

Foreword

In this issue of the *Quarterly* we are pleased to share with our readers the 2007 annual Reformation Lectures, delivered on October 25–26, 2007, in Mankato, Minnesota. These lectures are sponsored jointly by Bethany Lutheran College and Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary. This was the fortieth in the series of annual Reformation Lectures which began in 1967.

This year there were two presenters. The first lecture was given by the Rev. Gaylin R. Schmeling, who is the president of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota. He was born on September 27, 1950, at Litchfield, Minnesota, to Lois and Raymond Schmeling. His childhood was spent on the family farm near Hutchinson, Minnesota. After Lutheran high school, he attended Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin; Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minnesota; and Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota, graduating in 1973 with a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree in Elementary Education. He then received a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree in 1978 from Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota, after vicaring at a five-point parish in northern Iowa (the Northwood-Lake Mills Parish). In 1993 he earned a Master of Sacred Theology (S.T.M.) degree in the History of Dogma at Nashotah House Seminary, Nashotah, Wisconsin. His thesis was titled, *The Lord's Supper in Augustine and Chemnitz*. He has lectured on various theological subjects in Germany, Ukraine, and Africa. He has been a contributor to a number of theological periodicals, and has written two books: *Baptism: My Adoption into God's Family* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1999); and *God's Gift to You: A Devotional Book on the Lord's Supper*, (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2001).

After seminary his first call was to a two-point parish: English Lutheran Church of Cottonwood, Minnesota, and Zion Lutheran Church of Tracy, Minnesota. After serving them for 8 years he received the call to Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Okauchee, Wisconsin. In 1997 he accepted the call to be the president of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota, where he also teaches in the areas of church history, dogmatics, and

practical theology. In 1985 he was elected to the Doctrine Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and is presently its chairman. He also serves as the editor of the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, the theological journal of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

In 1973 he married Rebecca née Christensen. Their marriage has been blessed with two sons, Timothy and Samuel, both of whom are pastors in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

The second presenter was Dr. Carlos R. Messerli, who is the Founding Executive Director Emeritus of the Lutheran Music Program, a national summer program conducted on various Lutheran college campuses that trains young people in all aspects of classical music for participation in church music. Earlier he had retired from a twenty-year career as Professor of Music at Concordia College (now University), Seward, Nebraska. He received his undergraduate degree from Concordia Teachers College (now University), River Forest, Illinois, and advanced degrees from Northwestern University, the University of Michigan, and the University of Iowa.

He was a member of the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship, which produced the *Lutheran Book of Worship*, a national officer in the Lutheran Society for Worship, Music, and the Arts, and two-term president of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians (ALCM). He has received an honorary doctorate from Concordia University, River Forest, Illinois, was made an honorary alumnus of Valparaiso University, and an honorary lifetime member of the ALCM.

His publications include *Thine the Amen: Essays on Lutheran Church Music in Honor of Carl Schalk*; *Celebrating the Musical Heritage of the Lutheran Church*, an interactive CD-ROM project for Thrivent Financial (author and content editor); and *The Manual for the Lutheran Book of Worship* (co-author). His most recent published article is “Grace Notes,” which recounts the contributions to church music by Johann Walter, Michael Praetorius, Heinrich Schutz, and Dietrich Buxtehude, that appeared in *Christian History* (Summer 2007).

The theme of the lectures was **The Life and Work of Paul Gerhardt: 400th Anniversary**. The first lecture, presented by the Rev. Schmeling, was entitled “Paul Gerhardt: Pastor and

Theologian.” In this presentation the essayist outlined Gerhardt’s life and his battle for confessional Lutheranism. He emphasized that Gerhardt was one with the seventeenth-century theologians, pointing to Gerhardt’s contributions as a devotional writer as he directed his people to the doctrines of the faith and the wonderful comfort that grows from them.

Dr. Messerli presented “Paul Gerhardt: Poet and Hymnwriter.” In this lecture the essayist spoke of the great contribution that Paul Gerhardt made to Lutheran hymnody. Through his hymnody the Lutheran faith has been sung into the hearts of many. It has brought comfort and strength to generation after generation.

The Reformation Lectures centered in the important contribution that Paul Gerhardt made to the Lutheran Church and Lutheran hymnody. In his hymns, sermons and other writings, the Gospel always predominates as Gerhardt applies that Gospel truth to the burdens and struggles of the Christian’s life. He faced the Christian cross, and his hymns offer comfort as we face the Christian cross. His enemies considered him to be as thickheaded as a mule and as stubborn as one, but his friends knew that his strong convictions were based on the salvific Word of the Lord. This divine, sifted in Satan’s sieve, is indeed the sweet singer of Lutheranism.

Each lecture was followed by a panel discussion. The panel members were the Rev. Jerome Gernander, pastor of Bethany Lutheran Church, Princeton, Minnesota; the Rev. Thomas Rank, pastor of Center and Scarville Lutheran Churches, Scarville, Iowa; Prof. Mark Harstad, professor at Bethany Lutheran College; and Prof. Dennis Marzolf, professor at Bethany Lutheran College.

In this issue of the *Quarterly* we also include a paper on the life and work of Paul Gerhardt entitled “After the Storm: Paul Gerhardt and a Pastoral Theology of the Cross.” This paper was presented at the General Pastoral Conference of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, held October 2-4, 2007. The essayist was the Rev. Alex Ring, who is pastor of Lakewood Lutheran Church in Lakewood, Washington.

Included in this issue are two funeral sermons written by Paul Gerhardt. The first sermon, based on Psalm 86:11, was translated by the Rev. Wade R. Johnston, pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in

Saginaw, Michigan, a member of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Also assisting in this translation were Pastors Herbert Kuske, Timothy Kolb of Bethany Lutheran in Saginaw, Michigan, and Luke Boehringer of Salem Lutheran in Owosso, Michigan.

These two funeral sermons were translated from the German found in *Paul Gerhardt als Prediger: Vier Leichenpredigten desselben aus den Jahren 1655, 1659, 1660 und 1661* (Zwickau: Druck und Verlag von Johannes Herrmann, 1906). Johannes Herrmann (1850–1904) was an important printer and editor of confessional Lutheran literature in the nineteenth century. His son Johannes Herrmann (1885–1965) was the head of the publishing house following his father. These faithful men were the great-grandfather and grandfather, respectively, of Dr. Gottfried Herrmann, the rector of *Lutherisches Theologisches Seminar* in Leipzig, Germany.

Contents

The 40th Annual Reformation Lectures The Life and Work of Paul Gerhardt: 400th Anniversary

Lecture One: Paul Gerhardt: Pastor and Theologian	7
<i>Gaylin R. Schmeling</i>	
Lecture Two: Paul Gerhardt: Poet and Hymnwriter	70
<i>Carlos R. Messerli</i>	
Reactions to the 2007 Reformation Lectures	97
<i>Jerome T. Gernander</i>	
<i>Thomas L. Rank</i>	
After the Storm: Paul Gerhardt and a Pastoral Theology	107
of the Cross	
<i>Alex K. Ring</i>	
Funeral Sermon on Psalm 86:11	138
<i>Paul Gerhardt</i>	
Funeral Sermon on Psalm 71:9	156
<i>Paul Gerhardt</i>	
Gerhardt and the Berlin Christmas Service of 1659	175
Anna of Prussia	177
<i>Gaylin R. Schmeling</i>	



Paul Gerhardt.

Paul Gerhardt: Pastor and Theologian

Gaylin R. Schmeling

I.	The Life of Paul Gerhardt	9
A.	Introduction	9
B.	The Early Life of Paul Gerhardt	10
	1. Gräfenhainichen Years	
	2. Grimma Years	
	3. Wittenberg Years	
C.	The Thirty Years' War	14
D.	The First Period in Berlin and the	16
	Mittenwalde Pastorate	
	1. Time in Berlin	
	2. First Call, Ordination, Marriage	
E.	The Second Reformation in	18
	Brandenburg-Prussia	
F.	Life in Berlin and Pastor at the Nikolaikirche . . .	20
	1. Controversy with the Great Elector	
	2. The Berlin Colloquy	
G.	The Lübben Pastorate	26
II.	The Theology and Pastoral Care of Paul Gerhardt	28
A.	The Doctrinal Emphases of Gerhardt.	28
B.	The Sermons of Gerhardt	33

C.	Gerhardt and Lutheran Spirituality	34
	1. The Arndt and Gerhardt Connection	
	2. Mysticism and Mystical Union	
	3. Devotional Themes	
	4. Theology of the Cross	
	5. Comfort (<i>Trost</i>) of the Lord	
III.	Conclusion	44
	Addendum I: The So-Called “Testament” of Paul Gerhardt	46
	Addendum II: Von der Heiligen Taufe	48
	Addendum III: Vom heiligen Abendmahl	51
	Addendum IV: Outline of Gerhardt’s Life	54

Paul Gerhardt: Pastor and Theologian
Theologus in cribro Satanae versatus
 (A theologian sifted in Satan's sieve)

I. The Life of Paul Gerhardt

A. Introduction

The past two years have commemorated important dates in the life of Paul Gerhardt. Last year was the 330th anniversary of his death in 1676 and this year is the 400th anniversary of his birth in 1607. Does this man have any relevance to the students at Bethany Lutheran College and to our Evangelical Lutheran Synod? Some may respond no, but one needs to consider this for a moment. If we open our *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* we will discover 22 hymns written by this author. A pastor in our midst has the name Paul Gerhardt Madson, showing the high regard that our synod has had for this Lutheran poet. From my own life, I remember that we ended every day of Lutheran elementary school with the hymn "Now Rest Beneath Night's Shadow." To this day, I comfort myself in night terrors with the beautiful verse:

Lord Jesus, who dost love me,
 O spread Thy wings above me
 And shield me from alarm!
 Though evil would assail me,
 Thy mercy will not fail me:
 I rest in Thy protecting arm.
 (ELH 569:5)

Gerhardt's hymns have been sung for generations, in times without number. Catherine Winkworth (1829–1878) translated several of them.¹ John and Charles Wesley were influenced by Gerhardt's hymns and translated a number of them into English, including "Jesus Thy Boundless Love to Me" (ELH 372). During his imprisonment by the Nazis, Dietrich Bonhoeffer found comfort in the hymns of Gerhardt, hymns that he had learned as a child.² In the novel *Heidi*, the Grossmutter is comforted by Gerhardt's hymn, *Die güldne Sonne*. Günter Grass, Germany's finest living novelist,

has Paul Gerhardt attend a gathering of literary figures to discuss the devastation following the Thirty Years' War in his *The Meeting at Telgte*. A recent German biography of Gerhardt maintains that more Germans have memorized verses from Gerhardt than verses from Goethe. In his hymns and other writings, the Gospel always predominates as he applies that Gospel truth to the burdens and struggles of the Christian's life. Gerhardt faced the Christian cross and his hymns offer comfort as we face the Christian cross.

What do we really know about this man? Some consider him to be the greatest Lutheran hymn writer and German religious poet that ever lived. Others think that he is somewhat boring. Still others confuse him with Johann Gerhard. Many of his hymns are based on prayers from the *Little Garden of Paradise* (*Paradiesgärtlein voller christlicher Tugenden*) of Johann Arndt. Some would consider Johann Arndt to be the precursor of Pietism. Does this make Gerhardt a Pietist?³ His hymns are considerably more subjective than those of Luther. Many of them begin with the German word *ich* (I) indicating that he emphasized personal feelings and emotions. He was pastor for a time at one of the most important churches in Berlin, the Nikolaikirche, and yet he was thrown out by the Great Elector, Frederick William. Was he a great defender of faith or a troublemaker? These are some of the questions we want to consider as we look at Paul Gerhardt, the pastor and theologian.

B. The Early Life of Paul Gerhardt

Gräfenhainichen Years

The little town of Gräfenhainichen was hidden deep in the forest area of the Dübener Heiden between the Elbe and the Mulde rivers and was surrounded by walls for protection. The town of around a thousand inhabitants was located south of Wittenberg on the road to Halle and Leipzig. When Paul Gerhardt was born there on March 12, 1607, it was a part of Electoral Saxony (*Kursachsen*). His father, Christian, operated a farm and a Gasthaus and served as one of three mayors of the town. There are records of his grandfather, Paulus Gerhardt, after whom he was named, living in the town

already in about 1569.⁴ His mother, Dorothea née Starke, came from a family of theologians. Gerhardt was the second son in a family of four children. His older brother, Christian (b. 1606), followed in his father's footsteps maintaining the family business. Concerning the rest of his siblings there is little information. As was customary at the time, Gerhardt was probably baptized the day after his birth in the Marienkirche at Gräfenhainichen. Gerhardt's father died in 1619 and his mother in 1621. The early loss of his parents may be the reason that his hymns often compare God's special love for the human soul to that of parents for their children.

Gerhardt's forefathers on his mother's side were valiant confessional Lutherans. She was the daughter of Caspar Starke, the superintendent of Eilenburg. Her maternal grandfather was Gallus Döbler who had been the superintendent of Eilenburg before his son-in-law. When Christian I (1560–1591), the son of Elector August, one of the signers of the *Formula of Concord*, attempted to Calvinize Electoral Saxony in a Second Reformation,⁵ Caspar Starke lost his office for a time because he refused to give up the exorcism in Baptism.⁶ Baptismal exorcism had taken on the significance of being a confessional stand against the Reformed. The Lutherans understood exorcism in Baptism as a confession of the scriptural doctrine of regenerative Baptism and the teaching that man was born dead in original sin. Christian I and his chancellor, Nicholas Krell, forbade its use hoping to move Electoral Saxony in the direction of the Reformed. They probably would have succeeded had Christian I not died unexpectedly in 1591. His young son, Christian II (1583–1611), who was surrounded by staunch Lutherans, restored confessional Lutheranism to the land. Krell was imprisoned and beheaded in 1601, the exorcism was reintroduced in the liturgy, and Starke was returned to his office.⁷ As a result of this controversy, Hölzer von Hönegg (1580–1645), the court preacher at Dresden, is thought to have said, "One should rather have fellowship with the Papists and likewise have more trust in them, than [have fellowship] with and [trust] in the Calvinists."⁸

Grimma Years

Gerhardt's early education took place at Gräfenhainichen. Here,

among other things, he would have been taught the doctrines of the faith, music, and the Latin language. At age 15, in 1622, he had the opportunity to attend the *Fürstenschule* (Prince's school) in Grimma, southeast of Leipzig. This was a German gymnasium which is comparable to our high school and first two years of college. The gymnasium was near Nimbschen, famous for the cloister from which Katherine von Bora, Luther's wife, escaped on Easter in 1523. The school had been founded in 1550 by Elector Moritz who was known as the Judas of Meissen among the Lutherans.⁹ This elite institution, devoted mainly to training Lutheran pastors, was housed in a former Augustinian monastery. Paul Gerhardt's older brother, Christian, also attended the *Fürstenschule* but was unhappy there and left in 1623.

New regulations for the *Fürstenschule* were established by Adam Siber in 1579 which portray the atmosphere of the school.

These regulations for example fixed punishments on seven levels: 1. Warning, 2. Eating on the floor, 3. Denial of food and drink, 4. Caning, 5. The so called "Fiedel", a choking collar, which one had to wear in the stocks, 6. Dungeon 7. Expulsion from the school. The school regulations stated in addition that lessons in Christian doctrine and languages must not exceed six hours a day. However, both areas offered the opportunity to include other lessons, for example in music, rhetoric, dialectics and repetition. The essential aim of the St. Augustin Fürstenschule however remained to develop the pupils into perfect Latin scholars, to enable them to read the works of the Latin classics, such as Virgil (70–90 BC).¹⁰

The curriculum at the institution demanded a high degree of self-discipline on the part of the students who received a thorough training in the classical languages, philosophy, theology, and sacred music. The theological courses at the *Fürstenschule* originally centered on the study of Melancthon's *Loci Communes*. However, after Christian I's attempt at the Calvinization of Electoral Saxony, Melancthon's writings were somewhat suspect. Therefore the new chief doctrinal text used at Grimma was Hutter's *Compendium*.¹¹ All students were required to memorize Hutter's *Compendium* in Latin. The influence can still be seen in Gerhardt's hymns.¹²

Paul Gerhardt was a faithful student at the Prince's school at Grimma. He was neither the best student nor the worst. His academic work was generally satisfactory.¹³ He finished his course of study in December of 1627.

Wittenberg Years

On January 2, 1628, Paul Gerhardt matriculated at the Wittenberg University, the *Leucorea*,¹⁴ where Luther began the Reformation. When Gerhardt entered the university it was about 125 years old and a large number of students were in attendance. It was one of the most important centers of Lutheran theology. It was known as the *Cathedra Lutheri* (Luther's teaching chair).¹⁵ Here orthodox Lutheran theology was taught in accord with the Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. Together with the university in Jena where Johann Gerhard (1582–1637) taught, it was the bulwark of Lutheran theology. It was a fortress and defense against the inroads of Calvinization. Here Gerhardt acquired an unswerving loyalty to the *Book of Concord* of 1580.

Many of Gerhardt's teachers at Wittenberg were major Lutheran theologians. They included Jakob Martini (professor from 1623–1649), a leading teacher of Aristotelian philosophy advancing the analytical method; Paul Röber (1627–1651); Wilhelm Leyser (1627–1649); and Johann Hülsemann (1629–1646), one of the chief dogmaticians of the era.¹⁶ Paul Röber was probably the best known preacher in Wittenberg at the time and greatly influenced Gerhardt. At least one of his sermons provides the basis for one of Gerhardt's hymns.¹⁷ Gerhardt probably attended the lectures of August Buchner (1591–1661), a professor of rhetoric and poetics who was an intimate friend of Martin Opitz (1597–1639). Opitz was the author of the *Treatise on German Poetry (Von der deutschen Poeterei)*, written in 1624, which lays the foundation and gives the principles of forming German verse.¹⁸ Therefore it is likely that through Buchner Gerhardt was influenced by Opitz's rules for the language, metric form and content of poetry. Some would even go so far as to say that without Opitz's poetic influence there would have been no Gerhardt.¹⁹

Gerhardt remained in Wittenberg for about 14 years. Between

1630 and 1635 he lived in the home of August Fleischhauer, the pastor of the Stadtkirche (city church) in Wittenberg. Here he served as tutor for the Fleischhauer children which was a common assignment for students of theology of the period. He enjoyed the culture of the Fleischhauer household and had his residence in the shadow of the great St. Mary's Church of the city.²⁰

Some have speculated as to why Gerhardt's study of theology took such an unusually long time. He was in Wittenberg from 1628 until 1642 and he was still unordained when he left the university at the age of 36. The Thirty Years' War and the plagues that came in its aftermath certainly impeded his progress. In addition many of the churches in the region were destroyed in the war and poverty was widespread. Thus, requests for candidates of theology were not in abundance.

C. The Thirty Years' War

As was noted above, the devastating Thirty Years' War had a detrimental effect on Gerhardt's student years and would continue to have a profound influence on him throughout his life in various ways. The *Book of Concord* brought spiritual peace within the Lutheran Church but it did not end the political hostilities that grew from the conflicting religious confessions in Europe. In 1619, the Peace of Augsburg of 1555 unraveled and war broke out. The Thirty Years' War which resulted can be divided into four main phases: Bohemian (1618–1625), Danish (1625–1629), Swedish (1630–1635), and French (1635–1648). For a while it seemed as if the Lutheran princes and their armies were going to be destroyed, and that Lutheranism in Germany would be pushed into the Baltic Sea. But God roused the great Lion of the North to come to the defense of the suffering German Lutherans who were not all that happy to see him.²¹ In 1630 Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, brought his army to Germany to assist the Lutherans. As he entered Wittenberg in 1631 he is to have said, "Dear sirs, from this place the light of the Gospel has come to us from you. But because enemies would darken it here, we must come to you in order that God would soon rekindle that light."²² His well-organized army went from victory to victory. Before the battle of Lützen in 1632, the entire army sang,

“A Mighty Fortress is Our God” and “O Little Flock.” His army defeated the Catholic army, but Gustavus died in battle. Gerhardt probably witnessed his funeral procession through Wittenberg on its way to Sweden. The war continued for thirteen more years. After thirty years of savage warfare, the war ended with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. This peace provided equal rights for Lutherans, Calvinists, and Catholics, but the prince had the right to decide the religion of his realm (*cuius regio eius religio*).

The effect of the Thirty Years’ War on Germany was devastating. Northern Germany lay in ruin. The land was ravaged by the plundering armies. Armies at that time had no supply lines or support groups. They survived by living off the land, pillaging and looting wherever they went. A friendly army was just as devastating as an enemy army. First the land had to support the imperial armies, and later the Swedish army needed to be supported. The population was reduced to about one-third of what had been before the war. Trade had almost ceased. The war left Germany so exhausted it took a century to recover. The intellectual, moral, and spiritual life was at low ebb. The war was a horrible tragedy and fought in the name of religion. Large areas of Northern Germany were burned and ruined with the result that the folk song developed:

Maikäfer flieg!
Dein Vater ist im Krieg.
Deine Mutter ist im Pommerland.
Pommerland ist abgebrannt,
Maikäfer flieg!

May Fly, fly away!
Your Father is in the War.
Your Mother is in Pommerland.
Pommerland is burning,
May Fly, fly away!²³

Paul Gerhardt suffered personally in the war. In 1637 the Swedes, determined to punish Elector Johann George I²⁴ for signing a separate peace (Prague in 1635) with the Emperor, appeared before the gates of Gräfenhainichen demanding a war tax. It was paid but the soldiers set fire to the city anyway. Gerhardt’s home and the city

church, school, parsonage, and castle were destroyed, along with many other buildings. At this time many of the records of Gerhardt's early life were lost. In the plague that followed the destruction of the city, Gerhardt's brother, Christian, died in November.²⁵ The city of Wittenberg itself, where Gerhardt lived at the time, was spared attack but here also pestilence devastated the city.

The suffering under the cross in the turmoil and devastation of the Thirty Years' War produced many great poets and poignant expressions of the Christian faith. The orthodox Lutheran faith touched the hearts of many and that warm and vibrant faith was expressed in devotional literature and hymns. In many ways this was the golden age of Lutheran hymnody with such great writers as Johann Heermann (1585–1647), Johann Rist (1607–1667), and Paul Gerhardt.

D. The First Period in Berlin and the Mittenwalde Pastorate

Time in Berlin

Gerhardt left Saxony in 1642 for Berlin, the capital of Brandenburg-Prussia. Before the Thirty Years' War Berlin had a population of about 12,000. As Gerhardt entered the city the population had been reduced to around 5000. As in Wittenberg, he supported himself as a private tutor for the children of a prosperous middle class family, the family of Andreas Berthold, a lawyer in the Chancery Court (*Kammergerichtsadvokat*). Berthold would become his future father-in-law. He supplemented his income as tutor by writing occasional poems and hymns. One of his earliest writings was a wedding poem (*Hochzeitsode*) at the marriage of one of Berthold's older daughters to Joachim Fromm, one of the pastors at the Nikolaikirche in Berlin. Gerhardt was well liked and respected by the Lutheran laity and clergy in this city. Occasionally he served as a substitute pastor for the city churches.

