert of Prussia, and as a result fell into disfavor with the Duke. In 1553 Chemnitz went back to Wittenberg, where Melanchthon persuaded him to lecture on his *Loci Communes*. His lectures were well received by the students. Shortly after coming to Wittenberg he was called to be assistant to Joachim Moerlin, who was superintendent of the churches at Braunschweig. Incidentally, Moerlin had been banished by Duke Albert during the Osiandrian controversy.

Despite pressure to remain at Wittenberg he accepted the call to Braunschweig. Before he left Wittenberg, Bugenhagen ordained him. At Braunschweig he began preaching regularly. He was not a particularly good preacher at first, but developed into an excellent one, and his sermons were described as doctrinal, short, simple, and clear. The clergy at Braunschweig took them as models.

By 1577 Duke Albert of Prussia saw through Osiander's aberrations and sought to recall both

Chemnitz and Moerlin to his realm. After some negotiations the council at Braunschweig agreed to permit Moerlin to go to Prussia, but insisted that Chemnitz remain in Braunschweig and take Moerlin's place as superintendent. Chemnitz reluctantly agreed on these conditions:

1. That all members of the ministerium would abide by the corpus of doctrine which was in force in the churches at Braunschweig and would strive unitedly and constantly against error;
2. That all pastors would work together in the matter of church customs and ceremonies;
3. That no pastor would belittle a brother pastor or speak evil against him, that all complaints would be brought before the assembled ministerium, and that the aggrieved parties would not leave the assembly before a reconciliation had been effected;
4. That the superintendent should have the right to admonish members of the ministerium, and members of the ministerium to admonish the superintendent when they found fault with one another;
5. That, though he sought no personal honor, the brethren give the superintendent due reverence and obedience for the sake of the proper conduct of the office.

He also asked the council of Braunschweig to subscribe to the following points:

1. The council will abide by the accepted body of doctrine and will permit the

ministerium at all times to teach according to it and to warn against false doctrine;

2. The ministerium will be permitted not only to teach the true doctrine and to warn against false doctrine but also to rebuke ungodly living, even if this should be found in the city council and its members;
3. The city council will not interfere with the exercise of proper church discipline on the part of the superintendent and the ministerium;
4. The city council will not call any minister without the consent of the ministerium and the superintendent, nor remove any pastor from office without the consent of the same parties;
5. The council will foster the city schools but will not engage teachers unless they have the approval of the superintendent;
6. The assistant to the superintendent provided for in the church order of Braunschweig will be appointed by the council only after prior approval of the superintendent.

In so doing Chemnitz showed the grasp that he had of the problems that existed. He became an excellent superintendent. He met with the pastors of the city twice a month to discuss doctrine and practical matters. He provided for widows and orphans of pastors. He saw to it that care and dignity were maintained in calling pastors. Candidates for the ministry were thoroughly examined before they were called into the ministry.

In his meetings with the ministerium of Braunschweig, Chemnitz again lectured on Melancthon's Loci. He became famous as a churchman and preacher, but he is especially noted for his role in connection with the controversies between the Roman Catholics and the churches of the Augsburg Confession, and the strife which rent the later churches after Luther's death. The first led to his Examen of the canons and decrees of the Council of Trent, the second to the writing of the Formula of Concord, of which he was the chief author. He was assisted by Andreae, Chytraeus, and Selnecker.

In the Examen, which consisted of four volumes, he showed from Scripture and the fathers just how far Catholicism had departed from Scripture. In the first volume he worked through the formal principle of the Reformation showing that Scripture alone and not tradition, nor a combination of the two, is the sole source and norm of doctrine. The first volume appeared in 1565 and covers the chief articles of the Christian faith. In the remaining three volumes he treats the sacraments and the abuses in the Roman Catholic church which the Council of Trent sought to defend. The Examen was widely acknowledged not only as a polemic against Trent, but also as a thorough exposition of the teaching of the adherents of the Augsburg Confession. It has been praised by the Lutherans and also has the respect of noted Roman Catholics. (We are indeed grateful that Part I & II of the Examen have been translated into English by Fred Kramer.)

Chemnitz is also known for the role which he played during the dissension that arose after Luther's death. This dissension had its roots

in the vacillations of Melancthon, who allowed himself to be pressured by the Interims. It was Chemnitz more than anyone else who was the guiding force behind the Formula of Concord and was instrumental in putting together a document that was signed by three electors, twenty dukes and princes, many lesser nobles, thirty-five imperial cities, and about 8000 pastors and teachers. Chemnitz was irenic, yet firm. He did not engage in name calling, but focused on the issues and as a result brought concord out of dissension. Theology was for him not merely an intellectual pursuit, but he believed that theology existed to serve the church. It is fair to say that Chemnitz, under God's grace and guidance, saved the Lutheran Church from destroying itself by strife. As Lutherans we are indeed grateful to our gracious God for this legacy and it is indeed appropriate that we honor the memory of this great man of God at our Reformation lectures this year. We should also mention that besides the Examen and the Formula of Concord he wrote the Loci Theologici, De Duabus Naturis, De Coerna Domini, and Harmony of the Four Gospels which was published after his death. (We are also grateful that De Coena Domini and De Naturis have been translated by Dr. J. A. O. Preus, who is currently working on sections of Loci Theologici.)

In 1555 Chemnitz was united into marriage with Anna Jaeger, daughter of a jurist. This union was blessed with two sons and eight daughters. Four of the daughters died in infancy. He enjoyed good health most of his life, but at the age of 60 he suffered from what we would today call "burn-out." In 1584 he resigned from his office as superintendent and died two years later at the age of 64. Rightly has it

been said "if the second Martin had not come, the first Martin would scarcely have endured" or as Dr. Klug has put it in his lecture, "without Chemnitz on the field, Rome would have carried the day against the Lutheran Church."

(The above is largely a summary of a biographical sketch of Martin Chemnitz by Fred Kramer, translator of Part I and II of the Examen.)

- WWP

REFORMATION LECTURES

LECTURE I

Dr. Eugene Klug

CHEMNITZ and AUTHORITY

1. Chemnitz was a man of the Word, committed to the Biblical text. If for Luther the guiding principle for doing theology was submission to the Biblical text - haec regina debet dominari (this queen must rule), and we must "bend low in reverence before its footprints," he had said - the same mindset also characterized Martin Chemnitz. That spirit governed the Lutheran reformation.
2. Chemnitz made his reputation theologically the old fashioned way - he earned it. As is now generally known, he was more or less self-taught. The basic tools, expertise in the Biblical languages, were a fruit of his university years, but two and a half years as librarian of the ducal library in Koenigsberg, 1550-1552, afforded the opportunity to read himself deeply into theology. With two-pronged approach he intensively pored through the Bible in the original languages and Luther's works. He could not have chosen a better way to go. It prepared him for the gladiator's role which he would soon be called on to fill. Terrible controversies brewed in the Lutheran church during the stormy years after the Augsburg and Leipzig Interims of 1548. Luther had died in 1546. Melanchthon, though a valued friend and colleague at Wittenberg, proved insufficient

to bear the mantle of leadership after him. Chemnitz emerged as one of the champions of orthodox Lutheran theology, along with theologians like Jacob Andreae, David Chytraeus, Nikolaus Selnecker, and laymen like Prince August of Saxony. The church is in their debt for the Formula of Concord and the Book of Concord.

3. But it was Martin Chemnitz who was the key figure in the Lutheran church in the generation after Luther. Well known is the Roman Catholic assessment - chiefly as a result of his remarkable rebuttal of counter-Reformation theology in his Examination of the Council of Trent: "If the second Martin had not come, the first would not have remained." Sometimes a man's true worth is discovered not first of all, or only, in the eyes of the beholders who are his friends, but especially by those who opposed him and learned firsthand the true-tempered steel, the cutting edge of his theological acumen. Chemnitz' Examen Concilli Tridentini had scored and deeply etched itself upon the minds of his Catholic opponents. "For this work Chemnitz received the title 'the most villainous Lutheran' (sceleratissimus Lutheranus) from Count Bartholomaeus v. Portia, the papal nuncio," notes Werner Elert.¹ Without Chemnitz on the field Rome would have carried the day against the Lutheran church. He was the one who most incisively and definitively cut into Rome's theological corpus and did the surgery on Trent's (1545-1563) formulations, and his Roman opponents recognized it. Yet he had done it, as in all his work, with a gentle hand, calm and unhurried like a skillful surgeon intent on healing. The massive Examen occupied him for almost eight years, 1565-1573, midst

other duties as superintendent of the churches and clergy in the Brunswick territory.

4. In his own autobiography Chemnitz explains his humble beginnings in the small town of Treuenbrietzen, about half way between Wittenberg and Berlin. The family had come on hard times and young Martin had to struggle for an education. An avid learner, he eventually attained a master's degree at the University of Wittenberg, 1548. Meanwhile he had taught the classics, Greek and Latin, to earn a living. His contact with Luther was minimal, even though he had been a student at Wittenberg the year before the Reformer's death, 1545. Later he regretted having missed the opportunity to sit in the great teacher's classroom, though he had heard him preach. Little did he then realize that one day he would be the man destined by God to assume his famous namesake's mantle, the Lutheran church's next ablest teacher.

5. During his years at the university, Chemnitz had become quite expert in what he himself described as "judiciary astrology." He would call it dabbling in horoscopes, calculating propitious moments and influences on a person's life and events through the zodiacal signs, the positions of the stars and planets. One may question just how much confidence he placed in this "art," but by it he was able, as we say today, "to work his way through college." Not insignificantly it also helped get him the appointment to the Prussian ducal library at Koenigsberg, since the rulers put much stock in these astrological tables.² Chemnitz was willing to oblige, even though he undoubtedly knew that Luther had viewed this practice of trying to tell the future by the stars not only

as tomfoolery but idolatry, contrary to the first commandment. Melanchthon also was "soft" on astrology, even while Luther was alive and in spite of Luther's pointed remonstrations and opposition. In one of Luther's exchanges with his colleague, the Reformer stated point-blank: "I do not want to tell Germany's fortune on the basis of the stars; but on the basis of theology, I announce to Germany the wrath of God."³

6. Fortunately when it came to theology Chemnitz followed Luther, not the stars, nor even Melanchthon for that matter. The latter worthy tended to deviate from Luther on the very principle that mattered most, the question of authority in religion. How was one to know the things of God? What in fact could be said about God Himself? What were God's intents and purposes towards mankind? These were crucial matters and man, if left to himself, always ended up making God in his own image or giving answers for God's purpose which conformed to his own so-called best thoughts.

7. It is the epistemological problem. Episteme is the Greek word for knowledge or understanding. The science or discipline of getting at the source of such understanding is called epistemology, the study of knowledge, its origin, nature, and limits. For all intellectual pursuit, in whatever discipline, there is a principium cognoscendi, a principle of knowing, or understanding. Shall man find it in himself? In his own reason and intellect? Was he not virtually God-like in this respect? If it is outside of himself, where shall he look? Especially when it involves things beyond this natural realm, which can be empirically observed,

which man can tabulate, and from which he can draw a certain number of generally valid conclusions?

8. Luther never doubted the lessons taught by the natural realm around him. He was a close observer of nature and its many wonders. But what about their origin? Whose was the hand behind them, that had made them? Only a blind man, a fool, deliberately closes his mind's eye to what he sees, and denies the Creator's handiwork or the Creator Himself. Luther never questioned the fact that there was such a thing as natural knowledge of God, nor that conscience itself informed man of God's existence; in other words, that there was a validity to what these natural sources revealed. This does not result from prior research, seeking, and structuring by man, but is a given by God, something He Himself intends. Commenting on Galatians 4, 8.9, which refers to this very thing, Luther states that "there is a twofold knowledge of God, the general and the particular."⁴

9. That there is a God, that He is the Creator, that He is of infinite power, and that He is all men's judge - these are all things man has more than a small inkling of, as St. Paul also testifies in Romans 1, 20. But who God truly is, what is in His heart, and what He has done for sinful man's salvation - all these things lie beyond man's competence, even to the slightest inkling. Here man needs the special revelation which only God can and has given through His Word, now not the word which man can, as it were, read in the trees but the Word which He reveals through His specially chosen veils or curtains, larvae Dei. These were His

wondrous theophanies in the Old Testament, His revelations to the prophets, also His inspiration of the written Word through these men, and then eventually through His apostles. Finally, in a most preeminent way God made Himself known through His own Son, born of the virgin Mary at Bethlehem.

10. Don't despise God at the point where, and the manner in which, He approaches you in these revelations of Himself and His will toward sinful mankind, Luther cautioned. It is God's way of revealing Himself and we should know that He "does not manifest Himself except through His works and the Word."⁵ And because it is impossible for us to view God in his "uncovered divine essence," He deigns to envelop "Himself in His works in certain forms, as today he wraps Himself up in Baptism, in absolution, etc." To try to know God, therefore, beyond these stated limits, is to get beyond our depth immediately. "It is therefore insane to argue about God and the divine nature without the Word or any covering (larva), as all the heretics are accustomed to do. But those who want to reach God apart from these coverings exert themselves to ascend to heaven without ladders (that is, without the Word). When God reveals Himself to us, it is necessary for Him to do so through some such veil or wrapper and to say: 'Look! Under this wrapper you will be sure to take hold of Me.'"⁶

11. By "necessity," of course, Luther did not mean that God had to do it, but rather that God graciously for man's sake provided the avenue of escape from sin. Particularly God gave the revelation which made this known and available, in Word, in Baptism, and especially

in Christ, the Savior, when He came to us sinful men in the lowly garments of our own sinful flesh - yet without sin! - and revealed Himself and His gracious disposition toward sinners as nowhere else. In the so-called foolishness of the cross (1 Cor. 1, 18:2, 14) lay man's salvation. This is the blessed theologia crucis. The way to God is not through mysticism, asceticism, observances - which are all rungs on the ladder of theologia gloriae, human self-elevating - but simply through Christ!

12. Christ is at the center of the Word. He is the true focal point or hub of the whole of Sacred Scripture, the inspired prophetic and apostolic Word. Against Erasmus Luther had thundered: "Tolle Christum e Scripturis, quid amplius in illis invenies?" - Take Christ out of the Scriptures and what more will you find in them?⁷ For Luther, and so also for Chemnitz, there was only one way to go: Nihil nisi Christus praedicandus, nothing but Christ must be preached. Scripture had but one theme - Christ! On that point, as on all others, we must bend before Holy Scripture, for it is the "Holy Spirit's book," was Luther's attitude. And what Christian would think otherwise, Luther challenges, probing Erasmus' heart? Frankly, too, "what can the church settle that Scripture did not settle first?"⁸ You, and others, may have trouble with some of the doctrinal claims Holy Scripture places upon you, Erasmus, but just remember this: "The Holy Spirit is no skeptic."⁹

13. Chemnitz followed Luther precisely in this Knechtsgestalt, servant-stance, before Scripture. One need look no further than the Examen to see this. More than 300 pages of

evidence in the English translation, Vol. 1, state the case that he is making against the Council of Trent (especially against Andrada, Trent's interpreter). God's Word must be sought not in church councils and church traditions but only "according to the norm of the Scripture which has been divinely revealed."¹⁰ The church has not been left in a quandary as to where to find God's word - a plague that still burdens modern, skeptical theology! - but "God Himself revealed Himself and His will to the human race by giving a sure Word, which He confirmed with great miracles."¹¹ History tells the story of how "God at all times graciously looked out for His church, that it might be certain which doctrine it was to embrace as undoubted, heavenly, and divine, and by what norm any errors (were to be) avoided, known, and judged."¹²

14. With the patriarchs God used unique forms of communication. But from the time of Moses and onward God chose a new "way and method of preserving and retaining the purity of the heavenly doctrine by means of the divinely inspired Scriptures."¹³ "The dignity and authority of the Holy Scripture" are grounded on God's own initiative, for He did it "with His own finger."¹⁴ Chemnitz surveys the "firm testimonies" which can be found in Scripture itself, with the reminder that "they set before us the judgment of the Holy Spirit Himself concerning the Scripture." A "pious heart," Chemnitz counsels, will rest on "what its author, the Holy Spirit, concludes and declares about His work."¹⁵ Chemnitz assembles a truly impressive list of ancient authors, the early church fathers, who concurred in this view, but reminds his readers that "the truth of the Word of God does not depend on the church."¹⁶ Just the reverse - the church has always depended upon the pure Word.

15. The canon of the Old Testament books is fixed by the New Testament, by the Lord Himself and His apostles. The canon of the New Testament, Chemnitz shows, rests on no less secure basis. Fundamentally it is fixed by God Himself, through the testimony which is inherent in the inspired writings themselves. The early church (ecclesia primitiva) played a role in this, for it was close to the happenings as recorded, knew the authors and could vouch for them, thus verifying that the things written corresponded with the preaching of the same apostles. Citing the well-known text, 2 Tim. 3, 14-17 - so often neglected and passed over by modern critical theologians - Chemnitz stresses how "this text if it is diligently weighed will show that Paul is speaking not only of the sacred writings of the Old Testament but of the whole Scripture." By the time of this writing - usually recognized as Paul's last - we know today that virtually the whole New Testament had been completed; "this, therefore, is the true canonization of the writings of the New Testament." Chemnitz confidently avers.¹⁷

16. In the same context Chemnitz underscored Scripture's capacity to interpret itself, Scriptura Scripturam interpretatur, or Scriptura interpretat sui. This is so because of its inherent clarity, claritas Scripturae. When Chemnitz asserts that "there are definite rules according to which interpretation must be carried out," he recognizes the basic hermeneutical principles.¹⁸ They are built into all communication, and they are self-contained in God's Word. Luther once remarked to Erasmus that God after all did not give us the Scriptural Word to add to our darkness but to our light. The notion that there is no light or meaning in the text

until we bring our finest thoughts and insights into it is the worst poison. "This is what I have called the Babylonian captivity," Chemnitz states, when Scripture's meaning must first be declared by the church, the fathers, or some other authority. This is to set Scriptures under the heel of man.

17. To illustrate how this goes, I can refer to a recent happening at the Lutheran-Methodist Dialogue. The topic under study was the ministry, the episkopē, in the church. After much discussion, the suggestion was made (by a Lutheran) that we ought really make a thorough study of the Biblical text on the subject. Instead of enthusiasm for this modus operandi there was silence and finally only the observation (by a Methodist): "But that would necessitate first addressing the whole hermeneutical problem." What problem? Obviously that each of us would be interpreting according to his own slide rule, implying that it would be impossible to arrive at consensus. So, better skip the Biblical study.

18. Chemnitz was quite right - "it is truly a Pandora's box, when once this postulate is granted, that proof and confirmation from the Scripture are not necessary."¹⁹ The maneuver is quite obvious, elevating human opinion, traditions, to magisterial position over Scripture. By that tactic the Scriptures finally can say nothing binding at all upon the human heart. It was not that Chemnitz had little regard for the value of tradition(s) within the church. Pains-takingly he tabulates and characterizes the benefits that have come down from the fathers through all the centuries, not least their faithful witness to pure teaching, practice, etc. But the rule of thumb must remain, that long usage

by itself does not establish truth, particularly not when it opposes Scripture, for "custom without truth is ancient error" and no more than that!²⁰ In matters of Christian faith and life we must "take refuge in nothing else but the Scriptures."²¹

19. Like Luther, Chemnitz refuses to pry into the nature of God Himself and he always disapproved of the expression or the idea of "God uncovered," Deus nudus. The idea or attempt of knowing God as He is in Himself, as a Ding an sich (Goethe), a thing in itself, or in its nature, like some mathematical table or scale on the piano which we master, is an affront and sinful presumption. From this has resulted all manner of harmful speculation, the delight of human philosophies. God tells us of Himself and His attributes in His Word. This we should gladly accept, but this does not put God as it were in our hands, or in our heads, as a thing which we have mastered. To Chemnitz, as first of all to Luther, God as He is in Himself remains forever unknowable (1 Tim. 6, 16: Ex. 33, 18.20).

20. Even God the revealed, deus revelatus, as He has made Himself known to us in His Word, whom we know and love, whose purposes and mercy we have come to understand, is not now like a person with whom we stand on equal plane, whose nature and purposes we completely grasp. He still remains the hidden God, deus absconditus, to us, wherever and to the extent that He has not made Himself or His purposes known. Let God be God in His majesty and glory, Luther contended. If we wish to know Him, let us not run here and there, as St. Paul warns in Romans, Chapter 10, but let us go to His Word where He reveals Himself and all that is necessary for our salvation.

Luther's advice is, go to Bethlehem, if you want to know Him, and behold the virgin nursing the child, for there is your God, the infant made man for your sakes!

21. Chemnitz wrote a whole book on the subject.

Not merely twenty or thirty pages, but well nigh 500 pages! Its single focus was also its title, De duabus naturis in Christo, Concerning the Two Natures of Christ, 1578. He saw the great need of showing that the Almighty God, Deus incarnatus, who "united Himself with our nature." The divine Son of God did this, "in order that with the nature according to which He is closest to us, devoted and related to us as our Brother, and according to which we are also flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone, the divine nature may deal with us in grace to give us life."²² Chemnitz devotes his book to telling the "very sweet comforts" (dulcissimae consolationes) which are ours through the blessed doctrine of the two natures in Christ. Pious persons have at times stripped away the comfort that this great doctrine brings to man, elevating Christ, as they think, into some supraterritorial, spiritual being only, unattached to the human condition entirely. "This beautiful, necessary comfort is taken and stolen from us," spoke the church at Chemnitz' time, "when one teaches that Christ is present in His church on earth and acts only according to and with His divine nature and not at the same time according to and with His human nature."²³

22. "The true knowledge of the person and work of Christ is divinely revealed in the Word as something not only good and useful, but as absolutely necessary for salvation and eternal life," states Chemnitz in his prefatory remarks.²⁴

The Word of God upon which Chemnitz grounds his argument is the "Scripture (which) expressly teaches that these two natures do not subsist by themselves, but have been united into the one person of the Logos."²⁵ In typical fashion Chemnitz surrounds this propositional statement, as he does always, with salient, pertinent Scripture references or proof.

23. The church has been plagued with errors in Christology, in the teaching concerning Christ's holy person and work, but the fact is that "Scripture carefully treats of this doctrine and repeats it in many places."²⁶ "God has revealed to us in His Word, through His Spirit, as much concerning this mystery as He judged necessary and useful for us in this life for a true and saving knowledge of our Savior Christ."²⁷ Yet no other article of the faith, except perhaps the Trinity, has experienced "so many controversies, so many different opinions, so many heresies."²⁸ There is no other explanation for this than "that the curiosity of the human mind hates to limit itself to the bounds of divine revelation, (but) longs to wander (and) twist and turn the teachings of Scripture to conform to preconceived notions."²⁹ However, if there is to be a settlement of these controversies and a true consensus attained, then "the norm and rule of judgment must always be the voice of God as revealed in Scripture."³⁰ This is no simplistic sort of idea on the part of Chemnitz. It is Scripture's own presuppositional stance that in itself it is its own best interpreter, Scriptura interpres sui.

24. As is commonly known Chemnitz was one of the principal authors of the Formula of Concord (1577) and thus also of the Book of Concord (1580).