At this time he met the cantor at the Nikolaikirche, Johann Crüger (1598–1662), who would eventually be his coworker. In 1647 Crüger produced a collection of hymns entitled *Praxis*

*Pietatis Melica*²⁶ in which 18 of Gerhardt's hymns were set to melodies composed by Crüger. Crüger was born in Gross-Bressen, Brandenburg. He received his musical training under Paulus Homberger in Regensburg. In 1622 he was appointed cantor of the Nikolaikirche at Berlin and he was also called to teach at the Greyfriars Gymnasium. He lost his wife and his entire family in the pestilence of 1636. Thereafter he married Elisabeth Schmidt, who was 17, and together they had 14 children, most of whom did not reach adulthood.²⁷ He wrote no hymns but he was one of the most distinguished musicians and tune composers of his time. He composed around 70 chorales. Through the *Praxis Pietatis Melica*, Gerhardt's hymns became well known in Brandenburg. Without Crüger's melodies, Gerhardt's hymns would not have been so well known.²⁸

First Call, Ordination, Marriage

When the elderly pastor at Mittenwalde died in 1651, Gerhardt was proposed as the minister of the St. Moritz Church. The town council followed this proposal and invited Gerhardt to Mittenwalde. On September 28, 1651, he gave his trial sermon at the St. Moritz Church after which he accepted the call. He served as pastor and *Propst* (head pastor) in Mittenwalde and had supervision over several neighboring congregations. At 44 years of age he was ordained on November 18, 1651, at the Nikolaikirche in Berlin.²⁹ A delegation from Mittenwalde was present at his ordination.³⁰ At his ordination he pledged himself to the Lutheran Confessions. In January of 1652 he was installed as pastor in Mittenwalde by his friend Andreas Fromm, the pastor of Petrikerche in Cölln.

When Gerhardt moved to Mittenwalde, south of Berlin, it had about 800 inhabitants. Here he had some conflict with the second pastor of the St. Moritz Church. Generally, however, his time at Mittenwalde was a quiet and peaceful period in his life. During this time he continued to write hymns which attracted great attention. They were quickly adopted in hymnbooks in both Brandenburg and Saxony.

Now that he was in a secure position, he thought of

establishing his own household and family.³¹ His thoughts centered on a young woman that he had met in the Berthold household where he had served as tutor. On February 11, 1655, he married Anna Maria Berthold. The service took place in the Nikolaikirche with Petrus Vehr preaching on 2 Corinthians 13:11.³² Their first child, born in 1656, died in infancy and a memorial plaque in the Mittenwalde church shows their grief. The couple had three sons and two daughters but only one son, Paul Friedrich, survived his parents.

As pastor in Mittenwalde, Gerhardt probably preached two or three times on Sunday and at a number of services during the week. The main worship service on Sunday morning would last from 2–3 hours with an hour-long sermon and the Lord's Supper. Besides the divine services the pastor's activities included Baptisms, visiting the sick and dying with the sacrament, private confessions, weddings and funerals.³³ Even with this busy schedule he still found quietude in Mittenwalde, and before this in Berlin, in which he wrote most of his hymns. His fame as the sweet singer of Lutheranism began to spread far and wide. In 1661 the tenth edition of Crüger's hymnal, *Praxis Pietatis Melica*, was printed where 90 of Gerhardt's hymns appeared.

E. The Second Reformation in Brandenburg-Prussia

The religious situation Gerhardt met in Berlin was considerably different from the staunch confessional Lutheranism of Saxony. The Hohenzollern family, the ruling family of Brandenburg-Prussia, accepted the Reformation in 1539. Joachim II (1505–1571) became a Lutheran in a very conservative Reformation. Very few of the medieval rites were changed. His son, Johann George (1525–1598), was one of the electors who signed the Formula of Concord. However, his grandson, Johann Sigismund (1572–1619), who spent time at the University of Heidelberg, the center of German Reformed learning, was influenced by its theology. In addition to this, it was politically beneficial for him to be of the Reformed persuasion in order to obtain the land of Cleves in western Germany. Thus it seems that Johann Sigismund left the Lutheran Church for both political

and religious reasons.

On Christmas Day in 1613, Johann Sigismund openly embraced the Reformed faith in the first Reformed Communion service in the Berlin Cathedral. While he became Reformed, his wife Anna remained an ardent Lutheran, and the same was true of most of his people. His court preacher, Simon Gedicke (1551–1631), was totally opposed to the Reformed faith. In this way Prussia differed from the Palatinate, where the people were forced to follow the religion of their princes. This set the stage for the struggle in Prussia between the Lutherans and Reformed which climaxed in the Prussian Union of 1817 bringing many confessional Lutherans to America.

The two outward signs of the Second Reformation were the rejection of exorcism in Baptism and the innovation of the *fractio panis*, the breaking of bread in the Lord's Supper. The Reformed attempt to change the baptismal liturgy touched the heart of the common people. "A butcher, determined to have his daughter baptized in the proper Lutheran manner, appeared in Dresden's Hofkirche armed with a meat cleaver. He positioned himself next to the baptismal font and threatened to split the minister's head if he dared to omit the exorcism from the baptismal formula."³⁴ Johann Sigismund believed in the main tenets of the Second Reformation. He assumed the Lutheran Reformation did not go far enough. Too many medieval customs and doctrines remained in the Lutheran Church. He wanted to "sweep the leftover papal dung completely out of the sheepfold of Christ."³⁵ The attempts by the Reformed at a Second Reformation brought enmity and bitterness between the two church bodies.³⁶

At the time Gerhardt came to Berlin the sovereign and the ruler of Brandenburg-Prussia was the Great Elector, Frederick William (1620–1688). He was the grandson of Johann Sigismund. While the vast majority of people in Brandenburg-Prussia were Lutheran, the ruling family, the Hohenzollerns, were Calvinists. The Great Elector was an excellent political leader for the land. He spent his life trying to restore the economy of Brandenburg-Prussia after the Thirty Years' War.³⁷ At the same time, his religious views were a detriment to the Lutheran Church. The Great Elector hoped to end the distinction between the Lutheran Church and the Reformed

Church by blurring the distinctive biblical doctrines of the Lutheran Church, especially the doctrines of the person of Christ and the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Supper. All this he did in the name of tolerance, irenic relations, and moderation between churches advocating many of the syncretistic ideas of Georg Calixtus.³⁸ Yet Brandenburg-Prussia, with its 2.5 million Lutherans and only around 15,000 Reformed, was not interested in union.³⁹

F. Life in Berlin and Pastor at the Nikolaikirche

Gerhardt and his family were happy in Mittenwalde but their personal relationships continually drew them to Berlin. At the end of May 1657 the news reached Gerhardt through Martin Richter, a member of the Berlin city council, that he had been called as the second deacon (third pastor) of the Nikolaikirche, the same congregation in which he had been ordained upon acceptance of the call to Mittenwalde.⁴⁰ In addition to the office of cantor, to which Johann Crüger was called, there were four ordained offices in the public ministry of the congregation.⁴¹ In a letter of June 4 that same year he accepted the call to Berlin. A few weeks later, on July 22, he performed his first official act, a Baptism, at the Nikolaikirche. It seems that Gerhardt had some hesitation about leaving Mittenwalde for he accepted the call only after fervent prayer and deliberation.⁴² Still, both he and his wife were happy to be in Berlin among friends and family, making their home at Stralauer Straße 38.

In his position as pastor at the Nikolaikirche, Gerhardt gained much recognition and respect from both the upper and lower classes. He worked faithfully caring for the souls of his flock with the means of grace, holy Word and blessed Sacraments. In the ravages as a result of the Thirty Years' War his people were suffering great losses through devastation, terror, disease, and hunger and were often without hope. Gerhardt viewed his task in this situation to be the spiritual renewal of his members, providing comfort and hope through his hymns, sermons, and pastoral care. Because of this he was one of the most well-loved pastors in the city and was held in high regard by all in Berlin. Even Calvinists attended his services including the pious Electress Louisa Henrietta, who was a great

admirer of his hymns. He made his stand on the inspired, inerrant Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. Beside his hymns all that remains of his written materials are four printed funeral sermons, a prayer paraphrase, several letters and his testament to his son.⁴³

Together with the other pastors, the cantor Johann Crüger was Gerhardt's coworker at the Nikolaikirche. A close friendship between the men had developed before Crüger died in 1662. The next man who was called as the cantor by the congregation was Johann Georg Ebeling (1620–1676). His life indicated his staunch Lutheran stand, for after the dismissal of Gerhardt he moved to Stettin in Pommern where he could practice orthodox Lutheranism.⁴⁴ Like Crüger, he composed a number of melodies for Gerhardt's hymns, among them the melody for the hymn "Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me?" (ELH 377). His chief publication was *Pauli Gerhardt Geistliche Andachten* in 1666–1667 which contained 120 of his hymns.

Controversy with the Great Elector

As Gerhardt served in his parish in Berlin there was constant strife between the Lutheran and Reformed clergy as a result of the Great Elector's attempts to blend the two denominations into one church. In order to receive taxing privileges from the Landtag (state parliament) in 1653 the Elector agreed to preserve the teachings of the Lutheran Confessions in the land.⁴⁵ However, in 1656 he ordered that those ordained should not be asked to pledge themselves to *Book of Concord* but only to the Holy Scriptures and the Augsburg Confession.⁴⁶ The next year he forbid candidates of theology from Brandenburg-Prussia to be examined and ordained outside of the Hohenzollern lands. Both of these regulations had implications for Gerhardt. At his ordination he pledged himself to the Lutheran Confessions, and he had been educated outside of the Elector's realm at the University of Wittenberg in Saxony, the bulwark of orthodox Lutheranism.

In spite of the decrees and prohibitions of the Elector, the Lutheran clergy continued in their protest against his restrictions on Lutheranism. This was especially the case after the conference in

Hessen-Kassel in 1661 where it was purported that general agreement had been reached between the Lutherans and the Reformed.⁴⁷ On July 2, 1662, the Edict of Tolerance (*Toleranzedikt*) was drafted for the Elector mainly by the Reformed Court preacher (*Hofprediger*) Bartholomäus Stosch. The edict ordered the end of all polemics and intolerance between the Lutherans and the Reformed. To be sure there had been strong statements made, such as the one by Pastor Heinzemann who stated in his sermon, “So we now condemn the Papists and Calvinists ... with one word, whoever is not Lutheran, is damned.”⁴⁸ However, the real purpose of this tolerance or Reformed irenicism was not to bring peaceful coexistence between the church bodies. Rather it was to protect the Reformed minority, silence the Lutheran preachers, and slowly move toward a Second Reformation. Following the edict, a Lutheran pastor could not say from the pulpit that Jesus died for all people (1 Timothy 2:6), for that would be an attack on the Reformed doctrine of limited atonement. He could not say that God wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4), for that was contrary to the Reformed doctrine of double predestination. He could not say that the flesh and blood, born of Mary, is received by the mouth of both believer and unbeliever in the sacrament (Matthew 26:26–28; 1 Corinthians 11:27), for that was contrary to Reformed representation. He could not say that the whole Christ, both God and man, is present with us always to the end of the world (Matthew 28:20), for Reformed theology said that since the Ascension Christ’s body has been in one location, heaven. The edict tried to force the Lutheran pastors to break their ordination oath to teach in accord with the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

The Berlin Colloquy

The next blow to the Lutherans occurred on August 21 of the same year (1662) when the Elector specifically forbade his subjects from attending the University of Wittenberg. The same day the Elector called for a friendly and brotherly colloquy (*amicabile colloquium*) between the Lutheran and the Reformed in his land. He wanted to see if they could come to the agreement that there were no

fundamental differences in doctrine between them as the Hessians in Kassel had concluded. The colloquy was not exactly friendly, however, for non-compliance would have probably meant dismissal from office. Supported by Calov⁴⁹ and the Wittenberg faculty, the Lutheran clergy of Berlin prepared for the colloquy. The meetings were held from September 1662 to May 1663 in 17 sessions. The leader of the Reformed was Bartholomäus Stosch. The main spokesman for the Lutherans was Elias Reinhardt, the archdeacon of the Nikolaikirche, while Gerhardt prepared their written defense.⁵⁰

The two main points that were to be discussed at the colloquy were: 1. Was there anything in the official Reformed confessions and especially in the most recent edict that, on the basis of Scripture, should be condemned; and 2. Was there anything in the Reformed confessions that would cause an individual to be damned.⁵¹ The purpose of these questions was to force the Lutherans to say that there was no difference between the two denominations in fundamental doctrines. The syncretists and the Reformed irenicists believed that there could be church fellowship on the basis of agreement in fundamental articles while various opinions could be held on non-fundamental articles.

The Lutheran Church teaches that all doctrines of the Bible are to be taught and there is to be no deviation from the doctrines of the Bible. There is to be complete agreement in all the doctrines of Scripture for church fellowship. There is either complete fellowship or no fellowship at all. At the same time the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines is maintained. **Primary fundamental** doctrines are those doctrines that are the basis for salvation. Without a knowledge of them saving faith cannot be worked or maintained. If they are denied, there is no foundation on which saving faith may rest. Such doctrines are the doctrine of the Trinity, the person and work of Christ, and justification by faith alone. **Secondary fundamental** doctrines are related to and support the foundation of faith. They are related in such a way that ignorance of them may not destroy saving faith. Examples of secondary fundamental doctrines are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. **Non-fundamental** doctrines do not relate directly to the foundation of faith. As a result they may be unknown and even denied without

destroying faith provided that such a denial is not a conscious rejection of Scripture. An example of a non-fundamental doctrine is the doctrine of Antichrist. Non-fundamental doctrines are not a part of the foundation of faith but where faith already exists, they strengthen it.⁵²

The discussions began with the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. The Reformed asked the Lutherans if the doctrine of the oral eating or reception (*manducatio oralis*) of Christ's body and blood was necessary for salvation. By this question, the Reformed wanted to make the Lutherans say that the bodily eating of Christ's body and blood was not fundamental. Gerhardt carefully worded his response.

When we state that the article concerning the oral reception is a fundamental article of faith, though not a decisive one, yet one which saves, then we would also not dare to prove that without this doctrine no one could come to faith, love, and hope, and thus eternal salvation.⁵³

The oral reception for Gerhardt was a fundamental article (secondary fundamental) because the oral eating was salvific: it nourished faith in Christ. He did not mean that one could not be saved without oral eating. Here Gerhardt implied that the Reformed were asking the wrong questions. They should not have asked whether an article is necessary for salvation but rather they should have looked at the wonderful salvific benefits that the Lord's Supper offers through oral reception. In addition the Lutherans showed that the logical conclusion of denial of oral reception was a denial of the personal union in Christ.⁵⁴

The Reformed responded by stating that the differing view on the oral eating was of minor significance. They were pressing their agenda of unionism with full-force toward syncretism. At this point they added to the agenda of the conference discussions of the doctrine of the person of Christ, Baptism, and the other doctrines that distinguished the Reformed from the Lutherans. They overloaded the agenda, causing true doctrinal discussions to become impossible.

Statements were made by Gerhardt and the other Lutherans that implied that Calvinists and Papists were not saved. These

statements meant that the Calvinistic system and the Romanist system logically and consistently are faith-destroying. They did not mean that everyone within these denominations was damned. For example it was stated:

A Christian is either one who is baptized into Jesus and confesses Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah and Savior of the world. Thus it is perhaps possible that not only Calvinists but also Papists be called Christians. Or a Christian is one who has a true saving faith, pure and unadulterated, and also allows fruits of the same to be seen in his life and behavior. Thus as such, I cannot hold the Calvinists to be Christians.⁵⁵

After the 17 sessions of the meeting neither party was convinced of the validity of the other's arguments. The Lutherans were certainly not convinced that the doctrinal differences between the Reformed and themselves were merely a matter of indifference. Their patience had run out and the colloquy ended in failure.

On September 16, 1664, the Elector issued a new edict,⁵⁶ written by Stosch, which again demanded that the Lutherans not preach publicly against the doctrines of the Reformed. The Elector demanded that all the pastors sign the edict or be dismissed from their office.

During doctrinal discussions with the Reformed, Gerhardt staunchly maintained the Lutheran position. He refused to sign the edict promising not to bring polemics against the Reformed into the pulpit. Even from his sickbed, he encouraged the other pastors not to consent to the Elector's demands.⁵⁷ The Elector considered Gerhardt to be the chief instigator of the Lutheran opposition to his plans. As a result the Great Elector deposed him from office on February 13, 1666. Public support for this Lutheran martyr is evident in the edition of his hymns by Ebeling that was begun shortly following his dismissal. Although he was restored to office the following year (1667) because of a general outcry among the people, his conscience would not allow him to remain in his office. As long as he remained a pastor in Brandenburg he was compelled to remain silent concerning the false teachings of the Reformed. Also, remaining in the office implied that he was tacitly agreeing with the Elector's edict.

This was indeed his "Berlin Passion." He was dismissed

from the pastoral ministry because of his confession of faith along with other valiant Lutheran confessors. However still another cross was added to his burden. After 13 years of wedded bliss Gerhardt's wife, Anna Maria, died on March 5, 1668. Early in the morning on this date Gerhardt called his wife's confessor, Samuel Lorenz. It was Thursday, the day the church commemorates the institution of the Holy Supper. In the meantime she asked her husband to read the sermon on the Lord's Supper from Luther's *Hauspostille*. When Lorenz, her brother-in-law and confessor, arrived he offered her absolution and the Holy Supper. Later she asked that Gerhardt sing for her some of his hymns, among them "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded." With this she died in the Lord.⁵⁸ She was only 46 years old. She was buried beside a number of her children behind the altar of the Nikolaikirche. Samuel Lorentz preached her funeral sermon on the basis of Hebrews 10:36. He reminded Gerhardt that God desired to comfort him in his bitter grief and misery, and that He wanted Gerhardt to continue to comfort devout hearts in the future.⁵⁹ It is said that even the Great Elector was represented at the funeral by several of his officials.

G. The Lübben Pastorate

After being without call for over a year, in November 1668 Gerhardt accepted the call to be archdeacon of Lübben an der Spree in Saxony, where the edict of the Elector was not enforced and the teaching of the Lutheran Confessions was upheld.⁶⁰ His relocation there, however, was delayed by prolonged sickness and the death of his wife.⁶¹ It was not until June 1669 that he began his new duties in Lübben. Here he spent the last seven years of his life as pastor of the town. These were peaceful, quiet years, but they were also years of sadness since his wife was gone, his only remaining child had more than one dangerous illness, and he was separated from his dear friends and family in Berlin. Lübben was a small town which did not offer the cultural advantages of Berlin. His refuge and refreshment were in his devotional hymns. Here he found comfort and strength as he sang and meditated upon the content of these hymns.

The death of Gerhardt occurred on May 27, 1676, in his

seventieth year. His last words which he was to have prayed were lines from one of his own hymns, “Warum sollt ich mich denn grämen” (“Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me,” ELH 377). The hymn speaks about death as that which cannot kill. It reminds us that death cannot destroy forever. Death for the believer is like a door that closes to a world of suffering and opens the way to eternal joy in heaven.⁶² He was buried at what is now the Paul-Gerhardt-Kirche, Lübben an der Spree, Spreewald, Germany. Ironically this church is a union church today. His remains are in a crypt below the altar. The Lübben congregation commissioned a life-sized painting of him for the church where it still hangs. Beneath it is the inscription, “A theologian sifted in Satan’s sieve” (*Theologus in cribro Satanae versatus*). His life was indeed tested and refined as pure gold through cross and trial.

Paul Gerhardt left behind a testament for his 13 year-old son, Paul Friedrich, which is one of the most personal documents written by him.⁶³ He encouraged his son to become a Lutheran pastor and to study at confessional schools that were not controlled by syncretists. As to his Christian life Gerhardt encouraged his son not to follow an evil way of life, but instead the commands of the Lord. He was not to do anything evil in the hope that it would remain undiscovered. In his daily life, he was not to be filled with anger. He was to be ashamed of the lusts of the flesh. He was to do good to people whether or not they could do the same to him. He was to flee avarice as he would flee hell. In conclusion, Gerhardt urged him to pray diligently, study what was true, live peacefully, minister earnestly, and remain steadfast in his faith and beliefs. Then when his last hour would come he would part this world willfully, joyfully, and blessed.⁶⁴

After Gerhardt’s death, his son remained in Lübben for a time. Following the advice of his father to study theology, he enrolled in Wittenberg University in 1680. Later he became a pastor in the small town of Bauske, near Riga, Latvia.

II. The Theology and Pastoral Care of Paul Gerhardt

A. The Doctrinal Emphases of Gerhardt

Gerhardt was certainly a child of the age of Lutheran orthodoxy.⁶⁵ He was born and raised in this period and it influenced every fiber of his body and every facet of his mind. His forefathers participated in the controversy concerning baptismal exorcism. His basic doctrine text in gymnasium was Hutter's *Compendium* and at the university he was educated by some of the leading theologians of Lutheran orthodoxy. In Berlin he fought against the movement toward the Second Reformation and the syncretistic tendencies of the Great Elector Frederick William. Theologically he was one with the seventeenth-century dogmaticians.

Lutheran orthodoxy did not intend to add anything to the doctrine of Luther and the Confessions. Its purpose was to put the teachings of the Reformation into a logical, concise form. In this systematization of doctrine it was indebted to the *Loci Communes* of Melancthon and the *Loci Theologici* of Martin Chemnitz. The format and organization of these documents became the model of the massive dogmatics of the seventeenth-century dogmaticians. In their work they used Aristotelian philosophy, as did the scholastics of the Middle Ages, to bring order to their great doctrinal system. For example, there is a connection between the structure and form of Thomas Aquinas' *Summa* and Johann Gerhard's *Loci Theologici*.⁶⁶

Gerhardt, as all of Lutheran orthodoxy, maintained the preeminence of the formal and material principles of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Our **formal principle** is the inspired, inerrant Holy Scriptures, the only source of faith, doctrine, and life. In his sermons Gerhardt makes copious use of Scripture references and proof passages indicating that the source of all his teaching is the Bible, the Word of God.

Interestingly enough, Gerhardt often uses the Apocrypha in his writings. For example, in the funeral sermon for Joachim Schröder in 1655 he quotes from the Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach and Tobit.⁶⁷ This shouldn't surprise us that much. Luther states concerning the Apocrypha, "These books are not held equal to the Scriptures but are

useful and good to read.”⁶⁸ One certainly has the right to quote from the apocryphal books just as one would quote from the Catechism or other Christian literature. Even Walther based one of his wedding sermons on a text from the book of Tobit.⁶⁹

The **material principle** of the Evangelical Lutheran Church is justification by faith alone without the deeds of the law. A person is justified or declared righteous not by anything he does or accomplishes but alone through the imputed righteousness of Christ that is ours by faith. On the basis of Christ’s sacrifice and His perfect keeping of the law in our place (Galatians 3:13; Romans 5:18–19), God does not impute (count or reckon) sin but declares the whole world righteous or innocent. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them” (2 Corinthians 5:19; Romans 4:5; Romans 5:18; Romans 3:23–24). This verdict of “not guilty” the Holy Ghost brings to the individual through the means of grace and is obtained by faith (Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 12:3). This, the central article of the faith, is the main source of comfort in Gerhardt’s funeral sermons.