Jobst Ebel, describing Chemnitz' role in the origin of the Formula, says of him: "With Martin Chemnitz there came into the story of the origin of the Formula of Concord a man with his own unique theological imprint."³¹ We may safely assume that the work which he had done on the earlier and shorter version of the De duabus naturis in 1570 contributed heavily to his preparedness for the significant article (VIII) on the person and work of Christ in the Formula. The same conclusion must apply to Article VII on the Lord's Supper. One of the first assignments engaging him as co-adjutor with Joachim Moerlin in Brunswick was a definitive answer in the Hardenberg case. Dr. Albert Hardenberg was cathedral preacher in Bremen. On the matter of the Lord's Supper he leaned strongly in the direction of Zwinglianism. Moerlin sought a confrontation on the issue, to safeguard Lutheran parishes from the inroads of any form of Crypto-Calvinism. Chemnitz wrote the opinion (Gutachten), 1560/1561, which was utilized at the hearing by Moerlin. Hardenberg was dismissed eventually.

25. What Chemnitz had done was to expand on material previously worked out on the doctrine of the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament. This he now published that same year (1561), somewhat expanded, under the title, Repetitio sanae doctrinae de vera praesentia, Summary of Sound Doctrine on the Real Presence. In turn this work was expanded and revised, to appear in 1570 (with frequent reprintings till 1690) under the title Fundamenta sanae doctrinae de vera et substantiali praesentia, exhibitione et sumptione corporis et sanguinis Domini in coena, available in translation today under the title, The Lord's Supper.

26. Like Luther, Chemnitz recognized how closely the articles on Christ and the Lord's Supper were interwoven, particularly when faulty theology entered in. The rudimentary error of the Crypto-Calvinists and their denial of the real presence really began with their failure to grasp and to grant the full communication of divine attributes to Christ according to His human nature, the genus majestaticum. Chemnitz in Luther-like manner is held by the words of Christ, as given in the sacred record, and he bemoans the tragedy of how "some evil genius has brought these most holy words into controversy."³³ He deplores the fact that, while ordinarily the words of a testator are respected as sacrosanct and no one attempts even to substitute "the mind of the testator" for what is in fact written, yet in the case of Christ's sacred words all manner of subtleties have been introduced, all of them artful deviations from what Christ had so simply stated and promised.

27. Therefore, on the basis of Scripture, and with Luther's lucid teaching on the Real Presence in mind, Chemnitz explained that he was encouraged by the favorable response that he had received from pious believers when first he had written a brief in behalf of Christ's Supper, to show "that the dogma of the Lord's Supper has its own proper and peculiar setting (sedes doctrinae) in the words of institution and that in these words its true meaning must be sought."³⁴ If faith is to be sure, it must rest on what "the Holy Spirit has shown in Scripture itself." Therein are the "weighty arguments" which "compel us not to depart from the proper, simple, and natural meaning of the words of the last will and testament of the Son of God." The reader finds here the grist for the brilliant article (VII)

on the Lord's Supper in the Formula. A key factor for the outcome is Chemnitz' (as well as his coworkers') attitude towards the Word of God, Holy Scripture. He refused to quibble with the Haec dicit Dominus, thus saith the Lord.

28. The Formula did not include a special article on the Scriptures as the authoritative Word governing Lutheran theology. It needed none. First, there was no dispute in the 16th century concerning the Scripture's inspiration and primacy in the church, though the departures from its authority were of course legion, to the right and to the left, in Romanism and in the radical groups. Second, the formulators declared very plainly their starting point in the preface of the Formula, stating that the Scriptures were the foundation, rule and plumbline "whereby all dogmas should be judged" and all "controversies should be explained and decided in a Christian manner." There was no higher court of appeal than "the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments." These constituted what the confessors recognized "as the pure, clear fountain of Israel." There was "the foundation of divine truth," and nothing other, and on Scripture's authority the articles of faith were presented in thesis and antithesis.

29. Chemnitz and his colleagues left no doubt as regards their modus operandi; their work on the Formula bears its own testimony as to the faithfulness with which they bent themselves under Scripture's magisterium. Deus locutus est, God has spoken. Little wonder then that the Confessions became the very marrow of Scripture, ipsa medulla scripturae, because they were a true exposition of God's Word.

30. There are other writings of Chemnitz which deserve at least mention. In fact they were major productions. Not least would be his dogmatics, a loci theologici,³⁵ published after his death by his understudy, Polycarp Leyser. Leyser also saw to it that Chemnitz' great work on the harmony of the Gospel, Harmonia evangelica, was continued (it was completed by Johann Gerhard), and also a sermon book, Postillen.

31. Nor should we omit mention of the charming little handbook on doctrine, the Enchiridion, or Handbuechlein der vornehmsten Hauptstuecke der christlichen Lehre, which first appeared in 1560.³⁶ It was intended for clergy and laity. Clearly and in uncomplicated catechetical arrangement it treats virtually all articles of the Christian faith. Its declared purpose was to raise the level and tone of theological knowledge in the churches of the Braunschweig territory. The sound Scriptural base on the sedes doctrinae, so typical of Chemnitz' way of working, is everywhere evident. But it was not to be a substitute for Biblical study itself, for, as Chemnitz says in his preface, the "passages of Scripture are everywhere noted, so that the pastors themselves should learn to search in the Bible and be able to advance sure testimony of the Scripture on each point."³⁷ Not only was it written to help the pastors prepare for their regular qualifying examinations on fitness for office, but also, as Chemnitz states, it was "written in German so that the laity might read and know what is discussed in examinations" and be able to "judge whether their pastors follow the true voice of Christ."³⁸

32. Identifying the Holy Scriptures with God's Word is an absolute, unwavering principle

for Chemnitz.³⁹ The Enchiridion is among the earliest doctrinal works in Christian theology which includes a special section on the Scriptural Word. "God saw to it that this Word of His was put into writing by faithful witnesses."⁴⁰ "The Holy Spirit included in Scripture the sum of the whole heavenly doctrine, as much as is necessary for the church," and for the individual believer to "obtain eternal life."⁴¹ As a result, God's church throughout its life has always viewed the Holy Scriptures as "a definite canon and a single norm or rule according to which all religion and doctrine ought to be examined, tested, and judged." Therefore, when in the church the question is, what is God's word on a given point, what does God say, then the rule must be that "that which does not have foundation in Holy Scripture and cannot be proved by it and is not in harmony with it, but contrary to it, this we neither can nor ought to set forth and receive as the Word of God."⁴² Stated positively, "this should be our axiom: Thus it is written; thus Scripture speaks and testifies - (this is the way) He bound His church (when) we want to know or show that a teaching is God's Word."⁴³

33. There are three relatively little known works of Chemnitz which played significant roles in the Lutheran churches which he was called on to serve. While they may be said to cover essentially the same doctrinal matters treated in the Enchiridion, their importance was in the service they rendered as confessions or symbols for the churches for which they were prepared. As such they also became significant precursors to the Formula of Concord itself. Corpus doctrinae Prutenicum, 1567, was prepared in behalf of the Lutheran church in the duchy of Prussia. It was

addressed in part as an answer to the Osiandrian heresy on the doctrine of justification, which changed the forensic sense of righteousness, God's declaration of forgiveness upon sinners for Christ's sake, to a "being made righteous" through the indwelling of Christ's divine nature. As a church order it also included a summary of Christian doctrine and was known as the corpus doctrinae for the Prussian territory.

34. The following year, 1568, Chemnitz joined forces with Jakob Andreae in working out a similar church-order for the Braunschweig-Wolfenbuettel territory. Again a corpus doctrinae resulted, sometimes known as the Kurtzer Bericht of 1569, intended as a guide and norm for the churches and clergy espousing the Reformation. Later this was expanded into the Wolgeruendter Bericht of 1575. Theodore Mahlmann, in his article on "Chemnitz" in the newly revised Theologische Realencyclopedie,⁴⁴ points out that this important confessional document parallels closely the appearance of the Formula of Concord, 1577, and is therefore significant in any study or tracing of the sources for the Formula.

35. Of the Corpus doctrinae Prutenicum Mahlmann observes that Chemnitz very clearly cites the Scripture as the normative canon to which all doctrine must conform. "What is new here is the well-formulated doctrine of the Holy Scripture as the canon or rule, modeled after the Examen, and the (virtual) 'canonization' of 'Luther's writings' without much ado."⁴⁵ It is evident that by this time Chemnitz has clearly in mind some of the issues that needed to be addressed by the torn church, including such things as Christology (in view of what was happening on the Lord's Supper among Crypto-Calvinistic

Lutherans), also the nature of sin, free will, and tangent articles, all of which came to be involved through the Philippist and Flacian controversies. Each side wanted to claim fidelity to Luther. Chemnitz succeeded in showing where Melanchthon and Flacius, the two principal Lutheran leaders after the Reformer's death, had both departed from the Scriptural norm. To do so, of course, he first of all had to be a master of the Scriptures themselves, in the style of Luther, and then he also had to be totally familiar with the Reformer's works, not only as to given statements but also as to Luther's meaning in a given context.

36. Who were the true and genuine adherents and supporters of the Augsburg Confession, of Smalcald, of the Catechisms? If peace and concord were to be restored to the individual Lutheran territorial churches and to the church as a whole, it would be necessary, as Chemnitz rightly saw it, to restore first of all an inner peace, a true concord and unity of hearts joined together in the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, Eph. 4, 3. Unless there is agreement in doctrine, purely taught in keeping with Scripture, there cannot be external unity of the church. Chemnitz articulates this nicely in his prefatory remarks to the Kurtzer Bericht of 1569, stating: "Where a thoroughly lasting church-order is to be established and set up, it is a foremost concern that there be a proper foundation or basis, in order that the teaching be pure and in perfect accord."⁴⁶ Chemnitz was very much aware of the tricks human reason likes to play, especially in undermining established doctrinal standards like the Augsburg Confession and the other Lutheran confessions of that time. Therefore he "strongly and repeatedly emphasizes that it is necessary to include the

antithesis in the confessions, according to the example of Jesus and the apostle Paul."⁴⁸

37. The concern here is not for peace and unity in mere external affairs. In the church there is another sort of peace to be sought after. This peace "is not analogous to peace in ordinary human affairs, which is tantamount to friendship," states Ebel with reference to what Chemnitz was striving for in the territorial churches he was called on to serve and the Lutheran church at large.⁴⁹ Mere human orders, conventions, usages, norms, or authority would not avail. "What Chemnitz was striving for was real, substantial agreement," states Hoass, and "he had no regard for clever and crafty interpretations which at best resulted in verbal agreements."⁵⁰ That would be tantamount to constructing a building lacking solid foundation or proper structural design; it would soon collapse. In the constructing of any church-order or system of doctrine there could be no substitute for the Word of God. For Chemnitz this meant Holy Scripture, if the doctrine was to be pure, sound, true, and saving or wholesome. "Hear Him! hunc audite!" Chemnitz exhorts in the opening line of the Wolgegruendter Bericht which was prepared for the Braunschweig churches.⁵¹

38. For Chemnitz this was no mere academic commitment to the words of Scripture. The apostolic and prophetic Word had a focus. That focus was Christ, who was the chief cornerstone for the foundation upon which the prophets and apostles were grounded. "The one, pure, saving teaching God revealed in His Holy Word through the writings of the Old and New Testaments, (and what God's mouth thus has spoken and revealed" must be received, therefore, as His Word.⁵² Chemnitz addressed every article of faith on the

basis of Scripture with sure confidence that God had spoken. Holy Scripture is not a cleverly devised compilation of human thought and of human origin. "God himself has taught it (the true Christian religion) from heaven," stated Chemnitz, "through the mouth of the prophets, Christ, and the apostles."⁵³

39. Scripture's authority and sufficiency in all matters of doctrine must be beyond cavil in the church. There can be no system of doctrine other than the articles which Scripture clearly teaches. It is the only source. While Christ is the center of Scripture's teaching, Old and New Testament, it must also be clear and well-established that all other articles of the faith stand on the same base and derive from the same source. Though Chemnitz frequently quotes Luther, as in the Formula, his purpose is only to show how Luther's apt and lucid explanations conform to Scripture's clear teaching.