In the second part our dear Lord and Savior wants us to be aware that such a faithful and steadfast Christian heart is not a work of men. It does not come out of our own flesh and blood that a Christian clings secure and unmoved to his Redeemer and Savior. Rather it occurs only and alone through His divine power and strength that He Himself inculcates a lion’s heart and a hero’s courage to a Christian, particularly that He set before his eyes the beautiful crown of life and honor which hereafter will be put on those who fought valiantly through life and death to reach their Lord Christ.⁷⁰

The doctrine of the **Trinity** is maintained in Gerhardt’s writings. He does not necessarily present an in-depth study of the Trinitarian doctrine, but his hymns and sermons are saturated with a Trinitarian emphasis. He speaks mainly of the economic Trinity referring to God as “God-is-towards-and-for-us” (*opera divina ad extra*). He points to the Father as creator and preserver, the Son as the redeemer and the Holy Spirit as the sanctifier. For example, he ends one of his sermons with this benediction: “Help and bring us all together there (heaven), O God the Father, God the Son and God

the Holy Spirit, the one undivided Trinity, highly praised now and in all eternity.”⁷¹ In his hymn “O Enter Lord Thy Temple” (ELH 400), he prays that just as the Holy Spirit gave us a “second birth more blest” in Baptism, that He would continue to strengthen our faith-life in the “darkest hours” through the means of grace. At the same time, he does not neglect the ontological Trinity, referring to God as “God-is-unto-Himself” (*opera divina ad intra*). Here we are referring to the terms unbegotten, begotten, and proceeding. The Father is unbegotten, the fountain source of the Trinity (John 1:1); the Son is begotten of the Father before all worlds (Psalm 2:7; John 1:1); and the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son (John 15:26; Galatians 4:6; Romans 8:9). These are the terms that distinguish the persons of the Trinity and their internal working. In the sermon mentioned above, Gerhardt explains that the second person of the Trinity is the only begotten of the Father from all eternity as confessed in the Nicene Creed.⁷²

The **personal union** in Christ, together with the Lord’s Supper, was at the center of the controversy with the Reformed in Berlin in Gerhardt’s time as noted above. The Lutherans maintained that the Reformed did not teach a true communication of attributes, specifically the *genus maiestaticum*: that the divine attributes were communicated to the human nature in Christ.⁷³ The Reformed rejected the communication of attributes and the *genus maiestaticum* because they could not accept that the finite human nature of Christ is capable of receiving infinite divine attributes (*Finitum non est capax infiniti*). In his sermons Gerhardt explains the personal union in Christ in a simple biblical way for his parishioners:

Therefore also the “he” in our text must refer to another David than the earthly and bodily one, namely, the heavenly and spiritual one, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For He is the proper true firstborn; partly according to His eternal and godly birth for He is true God from eternity of the essence of His Father begotten in an inexpressible manner. Partly He is also the firstborn according to His human and bodily birth for He in the fullness of time both as God and man was born of the Virgin Mary. “For Mary gave birth to her firstborn Son” as Luke states in chapter 2. Thus His kingdom is an eternal imperishable kingdom for it is a spiritual kingdom, a heavenly kingdom, a

kingdom that is not of this world. Therefore it cannot fall with the kingdoms of this world.⁷⁴

The basis for the central article of justification is the **redemptive work** of the God-Man Jesus Christ. This redemptive work is portrayed in the hymn “A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth” (ELH 331), which is in many ways Gerhardt’s *Agnus Dei*. In verses 1–4, Gerhardt points to the Savior as the Old Testament lamb led to the slaughter for our salvation. He is wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquity. On the altar of the cross, the true Lamb of God poured out His blood, that crimson flood, covering the mercy seat of God, atoning for the sins of all men. Then in verses 5–10, he goes on to picture how the redemptive sacrifice is brought to us. That rose-colored treasure flows to us from the wounded side of the Savior (verse 7). Here Gerhardt is alluding to the Lord’s Supper, and one is reminded of the altar paintings with blood flowing from the Savior’s side into the communion cup. Gerhardt assures us that we eat of the heavenly manna and we drink from the fountain of waters and are satisfied (*Soll mich dies Manna speisen, Im Durst solls sein mein Wasserquell*; verse 8). Finally he sees us at the wedding feast, dressed in the purple blood of Christ, prepared for the bridegroom. In the Supper we have the wedding feast of heaven in foretaste (verse 10).

Sanctification is by no means ignored in Gerhardt’s writing. Out of thanks for Christ’s redemptive work, the Christian will strive to walk in Christ’s loving footsteps. For example, he states in one of his hymns:

Use all this well, and because you have become
 Now clean in Christ
 So live and do also as a Christian
 And hold Christ’s order (for life).
 Until there in eternal joy
 He lays the garment of honor and joy
 Around your soul.⁷⁵

The **means of grace** are a predominant theme in Gerhardt’s writings as in the writing of all Lutheran theologians. The way the treasures of the cross are brought to the Christian is through the

means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments. Here forgiveness of sins, life and salvation are brought to the individual and faith in Jesus as the Savior is worked to receive those benefits.

Baptism played an integral role in the life of Gerhardt. Before he was born, his great grandfather faced the controversy concerning baptismal exorcism. On the day after he was born, he probably was born again in the baptismal water of the Marienkirche. Throughout his life he defended the important biblical doctrine of regenerative Baptism. His hymns and sermons often allude to Baptism. In addition to this, he has one hymn totally dedicated to the sacrament, “You People, Who Have Been Baptized” (*Du Volck, das du getauffet bist*).⁷⁶ This hymn begins by teaching the doctrine of original sin. Before we were born and first sucked milk, we had turned from the highest good, the eternal God (verse 2). We were slaves of Satan and imprisoned in his kingdom (verse 4). Yet the water-bath of holy Baptism changed all that. It replaced what Satan corrupted and what we added thereto by our evil nature (verse 5). Baptism frees us from sin and we inherit everything that Christ inherited as the Son of God (verse 6). Alluding to a *Christus victor* theme, Gerhardt tells us that in Baptism death dies and can strangle no more. Here hell is broken and all its hosts must lay under our feet (verse 7). In Baptism we put on Christ and cover our shame (verse 8) and thus we are prepared to face death (verse 11) and to live properly as Christians in our earthly vocation (verse 12). Baptism was Gerhardt’s comfort and stay throughout his life, and he was still defending the biblical doctrine as he faced the baptismal exorcism question at the end of his career.

Surrounded by the influence of Reformed theology, Gerhardt fought to maintain the biblical doctrine of the **Lord’s Supper** in his surroundings. As noted above, in the second part of his hymn, “A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth,” he views the believer receiving the purple blood of Christ from His wounded side in the Lord’s Supper and refers to the Supper as the manna for the way. Only one of Gerhardt’s hymns is classified as a Lord’s Supper hymn: “Lord Jesus, My Love” (*Herr Jesu, meine Liebe*).⁷⁷ This hymn he wrote to his beloved congregation in Berlin while he was pastor at Lübben. He was strengthening them in the biblical doctrine of the

Supper now that he was no longer with them. In this hymn he gives a detailed explanation of the Lord's Supper, defiantly teaching the oral reception of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament (*manducatio oralis*) in opposition to the Reformed. He begins the hymn by recounting the Christian's continual struggle in life. His daily sin and failure causes him to feel separated from God. Satan with his devices strives to gnaw at his spirit. He has a thousand ways to draw us from the Lord (verses 1–2). However such harm is repelled at the table instituted by Christ where He distributes His precious flesh and blood. He bids the Christian come to Him and find comfort (verse 3). In verse 4, he leaves no question concerning what is received with the mouth in the Supper:

Here is present in the bread
 My body, which was given
 Into the bands of death and the cross
 For you, who have strayed from me.
 In the wine is what flowed
 To blot out your offense,
 My blood, that I shed
 In meekness and patience.
 Take them both with the mouth
 And consider also with this
 How good from the foundation of my heart
 I, your Redeemer, am.

His body and blood received with the mouth forgive the sins of all, strengthen and nourish our faith life, comfort when one is about to be lowered into the grave, and make us princes in the golden heavenly banquet hall (verses 5–8). In verse 8, we hear the echo of the eschatological “already and not yet.” In the Supper, we already participate as princes in the heavenly banquet which we will receive in all its fullness in the feast of heaven. We have the feast already in foretaste but not yet in its fullness.

B. The Sermons of Gerhardt

Beside Gerhardt's hymns and his testament to his son, very little remains of Gerhardt's written works. Four sermons of Gerhardt

have been preserved. These four sermons are funeral sermons. The first sermon was written for the funeral of Nikolaus Wernicke (April 24, 1659) at the Nikolaikirche. It is based on Micah 7:7–9. The second sermon was preached at the funeral of Joachim Schröder (May 17, 1655) in Zossen, a small town outside of Berlin. The text for this sermon is Psalm 71:9. The third sermon is a funeral sermon for a small child conducted at the Nikolaikirche (August 19, 1660). Friedrich Ludwig Zarlang was the son of dear friends of Gerhardt and members of the Nikolaikirche. The sermon is based on Psalm 89:26. The fourth sermon was written for the funeral of Anna Weber (February 10, 1661) at the Nikolaikirche. The sermon is based on Psalm 86:11.

C. Gerhardt and Lutheran Spirituality

There is no doubt that Paul Gerhardt stood firmly in the fold of Lutheran orthodoxy and the seventeenth-century dogmatians. At the same time, he was a part of the devotional movement that swept the Lutheran lands in the seventeenth century. This movement promoted a practice of piety which focused on an intimate union between the heart of Christ and the heart of each faithful Christian. Thus Gerhardt often uses the personal pronoun *ich* (I) in his writings, rather than *wir* (we). Unlike the later Pietists who overemphasized sanctification and devalued the means of grace, the devotional writers held that the means of grace, the liturgy, personal devotions, and piety went hand-in-hand. Gerhardt was no more a Pietist than the other great devotional writers of the time. Gerhardt's hymns were used in the practice of Lutheran spirituality and spiritual formation.⁷⁸ While terms like this were not used, the devotional writers made considerable use of piety (*pietas*, *Frömmigkeit*) and godliness (*Gottseligkeit*). This devotional literature (*Erbauungsliteratur*) was to encourage proper meditation on the Word and contemplation of the loving Savior through reading, marking, learning and inwardly digesting the Word, as the ancient collect states. Through this process the Word said or sung was to be brought from the mind to the heart, touching one's whole being with the comforting love of Christ. While there were others before him such as Philipp Nicolai

(1556–1608) and Martin Moller (1547–1606), the main founder of this movement was Johann Arndt.

To his orthodox biblical Lutheran doctrine Gerhard fused the devotional emphasis of Johann Arndt, Johann Gerhard, and the other devotional writers. Seeing his parishioners suffering great losses through terror, disease and hunger in the wake of the Thirty Years' War, Gerhard, as Arndt before him, saw his decisive task to bring spiritual renewal. This he did through his hymns. When one reads the devotional writings of Gerhard and Arndt and the hymns and sermons of Paul Gerhard, one finds a warm piety and the power of God unto salvation which touches the heart. The Christian needs a personal relationship with the Savior through the means of grace. This literature was intended to nourish and strengthen believers through the Gospel, encouraging repentance and spiritual renewal and formation. One of the predominant themes of Lutheran Spirituality is **Union and Communion with God through the life-giving Word and the blessed Sacraments.**

The Arndt and Gerhard Connection

In many ways Gerhard follows in the footsteps of Johann Arndt (1555–1621). Arndt was the most influential devotional author that Lutheranism produced. He was called as pastor in Badeborn, Anhalt in 1583. In 1590, when Anhalt faced the Second Reformation, he was deposed for insisting on the unaltered Augsburg Confession and the right to use the baptismal exorcism. After this he served as pastor in Quedlinburg, where he influenced Johann Gerhard; in Braunschweig, the city of Chemnitz; and in Eisleben. His final position was superintendent in Celle. His most important work was *True Christianity* (*Sechs Bücher vom wahren Christentum*). It was one of the first German Lutheran devotional book for the common people. Next to the *Imitation of Christ* it is the most widely circulated devotional book in Christendom. When our forefathers came to this country they brought the Bible, the catechism, the hymnbook, and *True Christianity*.

The connection between Arndt and Gerhard is evident in Gerhard's use of the prayers in Arndt's *Paradiesgärtlein* as the basis for a number of his hymns.⁷⁹ He used devotional motifs common to

Arndt and the other devotional writers such as the creation, nuptial, and wounded side motifs. The relationship between the two is especially seen in his use of Bernardian mysticism and the mystical union. Gerhardt's contemplation of the cross in Bernardian mystical form is seen in the hymn "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded" (ELH 334).

Mysticism and Mystical Union

When faith in the Savior is worked in the heart by the Spirit, an individual is totally forgiven on the basis of Christ's atoning sacrifice and he stands justified before God. At the same time new spiritual life is worked, our new man and the entire Trinity makes its dwelling in us (John 14:22–24). This indwelling of the Holy Trinity is referred to as the mystical union (*unio mystica*). The mystical union is the union between God and justified man wherein the Holy Trinity dwells in the believer substantially and operates in the same by His gracious presence. Thus the believer has union and communion with God, partaking in the divine (2 Peter 1:4). This union is effected by God Himself through the means of grace, Word and Sacrament.

The doctrine of the mystical union as employed by Paul Gerhardt, the devotional writers, and the dogmaticans is seen by some as a perversion of Lutheran doctrine and the advent of Pietism. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our Lutheran Confessions speak of the gracious indwelling of the Trinity by faith in the elect who have been justified through the imputation of Christ's righteousness.⁸⁰ Philipp Nicolai, the great Lutheran hymn writer and preacher, made considerable use of this doctrine in providing comfort for Christians:

Above all this, the fact that God out of great love dwells and rests in His elect and again that they rest tenderly and sweetly in Him and eternally rejoice, this indwelling of God in His elect produces great benefits and much heavenly fruit as Christ says: He who remains in me and I in him the same brings forth much fruit. [*Ueber dies alles, dass Gott aus grosser Liebe in seinen Auserwählten wohnt und ruht, und sie hinwiederum sanft und lieblich in ihm ruhen und sich ewiglich erfreuen, schafft diese Einwohnung Gottes in seinen Heiligen auch grossen Nutzen*

*and viel himmlische Früchte, wie Christus sagt: Wer in mir bleibt, und ich in ihm, der bringt viel Früchte.*⁸¹

Therefore we see that the mystical union was not an innovation of Arndt though definitely taught by him,⁸² but rather it is a scriptural doctrine embraced by all the Lutheran fathers. One of the places that Gerhardt uses the comforting doctrine of the mystical union is in his Christmas hymn, “I Stand Beside Thy Manger Here”:

This only, Lord, I humbly pray,
 O grant it, dearest Savior,
 That Thou wouldst dwell in me this day
 And here abide forever.
 So let me be Thy cradle blest.
 Come! Come, within my heart to rest,
 My precious Joy and Treasure!
 (ELH 129:5)⁸³

The biblical doctrine of the mystical union as taught by Gerhardt is not to be confused with the false mysticism of the enthusiasts and the pagan world. In the mystical union the distinction between the divine and human is not confused. The soul of man is not absorbed into the divine. Rather the Lutheran theologians explicate the mystical union using the analogy of the personal union in Christ. As the human and the divine in Christ are united into one person and yet the natures remain distinct, so in the mystical union the Trinity makes its dwelling in man but God and man remain distinct. There is no essential or substantial union, but there is a union of substances.⁸⁴

This gracious union with God is conveyed and preserved through the means of grace. Many of the medieval mystics and Reformed enthusiasts believed that outward means were unimportant in the union with the divine. In other words the Spirit conveys and maintains this union without external means. Contrary to this, Gerhardt continually preserves the connection between the mystical union and the means of grace. Finally in the mysticism of Gerhardt man does not climb to God through contemplation, but God Himself descends to us in the manger and the cross. Christ unites us with Himself in the Word, He clothes us with Himself in Baptism, and He

feeds us with Himself in the Holy Supper so that we have union and communion with the divine.

Devotional Themes

The mystical union is often expressed by the devotional writers with the **nuptial motif**, which has its roots in Scripture (Song of Solomon; Hosea 2:21–22; Revelation 21:2). As husband and wife become one flesh, so Christ unites Himself to His bride the church and to each believing soul, giving her all His divine gifts and taking upon Himself her burden of sin. The bride by nature was naked but He clothed her with the garments of salvation and covered her with a robe of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10). With these thoughts in mind, Gerhardt ends his hymn, “The Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth,” “And there, in garments richly wrought as Thine own bride, I shall be brought to stand in joy beside Thee” (ELH 331:10). This motif often includes Luther’s joyful exchange (*der fröhliche Wechsel*).⁸⁵ Christ, my husband, takes upon Himself my sin, death and hell and gives me, His bride, in exchange His forgiveness, life and salvation. Gerhardt makes this same connection: “Lord, my Shepherd, take me to Thee. Thou art mine; I was Thine” (ELH 377:7). Christ, my husband, who gave His life for me will never abandon me. What comfort this is!

In his pastoral care Gerhardt makes considerable use of the picture of the **wounded side of the Lord**. This image is based on John 19:34.⁸⁶ This picture was used already by Augustine and it was used throughout church history.⁸⁷ On that first Good Friday after Jesus completed salvation for all men, His side was opened showing how the treasure of salvation is distributed to all people. It flows to us in the water and blood: the water of Baptism, the blood of the Lord’s Supper, and in His Word which is spirit and life. Gerhardt uses this picture when he writes, “My greater treasure, Jesus Christ, is this which from Thy wounds most blest flowed forth for my salvation” ([*Mein großer Schatz Herr Jesu Christ, ist dieses, was geflossen ist aus deiner Leibes Wunden*], ELH 331:7). In another hymn he speaks in Bernardian mystical style of kissing the wounds of the Savior,⁸⁸ showing how greatly he prizes the treasure flowing from

the wounded side of Christ. At other times, the devotional writers speak of hiding themselves in the wounded side of the Savior until all the stormy blasts of life are over. Here there is rest and peace in the outrageous fortune of life.

Following the lead of Johann Arndt, Gerhardt makes a considerable use of the **pictures from nature and creation** in his works. He points to the wonderful blessings of the creation. He directs his readers to the beauty of the seasons, the magnificent splendor of God's creation (*Die güldne Sonne*, ELH 57). At the same time he uses these pictures from nature to point to our spiritual life. As the sun descends and seems to be defeated, Gerhardt tells us we have another sun, Christ the Sun of gladness, dispelling all our sadness ("Now Rest Beneath Night's Shadow," ELH 569:2). The beauties of the summer should remind each Christian of the wonderful splendor of the summer of heaven. The fall points to the end of the world and to the fall of our life. Every evening as we remove our clothes and go to sleep, we are to think of our mortality. When we arise and dress, we are directed to the glorious garment in which we will be dressed in heaven's morning. At the same time the rhythm of the day reminds us of our dying and rising in Baptism (ELH 569:4). Everything in mundane life should point us to the spiritual.

The **wanderer or traveler motif** was common among the devotional writers. The great Lutheran dogmatician from Strassburg, Johann Conrad Dannhauer (1603–1666), even entitled his main theological work *Hodosophia christiana (The Christian Way of Wisdom)*. The theme of Gerhardt's sister's funeral sermon was, "The Last Battle of Spiritual Pilgrims and Wanderers."⁸⁹ This motif is based on the Old Testament Exodus. As Israel of old we were all liberated from the great satanic pharaoh. We passed through the Red Sea of Baptism and now we are traveling through this present wilderness, nourished by the heavenly manna until we cross the Jordan of death, reaching the heavenly Canaan above. Gerhardt's hymn, "I Am a Guest on Earth,"⁹⁰ employs this imagery. He speaks of himself wandering here on earth striving to reach the heavenly *Vaterland*.

The wanderer motif is also found in Gerhardt's hymn "Commit Whatever Grieve Thee" (TLH 520; ELH 208). This hymn

is based on Psalm 37:5: “Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass” (*Befiehl dem Herren deine Wege und hoffe auf ihn; er wirds wohl machen*). In its German form the hymn is an acrostic on Psalm 37:5, formed by the initial words of the stanzas.

1. **Befiehl** du deine Wege
2. **Dem Herren** mußt du trauen
3. **Dein'** ewge Treu und Gnade
4. **Weg'** hast du allerwegen
5. **Und** ob gleich alle Teufel
6. **Hoff'**, O du arme Steele
7. **Auf**, auf, gib deinem Schmerze
8. **Ihn**, ihn laß tun und walten
9. **Er** wird zwar eine Weile
10. **Wirds** aber sich befinden
11. **Wohl** dir, du Kind der Treue
12. **Mach'** End, o Herr, mach' Ende⁹¹

An interesting aspect of Gerhardt's sermons and devotional literature is his **gathering of Scripture passages**. At times he collects many sections of Scripture into a compact form as a special comfort to the Christian.

But in death, we should observe that we should not fear so greatly before death. We should not be dismayed so greatly before the grave. We should not be disheartened in the pains of our life and the loss of all our body's strength. Rather then, we should turn with Christ to God in heaven and say, You are my Father, You are my God, You are my refuge who helps me [Psalm 89:26]. Because You are my God and my Father You will not forsake Your child, You fatherly heart. You are my light and my salvation, before whom should I fear? You are the strength of my life, before whom should I be afraid [Psalm 27:1]? So I am also certain that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature may separate me from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord [Romans 8:38–39].⁹²

Theology of the Cross

Every aspect of Gerhard's theology is influenced by the cross. Here he is following in the footsteps of Luther who reminds us, "He who does not know Christ does not know God hidden in suffering.... God can be found only in suffering and the cross."⁹³ Gerhard does not look for God in the great and spectacular things of this world but in the humble child in the manger and the crucified one. This is seen in his hymn, "O Jesus Christ, Thy Manger Is" (ELH 161), where he beholds his God as the humble child in the manger.

Salvation is not accomplished through great and powerful signs in the eyes of the world. God chose not to accomplish redemption through His bare majesty and power. Rather Gerhard shows us that salvation was accomplished in the death of God and His seeming defeat as he points out in his hymn, "O Sacred Head Now Wounded" (ELH 334). The channels of God's salvation are not to be found in magnificent signs or in things that the human mind could understand. Rather the means of grace are a seemingly insignificant book, a palm-full of water, and some bread and wine. Gerhard's battle in Berlin centered in this very point. The Reformed could not accept the fact that the baptismal water could be regenerative and that the host and chalice were Christ's body and blood. God chose to hide His power in these insignificant things. Gerhard realized that the church was not a great and powerful outward organization such as the Elector hoped to accomplish through uniting the Lutheran and Reformed churches in Brandenburg-Prussia. Rather the church is found in the insignificant gathering around the means of grace.

The theology of the cross also affects the life of the Christian. The Christian should not expect that his life will always be outwardly easy. But his life is always at its best under the cross because his gracious Father is guiding his life. This we see in Gerhard's life. His life did not appear to be outwardly successful. But in the conflicts and struggles (*Anfechtung*), God was at his side. God is not closest to us in peace and leisure but in the suffering of the cross. This is Gerhard's attitude toward the cross.

Though a heavy cross I'm bearing
 And my heart Feels the smart,
 Shall I be despairing?
 God, my Helper, who doth send it,
 Well doth know All my woe
 And how best to end it.
 (ELH 377:2)

Comfort (Troost) of the Lord

The main purpose of the devotional literature of the time was doctrine (*Lehre*) and comfort (*Troost*). The people of Gerhardt's time were in need of comfort as a result of the Thirty Years' War, and they needed to be instructed continually in the doctrine on which that comfort was based. Their land lay in ruin. Education and business had nearly ceased. More importantly, the church had suffered great loss in its outward organization. Churches were burned, pastors driven out of their congregations, and the normal rhythm of parish life disrupted.

Our times appear outwardly quite different. We are rather well-to-do: we have one of the highest standards of living that there has ever been, and one would assume that all should be right with the world. Yet all around us there are people who are on the verge of despair. They can find no meaning or purpose in life. For them, life is "an aimless mote, a downward drift from futile birth," as another hymn writer explains.⁹⁴ Rick Warren and Joel Osteen are looked to for comfort, yet what they offer will not help us make it through the day. We often feel burdened with our sins, forsaken and alone. Even in the best of times our fast-paced lives leave us trying to catch our breath, never quite at peace within ourselves. Our world is definitely in need of the comfort.

The comfort that Gerhardt has to offer is not sunshine and lollipops. Gerhardt does not promise us paradise in the here and now. He does not promise us a rose garden. But in the midst of trial and tribulation, he offers confident hope. Gerhardt fills his literature with words of comfort such as *Schirm und Schild, Hilf und Heil*. He emphasizes *Troost* in all he writes. We are not left alone and hopeless in the ravages and misfortune of life. We have the greatest

helper there is: God the Father in heaven. Therefore Gerhardt can confidently sing,

Commit whatever grieves thee, Into the gracious hands
Of Him who never leaves Thee, Who heav'n and earth commands.
Who points the clouds their courses, Whom winds and waves obey,
He will direct thy footsteps And find for thee a way.
(TLH 520:1; ELH 208)

Not only can our great Helper help in every need, we have the certainty that He will help. He already did the greatest thing for us. He sent His Son to lay down His life on the altar of the cross to pay for our sins and chose us as His own in Baptism where faith was worked in our hearts. If He already did this, the greatest thing, then He will be with us in all the other needs and struggles of our lives, working all for good (Romans 8:28), even turning evil into good in our lives (Genesis 50:20). This is Gerhardt's point when he writes:

I build on this foundation: That Jesus and His blood
Alone are my salvation, The true eternal good.
Without Him all that pleases Is valueless on earth;
The gifts bestowed by Jesus Alone my love are worth.
(ELH 517:3)

Through the doctrine of the mystical union, Gerhardt adds to the assurance that our Savior God will be with us in our needs. The Christian faces many burdens, but because Christ dwells within him, he knows that God is for him; therefore nothing can be against him. "If God Himself be for me, I may a host defy" (ELH 517:1).

Finally in Gerhardt's hymns we are taught the holy art of dying (*ars moriendi*). United with His cross by faith in the Savior, we can be unafraid of living and unafraid of dying as he so beautifully points out in the hymn:

Be Thou my consolation, My Shield when I must die;
Remind me of Thy passion When my last hour draws nigh.
Mine eyes shall then behold Thee, Upon Thy cross shall dwell,
My heart by faith enfold Thee, Who dieth thus dies well!
(ELH 335:8)⁹⁵

Our Helper is the one who can do all for He is almighty. He will take care of us for He already gave His life for us on the cross and made His dwelling within us. This one strengthens us in all the difficulties of life through His means of grace, Word and sacrament. The means of grace are our nourishment for the way, the fortress in battles and the rock of help. Here we receive the strength to do all things through Him (Philippians 4:13), the power to overcome and obtain the victory (1 Corinthians 5:57).

III. Conclusion

Before Gerhardt's death, his hymns were sung throughout the German Lutheran world. He was influenced by Lutheran orthodoxy, and he in turn influenced it. His impact did not stop there. His hymns were well loved by the German Reformed, and his hymn, "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded," was soon found in the hymnbook of the Roman Catholics. The impact of his work continued in the age of Lutheran Pietism. Philipp Jakob Spener (1535–1705), one of his successors at the Nikolaikirche and the father of Pietism, had a high regard for his hymns.⁹⁶

At the time of the confessional Lutheran renewal (*Erweckungsbewegung*) in the nineteenth century, Gerhardt was a hero of those who made their stand against the Prussian union. His stand in the time of the Great Elector was reminiscent of their situation. When they made their exodus to America, as he had done to Lübben, they brought his hymns with them, and they sang them as their comfort and strength. All the hymnals of confessional Lutheran synods contained his hymns. They were translated into English and are still a source of spiritual nourishment, comfort, and strength today.

Paul Gerhardt was the greatest German hymnist of the seventeenth century. Along with Luther he is regarded as one of the greatest hymn writers in all of Lutheranism. More of his lyrics have made their way into the English language than those of any other German writer and their popularity continues to increase. His 139 hymns and poems are an indispensable part of the Christian heritage. In his hymns and other writings, the Gospel always predominates

as he applies that Gospel truth to the burdens and struggles of the Christian's life. He faced the Christian cross, and his hymns offer comfort as we face the Christian cross. His enemies considered him to be as thickheaded as a mule and as stubborn as one, but his friends knew that his strong convictions were based on the salvific Word of the Lord. This divine, sifted in Satan's sieve, is indeed the sweet singer of Lutheranism.

Addendum I

The So-Called “Testament” of Paul Gerhardt for His Son (Early 1676)

Now that I have reached the 70th year of my life and also have the joyful hope that my dear, holy God will soon rescue me out of this world and lead me into a better life than I have had until now on earth, I thank Him especially for all His kindness and faithfulness which, from my mother’s womb until the present hour, He has shown me in body and soul and in all that He has given me. Besides this, I ask Him from the bottom of my heart that when my hour comes He would grant me a happy departure, take my soul into His fatherly hands, and give my body a peaceful rest in the ground until the dear Last Day, when I, with all of my [family] who have been before me and also may remain after me, will reawake and behold my dear Lord Jesus Christ face to face, in whom I have believed but have not yet seen. To my only son whom I am leaving behind I leave few earthly goods, but with them I leave him an honorable name of which he will not have to be ashamed.

My son knows that from his tender childhood I have given him to the Lord my God as His possession, that he is to become a servant and preacher of His holy Word. He is to remain now in this and not turn away from it, even if he has only few good days in it. For the good Lord knows how to handle it and how sufficiently to replace external troubles with internal happiness of the heart and joy of the spirit.

Study holy *theologiam* [“theology”] in pure schools and at unfalsified universities and beware of the syncretists [those who mix religions or confessions], for they seek what is temporal and are faithful to neither God nor men. In your common life do not follow evil company but rather the will and command of your God. Especially: (1) Do nothing evil in the hope that it will remain secret, for nothing is spun so small that it is not seen in the light of day. (2) Outside of your office and vocation do not become angry. If you notice that anger has heated you up, remain still and speak not so much as a word until you have first prayed the Ten Commandments

and the Christian Creed silently. (3) Be ashamed of the lusts of the flesh, and when you one day come to the years in which you can marry, then marry with God and with the good advice of pious, faithful, and sensible people. (4) Do good to people even if they have nothing with which to repay you, for the Creator of heaven and earth has long since repaid what humans cannot repay: when He created you, when He gave you His beloved Son, and when He accepted you in Holy Baptism as His child and heir. (5) Flee from greed as from hell. Be satisfied with what you have earned with honor and a good conscience, even if it is not all too much. But if the good Lord gives you something more, ask Him to preserve you from the burdensome misuse of temporal goods.

In summary: Pray diligently, study something honorable, live peacefully, serve honestly, and remain unmoved in your faith and confessing. If you do this, you too will one day die and depart from this world willingly, joyfully, and blessedly. Amen.

(Translated by Benjamin T. G. Mayes, May 4, 2007)

Addendum II

Von der Heiligen Taufe

Paul Gerhardt

Melody: *ES IST DAS HEIL* (ELH: 227)

1. Du Volck, das du getauffet bist
Und deinen Gott erkennest,
Auch nach dem Namen Jesu Christ
Dich und die deinen nennest,
Nims wol in acht, und dencke dran,
Wie viel dir gutes sei gethan
Am Tage deiner Tauffe.

1. You people, who have been baptized
And know your God,
Also by (according to) the name of Jesus Christ
You name yourself and yours,
Consider and reflect thereon,
How much good happened to you
On your Baptism day.

2. Du wahrst, noch eh du wurdest gebohrn
Und eh du Milch gesogen,
Verdampt, verstossen und verlohrn,
Darumb das du gezogen
Aus deiner Eltern Fleisch und Blut
Ein Art die sich vom höchsten Gut
Dem ewgen Gott stets wendet.

2. You were still before you were born
And before you sucked milk,
Doomed, rejected and lost,
Thus you were drawn
Out of your parent's flesh and blood
A nature which continually turned
Itself from the highest good, the eternal God.

3. Dein Leib und Seel war mit der Sünd
Als einen Giffit durchkrochen,
Und du wahrst nicht mehr Gottes Kind,
Nach dem der Bund gebrochen
Den unser Schöpffer auffgericht
Da er uns seines Bildes Licht
Und herrlichs Kleid ertheilte.

3. Your body and your soul were with sin
Permeated as with poison
And you were no more a child of God,
According to the covenant that was broken
Which our Maker established
When He imparted to us the light of His image
And a glorious garment.

4. Der Zorn, der Fluch, der ewge Tod,
Und was in diesen allen
Enthalten ist vor Angst und Noth
Das war auff dich gefallen:
Du wahrst des Satans Schlav u. Knecht
Der hielt dich fest nach seinem Recht
In seinem Reich gefangen.

4. The anger, curse, and eternal death,
And what is in this all
Is the basis for the angst and need
That has fallen on you:
You were a slave and servant of Satan
Who held you fast according to his right
Imprisoned in his kingdom.

5. Das alles hebt auff einmal auff
Und schlägt und drückt es nieder
Das Wasser-Bad der heiligen Tauff,
Ersetzt dargegen wieder
Was Adam hat verderbt gemacht
Und was wir selbsten durch gebracht
Bei unserm bösen Wesen.

5. That all was canceled once for all
The water-bath of Holy Baptism
Struck and pressed it down,
It replaced again
What Adam had made corrupt
And what we ourselves accomplished
By our evil nature.

6. Es macht diß Bad von Sünden loß,
 Und gibt die rechte schöne.
 Die Satans Kercker vor beschloß,
 Die werden frei, und Söhne
 Deß, der da trägt die höchste Kron,
 Der läßt sie, was sein einger Sohn
 Ererbt, auch mit ihm erben.

6. This bath makes one free from sin,
 And gives the proper beauty.
 Before them (the baptized) Satan's prison is shut,
 They are free, and sons,
 Of whom He who bears the highest crown,
 Permits them what His only-begotten Son
 Inherited, also to inherit with Him.

7. Was von Natur vermaledeit
 Und mit dem Fluch umbfängen
 Das wird hier in der Tauff erneut
 Den Segen zu erlangen.
 Hier stirbt der Tod, und würgt nicht mehr
 Hier bricht die Höll, und all ihr Heer
 Muß uns zum Füßen ligen.

7. What was cursed from nature
 And with the curse surrounded
 That is here in Baptism renewed
 The blessings obtaining.
 Here death dies, and can strangle no more
 Here Hell is broken, and all its hosts
 Must lay under our feet.

8. Hier ziehn wir Jesum Christum an
 Und decken unsre Schanden,
 Mit dem, was er für uns gethan
 Und willig außgestanden.
 Hier wäscht uns sein hochtheures Blut
 Und macht uns heilig fromm und gut
 In seines Vaters Augen.

8. Here we put on Jesus Christ
 And cover our shame
 With that which He has done for us
 And willingly endured
 Here He washes us with His highly precious blood
 and makes us holy, pious and good
 In His Father's eyes.

9. O grosses Werck! O heiliges Bad,
 O Wasser dessen gleichen
 Man in der gantzen Welt nicht hat!
 Kein Sinn kan dich erreichen.
 Du hast recht eine Wunder-Krafft,
 Und die hat der, so alles schafft
 Dier durch sein Wort geschencket.

9. O great work! O holy bath,
 O water like which
 One in the entire world does not have!
 No intellect can reach (fathom) you.
 You truly have a wonder-power,
 And this is what He who created all things
 Has given you through His Word.

10. Du bist kein schlechtes Wasser nicht
 Wies unsre Brunnen geben.
 Was Gott mit seinem Munde spricht,
 Das hast du in dir leben.
 Du bist ein Wasser das den Geist
 Des Allerhöchsten in sich schleußt
 Und seinen grossen Namen.

10. You are not simple water
 Not a product our fountain gives.
 What God speaks with His mouth,
 That you have living in you.
 You are a water that encloses in itself
 The Spirit of the Most High
 And His great name.

11. Das halt O Mensch in allem Werth,
 Und dancke für die Gaben,
 Die dein Gott dir darin beschehrt,
 Und die uns alle laben
 Wenn nichts mehr sonst uns laben wil.
 Die laß, bis daß des Todes-Ziel
 Dich trifft, nicht ungepreiset.

11. This hold, O man, in greatest value,
 And give thanks for this gift,
 Which your God herein bestows to you,
 And which refreshes us all
 When nothing otherwise will refresh.
 This do not allow until the death-goal
 To meet you unextolled.

12. Brauch alles wol, und weil du bist
 Nun rein in Christo worden
 So leb und thu auch als ein Christ
 Und halte Christi Orden.
 Bis das dort in der ewgen Freud
 Er dir das Ehr- und Freuden-Kleid
 Umb deine Seel lege.

12. Use all this well, and because you have become
 Now clean in Christ
 So live and do also as a Christian
 And hold Christ's order (for life).
 Until there in eternal joy
 He lays the garment of honor and joy
 Around your soul.

From:

Otto Schulz, *Paul Gerhardts Geistliche Andachten in hundert und zwanzig Liedern* (Berlin: Nicolaischen Buchhandlung, 1842), 228–229.

An English translation of this hymn is found in the Lutheran Service Book, 596. It includes verses 1–2, 5, 8, 11–12.

Addendum III

Vom heiligen Abendmahl

Paul Gerhardt

Melody: *NUN LOB, MEIN SEEL* (ELH: 456)

1. Herr Jesu, meine Liebe,
 Ich hätte nimmer Ruh und Rast,
 Wo nicht fest in mir bliebe
 Was du für mir geleistet hast.
 Es müst in meinen Sünden
 Die sich sehr hoch erhöh'n,
 All meine Kraft verschwinden
 Und wie ein Rauch vergehn,
 Wen sich mein Hertz nicht hielte
 Zu dier und deinem Tod,
 Und ich nicht stets mich kühlte
 An deines Leidens – Noth.

2. Nun weist du meine Plagen
 Und Satans meines Feindes List,
 Wenn meinen Geist zu nagen
 Er embsig und bemühet ist,
 Da hat er tausent Künste,
 Von dier mich abzuziehn:
 Bald treibt er mir die Dünste
 Des Zweiffels in den Sinn,
 Bald nimmt er mir dein Meinen
 Und Wollen aus der Acht
 Und lehrt mich gantz verneinen,
 Was du doch fest gemacht.

3. Solch Unheil abzuweisen,
 Hast du, Herr, deinen Tisch gesetzt,
 Da lässest du mich speisen,
 So daß sich Marck und Bein ergötzt.
 Du reichst mir zu genießen
 Dein theures Fleisch und Blut
 Und lässest Worte fließen,
 Da all mein Hertz auf ruht.
 Komm, sprichst du, komm und nahe
 Dich ungescheut zu mir,
 Was ich dir geb, empfahe
 Und nims getrost zu dier.

1. Lord Jesus, my love,
 I would never have peace or rest,
 If it did not remain firmly in me
 What you have achieved for me.
 All my power would be bound
 To disappear in my sins
 Which are greatly increasing
 And would like smoke fade away,
 If my heart did not avail itself
 To You and Your death,
 And I did not continually refresh myself
 On the necessity of Your suffering.

2. Now You know my afflictions
 And my enemy Satan's devices.
 When he diligently strives
 To gnaw at my spirit,
 He has a thousand arts,
 To draw me from You:
 Shortly he drives the haze
 Of doubt into my mind,
 Shortly he takes from my attention
 Your will and view
 And teaches me to deny totally,
 What you have established.

3. Such harm to repel,
 You have, Lord, Your table instituted,
 There you let me be fed,
 So that my marrow and bone are delighted.
 You distribute to me to partake of
 Your precious flesh and blood
 And let the words flow,
 On which all my heart rests.
 Come, You speak, come and draw near
 You without dread to Me,
 What I have given you, receive
 And take it to comfort you.

4. Hier ist beim Brod vorhanden
 Mein Leib, der dar gegäben wird
 Zum Tod und Creuzes Banden
 Für dich, der sich von mir verirrt.
 Beim Wein ist, was geflossen
 Zu Tilgung deiner Schuld,
 Mein Blut, das ich vergossen
 In Sanftmut und Geduld.
 Nims beides mit dem Munde
 Und denck auch mit darbei
 Wie fromm im Hertzengrunde
 Ich, dein Erlöser, sei.

5. Herr ich wil dein gedenken
 So lang ich Luftt und Leben hab,
 Und bis man mich wird sencken,
 An meinem End ins finstre Grab.
 Ich sehe dein Verlangen
 Nach meinem ewgen Heil:
 Am Holtz bist du gegangen
 Und hast so manchen Pfeil
 Des Trübsals lassen dringen
 In dein Unschuldigs Hertz,
 Auf das ich möcht entspringen
 Des Todes Pein und Schmerz.

6. So hast du auch befohlen
 Das, was den Glauben stärken kan,
 Ich bei dir solle hohlen,
 Und soll doch ja nicht zweiffeln dran,
 Du habst für alle Sünden
 Die in der gantzen Welt
 Bei Menschen je zu finden
 Ein völligs Lösegeld
 Und Opffer das bestehet
 Vor dem der alles trägt,
 In dem auch alles gehet,
 Bezahlet und erlegt.

7. Und das ja mein Gedanke
 Der voller Falschheit und Betrug
 Nicht im geringsten wancke,
 Als wär es dir nicht Ernst genug,
 So neigst du dein Gemüthe
 Zusampt der rechten Hand.
 Und gibst mit grosser Gütte
 Mir das hochwehrte Pfand
 Zu Essen und zu Trincken.
 Ist das nicht Trost und Liecht
 Dem, der sich läst bedüncken
 Du wollest seiner nicht.

4. Here is present in the bread
 My body, which was given
 Into the bands of death and the cross
 For you, who have strayed from me.
 In the wine is what flowed
 To blot out your offense,
 My blood, that I shed
 In meekness and patience.
 Take them both with the mouth
 And consider also with this
 How good from the foundation of my heart
 I, your Redeemer, am.

5. Lord I will remember You
 As long as I have breath and life,
 And until one will lower me
 At my end into the dark grave.
 I see Your desire
 For my eternal salvation:
 On the wood (cross) You were hung
 And have let so many arrows
 Of tribulation penetrate
 Into Your innocent heart,
 So that I might escape from
 The pain and agony of death.

6. Thus You also have commended
 That what can strengthen faith,
 I should by You obtain,
 And should indeed not doubt,
 You have for all sin
 In the entire world
 Found in mankind
 A full ransom
 And offering accomplished
 Before Him who sustains all,
 Unto Him also all goes
 Paid and deposited.

7. And that my thoughts
 Which are full of falseness and deception
 Would not in the least waver,
 As if it were not serious enough for You
 Thus You incline Your heart
 Together with the right hand.
 And give with great goodness
 To me the highly treasured pledge
 To eat and to drink.
 Is that not comfort and light
 To him, who lets himself think
 That You do not want him.

8. Ach Herr! Du wilst uns alle!
 Das sagt uns unser Hertze zu.
 Die so der Feind zu Falle
 Gebracht, ruffst du zu deiner Ruh.
 Ach hilff Herr! hilff uns eilen
 Zu dir, der jederzeit
 Uns allesamt zu heilen
 Geneigt ist und bereit.
 Gib Lust und heilges dürsten
 Nach deinem Abentmahl,
 Und dort mach uns zu Fürsten
 Im güldnen Himmels-Saal !

8. O Lord! You desire us all!
 That assures our hearts.
 Which if the enemy causes (them) to fall
 You call (them back) to Your peace.
 O help Lord! Help us to hasten
 To You, who always
 Is inclined and prepared
 To completely heal all of us.
 Give desire and a holy thirst
 For Your Supper,
 And there make us princes
 In the golden heavenly banquet hall.

From:

Otto Schulz, *Paul Gerhardts Geistliche Andachten in hundert und zwanzig Liedern* (Berlin: Nicolaischen Buchhandlung, 1842), 230–231.