40. Pure teaching is fundamental to Chemnitz' work as a teacher in the church. The church cannot be served in any other way. False and faulty teaching can only do harm. Many claims are made to being "Christian," but if doctrine is to be true and pure it must conform precisely to the Word of God, as Luther once stated, like a mathematical point. Holy Scripture is God's own plumbline by which all doctrine is to be measured and assayed. Like pure gold Scripture is its own vindicator, its own interpreter, interpretes sui. This sufficiency is given by God Himself. Every commentary or explication, therefore, must deliver God's intended sense and meaning, not that of a clever interpreter who plays games with Scripture, as Luther reminded

Erasmus. It is not open to the opinions of men. It must not "be bent, turned, and twisted" to suit the "individual interpreter's taste," cautions Chemnitz in the church-order for Braunschweig.⁵⁴ Against such "arbitrary handling of Scripture," Hoas states, "Chemnitz argues for the clarity of Scripture and its doctrinal unity."⁵⁵ This conforms closely to the position which Luther took against Erasmus who argued for a kind of freedom from textual commitment to the Scriptures because of its supposed obscurities, an argument which Luther absolutely refused to grant by demonstrating how Scripture itself repudiated such aspersions.

41. Chemnitz' concern for Scripture's integrity, purity, and authority was not a mere person fixation of arbitrary stance. He saw how all of doctrine hung from that thread. Chief of all doctrines, of course, was the justification of the sinner by the grace of God, for Christ's sake, through faith. If this article is not kept pure, the church perishes, as Luther before him had declared. Then the Gospel is lost. Then the Law will no longer be properly and rightly distinguished from the Gospel, and the two chief doctrines of the Bible will end in hopeless confusion.

42. It is evident that in his approach to doctrine and the writing of doctrinal statements (church-orders), or confessions, Chemnitz operated with unflagging commitment to a declared trust in Scripture's authority, as also its integrity as the inspired Word of God. Moreover, he saw the desirability of the church speaking out clearly concerning its faith and teaching. This was true particularly when strife and contention tore in demonic fashion at the articles of faith

themselves, threatening them with destruction. The confessions which Chemnitz wrote prior to the Formula bear witness to the deep regard which he maintained always for the Scripture as the Word of God itself, as well as his attitude vis-a-vis the Lutheran confessions. Mahlmann criticizes him and implies that his activity in behalf of such doctrinal formulations helped to turn up the problems.⁵⁶ This charge is of course without foundation in fact, and the Formula, which is the final grand end for all of Chemnitz' yeoman work in behalf of doctrinal purity and integrity, stands as vindication of his efforts. Genuine, orthodox Lutheran theology has never been better served. If Lutherans today wish to be confessional according to the intent and meaning of the Augsburg Confession and the other symbols of the Christian faith, and, above all, to the authoritative Word of God itself, Holy Scripture, they will be ready to admit their debt to this intrepid warrior for the faith, the "second Martin."

43. Chemnitz stepped down from his work in 1584 and died in 1586, April 8. The epitaph marking his grave is Gal. 2, 20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live . . ." - an appropriate commentary on his life, work, and meaning for the church.

44. In answering Trent, Chemnitz had devoted a major portion of his Examen Concilii Tridentini to the whole question of Scriptural authority. In great detail he treated both Holy Scripture's divine origin through inspiration and also the self-authenticating nature of the Biblical text. He recognized, and so also stated, that "the whole dispute" with Rome really turned on the authority question. For that reason he

expended extensive care to the task of demonstrating Scripture's authority, though in the beginning, as he says, he had first thought of laying this groundwork "with a few words and with a few quotations."⁵⁷ He saw that this would not suffice. Therefore, he traversed the whole New Testament canon because he saw that the "individual epistles of the apostles contain some clear testimonies concerning this matter," that is, Scripture's undisputed and not-to-be-disputed authority. Taken all together, they present such firm and solid proofs concerning the authority, perfection, and sufficiency of Scripture that one cannot escape them or overthrow them."⁵⁸

45. Readers of these initial pages of Chemnitz' text express unexpected pleasure in the fine overview he has given them of the whole New Testament text. They resonate favorably to Chemnitz' own observation at the end of his extended review of these apostolic writings, when he concludes: "This investigation has indeed instructed, delighted, and above all confirmed me, and I hope that by the grace of God some fruit will accrue from it to the reader."⁵⁹

46. My investigation in Chemnitz on this topic has instructed, delighted, and confirmed me concerning Holy Scripture's preeminence as authoritative norm in the church. Is it too much to hope that by the grace of God some fruit has accrued to the hearers (readers) also?

FOOTNOTES

- ¹W. Elert, The Structure of Lutheranism. St. Louis: Concordia, 1962, p. 286.
- ²cf. E. F. Klug, From Luther to Chemnitz on Scripture and the Word. Kampen (Netherlands): J. H. Kok, 1971, 126f.
- ³WA, TR 3, 3711. cf. Elert, op. cit. 431, for translation.
- ⁴LW 26, 399. ⁵LW 1, 11.
- ⁶Ibid., 11-15 passim. ⁷LW 33, 26.
- ⁸LW 33, 22. ⁹Ibid., 24.
- ¹⁰M. Chemnitz, Examination of the Council of Trent. St. Louis: Concordia, 1971, I, 32.
- ¹¹Ibid., 47. ¹²Ibid., 46.
- ¹³Ibid., 52. ¹⁴Ibid., 53.
- ¹⁵Ibid., 150. ¹⁶Ibid., 163.
- ¹⁷Ibid., 136. ¹⁸Ibid., 211.
- ¹⁹Ibid., 219. ²⁰Ibid., 307.
- ²¹Ibid., 276. ²²Elert, op. cit., 236.
- ²³Ibid.
- ²⁴Two Natures in Christ. St. Louis: Concordia, 1971, 15.
- ²⁵Ibid. ²⁶Ibid., 16.
- ²⁷Ibid., 17. ²⁸Ibid.
- ²⁹Ibid., 18. ³⁰Ibid., 20.
- ³¹Jobst, Ebel, "Die Herkunft des Konzeptes der Konkordienformel," Zeitschrift fuer Kirchengeschichte, vol. 91, 1980, p. 237. This

article continues the story begun earlier with a treatment of Andreae and adds vignettes on David Chytraeus, Nikolaus Selnecker, Andreas Musculus, and Christoph Cornerus, for which see pp. 237-282.

³²Translated by J. A. O. Preus, St. Louis: Concordia, 1979.

³³Ibid., 17.

³⁴Ibid., 21.

³⁵Chapters on "Free Will" and "Sin" are available in a translation in The Doctrine of Man, edited by Herman A. Preus and Edmund Smits. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1962.

³⁶1574, according to some sources. It is available today in translation by Luther Poellot under the title Ministry, Word, and Sacraments. St. Louis: Concordia, 1981.

³⁷Op. Cit., 17

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹cf. Jobst Christian Ebel, Wort und Geist bei den Verfassern der Konkordienformel. Munich: Kaiser, 1981, p. 109-171 passim.

⁴⁰Op. cit.,

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴q.v., p. 717.

⁴⁵RE, "Chemnitz," 716.

⁴⁶Quoted in Brynjulf Hoaas, "The Doctrine of Conversion in the Theology of Martin Chemnitz," an unpublished STM manuscript in the library of Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, IN, 1985. This study, for which I served as adviser, is particularly noteworthy since it turns up new soil in the area of Chemnitz studies by focusing in the main on the three somewhat unknown productions of Chemnitz referred to in the text, the Corpus Prutenicum, Kurtzer Bericht, and Wolgegruendter Bericht. Citations from this work hereafter designated by the author's name, Hoaas.

47Hooas, op. cit., p.

48Ibid.

49Ebel, op. cit., 36.

50Hooas, op. cit., 10.

51Ibid., 12.

52Ibid.

53Ibid. Quoted from the Corpus prutenicum.

54Ibid., 15

55Ibid.

56cf. RE, "Chemnitz," 317.

57Examination of the Council of Trent, 148. cf. also p. 176: "The canonical Scripture has its eminent authority also from this, that it is divinely inspired, 2 Tim. 3, 16."

58Ibid. Cited by F. Pieper, Preface to Lehre and Wehre, January 1887, Vol. 33, p. 3. cf. E. F. Klug, From Luther to Chemnitz on Scripture and the Word, p. 192: "The authority of Scripture means this, if it means anything at all: either in its Word nothing can be doubted, for it has divine, sacred authority; or else the alternative obtains, that nothing can be delivered until human authority or experience have first verified or established it. The latter would be an insufferable affront to God Who gave the Word."

59Ibid.

LECTURE II

Dr. Jacob A. O. Preus

MARTIN CHEMNITZ on the DOCTRINE of JUSTIFICATION

1. In 1537 at Wittenberg Luther presided over a Disputatio held in connection with the academic promotion of two candidates, Palladius and Tilemann, in which he discussed the passage in Rom. 3:28, "We believe that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law." Luther, in his prefatory remarks, said, "The article of justification is the master and prince, the lord and ruler and judge of all areas of doctrine. It preserves and governs the entire teaching of the church and directs our conscience before God. Without this article the world is in total death and darkness, for there is no error so small, so insignificant and isolated that it does not completely please the mind of man and mislead us, if we are cut off from thinking and meditating on this article. Therefore, because the world is so obtuse and insensitive, it is necessary to deal with this doctrine constantly and have the greatest understanding of it. Especially if we wish to advise the churches, we will fear no evil if we give the greatest labor and diligence in teaching particularly this article. For when the mind has been strengthened and confirmed in this sure knowledge, then it can stand firm in all things. Therefore, this is not some small or unimportant matter, particularly for those who wish to stand on the battle line and contend against the devil, sin, and death and teach the churches."

2. Countless statements of this kind can be found in the writings of Luther, but this one passage, cited by the "second Martin," Martin Chemnitz, in his Loci Theologici, suffices to illustrate the fact that Luther made the doctrine of justification the center of his theology, and so it has remained among true Lutherans to this day. The centrality of justification is the basic theme of Melanchthon's Loci Communes, begun (actually at a considerably earlier date than this Disputatio) in 1522. Chemnitz, in basing his Loci Theologici of 1554-1582 on the work of Melanchthon, gave the same central position and emphasis to the doctrine of justification. Thus a person is certainly correct in asserting that from Luther's rediscovery of the Gospel--as set forth in his early commentary on Romans and later stressed in his 95 Theses and throughout his career--down to the present day, at least among Lutherans who indicate some theological depth and concern, the doctrine of justification has occupied the center of our theology.

3. This is strikingly evident in both Melanchthon's Loci Communes and Chemnitz' Loci Theologici as well as the latter's Examination of the Council of Trent (Examen). The doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Christ the Mediator is the greatest contribution, and in some ways the unique contribution, of Martin Luther, and the same is true of Martin Chemnitz. This is not because the locus on justification in Chemnitz' works is necessarily the longest or the most innovative and significant theologically. His writings on Christology and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper are masterpieces in their area. But if one is even only a casual reader of Luther, the Lutheran Confessions or, in greater detail, of Melanchthon's Loci Communes or Chemnitz' Examination of Trent or his Loci Theologici, it becomes

abundantly clear that the Reformation was basically concerned about the relationship between a righteous God, who hates sin, and sinful man, who is alienated from God, and about how these two are brought together. Every article in the Confessions and the Loci of Melanchthon and Chemnitz, as well as large section of Luther's writings, deal with this subject.

4. Chemnitz follows Melanchthon's order in dealing with the various topics of loci of theology. These topics in their order are: God; the Trinity; the Son; the Holy Spirit; creation and providence, with the main emphasis, of course, on the creation of man and God's care for him; the angels, who are His ministering spirits; the cause of sin, emphasizing that the devil and man, not God, caused sin; human powers and free choice, especially as over against God; original sin and actual sin, including a long discourse on what sin actually is, namely, the violation of God's law. And at this point, in this context, comes the doctrine of justification, dealing with the question of how man in his sinful condition can be brought back into a peaceful relationship with the God who has been described in the foregoing. Justification and the forgiveness of sin are synonymous. Following the long treatment of man's justification and forgiveness there is a discussion of good works and the relation between these works and man's justification before God, and whether his good works are necessary for his salvation. Since man lies in fellowship with both God and his fellow men, especially other believers, the next locus deals with the church in which man maintains his relationship with God through his use of the sacraments.

5. Thus the entire work of Melanchthon and Chemnitz deals with the relationship between this

righteous God and sinful man, centering on the question as to how sinful man finds forgiveness and justification before God. This is the heart and functioning center of Lutheran theology and of the Lutheran Reformation.

6. A better understanding of Chemnitz' position on justification can be gained from a brief overview of the ecclesiastical and political conditions of his era. Luther began his great reform movement in 1517, but by the time of his death in 1546 conditions and situations had greatly changed. First, the political situation had changed. During most of Luther's public career there had been conflict between the two great Catholic powers of the age, France and the Hapsburgs who ruled Spain, Austria and the lowlands. This conflict had made it impossible for Charles V, a Hapsburg and emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, to which Germany belonged, to give his full attention to what was going on in northern Germany under Luther and with the active support of several of the secular German rulers. But by the time of Luther's death all of this had changed and peace had been established between the Catholic powers.

7. At the same time great inroads had been made by the Turks into the lands of the Empire in the east, and Charles V, previous to the time of Luther's death, had needed the help of the protesting German rulers in warding off the Turkish scourge led by no less than the great Suleiman the Magnificent. But this situation had also changed momentarily. Thus for the first time Charles was able to bring military power to bear on the religious problems of his empire. This he did in the Smalcald War of 1546-58, when he stood at the grave of Luther in Wittenberg and was

urged to dig up his bones. Secondly, the period from Luther's death to that of Melanchthon in 1560 was the bleakest period that Lutheranism had known ecclesiastically and theologically up to that time. Melanchthon, upon whom Luther's mantle fell, was a great scholar and linguist, but a poor leader and fighter. He tended to compromise, and after Luther's influence was gone he fell into a rationalistic spirit which was evidenced especially in his compromise of Luther's position regarding the Lord's Supper as over against the Reformed and of his position regarding salvation by grace alone as over against the papists. The result was chaos among the Lutherans, with the earlier and more orthodox of Melanchthon's students arrayed against the later and often more permissive students. It was the period of the Interims and the beginning of the Catholic Counter-Reformation.

9. The Counter-Reformation was exactly what its name implies, an attempt to undo the entire Reformation; it was supported by the pope himself, the Catholic hierarchy of most countries, the Emperor Charles V, and some other secular rulers, who used military, academic, political, and theological means to accomplish its purpose. Even the so-called Interims granted to the Lutherans after their military defeats were only interims, concessions granted for limited periods. Among the most important instruments used by the Romanists was the infamous Council of Trent of 1545-63, which publicly passed itself off as giving a true ear to the Protestants, and which often deleted some of the crassest arguments and language of the earlier generation. But nevertheless it held firmly to the earlier doctrinal position of Rome and, by conciliar decree, outlawed certain evangelical teaching which had previously been permitted within the Roman church. In other words, it tightened the control of those who wanted to

reject categorically Luther's rediscovery of the Gospel of salvation by grace through faith alone in Christ the Mediator.

10. To add to the problems for the Lutherans there appeared on the scene at this time the most formidable, well-trained, single-minded group yet to arise within Catholicism, namely, the Jesuits, who were bent on regaining all that had been lost to the Reformation.

11. Furthermore, the Reformed were on the march, often into Lutheran territory. England under her powerful king, Henry VIII, had turned Protestant, to be sure, but was violently anti-Lutheran and even had produced several Lutheran martyrs. The influence of Zwingli and Calvin was predominant in Switzerland, Holland, Scotland, and even parts of previously Lutheran Germany.

12. And while all this was going on, the Lutherans were falling apart theologically and ecclesiastically, due in part to the above-mentioned external circumstances, but also in part to the compromising and vacillating position of Melanchthon and to various understandings and misunderstandings of Luther himself by his followers. By 1570 this situation had become so critical that several theologians with the help and encouragement of some of the secular princes decided that something had to be done to save Lutheranism as a theological as well as an ecclesiastical entity.

13. Called into the service of his church at this time was a man by the name of Martin Chemnitz, named Martin because, like Luther, he was baptized on the day of St. Martin. He was a Saxon, of poor and undistinguished family,

yet a theological genius of the first rank, a man modest and unassuming, devoted to his Lord and His church, and one of the few men on record who turned down a professorship at Wittenberg in order to take a subordinate position in the church of Brunswick, itself not of great importance. Born in 1522, Chemnitz got a slow start. His education was sporadic and spotty. He spent a period of time at the new university of Koenigsberg as a librarian. Here he began to study Luther and the church fathers and became an excellent scholar at both. At the urging of Melanchthon he was called in 1554 (probably as a result of his very rigorous attack on Andrew Osiander, whom Melanchthon also opposed) to a position on the faculty at Wittenberg.

14. But the following year he left to spend the rest of his life at Brunswick, first as assistant to the general superintendent and later as general superintendent (bishop) himself. While at Wittenberg he had begun lecturing on Melanchthon's Loci Communes, and he continued this practice before the pastors of his diocese almost till the time of his death in 1584 (without, however, completing the work). These lectures, carried on for a period of nearly thirty years, were published by Chemnitz' sons and his successor, Polycarp Leyser, in 1592 and bear the title Loci Theologici, a title that came to be applied to the works of many dogmaticians who followed him.

15. Chemnitz was uniquely qualified for the task of reuniting the divided Lutherans with the documents known as the Formula of Concord (1577) and the Book of Concord (1580). As early as about 1550 he was asked by his friend and co-worker, Joachim Moerlin, to prepare material relative to the Osiandrian controversy. Andrew Osiander

was a Lutheran in Prussia who had come to deny the concept of objective reconciliation and justification and taught that the sinner is justified by his own essential and inherent righteousness, that is, he is made righteous rather than declared righteous by the imputed righteousness of Christ. This controversy, although ultimately settled entirely in Chemnitz' favor, stayed in his thinking for a long time, and he refers to it later in his Loci. He does this especially when he is dealing with the very Scriptural and Lutheran doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ by which we are justified rather than by our own essential and very imperfect righteousness.

16. The Council of Trent was in session at the time Chemnitz began his duties at Brunswick in 1554. He undertook a study of the Jesuit order, which was new at the time, and he produced a monograph on the subject in order to inform the Evangelical churches exactly what this group stood for. This led him into a study of the proceedings of the Council which were in the process of being published and officially commented on by a Portugese theologian named Andrada, who was attending the Council. Andrada made it painfully evident that the Council was closing all loopholes to an evangelical interpretation of the Scriptures and of the fathers. He was thus greatly strengthening the position which Luther from the very beginning had so vigorously opposed, by giving the authority of an ecumenical council to these errors. Chemnitz therefore undertook a thorough critique of the decrees of Trent. In 1565, only two years after the close of the council, his Examen (Examination of the Council of Trent) began to appear. This monumental work is to this day the classic Protestant answer to Trent.

17. During these Brunswick years, as stated earlier, Chemnitz also continued his lectures on Melanchthon's Loci, which had dealt at length with the doctrine of justification. Chemnitz' locus on this subject is filled with references to the Council of Trent, so, although the Examen and the Loci are somewhat different in thrust and overall content, there is a close relationship and considerable overlap. Because the general English-speaking public has had the Examen in English for over a decade, whereas the English translation of the Loci is still undergoing the editorial process, we shall in this paper present Chemnitz' position of justification on the basis of his Loci Theologici.

18. To give a few more details about the historical situation existing at the time of Chemnitz' Loci, we have mentioned Andrew Osiander, who fell into error on justification. We might also say a word about Joachim Moerlin, Chemnitz' mentor first at Koenigsberg and later at Brunswick. Moerlin was a few years older than Chemnitz, a graduate of Wittenberg, and a thoroughly orthodox Gnesio-Lutheran. He was not a particularly noteworthy scholar, although he could spot error and he knew where to find the budding theologian who could handle it, namely, Martin Chemnitz. He induced Chemnitz not only to tackle the popular and well-connected Osiander, but also to leave Wittenberg and Melanchthon to take a position as his own assistant. He also undoubtedly encouraged him to continue his lectures on Melanchthon's Loci, which Luther himself had described as worthy of inclusion in the canon of Scripture.

19. Also in the background and, like the Osiandrian controversy, not appearing, at least by name, in the Examen, was the Antinomian

controversy, led by another former devotee of Luther, John Agricola of Eisleben (Islebius). Agricola had fallen off the other side of the horse from Osiander by asserting that the law had no role at all to play in the life of the Christian.

20. The Osiandrian and Antinomian controversies were among the reasons for the development of the Formula of Concord. Both are dealt with at length in Chemnitz' Loci. Agricola's error had given much grief to Luther in his late years, partly because Agricola in stating his position had misquoted Luther or quoted him out of context. Furthermore, Agricola would appear to have recanted his errors only to revive them later. Both he and Osiander were signers of the Smalcald Articles. Related to this was also the error of another old Lutheran veteran, Nicolas Amsdorf, Luther's close associate over many years. Amsdorf had fallen into the trap of Agricola and had gone so far as to assert not only that good works were not necessary for salvation but also that they were positively detrimental. This had taken place on the one side, while on the other the ever-changing Melanchthon had revised his "canonical" Loci Communes to make room for the will of man to play a determinative role in his conversion and salvation.

21. Chemnitz in his tactful way also deals with this "Lutheran" aberration in his Loci. Thus there is a difference in thrust and content between the Examen and the Loci of Chemnitz, just as there is a difference between the theological bent of his Loci and the theological bent of the late Melanchthon, just as there is a difference in thrust, but not in basic theology, between Chemnitz and Luther, and between Chemnitz' Loci and his

Formula of Concord. The circumstances determine the direction and the content, even though in some cases Chemnitz was involved with both works at the same time.

22. Unfortunately we must mention one more Lutheran errorist, Matthias Flacius, who was so vigorous in his assertion of the total depravity of man that he even insisted on saying that man's very essence is sin. He thus got himself into trouble with Chemnitz and the other authors of the Formula, who saw here the possibility of a basic denial of the doctrine of Christology by saying that Christ Himself as true man would thus be sinful.

23. All of these matters, plus the situation in Rome and the long history of problems associated with the doctrine of justification from the first century of the church down to the very year in which Chemnitz was lecturing, are reflected in his Loci Theologici. One significant section of the locus on justification is devoted to the distinction between law and Gospel, a beautiful and pastoral discussion of this doctrine which is so crucial for a correct understanding and proclamation of the doctrine of justification. Melancthon in personal conversation with Chemnitz had stressed the importance of maintaining this distinction as essential to a correct understanding of the Gospel itself.

24. Chemnitz may well be called the father of normative Lutheran theology, a point which becomes increasingly obvious to anyone who studies such works as his Loci and his Enchiridion, in which in a very positive way he is covering most aspects of Lutheran doctrine over a wide range of topics.