Addendum IV

Paul Gerhardt: Outline of His Life and Work

1580—	Book of Concord
1598— <i>April 9</i>	Birth of Johann Crüger
1607— <i>March 12</i>	Birth of Paul Gerhardt in Gräfenhainichen
1612—	Printing of Johann Arndt's <i>Paradiesgärtlein</i>
1613— <i>Christmas</i>	Johann Sigismund celebrates the Lord's Supper in the Reformed manner at the Berlin cathedral
1618— <i>May 23</i>	Beginning of the Thirty Years' War
1619—	Death of his father Christian Gerhardt
1621—	Death of his mother Dorothea nee Starke
1622—1627	Gerhardt attends the Fürstenschule in Grimma
1622— <i>May 19</i>	Birth of Anna Maria Berthold
1628—1642	Gerhardt's theological study at Wittenberg
1637—	Gräfenhainichen set on fire by Swedish soldiers
1642—1651	At Berlin; where he wrote <i>Gelegenheitsgedichte</i> , 18 of which Crüger published in his <i>Praxis Pietatis Melica</i>

- 1648— *October 24* Peace of Westphalia
- 1650— Abraham Calov is a theological professor at Wittenberg
- 1651— *November 18* At age 45 he was ordained in the public ministry at the Nikolaikirche in Berlin where he bound himself to the Book of Concord of 1580
- 1651—1657 Pastorate in Mittenwalde
- 1655— *February 11* He married Anna Maria Berthold in Berlin
- 1657—1667 Gerhardt's Ministry at the Nikolaikirche in Berlin
- 1661— Publication of the tenth edition of Crüger's hymnal, *Praxis Pietatis Melica*, where 90 of Gerhardt's hymns appear
- 1662— The "Edict of Toleration" by Elector Frederick William
- 1666— *February 13* Gerhardt is removed from office for the first time
- 1667— Gerhardt is restored to his office for a short time, but his conscience will not allow for him to remain in the public ministry in Brandenburg where he must remain silent concerning the false teachings of the Reformed
- 1668— *March 5* Death of Gerhardt's wife, Anna Maria
- 1668— Gerhardt is called to Lübben in Saxony

where he may teach in accord with the Book
of Concord

1676— *May 27*

Gerhardt joins the Church Triumphant,
forever singing the chants and praises of
saints and angels

Bibliography

Books

- Arndt, Johann. *Sechs Bücher vom wahren Christenthum*. Stuttgart: J.F. Steinkopf, n.d.
- Axmacher, Elke. *Johann Arndt und Paul Gerhardt*. Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 2001.
- Beeskow, Hans-Joachim. *Paul Gerhardt: 1607–1676*. Lübben: Heimat-Verlag, 2007.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Letters and Papers from Prison*. Edited by Eberhard Bethge. New York: Macmillan Company, 1971.
- Brecht, Martin, et. al. *Geschichte des Pietismus, Band 1: Der Pietismus vom siebzehnten bis zum frühen achtzehnten Jahrhundert*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993.
- Bunners, Christian. *Paul Gerhardt: Weg, Werk, Wirkung*. Berlin: Buchverlag Union, 1993.
- Butzlaff, Heinz. *Pommern, Land am Meer*. Würzburg: Flechsig-Buchvertrieb, 2000.
- Dallman, William. *Paul Gerhardt: His Life and His Hymns*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921.
- Erb, Jörg. *In the Shadow of His Wings*. Translated by Nelda Roth. Monument, CO: Roth Publishing, 2001.
- Hewitt, Theodore Brown. *Paul Gerhardt as a Hymn Writer and his Influence on English Hymnody*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1918.
- Hoenecke, Adolph. *Ev.-Luth. Dogmatik, Band I & II*. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1909.

Kantzenbach, Friedrich Wilhelm. *Evangelische Enzyklopädie: Orthodoxie und Pietismus*. Germany: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, Gütersloh, 1966.

Klueting, Harm. *Irenik und Antikonfessionalismus im 17. Und 18. Jahrhundert*. Hildesheim, Germany: Georg Olms Verlag, 2003.

Kubitschek, Jörg. *Der Gegensatz zwischen lutherischer Bekenntnistreue und reformierter Irenik im 17. Jahrhundert-dargestellt an Paul Gerhardts Bekenntniskampf in Berlin (1657–1669)*. Thesis for graduation at the Lutherisches Theologisches Seminar Leipzig.

Kurtz. *Church History*, Vol. III. Edited by John Macpherson. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1890.

Langbecker, E.C.G. *Leben und Lieder von Paulus Gerhardt*. Berlin: Sander'schen Buchhandlung, 1841.

Lindberg, Carter, ed. *The Pietist Theologians*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

Maag, Karin & Witvliet, John, eds. *Worship in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004.

Metzger, Erika A. "Paul Gerhardt." *German Baroque Writers*, Edited by James Hardin. Dictionary of Literary Biography. Detroit: Gale Research, 1996.

Nicolai, Philipp. *Freudenspiegel des ewigen Lebens von Philipp Nicolai*. Edited by Rudolf Eckart. Elberfeld: Verlag des Lutherischen Büchervereins, 1909.

Niemetz, Gustav. *Geschichte der Sachsen vom germanischen Stamm bis zum Freistaat*. Spitzkunnersdorf: Oberlausitzer Verlag, 1999.

Nischan, Bodo. *Lutherans and Calvinists in the age of Confessionalism*. Brookfield, Vermont: Ashgate Variorum, 1993.

———. *Prince, People, and Confession: The Second Reformation in Brandenburg*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994.

Paul Gerhardt als Prediger: Vier Leichenpredigten desselben aus den Jahren 1655, 1659, 1660 und 1661. Zwickau: Druck und Verlag von Johannes Herrmann, 1906.

Petrich, Hermann. *Paul Gerhardt: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Geistes*. Gütersloh: Druck und Verlag von C. Bertelsmann, 1914.

———. *Paul Gerhardt: seine Lieder und seine Zeit*. Gütersloh: Druck und Verlag von C. Bertelsmann, 1907.

Pieper, Franz. *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. I. St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1950.

Priest, George Madison. *A Brief History of German Literature*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932.

Rödding, Gerhard. *Warum sollt ich mich denn grämen: Paul Gerhardt Leben und Dichten in dunkler Zeit*. Newkirchen-Vluyn: Aussaat Verlag, 2006.

Schaff, Phillip, ed. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. VII. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994.

Scharlemann, Robert. *Thomas Aquinas and John Gerhard*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964.

Schulz, Otto. *Paul Gerhardts Geistliche Andachten in hundert und zwanzig Liedern*. Berlin: Nicolaischen Buchhandlung, 1842.

Steiger, Johann A. “Geh’ aus, mein Herz, und suche Freud’”: *Paul Gerhardts Summerlied und die Gelehrsamkeit der Barockzeit*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, 2007.

———. *Johann Gerhard, Doctrina et Pietas*. Abteilung 1, 1. Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog Verlag, 1997.

Wallmann, Johannes. *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands seit der Reformation*. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1985/2000.

———. *Theologie und Frömmigkeit im Zeitalter des Barock: Gesammelte Aufsätze*. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1995.

Walther, C.F.W. *Predigtentwürfe*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1903.

Wenzel, Rev. G.A. *Pictures From the Life of Paul Gerhardt: A Historical Life Picture*. Edited by J.K. Shryock. Philadelphia: M.J. Riegel, 1881.

Periodicals

Der Lutheraner, Vol. 64, No. 7 (April 7, 1908), p. 111.

Herrmann, Gottfried. “Erprobt im Sieb des Satans: Anmerkungen zu Paul Gerhardts Testament.” *Theologische Handreichung und Information*. Vol. 25, No. 2 (April 2007), 13–16.

“In Behalf of Paul Gerhardt and the Elenchus.” *Theological Quarterly*. Vol. 11, No. 2 (1907), 107–121.

Johansen, John H. “Paul Gerhardt (1607–1676): An Assessment on the 300th Anniversary of His Death.” *The Lutheran Quarterly*. Vol. 28, No. 1 (February 1976), 21–29.

Krispin, Gerald. “Paul Gerhardt: Confessional Subscription and the

Lord's Supper." *Logia*. Vol. 4, No. 3 (July 1995), 25–38.

Kubitschek, Jörg. "Der streitbare Liederdichter." *Evangelisch-Lutherischer Volkskalender*. Vol. 118 (2007), 52–57.

Kubitschek, Jörg & Gottfried Herrmann. "Paul Gerhardts Kampf und Entlassung in Berlin 1666/67." *Theologische Handreichung und Information*. Vol. 18, No. 2 (May 2000), 9–12.

"Paul Gerhardt der Bekenner." *Lehre und Wehre*. Vol. 53, No. 2 (February 1907), 49–70.

Endnotes

¹ ELH 115, 400.

² Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters & Papers from Prison*, ed. by Eberhard Bethge (New York: Macmillan Company, 1971), 22, 38, 53, 128, 170, 369, 375.

³ Both Arndt and Gerhardt are placed among the Pietists in *The Pietist Theologians* by Carter Lindberg.

⁴ Hans-Joachim Beeskow, *Paul Gerhardt: 1607–1676* (Lübben: Heimat-Verlag, 2007), 9.

⁵ The term “Second Reformation” is used to describe the situation in which a state that is Lutheran in confession is slowly converted to Calvinism. It is also referred to as Calvinization. The implication is that the Lutheran Reformation did not go far enough and therefore the Second Reformation was required.

⁶ The exorcism consisted of this phrase in the baptismal liturgy: “I adjure you, you unclean spirit, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, that you come out and depart from this servant of Christ. Amen” (*Ich beschwöre dich, du unreiner Geist, bei dem Namen des Vaters, und des Sohnes, und des Heiligen Geistes, daß du ausfahrest und weichest von diesem Diener [dieser Dienerin] Jesu Christi. Amen*).

⁷ As a reaction to Christian I’s move toward Reformed theology, known as the Second Crypto-Calvinism Controversy (1586–1592), Christian II and his advisors had the “Christian Visitation Articles” produced in 1592 which expressed the Lutheran position concerning the doctrines under discussion. These articles are recorded in the *Concordia Triglotta* (pp. 1150–1157). The chief writer of these articles was Aegidius Hunnius (1550–1603), a professor at the University of Wittenberg.

⁸ Gustav Niemetz, *Geschichte der Sachsen vom germanischen Stamm bis zum Freistaat* (Spitzkunnersdorf: Oberlausitzer Verlag, 1999), 73. *Man soll lieber mit den Papisten [den Gefolgsleuten des Papstes, den Katholiken] Gemeinschaft haben und gleichsam mehr Vertrauen zu ihnen tragen denn mit und zu den Calvinisten*. Polycarp Leyser is purported to have made a similar statement (Karin Maag and John Witvliet, eds. *Worship in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004], 105).

⁹ The royal family of Saxony, the Wettin family, was divided into an Ernestine line and an Albertine line. Frederick the Wise (1463–1525), John the Steadfast (1469–1532), and John Frederick the Magnanimous (1503–1554) were from the Ernestine line. They were Luther’s sovereigns and

protectors during his lifetime. After Luther's death, in the Smalkald War, Moritz of the Albertine line sided with the emperor against his relative, John Frederick, in order to obtain the electorship. Thus, he betrayed the Lutheran cause. Remember that before Luther's death, the electors of Saxony are from the Ernestine line and after his death they are from the Albertine line.

¹⁰ Beeskow, 21.

¹¹ Leonhard Hutter (1563-1616), the chief representative of the older generation of the period of Lutheran orthodoxy, was a professor at Wittenberg and the teacher of Johann Gerhard. His resemblance of Luther in vigor, energy, and firmness of faith gave him the title of *Lutherus redivivus*. Paul Gerhardt probably memorized the saying of the times: *Leonhardus Hutterus, redivivus Lutherus* (Gerhardt Rödding, *Warum Sollt ich mich den grämen: Paul Gerhardt Leben und Dichten in Dunkler Zeit* [Newkirchen-Vluyn: Aussaat Verlag, 2006], 29). His most important symbolical writing was his *Concordia Concors* of 1614 in which he defended the *Formula of Concord* in response to the Calvinist Hospinian. Because of his valiant defense of Lutheranism in response to the attacks of the Calvinists he was known as *Malleus Calvinistarum*— Hammer of Calvinists (Bodo Nischan, *Lutherans and Calvinists in the age of Confessionalism* [Brookfield, Vermont: Ashgate Variorum, 1993], X:182). When Elector Christian II desired a theological textbook for his lands which was in strict conformity with the *Formula* he produced his *Compendium*. This text tended to use only Scripture and the Confessions in the presentation of doctrine. The book became very popular.

¹² Christian Bunnars, *Paul Gerhardt: Weg, Werk, Wirkung* (Berlin: Buchverlag Union, 1993), 34.

¹³ Rödding, 32.

¹⁴ *Leucorea* means “white hill” or “mountain” in Greek. “Wittenberg” has the same meaning in German.

¹⁵ Rödding, 43.

¹⁶ Bunnars, 41. Professors at the University of Wittenberg before the time of Gerhardt included Aegidius Hunnius (1550–1603), Leonhard Hutter (1563–1616), Polykarp Leyser (1552–1610) and Balthasar Meisner (1587–1626). Later, Abraham Calov (1612–1686), who influenced Gerhardt during his Berlin years, was professor here. Calov was loved by his friends and hated by his enemies. His enemies called him the “Lutheran Torquemada” and the “grand inquisitor.” For a brief biography of Calov see Timothy Schmeling, “Strenuus Christi Athleta Abraham Calov,” *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (December 2004), 357–399.

¹⁷ *O Tod, o Tod, du greulichs Bild*; Bunnars, 42.

¹⁸ George Priest, *A Brief History of German Literature* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), 91.

¹⁹ Theodore B. Hewitt, *Paul Gerhardt as a Hymn Writer and his Influence on English Hymnody* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1918), 14.

²⁰ Rödding, 41–42.

²¹ Historians debate the motives of Gustavus Adolphus for entering the war. Some assume that his motives were mainly political. He wanted to establish a Swedish foothold in northern Germany and thus make the Baltic a Swedish lake. Others believe his motive was entirely religious. His heart went out to the suffering Lutherans of Germany. His motivation was probably a mixture of the two.

²² Bunnars, 39. *Ihr Herren, von euch ist aus diesem Orte das Licht des Evangeliums zu uns gekommen; weil es aber durch die Feinde will verdunkelt werden, müssen wir zu euch kommen, um nächst Gott dasselbige Licht wieder anzuzünden.*

²³ Heinz Butzlaff, *Pommern, Land am Meer* (Würzburg: Flechsig-Buchvertrieb, 2000), 17.

²⁴ The Albertine electors of Saxony following Moritz were August I (1526–1586), Christian I (1560–1591), Christian II (1583–1611), Johann George I (1585–1656), Johann George II (1613–1680), Johann George III (1647–1691), Johann George IV (1668–1694) and Frederick August I the Strong (1670–1733).

²⁵ Bunnars, 39.

²⁶ The full name of this collection is *Praxis Pietatis Melica. Das ist: Übung der Gottseligkeit in christlichen und trostreichen Gesängen* (The Exercise of [Comforting] Musical Piety).

²⁷ Rödding, 70.

²⁸ Crüger died before the conflict with the Elector began in earnest. His son-in-law produced a portrait of him that remained in the Nikolaikirche until 1944. His second wife lived until 1700 when she was buried by Spener (1635–1705) who was then pastor of the Nikolaikirche (Bunnars, 73).

²⁹ Bunnars, 58.

³⁰ Rödding, 160.

³¹ It was generally assumed one could not have a Lutheran parsonage without a parson's wife.

³² The Nicolai hymn, "How Lovely Shines the Morning Star," was often used as a wedding hymn during this period. Gerhardt wrote a wedding hymn for this melody: "Wie schön ists doch, Herr Jesu Christ" (Rödding, 168).

³³ Bunnars, 62.

³⁴ Nischan, *Confessionalism*, III:39. There were also skirmishes concerning the use of pictures and images and concerning the adoration of the Supper. Concerning forms of outward adoration such as the elevation, the *ostensio*, and genuflecting, Gedicke explained, “We do this not because we adore the communion bread as if it had been transformed into the body of Christ, but rather...to remind ourselves that through this sacrament our faith is strengthened” (Bodo Nischan, *Prince, People and Confession: The Second Reformation in Brandenburg*. [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994], 140).

³⁵ Nischan, *Second Reformation*, 117. ...*die noch hinterbliebene Unsauberkeit deß Bapstums aus dem Schaffstall Christi vollend außzufegen*.

³⁶ Kurtz, *Church History, Vol. III*, Ed. by John Macpherson (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1890), 12–13.

³⁷ The Great Elector invited many French Reformed (Huguenots) refugees and other religious refugees to settle in the land. Most of these people were middle class businessmen who stimulated the Prussian economy. Yet, their presence in the predominantly Lutheran land necessitated, as far as he was concerned, more tolerance for the Reformed. The French Reformed refugees began to flood the land after the Edict of Nantes was revoked in 1685 and the Elector offered them safe haven in the Edict of Potsdam of 1685 (Beeskow, 65; Bunnars, 84).

³⁸ The Great Elector Frederick William had been influenced by the syncretistic views of Georg Calixtus (1586–1656) who hoped to unite Lutherans, Catholics, and the Reformed on the basis of the Apostles’ Creed, which contained the summary of fundamental doctrines and was sufficient for external fellowship in his mind. Calixtus further advocated the *consensus antiquitatis* or the *consensus quinquesaecularis* as the proper explication of the Creed for theologians. King Wadislav IV of Poland issued the call for the Colloquy of Thorn in 1645 hoping to unite the Lutherans, Romanists, and Reformed in his country. Calixtus publicized and promoted the colloquy. The Great Elector invited him to participate in the colloquy. However Calov and Hülsemann barred him from representing the Lutherans. Therefore he assisted the Reformed theologians. This colloquy clearly enunciated the proper biblical teaching of prayer fellowship because the true Lutherans would not pray with the Reformed, Catholics, and syncretistic Lutherans (*Der Lutheraner*, Vol. 64, No. 7 [April 7, 1908], p. 111; Adolph Hoenecke, *Ev. Luth. Dogmatik*, Vol. I, p. 7). Later Electoral Saxony issued the *Consensus repetitus fidei vere Lutheranae* which was a confession against syncretism and which reaffirmed the Augsburg Confession.

³⁹ The conflict between the Lutheran and the Reformed in Brandenburg-Prussia was primarily religious. However, there were also political dimensions to the conflict. The Great Elector was striving for absolutism in his government in contradistinction to the rights of the local nobility. The local nobility used their Lutheranism as a method to resist the Reformed Elector's centralization of power (Bunners, 76).

⁴⁰ Hermnn Petrich, *Paul Gerhardt: seine Lieder und seine Zeit* (Gütersloh: Druck und Verlag von C. Bertelsmann, 1907), 107.

⁴¹ Bunners, 67. At this time, the Nikolaikirche had four pastoral positions: a *Propst* and three deacons, the first deacon being the archdeacon. After the death of Petrus Vehr in 1656, Georg Lilius (1597–1666) became *Propst*, Elias Reinhardt (1625–1669) became archdeacon after the death of Gerhardt's brother-in-law Joachim Fromm in 1657, Gerhardt was called to the position of second deacon, and the position of the third deacon was vacant until 1658.

⁴² Bunners, 67.

⁴³ See Addendum I: *The So-Called "Testament" of Paul Gerhardt for His Son (Early 1676)*.

⁴⁴ Bunners, 108.

⁴⁵ Rödding, 187; Beeskow, 46.

⁴⁶ Bunners, 80.

⁴⁷ The Conference in Hessen-Kassel in 1661 was a meeting between the Reformed theologians of Marburg and the so-called Lutheran theologians of Rinteln. Here it was agreed that the Reformed and the Lutherans did not differ in fundamental articles of the faith. Also these Lutherans agreed to the removal of the baptismal exorcism and the *fractio panis* in the Supper. The results of this conference were rejected by the universities of Wittenberg, Jena, and Leipzig where pure Lutheran doctrine was taught. However this conference gave the Great Elector the incentive to work for the same agreement in Brandenburg-Prussia (Harm Klüeting, *Irenik und Antikonfessionalismus im 17. Und 18. Jahrhundert* [Georg Olms Verlag: Hildesheim, Germany, 2003], 144).

⁴⁸ Beeskow, 48; Bunners, 80. *Wer nicht lutherisch ist, der ist verflucht*— This was a condemnation of the doctrine of the Reformed and the Papists, not a condemnation of individuals.

⁴⁹ It appears that Gerhardt and Calov knew each other personally. There is recorded correspondence between the two. In addition, Gerhardt prepared a poem of comfort for Calov at the death of his daughter, the wife of Wilhelm Leyser, also a professor at Wittenberg (Bunners, 111).

⁵⁰ Rödding, 215.

⁵¹ Jörg Kubitschek & Gottfried Herrmann, "Paul Gerhardts Kampf

und Entlassung in Berlin 1666/67,” *Theologische Handreichung und Information*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (May 2000), 10; Jörg Kubitschek, “Der streitbare Liederdichter,” *Evangelisch-Lutherischer Volkskalender*, Vol. 118 (2007), 56.

⁵² Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics, Vol. I* (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 80–93.

⁵³ E.C.G. Langbecker, *Leben und Lieder von Paulus Gerhardt* (Berlin: Sander’schen Buchhandlung, 1841), 78–80. *Geben wir den articulum de orali manducatione zwar vor einen articulum fidei fundamentalem aus, aber nicht vor einem constituentem, sed conservantem und also dürfen wir auch nicht erweisen, daß ohne dieser Lehre Niemand den Glauben, Liebe und Hoffnung, und also die ewige Seligkeit erlangen könne.*

⁵⁴ Langbecker, 115; see also 84. If the finite bread is not capable of containing the infinite person of Christ because the finite is not capable of the infinite (*Finitum non est capax infiniti*), then the finite human nature of Christ is not capable of containing the infinite divine Logos contrary to Colossians 2:9. Thus the Reformed teaching leads to the destruction of the doctrine of the person of Christ.

⁵⁵ Langbecker, 88. *Ein Christ ist entweder, der auf Jesum getauft ist und Jesum von Nazareth für Messiam und Heiland der Welt bekennet. Also können vielleicht nicht allein Calvinisten, sondern auch Papisten Christen gennennet werden, oder ein Christ ist derjenige, welcher den wahren, selig machenden Glauben rein und unverfälscht hat, auch die Früchte desselben in seinem Leben und Wandel sehen läßt; also kann ich die Calvinisten quales nicht für Christen halten.*

⁵⁶ In this edict, the Lutherans were specifically forbidden to accuse the Reformed of being Calvinists, Zwinglians, enemies of the *genus maiestaticum*, and desecraters of the Sacrament. They were forbidden to say that the Reformed rejected the communication of attributes and that the Reformed taught that only a man died on the cross. The Reformed were forbidden to teach that the Lutherans were Ubiquitists, Flacians, Eutychians, Marcionites, and Pelagians. In addition, the Reformed were forbidden to teach that in the Holy Sacrament the Lutherans maintained that the body of Christ was present in a Capernaite manner (Rödding, 218).

⁵⁷ Beeskow, 80.

⁵⁸ Bunnars, 115–116.

⁵⁹ Beeskow, 86.

⁶⁰ As a postscript to the controversy between Gerhardt and the Great Elector it should be noted that shortly after Gerhardt was called to Lübben, the Great Elector withdrew the edict. This probably had to do with the fact that

he married a Lutheran woman and was more open to Lutheranism after the death of Queen Louisa Henrietta. His new wife was Sophie Dorothea of Holstein-Glücksburg.

⁶¹ There were also difficulties finding adequate housing. His household at this time included around 6 or 7 persons: besides himself, his widowed sister-in-law Sabina Fromm, who was his housekeeper; her son Andreas Joachim Fromm, a theological student; his own son Paul; and two or three household servants (Bunners, 122).

⁶² Bunners, 128–129. Specifically ELH 377:5.

⁶³ See Addendum I: *The So-Called “Testament” of Paul Gerhardt for His Son (Early 1676)*.

⁶⁴ Beeskow, 94.

⁶⁵ For the periods of the age of Lutheran orthodoxy see Gaylin Schmeling, “Gerhard—Theologian and Pastor,” *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (December 2004), 347–348.

⁶⁶ See Robert Scharlemann, *Thomas Aquinas and John Gerhard* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964).

⁶⁷ *Paul Gerhardt als Prediger: Vier Leichenpredigten desselben aus den Jahren 1655, 1659, 1660 und 1661* (Zwickau: Druck und Verlag von Johannes Herrmann, 1906), 37, 38, 41.

⁶⁸ LW 55:337.

⁶⁹ C.F.W. Walther, *Predigtentwürfe* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1903), 383.

⁷⁰ *Paul Gerhardt als Prediger*, 29.