25. Now let us turn to the Loci Theologici itself to see what he has to say about this crucial article of the Christian faith. Chemnitz begins his discussion of justification in his typical way by placing the matter in its proper context with other articles of faith, namely, man before God, man created by God, man fallen into sin and bereft of all his spiritual powers while the voice of the law accuses and condemns him. Then comes the blessed and joyous doctrine of justification, which deals with "our redemption, restitution and reconciliation." He says, "We must devote our utmost efforts to retain the genuine meaning and apostolic purity of the doctrine of justification, to hand it on to our posterity and to prevent its being torn away from us or adulterated by sophistic trickery or fraud... For it was a labor far greater than the labors of Hercules to rescue the true light from the unspeakably dense darkness and the putrid filth and cesspool of the Antichrist and to restore the apostolic purity to the fountains of Israel... Nor must we think that in this great light there is no need for concern on our part. For we have this treasure not in iron or brass vessels but in 'earthen ones,' 2 Cor. 4: 7, and the road on which we walk has many stumbling blocks on which in our weakness we may easily fall. I am often horrified that Luther with some kind of foreboding often repeated in his commentaries on Galatians and Genesis this statement: 'After my death this doctrine will again be brought into obscurity.'" On this serious note Chemnitz begins his locus on justification.

26. In the case of each locus Chemnitz always begins by stating the point at issue, the status controversiae. The Scripture verse which sets forth the entire subject is Rom. 3:21-28, "The righteousness of God, without the law, has

been revealed" in the Gospel, namely, that we "are justified freely by His grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation through faith, in His blood...without the works of the law." In a very real sense this entire locus is nothing but an exegetical study of this passage in Romans. Chemnitz goes on to show that we must define such terms as "Gospel," "to justify" (justificare), "righteous" (justus), "righteousness" (justitia), "freely" (gratis), and "grace." He also wants to distinguish between justifying faith and the other uses for the term "faith." Involved here is also the distinction between law and Gospel.

27. In discussing definitions Chemnitz makes a statement which well summarizes his view both on the doctrine and on the terminology with which the doctrine is expressed: "We must not believe that this is mere childish zeal for the definition of terms. For just as the substantive matters in this locus are far above and beyond our reason, so also the Holy Spirit has certain terms in the teaching on justification which are not found in common usage. The church must be concerned about language, that is, it ought not devise new ideas or produce new dogmas, but those things which have been given to us by the Holy Spirit we must learn from the correct meaning of the words which the Scripture uses in teaching the heavenly doctrine. Later on we shall show that the neglect of correct language was the source and spring of all the errors under this article."

28. Chemnitz defines the Gospel as "the doctrine of free reconciliation or the benefits of the Mediator." He shows that the term "gospel" (EVANGELIUM) or "good news" was used in secular

Greek, with parallels in other languages. In Scripture the Greek word EUAGGELION (good news) was used in the Septuagint (LXX) in such passages as Is. 41:27, "I give to Jerusalem a herald of good tidings," and Is. 52:7, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good tidings." And he shows that Paul in Rom. 10:15 interprets the latter passage as referring to the era of the new covenant; just as Christ in Luke 4:18 applies Is. 61:1, "He has sent Me to preach good tidings to the afflicted," to His own ministry. These points are abundantly supported by many other Scripture passages and by quotations from the fathers and from secular Greek, all supporting the same meaning and the various shades of meanings.

29. Later, still discussing the term "Gospel," Chemnitz points out that some passages of Scripture use the term with reference to its origin in God, others with reference to its subject matter. Still other passages stress its effects, others the object of the promise, namely, Christ, and still others present metaphorical allusions which do not actually use the word "Gospel," yet refer to it. He affirms that "justification before God must not be taught, learned, or sought in the law but in the Gospel... The object of justifying faith is not the doctrine of the law but the voice of the Gospel..." Moreover, this has always been the case. It is an error to teach that the Old Testament saints before Moses are saved by obedience to the natural law, those after Moses by the Mosaic law, and those of today by the evangelical law. Some were saying such things, both in antiquity and in Chemnitz' own era; for, says Chemnitz, the doctrine of the law is known and knowable to human reason but the Gospel is hidden and must be revealed by the Holy Spirit.

30. Chemnitz proceeds in a masterful way to delimit eight ways in which the law must be distinguished from the Gospel. Much of this material is unique to his Loci. Later on he adds still further categories, such as the fact that the Gospel must be preached to the repentant, must deal with the concept of reconciliation and must include the person and work of Christ. The latter point is meaningful in our own age, which has so watered down the Gospel as to mean almost anything which relieves a tough situation, with or without reference to Christ and his work or the purpose of His coming.

31. Note that Chemnitz equates justification with the reconciliation between man and God. Justification is the legal concept describing man's relationship to the law, and reconciliation refers to his relationship with God. In describing reconciliation he points out the benefits: 1) Christ has taken away our sins and made satisfaction for them; 2) Christ is the fulfillment of the law, thus stressing both His active and passive obedience; 3) The Gospel teaches that these benefits are offered in the Word and the Sacraments, through which the Holy Spirit works; 5) After giving the benefit of justification the Holy Spirit then works renewal; and 6) The promise of the Gospel is universal, applying to all, Gentiles as well as Jews, as long as they repent and receive the promise in faith."

32. The common definition of Gospel, as used in the Augsburg Confession and the Apology, has been "the preaching of repentance and the remission of sins," a definition of "Gospel" in the broad sense of the word. This definition had become inadequate for dealing with certain errors which arose after the time of the Augsburg Confession. For example, both Luther and Chemnitz had

attacked Agricola and the Antinomians, who had used this definition in support of their errors. Chemnitz says, "Here indeed Luther would have had cause to reject and condemn the common definition completely....if he had believed that it was a corruption of the true and correct teaching." But Chemnitz points out that this common definition can be misused on the one hand by the papists who try thereby to find a place for good works in their definition of justification, and on the other hand by the Antinomians who reject the need for good works entirely among the regenerate. For, as he points out, Christ Himself after the resurrection had committed to His disciples the ministry of "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," and in Luke 24:47 He speaks of "preaching repentance and remission of sins in His name."

33. Yet Chemnitz goes on to condemn the notion of the papists that "the Gospel properly speaking contains not only the promise of grace but also the teaching of good works," for, he says, they do not understand what they are saying. Such a notion would overthrow the distinction between law and Gospel as seen in Rom. 3:27, where "the law of faith" is used in opposition to "the law of works," and would thus change the Gospel into law.

34. This Gospel in the broad sense is indeed correctly defined as "the summary of the entire teaching which has been delivered and proclaimed through the ministration of Christ and the apostles." This is shown, for example, in Acts 20:21, "testifying repentance towards God and faith in Christ." Yet in the narrow or proper sense of the term the Gospel remains separate and distinct from the law. It is also correct to say

that the Gospel is the preaching of repentance in that the Gospel announces grace not to the secure and the hypocrites but to the repentant. This is what the Augsburg Confession is talking about when it uses the term "Gospel" in the broad sense. Again, the Gospel, in teaching that "there is no name given to man whereby he can be saved" except the name of Christ, Acts 4:12, is antithetically demonstrating that "all have been imprisoned under sin," Gal. 3:22. The term "justification" is a judicial term which presupposes a conscience terrified by the fear of God's judgment. In this sense the Gospel can be called "the preaching of repentance and the remission of sins."

35. Chemnitz also shows that unbelief is sin, but that true belief, or true faith, is not merely something historical but also carries with it the sense of confidence or trust (*fiducia*), a trust which centers in the grace of God. In his endeavors to give a correct definition of "Gospel," he cites at length Luther's disputations against the Antinomians, led by Agricola. Strangely, these Disputations have not been translated for the American Edition of Luther's works, although they are extremely relevant to many of the aberrations of modern theology. It is Chemnitz' contention in this section of his Loci that problems with the doctrine of justification arise out of subtle changes or new interpretations of the classic definition of the term, and that the only way to counteract this is to set forth in a thorough manner the doctrine of the distinction between law and Gospel as an antidote against both the papists, who insisted on including the law in the doctrine of justification, and the Antinomians, who insisted on removing it entirely from the life of the Christian. Both erred, both had to

be corrected, and the doctrine of justification had to be preserved by observing carefully the distinction between law and Gospel.

36. Chemnitz cites Luther's first disputation against the Antinomians to show "in what sense and for what reasons it is correct to say that the Gospel is the preaching of repentance," namely, 1) "because repentance by the testimony of all men is sorrow over sin together with the intention to live a better life"; 2) because "the first part of repentance, the sorrow, comes only from the law, but the second part, namely, the intention to do good, cannot come from the law, because this repentance only from the law is a half repentance or the beginning of repentance, or it is called repentance by the use of synecdoche, but it is without the good intention"; and "if a person continues in this 'half repentance,' it is the repentance of Cain, Saul, Judas, and other hopeless people. Therefore against these useless teachers of despair the Gospel teaches that repentance must not only be the loss of hope....but those who are repentant must take hope and out of love for God they must hate sin. This hatred of sin is the truly good intention."

37. And finally, 3) "The convergence of law and Gospel consists in this that the benefits of Christ of which the Gospel speaks are nothing else than the satisfaction for our guilt and punishment and that completely perfect obedience which we owe to the law. These two things which the law requires and demands are given to believers in Christ and imputed in Him for righteousnessand there is no way in which we can understand the greatness of the benefits of Christ unless they are compared with the rigor and severity of the law. This righteousness of which the law

speaks, which is impossible for us because of the weakness of the flesh, the Gospel shows and points out in Christ, who was made under the law, in order that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us by imputation through faith, both in the initial state when the law through the Spirit was written in our hearts, and in eternal life when our obedience to the law of God will be brought to completion." In one sense the righteousness of the law and of the Gospel is one and the same thing, but with respect to us the righteousness is different. With respect to Christ it is the same righteousness, for what the law demands and requires, this Christ supplies and gives. So also in regard to reconciliation, with respect to Christ it is called redemption because the compensation has been paid, but with respect to us it is called the gracious remission of sins.

38. "And," says Chemnitz, "all the saints in all ages from the foundation of the world have been saved by one and the same Gospel." He draws his material from Luther to demonstrate that from the fall to the flood, from the flood to Moses, from Moses to the prophets, and from the prophets to Christ there is one Gospel and one Savior. There have been controversies over this point in all ages, in the Old Testament, in the New, after the time of the apostles, in Chemnitz' day and, we may add, in our own also. Certain unfortunate statements of Luther had been used by the opposition on all sides to justify error. Chemnitz deals with these aberrations and gives the proper interpretation to Luther's statements.

39. All this brings him back to the true and correct definition of justification. He begins this subject with a long and very interesting

historical review of how the rise of the Pelagian controversy caused men such as Augustine and even Jerome to revise some of their earlier unfortunate statements which had attributed too much to man's natural powers and free choice, for a false teaching on these subjects will of itself produce a false doctrine of justification. He also points out that the insistence of the papists in clinging to their synergistic errors on justification arose out of their desire to preserve their spiritual and financial hold over the people who through their purchase of indulgences (which they understood to be the forgiveness of all their sins) were actually financing the entire structure of the papacy. The sophistry of Rome at the time of Trent was not quite so crass as it had been at the time of Tetzels, but the result was the same. Trent urged that "justification does not consist only in the remission of sins and free reconciliation, but it also includes the renewal of the mind and the will through the Holy Spirit." This, of course, is a perversion of the distinction between law and Gospel and makes our justification before God contingent in part on our obedience to the law. It was this very error, creeping back into Lutheranism, which caused Walther, Pieper, H. A. Preus, and others to stress the objective aspect of reconciliation and justification. Man is forever workrighteous.

40. Another perversion of this doctrine was the notion that "the obedience of Christ is indeed the only satisfaction for our sins and alone merits remission of sins and life eternal," but "these merits of Christ do not apply to those who live without contrition, repentance or good intention...therefore faith alone does not justify." Another variation of this error includes such ideas as that Christ made satisfaction only

for original sin (the early error of the scholastics), but more recently this had been refined to say that He had made satisfaction only for mortal sin, or only for those sins which preceded our conversion, but a satisfaction on our part is required for those sins we commit afterwards. Others argued that Christ has merited for us only first grace, so that through it we ourselves might merit remission and life. The argument was being increasingly refined and complicated. But Chemnitz asserts that in defining justification we must answer these questions: When the mind is terrified by the knowledge of sin and by the sense of the wrath of God, 1) what is that entity on account of which the sinner, in the face of God's judgment and condemned to eternal punishment, seeks the remission of sins, is absolved from the sentence of condemnation, and is received into eternal life? and 2) what is the means or instrument by which the promise of the Gospel, that is, the promise of grace, mercy, reconciliation, salvation, and eternal life, is received, laid hold upon and applied, that is [what is] the merit or satisfaction and application of it to oneself?