⁷¹ *Paul Gerhardt als Prediger*, 83.

⁷² *Paul Gerhardt als Prediger*, 68; see also ELH 405:3.

⁷³ Langbecker, 116.

⁷⁴ *Paul Gerhardt als Prediger*, 68.

⁷⁵ See Addendum II, verse 12.

⁷⁶ See Addendum II.

⁷⁷ See Addendum III.

⁷⁸ This refers to the ways in which our faith-life is formed, nourished and strengthened.

⁷⁹ Otto Schulz, *Paul Gerhardts Geistliche Andachten in hundert und zwanzig Liedern* (Berlin: Nicolaischen Buchhandlung, 1842), 125–135. Here five hymns are listed that are based on prayers from Arndt’s *Paradiesgärtlein*. See also Elke Axmacher, *Johann Arndt und Paul Gerhardt* (Tübingen: Francke Verlag, 2001), 233–238.

⁸⁰ FC SD III, 54, *Triglotta*, 933-935; see also Luther, WA 20:229.

⁸¹ Philipp Nicolai, *Freudenspiegel des ewigen Lebens von Philipp Nicolai*. Edited by Rudolf Eckart (Elberfeld: Verlag des Lutherischen

Büchervereins, 1909), 67.

⁸² Johann Arndt, *Sechs Bücher vom wahren Christenthum* (Stuttgart: J.F. Steinkopf), II:6, 216–219.

⁸³ See also ELH 115:14; 161:4; 517:7.

⁸⁴ “As the personal communication of attributes arises out of the personal union of the divine nature and the human nature in Christ so out of the spiritual union of Christ and the church, of God the Lord and a believing soul, arises a spiritual communion not only in the kingdom of glory and in eternal life but also in the kingdom of grace and in this life. Therefore Saint Peter says concerning the true believers that they have become partakers in the divine nature.” (*Wie aus der persönlichen Vereinigung der göttlichen und menschlichen Natur in Christo entsteht die persönliche Mittheilung der Eigenschafften / also entsteht aus der geistlichen Vereinigung Christi und der Kirchen / Gottes des Herrn und einer gläubigen Seele / eine geistliche Gemeinschaft / nicht allein im Reich der Herrlichkeit und im ewigen Leben / sondern auch im Reich der Gnaden und in diesem Leben / Dannenhero S. Petrus 2. Epistel 1. v. 4. von den wahren Gläubigen spricht / dass sie der Göttlichen Natur sind theilhaftig worden.*) (Johann Gerhard, *Postilla Salomonaea* in Johann Steiger, *Johann Gerhard*, 97.)

⁸⁵ LW 31:351–352.

⁸⁶ See also Zechariah 12:10, 13:1; 1 John 5:6. For a complete presentation of the wounded side motif see Gaylin Schmeling, “Gerhard—Theologian and Pastor,” 307–309.

⁸⁷ Augustine, “Tractate on John” CXX:2, Phillip Schaff, ed. *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. VII* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 434–435.

⁸⁸ Schulz, 9. *Ich umfange, herz und küsse der gekränkten Wunden Zahl und die purpurroten Flüsse Deiner Füß’ und Nägelmal.*

⁸⁹ Bunnars, 132. *Letzter Kampf geistlicher Pilgrime und Wandersleute.*

⁹⁰ Schulz, 37. *Ich bin ein Gast auff Erden.*

⁹¹ Schultz, 64.

⁹² *Gerhardt als Prediger*, 81–82.

⁹³ LW 31:53.

⁹⁴ “O God, O Lord of Heaven and Earth” (CW 400:1), written by Martin Franzmann (1907–1976), the anniversary of whose birth we are also celebrating this year.

⁹⁵ See also ELH 20:3; 334:9; 341; 372:7; 377:4–5. This medieval genre of literature was common to the devotional writers. For example, Martin Moller wrote a book entitled *Handbüchlein zur Vorbereitung auf den Tod, oder Heilige Sterbekunst.*

⁹⁶ Bunnars, 259; Rödding, 146.

Paul Gerhardt: Poet and Hymnwriter

Carlos R. Messerli

A celebration of the work of Paul Gerhardt on the 400th anniversary of his birth is a remarkable event, for we are thereby recognizing achievement nearly as old as the King James Bible and the work of William Shakespeare. Though Gerhardt's work was limited primarily to the writing of hymns, it has also proved to be of lasting value to many succeeding generations. Having endured for four centuries, Gerhardt's memorable hymns deserve careful review especially today in our age of impermanence and planned obsolescence.

In setting the scene for a review of the hymns of Paul Gerhardt, one can begin with three common understandings: 1) the popularity of Martin Luther's translation of the Bible into the German language of the people in the sixteenth century, a development that capitalized on the first European printing from moveable type that had occurred barely sixty years earlier; 2) the strong encouragement given by Luther for the active participation of the people in worship, chiefly through the singing of hymns in their own language; and 3) an expansion of personal devotional writing that occurred about one century after Luther.

The devotional literature of the seventeenth century reflected the relationship of theology to the personal life of the Christian. This more individual view of the faith was expressed in an outpouring of writing that included the creation of thousands of hymns. While many of these new, more personal hymns were sung in church they were also intended for private and family devotional reading and singing. The people, especially those well educated, appreciated the poetic quality, the language and the character of the new hymns of their faith. Among the host of hymn writers, amateur and professional, that appeared to satisfy the need, one author stood out for his fidelity to Lutheran doctrine, the beauty of his language, and the personal quality and relevance of his writing. That was Paul Gerhardt, one of the masters of the movement, whose hymns, having emerged from the vast output of the seventeenth century, are still valued today. Gerhardt's hymns still strike a resonant note as heartfelt, personal

expressions of the Christian faith in our secular and often troubled times when that faith is challenged as never before. It is heartening that even after 400 years they are well represented in all modern Lutheran hymnals. What is perhaps more remarkable is that some of his hymns are also found in the worship books of nearly every other Protestant denomination in America and many Roman Catholic parishes as well.

This presentation 1) examines the spiritual, literary, and musical environment in which his hymns were created; 2) reviews the aspects of his personal life that relate to the writing of his hymns; and 3) explores two representative hymns in their original German and in one English translation to discover their particular originality, strength, and character. Our point of reference will be *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* (1996), an important worship book in America that contains more of Gerhardt's hymns (22) than any other English language worship book, Lutheran or otherwise.¹

Paul Gerhardt's Times

It is important to set Gerhardt's position in history by relating his life span to that of the early Reformers, other hymn writers, Lutheran musicians, and certain events and publications. He did not write in a vacuum; he reflected the thoughts of his Lutheran predecessors and their concern for pure doctrine. He also was keenly aware of the social and political conditions of his time and the increasing importance of personal devotional literature. And he was aware of the development of current forms of poetry and modern musical settings of hymns for singing in church and at home.

The following figures, events, and publications (listed in approximate chronological order), all of which were familiar to Gerhardt, suggest the nature of his times in relation to spiritual, political, literary, and musical fields. He lived in an age of often violent political and social upheaval, rich theological debate and conflict, and a quest for personal security and peace.

Martin Luther (1483–1546) theologian, reformer, hymn writer

Posting of 95 Theses (1517) public beginning of the Lutheran Reformation

Nikolaus Herman (1480–1561) important early hymn writer

Philipp Melancthon (1497–1560) Luther's theological colleague and hymn writer

Johann Walter (1498–1570) Lutheran *Urkantor*; composer and Luther's musical advisor

Augsburg Confession (1530) the seminal Lutheran doctrinal statement

Lucas Osiander (1534–1604) popularized *Kantional* (hymn) style of arranging vocal music

Philipp Nicolai (1556–1608), important hymn writer

Formula of Concord (1577) final restatement of Lutheran doctrine

Michael Praetorius (c.1571–1621) composer, author, historian, prolific hymn arranger

Martin Opitz (1597–1639) reformer of German poetry and hymn writing

Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) devastating religious-political war on German soil

Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672) great Lutheran choral composer

Johann H. Schein (1586–1630) cantor, composer, hymn writer

Samuel Scheidt (1587–1654) eminent early German organist

Johann Crüger (1598–1662) Lutheran cantor and Gerhardt's colleague; hymn tune composer; musical compiler; publisher of Gerhardt hymns

Johann Arndt (1605) *True Christianity*, personal faith

PAUL GERHARDT (1607–1676)

Johann Rist (1607–1667) prolific hymn writer

Johann Ebeling (1620–1676) Crüger's successor and colleague; hymn tune composer and publisher of Gerhardt hymns

Paul Gerhardt was born in 1607 in Gräfenhainichen a small agricultural village near Wittenberg, Germany. His father, an inn-keeper, was village mayor and his mother a Lutheran pastor's daughter and granddaughter. His father died when he was but two years old and his mother when he was 14. He seems to have been a

good student in the village school, for it is noted that at graduation he even wrote a commendable Latin epistle. In the typical Lutheran school of the day religious instruction and hymn singing formed a regular part of the daily schedule. The Lutheran tradition of systematic memorization exercises in school included all of Luther's *Small Catechism*, many, many Bible passages, and, I believe, a significant number of hymn stanzas. This experience, probably, along with the singing of hymns that took place at home, provided young Paul with unforgettable exposure to the great literature of early Lutheran hymns.

In 1622, when he was 15, Paul went to nearby Grimma to attend the Prince's School, a former monastery, that housed about 100 students. The curriculum there was typically classical. Students were expected to speak Latin to their professors, and daily prayers were said in Greek, Latin, and German. No doubt the hymns of the early Reformers were prominent in the school curriculum. That would include Luther's adaptations of earlier Latin hymns, such as "Savior of the Nations, Come" (*ELH*, No.90), his liturgical hymns (e.g., "Kyrie, God Father," *ELH*, No.34), his hymns on the six chief parts of the Catechism, as well as those of Nikolaus Decius (e.g., "All Glory be to God on High," *ELH* No.35), and Johann Hermann's "Praise God the Lord, Ye Sons of Men," *ELH*, No.148. The spiritual atmosphere of the Lutheran school was strict and conservative.

The Thirty Years' War, which eventually was to devastate the countryside, had just begun in 1618 when Paul was 11 years old. The land in those days was divided into numerous, often squabbling provinces and authorities, with rulers usually determining the practice of the faith of the people—some remaining Roman Catholic, some becoming Lutheran, and some tending toward the Reformed faith of France and the Low Lands. But the overarching conflict between the entrenched forces of Roman Catholicism and the Protestants, both Lutheran and Reformed, eventually resulted in the war.

In 1626, when Paul was 19, the plague also spread across the land with catastrophic effects. For example, when it struck Grimma about 350 of the inhabitants of the small town were killed.

In spite of the war and the plague, Paul graduated from the Prince's School in 1627 at the age of 21, receiving an evaluation that

indicates that he was diligent and obedient, with good compositional skills in Latin, and that he had modest poetic talent. This slightly encouraging observation gave at least a mild indication of the talent of one who was to become a great German hymn writer.

After Grimma, Paul went to Wittenberg, the birthplace of the Reformation, to attend the university where Luther himself had taught. At the one-hundred-twenty-five-year-old University of Wittenberg he studied with Lutheran professors and absorbed the spirit of Luther and Melanchthon, whose teachings and sermons were still a presence in its classrooms and pulpits, and where the hymns of Luther and other early Reformers were in common use. His classically trained teachers were prominent Lutheran theologians, and there he became acquainted with Martin Opitz (1597–1639), the poet who later established the modern style of German poetic construction that greatly influenced Gerhardt and all succeeding German poets.

As the war was coming nearer and nearer, Swedish, that is, Lutheran, forces fought and eventually defeated the emperor's army, and in the process both armies laid waste to the German countryside. In addition to the havoc created by the pillaging military, the plague continued to strike with cruel force. In all, thousands were killed, and villages and homes were destroyed by both plague and war. In 1637 the Gerhardt home in little Gräfenheinichen was completely burned along with 400 other town buildings.

Lutheran influence remained strong and traditional worship practices were observed in Wittenberg. Worship leaders in Wittenberg relied heavily on the hymns of Luther, Herman, Nicolai, and other early Reformers. Of course, the latest methods of musical performance of these hymns, including the Italian style of instrumental accompaniment, were the practice in this university community.

In 1630 Wittenberg celebrated the centennial of the Augsburg Confession with public ceremonies, musical fanfares, decorations, military salutes, and a reading of the entire document in public. A significant service of celebration was held in church with nearly 1400 people participating in holy communion, a service in which the liturgical and doctrinal hymns of Martin Luther were prominent.

Information on the next years in Gerhardt's life remains somewhat scarce. It is known that he became a tutor in the home of a local pastor, a not uncommon practice at a time when educated or wealthy families sought an educational advantage for their children.

In 1643, at the age of 36, Gerhardt is found as a private tutor in Berlin, where he had moved and had become the friend of influential educators and religious leaders. In that year and the year following two dedicatory odes of Gerhardt were published, following the custom of prominent individuals to commission authors to write dedicatory poems for important occasions such as weddings, anniversaries, publications, and appointments to office. By this time he also appears to have developed a strong interest in writing hymns.

In Berlin he formed a friendship with the St. Nicolai church musician, Johann Crüger, who had earlier studied with Paul Homberger, who in turn was a pupil of the legendary Italian composer Giovanni Gabrielli (c.1533–1612) of St. Mark's, Venice. No doubt it was from Homberger that Crüger learned the modern Italian technique of supporting the harmonies of his hymn compositions with a figured bass, that is, an accompaniment for a keyboard and a bass instrument notated for performers in a kind of shorthand.

Crüger's respect and admiration for Gerhardt is manifested in the publication of his *Praxis pietatis melica* (The Musical Practice of Piety), a hymn collection that contained eighteen of Gerhardt's hymns set to melodies with figured bass by Crüger in 1647. In succeeding years this publication was republished and expanded many times to include a total of 81 hymns by Gerhardt in 1653 and then 88 of his hymns in 1661—in addition to many hymns by other authors. Ultimately the book was issued in a total of 44 editions by 1736. It is fair to say that Gerhardt's fame as hymn writer was secured by the widespread circulation of the publication. In 1648 the Thirty Years' War ended, and peace and rebuilding of the land ensued, although it would be many years before the scars and devastation were erased.

Gerhardt eventually accepted a clergy position at the age of 45 in the village of Mittenwalde. Four years later he married

Anna Maria Berthold, the thirty-three-year-old daughter of a Berlin lawyer in whose house Gerhardt had been a tutor. He remained in Mittenwalde for six years, until in 1657 he accepted a call to Berlin as third pastor, or deacon, at Nicolaikirche, where he was reunited with his friend, the St. Nicolai Cantor Johann Crüger.

Unfortunately, during most of the next twelve years Gerhardt's position, as well as that of other Lutheran pastors in Berlin, was threatened on doctrinal grounds rooted in their refusal to follow the Reformed teaching and practice preferred by the Elector, who also required a denial by the pastors of allegiance to the historic Lutheran *Formula of Concord*. Such an action was offensive to Gerhardt and particularly contentious, because many of the Berlin clergy and laity were staunch, orthodox Lutherans.

The high child mortality of those times is illustrated by the deaths of three Gerhardt infants in the space of the next four years: Maria in 1657, Anna in 1659, and Andreas in 1660. The impact of these tragic events was balanced just a little in 1662 by the birth of a son, also named Paul, who survived his parents. In the same year Cantor Johann Crüger died and was succeeded by Johann Ebeling (1620–76). Another infant, a son named Andreas Christian, was born and died in 1664.

Johann Ebeling, the new cantor at St. Nicolai, was a fine church musician who soon honored his colleague by publishing *Pauli Gerhardti Geistliche Andachten* (Paul Gerhardt's Spiritual Devotions) in 1666 and 1667. The collection for choir and home contained 120 of Paul Gerhardt's hymns. These were printed in choir book format, with soprano and alto voices on a left page and tenor and bass voices on the facing page. Separate part books for two violins and the *basso continuo* (figured bass) according to the modern Italian practice of the day accompanied the publication.

Gerhardt was highly regarded by his parishioners, his colleagues, and by many of Berlin's leaders. However, his troubled tenure at St. Nicolai caused by the continuing pressure of the Reformed Elector was also marked by the death of his wife Anna in 1668. In that same year his colleague, Cantor Johann Ebeling, resigned his position and Gerhardt, bowing to the pressure of the Elector, left the Berlin parish as a matter of conscience and

accepted a call to pastoral leadership at Lübben, Sadly, there he also experienced conflict with the church authorities, but now it was chiefly on personal and administrative matters. It seems that Gerhardt sought to spend his later years at a slower pace than earlier and demanded improvements (perhaps much needed), in his living and working conditions. The conflicts with authorities might also give evidence of an intractability that came with his advance age Paul Gerhardt died just 331 years ago this summer on May 27, 1676, at the age of 70.

Gerhardt's view of death as but a gate to heaven is clearly expressed in *Warum sollt ich mich denn grämen* ("Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me," *ELH*, No.377). Reflecting on a life dedicated to service to his Lord, he here examines life on earth with its troubles, cares, and grief, believing that Christ is always present, but that the joy of life in heaven is to be preferred to earthly life. It is reported that Gerhardt spoke the eighth stanza of this hymn on his deathbed. The hymn was also a source of comfort to the persecuted Lutherans in Salzburg, Austria, in the early eighteenth century, who sang it frequently in exile on their journey to ultimately settle in the North American colony located in what is now the state of Georgia.

We have seen how Gerhardt's interest in hymn writing and singing was nourished beginning in his earliest school years. Later in life, his developed skill was rewarded by numerous commissions for various celebratory occasions, such as weddings and memorial occasions. But it seems his greatest interest lay in writing hymns for public worship and private devotion.

It may be difficult for those of us today who live in the secular society of America to comprehend what life was like for Lutherans of seventeenth-century Germany, where church life and religious standards governed the whole society. In that day church bells announced the hours of the day for the community; the church calendar marked the holidays, weeks, and seasons of the year; religious principles and particulars were projected in civic regulations. Sundays and festivals were days of rest, often extending as in the case of Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost, an extra day or two. Church officials were part of leadership in the towns, and town councils were deeply involved in the hiring and

supervision of church administrations. Nearly every citizen was baptized, married, and buried by the church. Attendance at church services on Sundays and festivals was expected of all—certainly by all respectable citizens of the community. Sunday morning and afternoon worship was common. And services were numerous and lengthy, the chief service lasting as long as three hours, with hour-long sermons. Gerhardt's lengthy hymns reflect these social and civic circumstances and this Lutheran piety, and they satisfied an urgent spiritual need for the Lutherans of his day.

Paul Gerhardt wrote 134 hymns in the course of his life.² (A substantial output that pales in comparison, however, with the writing of some of his contemporaries; such as Johann Rist (1606–1667), who wrote a total of 680 hymns.) It is clear that three pervasive themes dominate Gerhardt's output: 1) the objective truth of the Christian doctrine of salvation by grace, 2) a deep understanding of and sympathy for the human condition, and 3) a longing for heaven. These themes are viewed from the perspective of the Christian living under the benign rule of a loving God.

Gerhardt's hymns project a rock-solid commitment to Luther's teachings, especially the doctrine of salvation by grace. He conveys this doctrine with clarity and authority, but in a more personal and lyrical style than does Luther and other early hymn writers. Whereas Luther would commonly use the pronoun "we," Gerhardt says "I." Gerhardt begins many of his hymns with the word "I." Luther never did. While Luther would analyze and explain doctrine in a hymn, Gerhardt would personalize it. Luther describes God's action; Gerhardt more often refers to human troubles, afflictions, and persecutions, and the home God has prepared for us in heaven. Although Jesus Christ is mentioned by name in barely half of his hymns, other names for him such as Hero, Son, and Shepherd are found everywhere, and the spirit of Christ's atoning work is pervasive. In it he finds solace, patience, and victory over sin and suffering. He emphasizes our personal involvement in continuing the work of Christ on earth. No doubt these themes are, in part, a reflection of his respect for and friendship with Johann Arndt (1555–1621), whose devotional writing, especially *Vom wahren Christenthum* (True Christianity) established a similar basis for spirituality. Gerhardt

even planned some of his hymns according to prayers of Arndt. He frequently employs biblical terminology and imagery, often quoting words or phrases directly from Holy Scripture, especially the Psalms. The Bible was the most common inspiration for his texts; in fact he credited more than 50 of his hymns with specific Bible sources, and of these, thirty were inspired by individual Psalms.

His sincere interest in the human condition is revealed by the estimation that two-thirds of his hymns regard aspects of the Christian's personal life, while only about one-third deal with the church year and the liturgy of the church. Gerhardt expresses a child-like joy in the prospect that his loving God will provide future happiness for him in heaven regardless of current trials. In spite of his dreadful experiences during the Thirty Years' War, he rested secure in the prospect that distressing events and conditions on earth would pale in comparison with the joys to be experienced in heaven.

In keeping with the exceedingly long services of his day, many of Gerhardt's hymns are quite lengthy, and consequently many of them have been shortened for use today. For example, the average length of his 22 hymns in our modern *ELH*, is not quite 8 stanzas; that is only about 2/3 of the average length of 12 stanzas of the originals. The reduction in length is, of course, understandable in the time-sensitive worship practice of most modern congregations. Nevertheless, 7 of the 22 in *ELH* are printed out in full as written by Gerhardt. "All My Heart Sings and Rejoices" (No.115) and "If God Himself Be for Me" (No.517) at 15 stanzas each are the longest. Because of their length, these two, for example, form fine poetic mini-sermons on the subjects they address. Nevertheless, I believe that few congregations today could endure two of Gerhardt's longest originals: an Easter hymn, *Nun fruet euch hier und überall* ("Now Rejoice Here and Everywhere," not in *ELH*), with its 36 stanzas, and *Ein Lämmlein geht* ("A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth"), a conflated Passion history based on the account of the four Gospels, which is 29 stanzas long in the original. Only 10 stanzas are printed in *ELH* (No.331).

Gerhardt was greatly influenced by the poetic standards organized by his contemporaries, such as August Buchner

(1591–1661), the Wittenberg Professor of Rhetoric and Poetry, and especially Martin Opitz (1597–1639), who is credited with establishing standards for German poetry that encouraged a more refined, subtle, and systematic poetic structure than the often rugged poetry of Luther and the other hymn writers of the previous century. Although Gerhardt did not consider himself a “professional” poet, he carefully and creatively utilized a great variety of poetic structures. Hewitt cites a discovery made by the Gerhardt scholar, F. Hahne, that he employed 51 different kinds of strophic constructions in his works.³ For the most part Gerhardt carefully adhered to conventional rhythmic patterns of poetry. He paid close attention to the pleasing repetition of the initial sounds of words in alliteration. Hewitt gives 195 examples in his works, such as *Gut und Geld* (goods and wealth), *Licht und Leben* (light and life). He provides 75 examples of inexact rhyming called assonance as in *Kraft und Macht* (strength and might). Gerhardt also frequently repeated words immediately or in adjacent or nearby lines for emphasis or for contrast.

Gerhardt has been described, especially by German writers, as a skillful and intuitive poet. He wrote naturally almost from the beginning of his career. He did not seem to develop through stylistic periods. At various times his poetry has been described as “pious, naive, hearty, benign, or unfailingly optimistic.” Hewitt quotes Goethe as saying that Gerhardt sang “as the bird sings that lives in the branches.”⁴

Translating German poetry into a foreign language is not an easy task. The editors of *ELH* called on 11 different translators (and a variety of others represented by “composite” translations) for its 22 Gerhardt texts. The problem is not only that the German idioms are often difficult to translate into English, but also that, while many words can be translated directly from one language to another, they often lose their flavor and precise meaning in the second language. It may even be that cognate words that look and sound much alike in German and English have somewhat different meanings. Finally, the beauty and flow of the poetry of one language is nearly impossible to duplicate in translation. Thus, a good translation is best when it is clear and beautiful in its own right, having a similar construction and meter to the original. It is successful if it conveys *as much of*

the original meaning and style as possible. It is most faithful to its source if it also accomplishes all of this on a line-by-line or couplet-by-couplet basis.

In describing the music for Gerhardt's hymns one must pay particular attention to the development of the harmonic setting of the chorale melodies. In the early sixteenth century harmonized settings of the chorale melodies were designed for choral performance and imbedded the chorale melody in the tenor voice where at times it was difficult to hear over the soprano, alto, and bass voice parts. Our modern style of hymn setting with the melody in the topmost voice was not yet common practice. Luther's musical advisor, Johann Walter, did write some settings with the melody in the soprano, but it was left to later composers, chiefly Lucas Osiander (1534–1604) to establish it as the normal practice with his *Fünfzig geistliche Lieder und Psalmen* (1586). This landmark collection set a standard for Lutheran chorale performance by choirs and congregations. Placing the melody in the soprano, where it could be heard more easily, greatly facilitated congregational singing. It is this type of setting that Crüger and Ebeling prepared for the hymns of Paul Gerhardt and others.

The first edition of Gerhardt hymns had a curious history. In 1640 Johann Crüger published *Newes vollkömliches Gesangbuch Augspurgerischer Confession* (New, Complete, Hymn Book of the Augsburg Confession), a book of 240 chorales with 137 melodies, of which 18 were by Crüger. The melodies were printed for singing in the modern Italian style with only a simple figured bass for accompaniment of a keyboard and a bass instrument, but not for use as a choir book. These hymns were intended first for family devotions, but they also could be used in church.

Following the success of this publication, Crüger issued in 1647 what appears to have been a second edition of the book under the title *Praxis pietatis melica* (Musical Practice of Piety), which included for the first time 18 of Gerhardt's hymns set to melodies by Crüger. The book did well and was expanded and republished many times. In the edition of 1649 the hymns were now set by Crüger for four choral voices and two descanting instruments such as violins or flutes. This meant that they were useful for part-singing at home, and

also for use in church by the congregation, choir, and instruments.

After the death of Crüger in 1662 his successor, Johann Ebeling, became cantor at St. Nikolai in Berlin and published in 1666–67 a complete collection of the hymns of Gerhardt entitled *Pauli Gerhardi geistliche Andachten bestehend in hundert und zwanzig Liedern* (Paul Gerhardt's Spiritual Devotions Presented in 120 Songs). The collection was issued in fascicles of 12 hymns each over the two years; the fascicles were eventually bound into one book with separate instrumental parts. However, now Gerhardt's hymns were set to 112 of Ebeling's melodies and eight others in the same choral and instrumental format as Crüger's 1649 edition.

Before examining in detail two of Gerhardt's works, it is important to remember that his hymns were intended for use both in personal reading and singing in family devotions as well as in worship at church. In the liturgy in church the hymn tune would have been laid out by means of a brief prelude on the organ. Thereafter, however, the leadership of the singing would be the responsibility of the choir, which often sang alternate stanzas of the hymn with its partner, the congregation. This practice was adapted from earlier liturgical practice to teach new melodies to the congregation, to provide parishioners with greater security in singing, and to give the choir a chance to embellish the melody in settings that were artistically satisfying and inspiring to the hearers. (Alternation could also reduce the tedium that might eventually accompany the singing of very long hymns.) In one sense the congregation and the choir engaged in a friendly competition in singing stanzas of hymns of the faith. In the choral stanzas the tune would generally have been found in the soprano voice where it was heard most easily above the usual setting in four-part harmony.

An Examination of Two Gerhardt Hymns

Auf, auf, mein Herz mit Freuden (Awake, My Heart, with Gladness, *ELH*, No.341) The text is rooted in Col. 2:15 and Romans 6. In the conflict of Christ and the Devil, Gerhardt portrays how Christ won the victory in a battle over death in a way that is comparable to Luther's great and graphic Easter hymn, *Christ lag in Todesbanden* (Christ Lay in Death's Strong Bands). As Gerhardt wrote this hymn

the land had just endured the ravages of the Thirty Years' War, and therefore a song of victory over death was most appropriate for the survivors as they considered the fragility of life. Here Gerhardt affirms the reality of the Resurrection for them and explores its meaning for all believers. The excellent translation in *ELH* is by John Kelly (1857).

The hymn first appeared in 1648 set to Johann Crüger's own melody in his *Praxis pietatis melica* and has remained associated with that tune ever since. The unusual triple meter of the melody among Crüger settings of Gerhardt hymns matches the exuberant spirit of its text. Also, the final line of the melody for this heaven-directed text climbs seven scale degrees to conclude on the highest pitch of the hymn, an unusual but appropriate musical metaphor for a hymn on the resurrection! The tune clearly captures the exuberance of the text. As a result it has remained one of the most popular of Lutheran Easter hymns.

Text meter: 76 76 66 66; eight of nine original stanzas in *ELH*. The original stanza 3 is omitted in *ELH*. Musical form (barform): a b a b c c'd b'

1. Awake, my heart with gladness,
 See what today is done,
 Now after gloom and sadness
 Comes forth the glorious Sun!
 My Savior there was laid
 Where our bed must be made
 When to the realms of light
 Our spirit wings its flight.

1. Auf, auf, mein Herz, mit Freuden,
 Nimm wahr, was heut geschieht!
 Wie kommt nach grossem Leiden
 Nun ein so grosses Licht!
 Mein Heiland war gelegt
 Da, wo man uns hinträgt,
 Wenn von uns unser Geist
 Gen Himmel ist gereist.

Gerhardt refers to the biblical Resurrection account, echoing the women coming to the tomb on the first Easter morning and Mary running back to tell the disciples (Matthew 28:8; Mark 16:2; John 20:4). We are called to get up, awaken!; he compares the raising of Christ from the dead to the rising of a great light, which translator Kelly capitalizes as Sun, referring both to the astronomical body and to Christ. My Savior lies in the grave as we must when we die, while our spirit goes to heaven. Translation of the last two lines is more poetic and appropriate to the melody than the original; thus,

our spirit “wings its flight” to the heavenly “realms of light” as the melody soars upward.

2. The Foe in triumph shouted
When Christ lay in the tomb.
But, lo, he now is routed.
His boast is turned to gloom.
For Christ again is free;
In glorious victory
He who is strong to save
Has triumphed o’er the grave.

2. Er war ins Grab gesenket,
Der Feind trieb gross Geschrei.
Eh er’s vermeint und denket
Ist Christus wieder frei
Und ruft: “Viktoria!”
Schwingt fröhlich hier und da
Sein Fähnlein als ein Held,
Der Feld und Mut behält.

Gerhardt cites the glee of the Devil at Christ’s death; the Devil cries out in triumph. The first two lines each end in two words that begin with the letter “G.” Later, when Christ is risen, Christ calls out “*Victoria!*” (not translated into English), and soars in triumph over the grave. He swings his pennant over the field as the banner of a conquering hero.

3. [Original stanza]
Upon the grave is standing
The Hero looking round;
The Foe, no more withstanding,
His weapons on the ground,
Throws down, his hellish power.
To Christ he must give o’er
And to the Victor’s bands
Must yield his feet and hands.

3. Der Held steht auf dem Grabe
Und sieht sich munter um;
Der Feind liegt und legt abe
Gift, Gall und Ungestüm
Er wirft zu Christi Fuss.
Sein Höllenreich und muss
Selbst in des Siegers Band
Ergeben Fuss und Hand.

At the site of the Resurrection Christ the Hero dramatically stands on the grave and sees the Devil and his hellish power thrown down; the Devil must yield his feet and hands (as a prisoner) in defeat.

3. [In Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary]
This is a sight that gladdens;
What peace it doth impart!
Now nothing ever saddens
The joy within my heart;
No gloom shall ever shake,
No foe shall ever take
The hope which God’s own Son
In love for me hath won.

3. Das ist mir anzuschauen
Ein rechtes Freudenspiel;
Nun soll mir nicht mehr grauen
Vor allem, was mir will
Entnehmen meinen Mut
Zusamt dem edlen Gut,
So mir durch Jesum Christ
Aus Lieb erworben ist.

The meaning of the Resurrection for me: The sight is a true play of joy (*Freudenspiel*); now, nothing will sadden me; there is hope for me won in love by God's Son.

4. Now hell, its prince, the devil,
Of all their power are shorn;
Now I am safe from evil,
And sin I laugh to scorn.
Grim death with all his might
Cannot my soul affright;
He is a powerless form,
Howe'er he rave and storm.

4. Die Höll' und ihre Rotten,
Die krümmen mir kein Haar;
Der Sünden kann ich spotten,
Bleib' allzeit ohn' Gefahr;
Der Tod mit seiner Macht
Wird schlecht bei mir geacht't;
Er bleibt ein totes Bild,
Und wär' er noch so wild.

The thought continues: Now hell and its *Rotten* (forces) have their power shorn (like Samson); I can laugh at sin; death is powerless over me; he (death is personified) remains merely a dead image or figure.

5. The world against me rageth,
Its fury I disdain;
Through bitter war it wageth,
Its work is all in vain.
My heart from care is free,
No trouble troubles me.
Misfortune now is play,
And night is bright as day.

5. Die Welt ist mir ein Lachen
Mit ihrem grossen Zorn;
Sie zürnt und kann nichts machen.
All Arbeit ist verlor'n.
Die Trübsal trübt mir nicht.
Mein Herz und Angesicht;
Das Unglück ist mein Glück,
Die Nacht mein Sonnenblick.

The personal power of the Resurrection. Contrast is emphasized in the stanza. Now the fury of the world is laughable; no trouble troubles me (*Trübsal* / *trübt*=troubles not my heart and countenance); misfortune becomes happiness (*Unglück* / *Glück*); and night is bright as day (*Sonnenblick*=glimpse of the sun).

6. Now I will cling forever
To Christ, my Savior true;
My Lord will leave me never,
Whate'er He passes through.
He rends Death's iron chain;
He breaks through sin and pain;
He shatters hell's dark thrall;
I follow Him through all.

6. Ich hang' und bleib' auch hangen
An Christo als ein Glied;
Wo mein Haupt durch ist gangen,
Da nimmt er mich auch mit.
Er reisset durch den Tod,
Durch Welt' durch Sünd' und Not,
Er reisset durch die Höll',
Ich bin stets sein Gesell.

My personal commitment to the Savior. I cling (and remain clinging) to Christ forever as a member of His body (a limb); (Romans 12:5); whatever he endures: he goes through death, through sin, through pain; he shatters hell (*durch* is repeated 5 times; *reisset* appears twice); I follow Him through it all; I am his companion.

7. To halls of heavenly splendor
 With Him I penetrate;
 And trouble ne'er may hinder
 Nor make me hesitate.
 Let tempests rage at will,
 My Savior shields me still;
 He grants abiding peace
 And bids all tumult cease.

7. Er dringt zum Saal der Ehren,
 Ich folg ihm immer nach
 Und darf mich gar nicht kehren
 An einzig Ungemach.
 Es tobe, was da kann,
 Mein Haupt nimmt sich mein an;
 Mein Heiland ist mein Schild.
 Der alles Toben stillt.

A repetition of my commitment. I follow him faithfully to the heavenly halls of honor; nothing will delay me (not a single trouble); my *Haupt* (Head, Leader) keeps me; my *Heiland* (Savior) is my shield; (Note fourfold poetic, personal emphasis of *mein*.) He quiets all the tumult.

8. He brings me to the portal
 That leads to bliss untold
 Whereon this rhyme immortal
 Is found in script of gold:
 "Who there My cross hath shared
 Finds here a crown prepared;
 Who there with Me has died
 Shall here be glorified."

8. Er bringt mich an die Pforten,
 Die in den Himmel führt
 Daran mit güldnen Worten
 Der Reim gelesen wird:
 "Wer dort wird mit verhöhnt,
 Wird hier auch mit gekrönt;
 Wer dort mit sterben geht
 Wird hier auch mit erhöht."

The golden glory of heaven awaits me. He brings me to the gates that lead to heaven; there golden words read: "He who has been despised with Me and gone through death with Me will in heaven be glorified (with Me)." (Cf. the gold of heaven [Revelation 21]; also the promise to the dying thief on the cross [Luke 23:43]). Note the repetition of *wer dort* and *wird hier* and the contrasts noted thereby.

Fröhlich soll mein Herze springen (All My Heart Sings and Rejoices, *ELH* 115) Reflects on the Incarnation and explains its meaning for

the sinful believer and views the joyful prospect of life eternal. The memorable translation by Catherine Winkworth (1827–78) captures the immediacy of the birth and its eternal implications for believers. As Gerhardt intended, we are at the manger, seeing and listening to the Child as we contemplate the meaning of the Incarnation for our heaven bound lives.

The hymn first appeared in Crüger's *Praxis pietatis melica* in 1653. The tune is especially well-crafted. The unique, short second and third lines and matching sixth and seventh lines of three feet each are set cleverly by Crüger. The first pair of three note patterns descends and then rises again, while the second pair does just the opposite, ascending first and then descending.

Text meter: 8 33 6 Double; an unusual meter that Gerhardt (or Crüger?) also found appropriate for the Easter hymn, *Warum sollt ich mich denn grämen* (Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me, *ELH* 377); all fifteen of the original stanzas are given in *ELH*. Musical form: a b b'c d e e' f.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. All my heart this night rejoices
 As I hear
 Far and near
 Sweetest angel voices.
 "Christ is born," their choirs are singing
 Till the air
 Everywhere
 Now with joy is ringing.</p> | <p>1. Fröhlich soll mein Herze springen
 Dieser Zeit,
 Da vor Freud'
 Alle Engel singen.
 Hört, hört, wie mit vollen Chören
 Alle Luft
 Laute ruft:
 "Christus ist geboren!"</p> |
|---|--|

An outburst of joy at the event of the Incarnation. "My heart leaps up in glee; all angels sing" (Luke 2:10–15); *Hört, hört* (repeated words = Listen, listen); *Alle Luft Laute ruft* (alliteration)= all the air calls out "Christ is born!"

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>2. Forth today the Conqueror goeth.
 Who the foe,
 Sin and woe,
 Death and hell, o'erthroweth.
 God is man, man to deliver;
 His dear Son
 Now is one
 With our blood forever.</p> | <p>2. Heute geht aus seiner Kammer
 Gottes Held,
 Der die Welt
 Reisst aus allem Jammer.
 Gott wird Mensch dir, Mensch, zugute.
 Gottes Kind,
 Das verbind't
 Sich mit unserm Blute.</p> |
|---|--|

The meaning of the Incarnation. Today God's Hero goes forth (out of his heavenly chamber=*Kammer*); *reißt aus* (tears out all misery) *Mensch* [repeated]; his blood, mixed with ours binds us forever with him (as with a blood oath); *Gottes Held*; *Gottes Kind* (repeated words, parallel construction).

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>3. Shall we still dread God's displeasure,
 Who, to save,
 Freely gave
 His most cherished Treasure?
 To redeem us, He hath given
 His own Son
 From the throne
 Of His might above us.</p> | <p>3. Sollt' uns Gott nun können hassen
 Der uns gibt,
 Was er liebt
 Über alle Massen?
 Gott gibt, unserm Leid zu wehren,
 Seinen Sohn
 Aus dem Thron
 Seiner Macht und Ehren.</p> |
|--|---|

Rhetorical questioning. Should we dread God who to save us gave us his Treasure (a treasure "beyond all measure") from his throne?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>4. Should He who Himself imparted
 Aught withhold
 From the fold,
 Leave us broken-hearted?
 Should the Son of God not love us,
 Who, to cheer
 Suff'ers here,
 Left His throne above us?</p> | <p>4. Sollte von uns sein gekehret,
 Der Sein Reich
 Und zugleich
 Sich uns selbst verehret?
 Sollt uns Gottes Sohn nicht lieben,
 Der jetzt kömmt,
 Von uns nimmt,
 Was uns will betrüben?</p> |
|--|---|

More questions. The second four lines parallel the first four in thought. "Is it not logical that God's Son loved us, since He left His throne to come to earth to save us?"

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>5. If our blessed Lord and Maker
 Hated men,
 Would he then
 Be of flesh partaker?
 If He in our woe delighted
 Would He bear
 All the care
 Of our race benighted?</p> | <p>5. Hätte vor der Menschen Orden
 Unser Heil
 Einen Greu'l,
 Wär' er nicht Mensch worden.
 Hätt' er Lust zu unserm Schaden,
 Ei, so würd'
 Unsre Bürd'
 Er nicht auf sich laden.</p> |
|--|--|

Conjecture. Again, parallel sets of four lines. If He had a distaste for the human condition would He have become human? If He hated us would He take on Himself the burden of our human flesh?

6. He becomes the Lamb that taketh
 Sin away
 And for aye
 Full atonement maketh.
 For our life His own He tenders,
 And our race,
 By His grace,
 Meet for glory renders.

6. Er nimmt auf sich, was auf Erden
 Wir getan,
 Gibt sich an,
 Unser Lamm zu werden,
 Unser Lamm das für uns stirbet
 Und bei Gott
 Für den Tod
 Gnad' und Fried' erwirbet.

The questions are answered by looking ahead to Christ's death: He becomes the (Passover) Lamb (I Cor. 5:7), *our Lamb* (repeated for emphasis), who gains for us, instead of death, grace and peace (*Gnad und Fried*) (as in the pastoral greeting before the sermon in worship). Cf. the beginning of Paul's epistles (e.g., Romans 1:7).

7. Hark! a voice from yonder manger,
 Soft and sweet,
 Doth entreat:
 "Flee from woe and danger.
 Brethren, from all ills that grieve you
 You are freed;
 All you need
 I will surely give you."

7. Nun, er liegt in seiner Krippen,
 Ruft zu sich
 Mich und dich,
 Spricht mit süßen Lippen:
 "Lasset fahr'n, o lieben Brüder,
 Was euch quält,
 Was euch fehlt;
 Ich bring alles wieder."

At the manger again, (the Infant) Christ tells us of the purpose of His Incarnation: "Listen!" From the crib he calls to you and me with *süßen Lippen* (sweet lips), *was euch quält; was euch fehlt* (whatever torments you; what you are lacking), "O dear brethren, you are freed from the ills (of sin); all you need I will give you."

8. Come, then, banish all your sadness,
 One and all,
 Great and small;
 Come with songs of gladness.
 Love Him who with love is glowing;
 Hail the Star,
 Near and far
 Light and joy bestowing.

8. Ei, so kommt und lasst uns laufen!
 Stellt euch ein,
 Gross und klein,
 Eilt mit grossem Haufen!
 Liebt den, der vor Liebe brennet;
 Schaut den Stern,
 Der uns gern
 Licht und Labsal gönnet.

Our response: (In imitation of the shepherds) we hasten to accept Him. “Oh! Come then, let us run (*lasst uns laufen*); hurry with the great crowd;” *Stern* (Morning Star, Star of Bethlehem); *Liebt / Liebe* [repeated]: “Love Him who with love is glowing, light and comfort (*Licht und Labsal*) bestowing.” Note the three pairs of words beginning with the letter “L”.

9. Ye whose anguish knew no measure,
 Weep no more; See the door
 To celestial pleasure.
 Cling to Him, for He will guide you
 Where no cross,
 Pain, or loss
 Can again betide you.

9. Die ihr schwebt in grossen Leiden,
 Sehet, hier ist die Tür
 Zu den wahren Freuden.
 Fasst ihn wohl, er wird euch führen
 An den Ort,
 Da hinfort
 Euch kein Kreuz wird rühren.

Addressing us, sinners: You who are suspended in great suffering; see, here is the door (Christ, the door; John 10:9) to true joy; hang on to Him; he will lead you to the place where no cross will disturb you.

10. Hither come, ye heavy-hearted,
 Who for sin,
 Deep within,
 Long and sore have smarted;
 For the poisoned wounds you're feeling
 Help is near,
 One is here
 Mighty for their healing.

10. Wer sich fühlt beschwert im Herzen,
 Wer empfind't
 Seine Sünd'
 Und Gewissenschmerzen,
 Sei getrost: hier wird gefunden,
 Der in Eil'
 Machtet heil
 Die vergift'ten Wunden.

An invitation to sinners. “Come, you whose hearts are afflicted with sin and *Gewissenschmerzen* (conscience pangs [unusually long word]); be confident; find comfort here; healing for your poisoned wounds.”

11. Hither come, ye poor and wretched;
 Know His will
 Is to fill
 Every hand outstretchèd.
 Here are riches without measure;
 Here forget
 All regret,
 Fill your hearts with treasure.

11. Die ihr arm seid und elende,
 Kommt herbei,
 Füllet frei
 Eures Glaubens Hände!
 Hier sind alle guten Gaben
 Und das Gold,
 Da ihr sollt
 Euer Herz mit laben.

Repeats and extends the invitation to sinners: “Hither, come (parallel construction as in st.10) ye poor and wretched, extending your poor hands in faith; here are all good gifts and the true gold to refresh your heart.”

12. Let me in my arms receive Thee;
 On Thy breast
 Let me rest,
 Savior, ne'er to leave Thee.
 Since Thou hast Thyself presented
 Now to me,
 I shall be
 Evermore contented.

12. Süßes Heil, lass dich umfängen,
 Lass mich dir,
 Meine Zier,
 Unverrückt anhängen!
 Du bist meines Lebens Leben;
 Nun kann ich
 Mich durch dich
 Wohl zufrieden geben.

A personal prayer and commitment. (Describing a loving embrace) “Sweetest Savior; you are my *lebens Leben* (the Light of my life); now I can, through you, be ever satisfied.” Note the four successive words that end in *ch*.

13. Guilt no longer can distress me;
 Son of God,
 Thou my load
 Bearest to release me.
 Stain in me Thou findest never;
 I am clean,
 All my sin
 Is removed forever.

13. Meine Schuld kann mich nicht drücken,
 Denn du hast
 Meine Last.
 All auf deinem Rücken.
 Kein Fleck ist an mir zu finden,
 Ich bin gar
 Rein und klar
 Aller meiner Sünden.

A personal commitment and prayer. “My guilt can no longer press down on me; you have taken my load (sins) on your back; I am altogether pure and clean of my sins.”