41. In defining and describing justification he also defines the terms involved and points out the shortcomings of Augustine, Lombard, and others in dealing with the doctrine by stressing that the term "justification" is a forensic or legal term, never meaning "to make righteous" or "to infuse righteousness." The word was used in the same sense by the Hebrews. Thus in defining it he asserts that "the word 'to justify' includes three aspects: to absolve the person who has been accused and brought to judgment of the crime with which he has been charged, so that he is not condemned by the legal processes, and that he be restored to his state of innocence; it means to

account or pronounce a person as righteous or innocent and to receive him as such. The term is used in this sense without distinction whether the cause is a just or an unjust one.... The term also includes the fact that the Scripture attributes to those who have been justified the praise, the testimony, and the rewards which are owed to the righteous and the innocent, and it treats them not as condemned guilty or even as suspects, but as righteous and innocent; and because he has been absolved in the judgment, he is freed from the law, the power, the force and the oppression of his enemy."

42. He summarizes by saying, "In the entire Scripture it is impossible to prove by a single example that the word 'to justify,' when it speaks of God's justifying, is ever to be understood as referring to renewal by the infusion of new qualities." This in opposition both to the papists and to Osiander. He continues, "We do not deny the renewal which takes place through the Spirit, but now the question is what the word 'justification' means in the Scripture."

43. Ancillary to his definition of the term "justification" are certain subordinate questions. For example, why does Paul in explaining this article of faith prefer the forensic concept of justification while the other New Testament writers seem to use synonyms, such as, "to save" and "to remit sins"? He says, "The reason doubtlessly lies in the fact that the profane, self-sufficient and Epicurean men of that time believed that the justification of the sinner...was a very unimportant matter, and thus they did not take seriously or desire reconciliation with God." He suggests that the picture of the court room is the strongest that can be used in stressing

the importance of this matter for worldly men. "Before God's judgment man can put up nothing in his own defense in order that he might be justified, since God does not justify out of frivolousness or unconcern, error or venality, and since He finds nothing in man whereby he might be justified before God (yet justification demands that the law be fulfilled, Rom. 8:4), therefore a foreign righteousness must intervene, the kind of righteousness which along with the remission of punishments must include also a total obedience to the divine law by way of satisfaction, so that there can be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. And to this the terrified sinner who is condemned by the voice of the law flees in true faith. He desires this, he begs for it, he lays hold on it, he submits himself to it, and he uses it as his defense before the judgment seat of God and the accusation of the law and is justified by this and by imputation, that is, he is absolved from the sentence of condemnation which lay over him and receives the promise of eternal life."

44. In connection with the human contribution to our salvation Chemnitz also points out the interesting fact that many of the fathers were far more Scriptural in their devotional writings than in their dogmatic treatises. He cites such men as Bernard, Gerson, and Augustine. For example, Augustine in his De Civitate Dei says that "our righteousness consists in the remission of sins rather than the perfection of our virtues." He cites many such excellent statements.

45. He also shows that what has been said about the objective nature of God's work as opposed to man's efforts under the term "justification"

also applies to the other terms used to describe man's relationship to a saving God, terms such as "covering iniquity" and "not imputing sins." He cites Titus 3:5-7 to show that "justification," "salvation," and "inheritance" are synonyms; also that "reconciliation," "blessing and not cursing," and "remission of sins" are synonymous. And then he says that when the New Testament writers speak of the relationship between a righteous God and the salvation of sinful man, while they do not use the term "justification," they mean the same thing. There is one Scriptural doctrine taught by many different people at many different times, using many different terms and concepts.

46. Then Chemnitz turns to the subject of "the righteousness of God," as used in Rom. 1:17, 3:22, 2 Cor. 5:21, 2 Pet. 1:1, and Matt. 6:33. This term has been incorrectly understood in the church in the past, and even Luther confesses that although "he held to the article of justification, yet he was troubled by the word and did not gladly hear the statement 'In the Gospel is revealed the righteousness of God,' Rom. 1:17, because he understood it as referring to God's judicial and stern righteousness by which He enters into judgment with us." But after discussing the matter at length Chemnitz brings us to the conclusion held both by Luther and himself that the righteousness which avails before God is not the righteousness of the law, but of the Gospel, the grace, mercy, and goodness of God by which He imputes or accounts to believers for their own righteousness the obedience of His Son and Mediator. This is what the term "the righteousness of God" means in the article of justification and stated in Rom. 1:17, "In the Gospel is revealed the righteousness of God...because He Himself is righteous and the justifier of him who is of the faith in Christ."

47. Chemnitz throughout this entire locus is really giving us a word study of the Scriptural terms used in the article of justification. Thus he turns next to the word "faith," which receives over 100 pages of discussion. This is the Greek word PISTIS, which is translated into Latin with two different words, fides or fiducia, depending on the stress of the user. In order to get the matter into focus he begins by saying, "Thus far we have discussed the word 'justification.' But because Paul's statement refers not only to 'justification' but also to 'justification by faith,' he also calls the righteousness of which the Gospel speaks 'the righteousness of faith.' Therefore, it is necessary to have a correct and proper explanation of the term 'faith' (fides). For faith is the unique means and instrument through which we lay hold on the righteousness of Christ and apply it to ourselves... For this reason the devil is so hostile to the doctrine of faith, for since he cannot hinder the decree of God regarding the redemption of the human race, although he tried to do so with cunning trickery against the house and family from which he knew the Seed was going to come, therefore he puts all his artfulness to work to destroy or upset or corrupt the instrument and means whereby God's work is to be applied. For he knows that without faith there is no benefit for us, either from the decree of redemption or the preaching of the Gospel."

48. He then proceeds to describe at length some of the many errors with which this doctrine has been obfuscated, beginning with the time of the apostles. He says, "Some understand faith only as an assent to the historical account which in a general way asserts that the things which are revealed in the Scripture are true. Some look

only to the quality of the faith and how strong it is, and because they think that it is imperfect and weak, something must be added to this faith which is done when a person weighs merits and worthiness on the scale, which can thereby justify him. From this then comes the idea of the...fides formata (faith formed by love).

Others err in regard to the object of faith, because they make as the object of justifying faith the whole Scripture including the precepts of the promise and the threats of the law. Some rave that the effects which follow or the activities by which faith is shown are the true and living causes and thus they confuse the formal cause with the object of faith, on account of which faith justifies...Others understand justifying faith to be an idea in the mind, an opinion, a figment of one's own brain concerning the imputation of our sins, even without repentance Among those who understand the word 'to justify' in a different way from what the Scripture teachesthere is also a perversion of the word 'faith,' because they understand faith in the same way they understand justification, namely, that because by faith the Holy Spirit is received who renews the mind and begins the new obedience, therefore... we are justified initially by faith but in a formal and complete way by love."

49. The point at issue must be stated correctly.

And this he does under three categories:
"The word 'faith' is better understood by an explanation of the word 'to justify,' for the question is not what virtues follow faith so that faith may be efficacious through love; but the question is this: how and in what respect does faith justify, that is, when in the real struggle our minds are terrified by the feeling of the wrath of God and seek firm consolation so that

they may be freed from the sentence of condemnation and be received into eternal life, to what must faith, in the midst of this agony, look and what must it grasp? In sum, in the argument about faith, the question concerns the application of the merits and obedience of Christ for the righteousness and salvation of everyone who believes." In this way the meaning of "faith" becomes clear. Antithetically, to say that we are justified means that we are "absolved from our sins and accepted as righteous, not by our works but by faith."

50. The best way to interpret these terms is to do so on the basis of the object of justifying faith. The law is not the object of faith but Christ is. The grace and mercy of God in Christ are the objects of justifying faith. Chemnitz stresses that "'faith' in the article of justification must be understood not only as knowledge and general assent which affirm in a general way that the promise of the Gospel is true, but it includes at the same time the activities of the will and the heart, that is, it is a desire and trust (fiducia) which, in the struggle with sin and the wrath of God, applies the promise of grace to each individual, so that each person includes himself in the general promise given to believers, and thus governs his life so that he may understand that the promise of the Gospel is for him."

51. Putting the matter another way, Chemnitz speaks of the effects of justifying faith, namely, the remission of sins, adoption, absolution from the accusation of the law, access to God, peace of conscience and purification of heart, victory over the world, salvation, and eternal life. Obviously these effects cannot be attributed simply to knowledge or general assent,

for this kind of knowledge the devils have, but these are the merits and blessings of the Mediator "which are bestowed upon those who by faith lay hold and apply the promise to themselves." Thus the correlative to justifying faith is the promise of grace.

52. With regard to the object of saving faith he makes the very interesting and significant statement which clears up many questions Lutherans of today (with our backgrounds in pietism) often have with respect to what exactly justifying faith is in contradistinction to other forms of faith, or with respect to the distinction between fides and fiducia. He says, "We do not deny that in many cases there are various external objects upon which our faith lays hold, but the question is: what is the object with respect to which faith justifies? In the account of the nine lepers the external object of their faith did not attribute to their faith the power to justify, as Christ Himself argues with reference to faith in the miracle. Thus we must make a distinction...."

53. There is also the question of the exercises of faith under the cross, in obedience, in prayer, and the expectation of bodily and physical blessings, when the person is reconciled by faith. In sum, he says, "Even when faith is concerned with external objects... in order that the promise may be sure and the confidence of our hope firm, this must always illumine that faith which relies on the promise of mercy for the sake of Christ. For unless faith first establishes that God is favorable toward us and has been reconciled, there can be no peace of conscience sought or aid requested."

54. Chemnitz then in his ongoing study of the Scriptural terms involved in this doctrine devotes considerable time to the matter of "trust, confidence in the face of fear, rejoicing, keeping the Word, eating and drinking and being filled." He discusses weak faith and shows that our forgiveness is not proportionate to the strength of our faith, but that the strength of a person's faith comes from Christ, its object. He also deals with the converse of these terms in a long discourse on doubt and its related concepts.

55. Chemnitz comes back again to the commonly accepted definition of faith as "assent to the entire Word of God as it has been given to us." The papists had stressed this as being a completely sufficient definition of faith, but Chemnitz says, "Many have debated as to whether this aspect really ought to be included in the definition of justifying faith. But there are good and serious reasons for doing so... for justifying faith presupposes and includes general faith which establishes with a sure conviction and without any doubt that those things which are revealed in the Word of God are absolutely true because God Himself is the author who is to be praised for His truthfulness because He is above all error. For when this general foundation begins to shake or waver, then the firm confidence in the promise of the Gospel cannot take root or be retained in time of spiritual struggle. For justifying faith has many properties in common with general faith, in that it involves things which are not seen, it does not rely on the judgment of our senses or a rational demonstration or proof... yet it is not a mere opinion but a sure conviction which has only the divine revelation in the Word as the cause for its certainty against the judgment of our senses and our reason and even our experience."

56. This is a most interesting statement, written about 1580, yet it throws light not only on the thinking of men such as Kant but also on our recent controversies within Lutheranism and, indeed, all of modern Christianity, wherein theologians are trying to argue that we somehow can retain the Gospel or some kernel of the Christian faith, and even the concept of law and Gospel, while at the same time permitting a doctrine that the Scripture contains errors of every kind and description and is thus unreliable. Much has been said and more can be said on this subject. Yet Chemnitz says, "The sum, the end, the focus and boundary of all Scripture is Christ in his work of Mediator." Chemnitz was neither a liberal nor a fundamentalist. Nor are we today who follow in his footsteps. He continues, "As Augustine says...the Christian faith differs from the faith of the devils in the last articles of the Creed: 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.' And in vain does faith concern itself with the other objects of Scripture if it does not hold firmly to the head of the Scripture which is Christ... The article of redemption cannot be truly understood unless there is the preceding knowledge of the rest of the articles of the Word of God. And yet we must firmly cling to this that faith justifies only with respect to that one object which is Christ." He has in mind here also the papistic concept that by extension we must for salvation also believe all the traditions and extra-Scriptural teaching of the church.

57. In defining and discussing saving faith Chemnitz also insists that we must include the work of the Holy Spirit in kindling faith and preserving us in this faith. The Spirit is the

efficient or working cause of our faith and salvation.

58. He also brings in and expands upon the concept of the formal and material principles of faith, namely, the true faith or confidence (fiducia) which is directed alone to Christ as the object of faith, which is the material principle in distinction to general faith in the Scripture, the formal principle. This is a distinction which is often neglected today, and its neglect creates incredible confusion.

59. Chemnitz also discusses the final cause or goal of justifying faith, using 1 Pet. 1:9 as his text, "...the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

60. Throughout his writings Chemnitz shows deep pastoral concern that Christians must possess the assurance of their salvation. This was in opposition to the papists who throughout proclaimed a theology of doubt and despair because the entire structure of their ecclesiastical organization was built upon doubt. In many places Chemnitz expands on this point.

61. Finally, having discussed the terms "justification" and "faith," he now takes up the other terms from the passage in Romans 3 and carefully examines them. Time does not permit here a close scrutiny of his treatment of such words as "freely," "grace," "imputation," or his long excursus on the word "only" or "alone" (sola) in which he studiously supports Luther. In a sense the word sola covers the whole subject.

62. His examination of the theology and the place in history of Pelagius, Julian of Eclanum,

Cassian, Prosper of Aquitaine, the scholastics, and most recently the Jesuits and the Council of Trent in connection with these points is a theological classic in itself.

63. Finally, we can summarize Chemnitz on justification by citing one of his statements which occurs near the end of his locus. "Human reason, even though Scripture does attribute to it some importance, in the article on justification is completely eliminated by the thunder of divine judgment, because apart from faith and outside of Christ, even those things which seem to be virtues in the unregenerate, before the tribunal of God in the article of justification are only sins and weaknesses, John 16:8-9, Rom. 14:23, Heb. 11:6, Phil. 3:7. But in regard to the works of the divine law... neither before nor after the reception of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of the fulfillment of the law, in this life, do these works establish our righteousness before God unto eternal life. And the reason is not that the divine law is not a divine teaching or that it is imperfect as is the case with our natural knowledge; but it is 'weak through the flesh,' even in the saints insofar as it pertains to perfect obedience..."

64. The statements cited through this paper, while only a minute fraction of the totality of his material, should convince the normally well-educated Lutheran that Chemnitz is very accurately reproducing the theology of Luther, of Melanchthon in his best period, and of the Lutheran Confessions. The somewhat better informed will see also that this theology was duplicated by the great orthodox theologians of the 16th and 17th centuries, down even into the age of Pietism. And in the 19th century revival of Lutheran orthodoxy

among both Europeans and Americans the theology of Chemnitz shines through. In fact, while Chemnitz is prolix and sometimes overly thorough, yet in even the age of rationalism he was honored for his objective scholarship, his irenic and fair-minded approach, his enormous knowledge and his pious concern not for his own glory but for the church. It is no overstatement to say that Martin Chemnitz, the second Martin of Lutheranism, is really the father of normative Lutheran theology. Luther ploughed the original rough ground but in a rather unsystematic way. Melancthon did much to systematize the work of Luther, but it remained for Chemnitz in his great confrontation with the Roman Counter-reformation and the Reformed and the weak Lutheran theology of the era, in his Examination of the Council of Trent and in his Loci Theologici, to bequeath to Lutheranism (no longer merely a movement or some temporary aberration which would eventually return to the welcoming and unchanging arms of Rome or be swallowed up in the pan-Protestantism already being planned in Geneva and Canterbury) the theological system which we to this day enjoy and for which we give thanks to God. The basic elements of Luther's teaching are all here: the centrality of the Gospel of Christ, the forgiveness of sin, the Scriptural basis, the respect for the thinking of the ancient church, the unity of all doctrine around the need of sinful man for a gracious and merciful God, all given to man in the church through the Word and the Sacraments.

COMMUNION SERMON
Pastoral Conference 1985

President W. Petersen

Text - I Corinthians 11:23-26

Prayer: "Jesus, Thy feast we celebrate;
We show Thy death, we sing Thy name,
Till Thou return and we shall eat
The marriage supper of the lamb." Amen

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (I Cor. 11:23-26)

In Christ Jesus, dear brethren,

"Lord, it is good for us to be here." Those words reflect our sentiments this morning as we gather for our conference communion service. As we labor in our respective callings we look forward to our coming together at the Lord's table. We treasure this fellowship and we rejoice together over the rich blessings which we receive in this meal.

In keeping with the theme of our conference,

namely the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians, "For I am determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified," let us on the basis of our text gather our thoughts around the theme,

"PROCLAIM THE LORD'S DEATH"

We do this

1. When we come to His table and reflect upon the meaning of His death.
2. When we believe what we receive -- the personal benefit therefrom, and
3. When we continue to do this until our Lord returns.

Twice Jesus says in the text, "Do this in remembrance of me." Every celebration of the Lord's Supper is a proclamation of His death and a powerful reminder of the necessity and meaning of that death. His death was the culmination of his passive obedience; it was the penalty which had to be paid if we were to be redeemed; it was the high cost of our salvation, as we confess in the explanation of the second article: "Not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent sufferings and death."

The prophet Isaiah described his death in these words, "But he was wounded for our transgression, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." His death was a voluntary act of love, as Jesus Himself says, "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again," Again: "I lay down my life for the sheep." Paul Gerhard has expressed it very strikingly in

one of our Lenten hymns,

"A lamb goes uncomplaining forth,
The guilt of all men bearing;
Laden with all the sins of earth
None else the burden sharing!
Goes patient on, grows weak and faint,
To slaughter led without complaint,
That spotless life to offer;
Bears shame, and stripes, and wounds and death,
Anguish and mockery, and saith,
'Willing all this I suffer.'"

(Hymnary 301, v.1)

And the blessed meaning of that death is summed up by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans, "We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." (Rom. 10:5) The barrier of sin which stood between God and us had been forever removed; the sacrifice which he rendered on the cross was a perfect sacrifice for all sin, for all time. When he cried on the cross "It is finished," he thereby declared that he had completed the work of our redemption. Because of this perfect, complete sacrifice the church of God joyfully sings,

"Jesus, in Thy cross are centered
All the marvels of Thy grace;
Thou, my Savior, once has entered
Through Thy blood the holy place:
Thy sacrifice holy there wrought my redemption,
From Satan's dominion I now have exemption;
The way is now free to the Father's high throne,
Where I may approach Him, in Thy name."

(Hymnary 227, v. 8)

The text says that the evening before his death Jesus instituted this Supper, which was to be a continual reminder to his people of his death until

the end of time. He was thinking more of us than Himself that night. Included in the words that He spoke were these, "Do this in remembrance of Me." Whenever we come together for the celebration of this Supper, which we are to do often, we proclaim His death. We are saying, "I believe that Christ died for my sins; his death is my life." Yes, the remembrance of the death of Christ consists of true repentance where we acknowledge our sinfulness with heartfelt sorrow and believe that His death has atoned for all our sins. Kingo makes it very personal when he writes,

"Thou hast died for my transgression,
All my sins on Thee were laid;
Thou hast won for me salvation,
On the cross my debt was paid."

Our hearts, then, should be filled with joy and gratitude as we again this morning come to our Lord's Table, set and prepared by Him, and ponder the blessed meaning of His death.

Secondly, we proclaim His death by gratefully receiving what He gives us in this Supper, namely his body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins. "And when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you....in the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." On the basis of these words Luther says in the Small Catechism in answer to the question, "What is the sacrament of the Altar?" "It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ Himself, for us Christians to eat and to drink." What closer, more intimate, more blessed communion could there be than that which exists between our crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ

and His people. His very body and blood, broken and shed for our sins, are actually given to us in this blessed Supper.

And we can have this assurance because Christ, who instituted this Supper, has commanded us to do what He did in that first Supper, namely speak His words, distribute, eat, and drink. This is all included in the words, "This do." Our Lord who spoke those words uses the lips of the officiant to speak those same powerful, creative words and through those words He effects the presence of His body and blood so that what is distributed by the pastor and received by the communicant is what He says that it is, namely His body and blood. Yes, He ties the action to His supper to the speaking of the pastor. "He that heareth you heareth Me," He says. And our Lutheran Confessions clearly state: "For wherever we observe this institution and speak His words over the bread and cup and distribute the blessed bread and cup, Christ Himself is still active through the spoken words by virtue of the first institution, which He wants to be repeated." (Tappert, p. 538) And our communion liturgy reflects the same in these words, "From the words of Christ: 'This is my Body, which is given for you'; 'This is my Blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sin'; you should believe that Jesus Christ is Himself present with His body and blood, as the words declare."

In this body and blood we receive the forgiveness of sins. That is the blessed personal benefit which our Saviour gives to us. Luther makes this perceptive observation: "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." (LW, Vol. 40, pp 213-214)

What Christ distributes in the sacrament is what we so sorely need. As we come to His Table this morning we come mindful of our many sins, personal, pastoral, and sins toward one another. Our sins are an open book to our omniscient Lord. When the ancient father Chrysostom makes the statement, "It is a miracle that a pastor can be saved," he is not thereby dissuading anyone from entering the ministry, but calling attention, in a most striking way, to the serious nature of the work to which God has called him. And there is not a calling on earth in which there are more temptations than in the ministry: sins of indifference, laziness, pride, envy, jealousy, personal wrangling. As we examine ourselves in the mirror of God's Holy Law we must confess to our shame that our life has been far from what it should be. We can only cry out with the psalmist, "If Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" Thank God, the answer we receive is, "But there is forgiveness with Thee that thou mayest be feared."

Yes, there is forgiveness with the Lord. And that forgiveness, won for us by the death of our Savior on the cross, is brought to us in this Supper and made our very own. True, we have this forgiveness in the spoken word too, but here He singles us out, takes us aside, and says personally to each one of us, "Take, eat; take drink for the forgive-

ness of your sins." Why God has so many ways to give us the forgiveness of our sins we cannot say, except that He is "surpassingly rich in grace" and has chosen various ways to bring it to us, such as through the spoken word, Baptism, the Holy Sacrament, through the power of the keys, and through the mutual conversation and consolation of brethren, as Luther so eloquently says in the Smalcald Articles. Yes, God knows what we need, why we need it, and is so generous in supplying it. This Supper is Gospel, pure Gospel. We proclaim his death when we believe and receive what he says and gives to us in His Supper. Again this morning we can say with the hymnist,

"Today I was my Savior's guest
My soul was here so richly blest."

Finally, we proclaim the Lord's death when we continue to partake of His Supper until our Lord returns. "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." When our Lord instituted this Supper He was looking ahead to His coming on the last day. We confess this truth in our creed whenever we gather for worship: "He shall come again to judge the quick and the dead."

He came the first time in humility and lowliness and died a horrible death in order to redeem us from sin, death, and hell. That is now history. He shall come again in glory, accompanied by His Holy angels, to judge the living and the dead. Because of His first coming we can look forward with joy and eager anticipation to His second coming. In the meantime, this Supper is a point of communication, a blessed means of grace, between the risen and ascended Savior and His

people, and as we continue to partake of this meal where we are reminded of, and ponder, the blessed meaning of His death and receive from Him His very body and blood which were broken and shed for our sins, we continue to proclaim His death. And as we do this may our quiet, confident prayer be: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Amen