14. I am pure, in Thee believing,
 From Thy store
 Evermore
 Righteous robes receiving.
 In my heart I will enfold Thee,
 Treasure rare,
 Let me there,
 Loving, ever hold Thee.

14. Ich bin rein um deinetwillen;
 Du gibst gnug
 Ehr und Schmuck,
 Mich darein zu hüllen.
 Ich will dich ins Herze schliessen;
 O mein Ruhm,
 Edle Blum,
 Lass dich recht geniessen!

A personal commitment and prayer. “*Ich bin rein*” (I am pure [repeated and advancing the thought from stanza 13]). *Ruhm... geniessen* (“Oh my glory, Noble Flower; let me truly enjoy you.”).

15. Dearest Lord, Thee will I cherish.
 Though my breath
 Fail in death,
 Yet I shall not perish,
 But with Thee abide forever
 There on high,
 In that joy
 Which can vanish never.

15. Ich will dich mit Fleiss bewahren,
 Ich will dir
 Leben hier,
 Dir will ich abfahren;
 Mit dir will ich endlich schweben
 Voller Freud
 Ohne Zeit
 Dort im andern Leben.

A personal commitment: “I will here be diligently faithful to you; with you I will enjoy complete happiness, timelessly, there in the next life ” (see Revelation 22).

Conclusion

The hymns of Paul Gerhardt form a clear witness to his unique contribution to Christian literature and worship. They reflect his conviction in the orthodox Christian faith as defined by the Lutheran Confessions. But they do more. In these hymns Gerhardt has given Christians a vehicle to contemplate the truths of the Gospel as they relate to Christian life. Above all, he states with great beauty and certainty the importance of keeping one’s eyes on the goal of eternal life in the face of the trials and tragedies of mortal life.

Gerhardt’s hymns can only be considered truly successful today if they are sung. They are not museum pieces merely to be admired. They bear their greatest relevance for worshipers of our present age in song. In order to accomplish this end, pastors themselves need to read them devoutly, schedule them regularly in worship, and

refer to them frequently in sermons. Parish education leaders should help the young to sing the hymns frequently and commit selected stanzas to memory. To support this practice, church musicians need to find every opportunity available to expose their choirs and their congregations to the eminently singable tunes to which Gerhardt's texts are set. Many fine artistic settings are available for choirs, and organ prelude arrangements of the melodies abound. The melodies need to become the common currency of each congregation. The texts and tunes will do the rest if only they are given exposure.

*Hymns that adore Him
Are precious before Him,
And to His throne like sweet incense they rise.*

Bibliography

- Blume, Friedrich. "The Age of Confessionalism," trans., Theodore Hoelty-Nickel, in *Protestant Church Music: A History*, by Friedrich Blume, et al. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974), a wide-ranging and detailed history of Lutheran church music translated from the German.
- Bunners, Christian. *Paul Gerhardt: Weg, Werk, Wirkung* (Berlin: Buchverlag Union, 1993); a definitive source of biographical and analytical information.
- Dallmann, William. *Paul Gerhardt: His Life and His Hymns* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c., 1907); a slender, informal introduction to Gerhardt's life and work.
- Ebeling, Johan Georg. *Pauli Gerhardi geistliche Andachten bestehend in hundert und zwanzig Liedern* (Berlin: Christoff Rungen, 1667), facs. ed., Friedrich Kemp (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1975). A republished edition of actual choir book with a separate book of instrumental parts.
- Herl, Joseph. "What's So Special about Paul Gerhardt?" (Unpublished brief lecture manuscript, no date).
- _____. *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), a valuable examination of parish visitation reports of early Lutheranism that cites the problems encountered in encouraging congregational song in early Lutheranism.
- Hewitt, Theodore B. *Paul Gerhardt as a Hymn Writer and His Influence on English Hymnody*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1976). A scholarly and reliable reprint of the 1918 first ed. of Yale University Press that was based on the author's dissertation. It also includes a summary of Gerhardt's life and the literary and theological environment in which he moved.
- Martens, Edmund R. *A Study of Johann Crüger and His Twelve Chorale Melodies Appearing in The Lutheran Hymnal* (University of Southern California: M. Mus. Thesis, 1964).

An examination of hymns of Gerhardt appearing in the 1940 hymnal of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod.

New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, ed., Stanley Sadie (Washington, D. C.: Macmillan: 1980): The twenty volumes contain numerous articles related to the period under study.

Chief among these are:

Blankenburg, Walter, “Johann Georg Ebeling,” V, 809–10.

Buelow, George, “Johannes Crüger,” V, 69–71.

Leaver, Robin A. and Ann Bond, “Martin Luther,” XI, 365–71. Within this article see especially “Lutheranism and Music,” 367–69.

Marshall, Traute Maass, “Paul Gerhardt,” VII, 255–56.

Riedel, Johannes. *The Lutheran Chorale: Its Basic Traditions* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1967); an introduction to the subject.

Endnotes

¹ *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*, Worship Committee of The Evangelical Lutheran Synod (St. Louis: MorningStar Music Publishers, 1996).

² Theodore B. Hewitt, *Paul Gerhardt as a Hymn Writer and His influence on English Hymnody*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1976). This is largely a reprint of the 1918 first ed. of Yale University Press. Hewitt surveys Gerhardt's life, including the theological, literary, and political environment of his times, with an emphasis on the character of the hymns and their translation into English.

³ Ibid. 20.

⁴ Ibid. 26.

Reaction to the 2007 Reformation Lectures

by Jerome T. Gernander

One danger we confront in thinking about our father in the faith, Paul Gerhardt, is to turn him into two Paul Gerhardts. On one hand there is Paul Gerhardt, the theologian who firmly stood his confessional Lutheran ground, joining in the condemnations of Calvinism and resisting the temptations of doctrinal compromise. On the other hand there is Paul Gerhardt, the hymn writer who apparently never makes us sing of such nasty, divisive things as the sacraments, but is the writer of “Jesus hymns,” so personal and warm and touching in their emphasis on my “personal relationship with Jesus” that non-Lutherans may comfortably join in. May the Lord deliver us from this evil too.

There are not two Paul Gerhardts. One does not need to go only to the historical records about Gerhardt to discover the pastor and theologian he was, although that is helpful and corrective for those who see in his hymns only a pious personal belief in Jesus that represents the “mere Christianity” that people of all denominations can share. But also, one can find in Gerhardt’s hymns the same firm confession he displayed in the struggle with the Great Elector.

President Schmeling has first pointed us to the history, highlighting the facts of the ill-fated colloquy of 1662–1663, instigated by the Great Elector. This is where Gerhardt’s Lutheranness comes out most clearly as the one who prepared the written statements of the Lutherans.

Gerhardt’s family history is very important here. President Schmeling has referred to the career of Gerhardt’s grandfather, Caspar Starke. What is important to realize is that Starke belonged to the period of the writing of the Formula of Concord. The importance of the Formula of Concord in the faith and confession of Paul Gerhardt cannot be overestimated. The attempt by the “Reformed” to remove the effects of that confession in his grandfather’s time—when the Formula of Concord was not even 20 years old—stamped itself on Gerhardt’s mind. His grandfather’s steadfastness did as well.

Equally important is Gerhardt's ordination vow. President Schmeling mentioned this. The actual vow of November 18, 1651, includes specific mention of the Augsburg Confession, its Apology, the Smalcald Articles, Luther's Catechisms and the complete Formula of Concord (*Formula item Concordia comprehensam*), as well as the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures.

President Schmeling has done us a great favor in translating for us Paul Gerhardt's own words in a number of places. Gerhardt declares the scriptural faith of the Formula of Concord concerning the "oral reception" in the Lord's Supper, and its place as a fundamental article of faith. President Schmeling has also nicely explained this in terms everyone can understand. Second, Gerhardt's words are: "As such, I cannot hold the Calvinists to be Christians." It is hard to get around these words. We are not to soft-pedal them either. While Gerhardt is speaking of the confession of that "denomination," these words condemn people who believe that confession. At other points in the colloquy, Gerhardt applied *damnatus* to the Calvinists.

What all of this reflects is that for Paul Gerhardt and his fellow Lutherans, there is no Christ apart from the Christ who (in the Lord's Supper) gives His very body and blood to be eaten and drunk for the remission of sins. Whoever rejects this Christ is not a Christian.

This leads us to Gerhardt's hymns. If you sing through the Gerhardt hymns translated into English, you will search in vain for explicit references to the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. (An exception is the baptism hymn which is included in the new LCMS hymnal. Another exception is "O Enter, Lord, Thy Temple" verses 2 and 3, but those verses are not included in the modern Lutheran hymnals, ELH included. President Schmeling has shared the information on the Lord's Supper hymn, which Rev. John Stephenson included in a full, singable translation in his *Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics XII: The Lord's Supper*.)

But these few exceptions are not in general use in our churches. So, is Paul Gerhardt as a hymn writer someone who offers a generic Jesus to those who sing these hymns?

The answer is no. As President Schmeling has noted, verses 7-10 of the hymn, "A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth" are an

allusion to the Lord's Supper. President Schmeling explains his way through these words, but the words themselves are a more powerful testimony:

Verse 7: ... My greater treasure, Jesus Christ,
Is this which from Thy wounds most blest
 Flowed forth for my salvation.

Verse 8: ... And when all else has lost its zest,
 This manna still shall feed me;
In thirst my drink, in want my food;
 My company in solitude,
 To comfort and to lead me.

Verse 9: Of death I am no more afraid,
 New life from Thee is flowing...

which is actually: *Was shadet mir des Todes Gift?/Dein Blut das ist mein Leben*: “Death’s poison cannot harm me now,/Thy blood new life bestoweth”¹

If we only take this one example, we see that in this Passion hymn, when all Christian hearts are looking to Christ crucified, and thinking that Gerhardt is directing them to the Lamb of God on the cross (which he, of course, is doing), the words are about the wounds, the blood, the drink, and the manna and food. Especially the more literal rendering of the words in verse 9, “Thy blood new life bestoweth,” tell us where Gerhardt is bringing us. These words are very reminiscent of the Formula of Concord’s words and all Lutheran preaching about the Sacrament of the Altar. Jesus’ blood bestoweth new life. Where do we find that to be true in the clearest way? In the Lord’s Supper.

What we are seeing is that the Paul Gerhardt who was so insistent that he would not yield at all to the Calvinists on the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper is also insistent that he will not give his “parishioners”—including us—anything less in our hymns. He will direct our faith not only to Christ in the blood that He shed for us but to Christ in the blood that He gives to us.

This is very important. Even in our use of Scripture in the Lutheran church, there can be a “Calvinizing” tendency. How often

even we spiritualize the blood of Jesus! If we hear texts such as “the blood of Jesus Christ ... cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:7), do we think of the Lord’s Supper? I submit that we spiritualize a verse like this. We picture the blood of Jesus covering us; we go back to Calvary in our mind’s eye. It isn’t so different from getting a presence of Jesus’ body and blood by going in our mind’s eye up to heaven where He is enthroned, as the Calvinist belief says. But in his hymns, Gerhardt is directing us to Jesus’ blood where He bestows it and where we receive it in material form in the Lord’s Supper—the oral eating and drinking, for which he was willing to stake his life and ministry in 1662 and beyond.

If we can see that there are not two Paul Gerhardts but one, and that he clearly confessed Christ not in a generic Protestant way but in a Lutheran way in both his theological battles and his hymns—which are theological battles in their own way—then what are we to learn?

I think it is this: We are to see that the battle Gerhardt held off is still going on. The Great Elector’s victory was thwarted by Paul Gerhardt and his fellow Lutheran confessors, but the Great Elector can still win his victory in our churches. Gerhardt would have been condemned for his preaching that enunciated a condemnation of Calvinist teaching. There would have been enough evidence. But would there be enough evidence to convict us of being Lutheran?

This is where we have sins to confess this Reformation season. Our preaching, our treatment of hymns and other elements of worship, the way we catechize and instruct, and our approach to pastoral practice and life in the congregation do not always enunciate a clear and distinctly Lutheran confession. A visitor might come away from our churches thinking that Lutherans are not so different from Protestants. Out of a desire for our churches to grow and gain more members, we might be led to want them to think that. This is why we dumb down our worship, our preaching, and our teaching. We think if we just talk about Jesus and not so much about the Sacraments, or if we highlight our similarities and not our differences, our churches will be better off. Paul Gerhardt shows us that this is not the Lutheran way.

We are tempted these days to compromise in no less of a

way than Gerhardt himself was tempted to compromise. It will be more peaceful for us in the church if our differences from generic Protestantism are less pronounced. This is a gradual defection, just as the Great Elector planned a gradual march toward changing of the church's confession and identity.

One hundred fifty years after Gerhardt, this was still the issue—as it is today. I close with the words of Wilhelm Loehe, who analyzed the religious unionism in America. He was speaking of what his “missioners” would find as they tried to plant churches among the settlers. In the planting—or building—of our churches today, his words are needed by us as well:

But now they not only build union churches there, but want to have “union pastors” (*Simultanpfarrer*) too, if one can speak of such without derision. The people of the various denominations... pool their money for pastor and church and desire pastors who will let them keep what they have and will serve them according to their wishes. The churches are called “Lutheran-Reformed,” as though one could and dared combine opposites; the pastors are “Lutheran-Reformed” and so forth. In short, poverty and the small number of settlers in newly acquired sites leads first of all to outward union; then, when a little time has passed, men are found united in heart also—that is, Reformed. For the Lutherans, ignorant of their heritage, are usually ready to yield...²

May God preserve us in the one true faith as He preserved our fathers in the faith such as Paul Gerhardt!

Endnotes

¹ Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary, 191, v. 9.

² Wilhelm Loehe, quoted in *Moving Frontiers: Readings in the History of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod*, edited by Carl S. Meyer (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), p. 103.

Reaction to the 2007 Reformation Lectures

By Thomas L. Rank

Thank you President Schmeling for your work and study of Pastor Paul Gerhardt. It is a blessing to be able to gather for these few hours to discuss the doctrine of the Lutheran Church, as exemplified in the hymns of Gerhardt. You have given us a detailed examination of his life and faith, the necessary context for hearing him today as we sing and pray the hymns he wrote.

Gerhardt's struggle against the "Second Reformation" is a struggle that has followed the Lutheran church throughout its history. In Luther's day Karlstadt, Zwingli, and the other "enthusiasts" opposed Luther's conservative approach to reformation in regard to externals. But the criticism was directed against the substance of the Lutheran teaching as well. Luther was criticized especially regarding his insistence on remaining with the words of Jesus Christ in the institution of the Lord's Supper: "This is My body." The need for the defense of the scriptural teaching of the Lord's Supper continued into Gerhardt's day with the Reformed denial of the oral reception of the body and blood of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar. That defense continues to be necessary in our own day as time and time again the Lutheran church is called upon to modify and weaken her insistence upon the real presence of the body and blood in the sacrament. The Lutheran reformers, as well as those who followed them, knew what was at stake in this matter. Luther confessed: the sacrament is the gospel. That phrase captures well why the Lutheran church does not and cannot in good conscience allow the real presence of the body and blood of Jesus Christ to be denied or in any way minimized in the Lord's Supper. It is about the blood of Jesus, given and shed for you, for the remission of sins. This is a treasure for souls burdened by sin and confronted with death. It is the medicine of immortality.

It is worth noting that the point of contention with the Reformed and others who say that the Lutheran Reformation did not go far enough focuses on the ways by which God delivers the

forgiveness of sins to sinners: baptism, absolution, and the Supper. Gerhardt was opposed by those who were offended by the exorcism in baptism and by the oral eating of the body and blood of Jesus in the Holy Supper. To defend these scriptural truths is not a matter of denominational loyalty, but a matter of confessing the truth of God's Word, of the care of souls, of trusting and applying the divinely given forgiveness of sins in the various ways God has appointed. As Luther wrote in the Smalcald Articles:

We shall now return to the Gospel, which offers council and help against sin in more than one way, for God is surpassingly rich in his grace: First, through the spoken word, by which the forgiveness of sin (the peculiar function of the Gospel) is preached to the whole world; second, through Baptism; third, through the holy Sacrament of the Altar; fourth, through the power of the keys; and finally, through the mutual conversation and consolation of brethren. (Tappert, SA, III, V)

Gerhardt served as pastor during the years following the devastation of the Thirty Years' War. The death of loved ones, the destruction of property, in fact, the loss of much of that for which we thank God in the First Article explanation ("home and family, property and goods, and all that I need to support this body and life") burdened his parishioners. This was the context for the pastoral care Gerhardt was called to provide. It was a context that demanded a right understanding of the spiritual troubles and their need to be addressed by the Word of God in its fullness. Gerhardt's hymns were never some mantra-like repetition of simple praise to God, nor were they superficial. One cannot sing or pray his hymns without reaching the conclusion that he captures well the distress of a soul troubled by the cross, by the burdens of life in the midst of death. Yet these hymns are not morbid, depressing, funeral dirges. Pastor Gerhardt applies the gospel, the grace of God in Christ, the Christ "for me," to the troubled soul. This is part of the genius of the pastoral care of souls which shines through Gerhardt's hymns. The soul is comforted, not by its own attempts to climb out of trouble, not by its own feelings about God, but by being directed to Christ, to Christ on the cross, to the promises of God delivered in Word and Sacrament.

Gerhardt understood well the spiritual burdens of a soul's sins, fear of death, temptations from Satan, and worldly trials. Such an understanding of the true spiritual needs of souls lies at the heart of pastoral care, not only in the time following the Thirty Years' War, but in our own day as well. Pastoral care must include this realistic understanding that the struggle finally is as St. Paul describes it in his letter to the Ephesians: "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12, ESV). Where this understanding is lost we should not be surprised at what replaces true pastoral care of souls. There are reasons for marital problems, financial woes, sexual immorality, etc. If sin is not seen as the underlying, fundamental problem of the human condition, then we should not be surprised when programs for marital success, financial independence, etc., become the church's response to these things. Souls are not cured of sin by programs, but by the application of the Law and the Gospel. The tools for such pastoral care include teaching what it means to live as a baptized child of God (here consider the fourth question in the Small Catechism on Baptism: "What does such baptizing with water mean?"); how to confess sins and receive the absolution of God; what the Sacrament of the Altar is, and its benefits. Bible, hymnary, and catechism remain the basic books of pastoral care of souls, for in them is the foundation of the life of faith under the cross.

This study of the life and work of Paul Gerhardt as pastor and theologian has presented to us a wonderful opportunity to renew and strengthen our understanding of true pastoral care for those souls who grieve over cross and trial. While the early 21st- century United States is not dealing with the after effects of a decades-long war that ruined towns and farms and homes, we are still confronted with troubles of fire and flood, of war in distant lands, of the strikes of terrorists here, and our own personal struggles with sin and death. God give us discernment and faithfulness so that we see that the real troubles of our age finally are no different from those of earlier years, and that the ways by which God has provided help are timeless. We still preach, sing, and confess Christ crucified, and point souls to

the good news of the gospel, the forgiveness of sins. Thank you President Schmeling for leading us in this beneficial study.

After the Storm: Paul Gerhardt and a Pastoral Theology of the Cross

Alexander Ring

Paul Gerhardt: The Early Years

He is called “The Sweet Singer of Lutheranism,” and it is from his sweet songs and his other writings that we learn much of what we know of Paul Gerhardt’s life and theology, since many of the other records of his life were destroyed by a fire in 1637. That so little is known is ironically fitting, since a recurring theme of Gerhardt’s hymnody is removing our eyes from everything else and placing them upon Jesus, that we might “know nothing... except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2; ESV).

We do know that Gerhardt was born March 12, 1607, in the town of Gräfenhainichen, which is a few miles southwest of Wittenberg. Most citizens of the town earned their living by raising cattle or farming; the town was especially known for its hops. Paul’s father, Christian Gerhardt, was the burgomaster of the town. His mother, Dorothea Starke, was a granddaughter of a Lutheran pastor. Both of his parents died when he was young; his father in 1619 and his mother in 1621. Paul also had a number of brothers and sisters, but even less is known of them than him.

At the age of fifteen Paul entered the Fürstenschule at Grimma. The school was noted for its pious atmosphere and stern discipline; its chief aim was to inculcate in the pupils “*Gottesfurcht und gute Sitte.*”¹ Paul almost did not finish there; the school almost closed in 1626 when the plague came to Grimma. Fifty of the eighty-two students were removed from the school by their parents, but Paul remained and graduated on December 15, 1627. His final report noted, “With good parts he showed diligence and obedience; his Latin composition is largely satisfactory; his poetical efforts in this language may be rated tolerable.”²

A few weeks later, on January 2, 1628, he enrolled in the

university in Wittenberg. Here two teachers in particular had great influence on him: Paul Röber and Jacob Martini. Both were staunch proponents of Lutheranism, promoting its teachings not only in the classroom but in sermons and hymns. Röber, besides composing hymns, often took his sermon texts from religious poems or hymns; he once preached on the hymn “Was mein Gott will, das gescheh allzeit.”³ In this way, Gerhardt was taught the use of hymnody as a tool of pastoral care and instruction.

Not much else is known of Gerhardt’s university career. We do know that when he graduated from the university he was not immediately placed as a pastor. This may have been by choice, but it also may have been that because of the Thirty Years’ War there was an over-abundance of young clergy. If this was the case, it was the least of the afflictions of the Thirty Years’ War, which was perhaps the most devastating war in the history of Germany, leaving no one unaffected, including Paul Gerhardt. Aside from perhaps interfering with his finding a job it was because of the war that his hometown of Gräfenhainichen was destroyed. The Elector of Saxony, Johann Georg, had earlier signed an agreement with the Swedes to support the Protestant cause but then deserted them. Determined to punish him for this betrayal, the Swedes marched on Gräfenhainichen in April 1637 and demanded a war tax of 3000 Gulden. The town paid the tax, but the Swedish soldiers set fire to the town anyway. The Gerhardt house and the church with its many records were among the 400 buildings destroyed. Following this the plague came to Gräfenhainichen that summer and took 322 victims. As terrible as this incident is, it was typical of the war.

Gerhardt likely remained in Wittenberg through 1642. By 1643 he had moved to Berlin and was working as a tutor in the home of Andreas Barthold, since during this time he composed a *Hochzeitsode*⁴ for the marriage of one of Andreas’ daughters. He remained in Berlin for about nine years, composing a number of *Gelegenheitsgedichte*,⁵ as well as a number of hymns, although the income of a tutor did not provide enough to get his hymns published.

His hymns and poems did bring him to the attention of Johann Crüger, who was cantor and organist of the St. Nicholas Church in

Berlin. Crüger was impressed by Gerhardt's hymns and included eighteen of them in his *Praxis pietatis melica*, thus introducing them into public worship. The hymns proved to be popular, and Crüger and Gerhardt began a collaboration and friendship that continued for many years.⁶ As encouraging as all this would have been, Gerhardt still was not working in his chosen field; at the age of 45 he was still without a clerical position, earning his living as a private tutor.

The Thirty Years' War: The Pastor & the Crosses of His Parishioners

In September of 1651 Paul Gerhardt's days as a private tutor came to an end when at the recommendation of the Berlin clergy he was proposed to the magistrate of Mittenwalde as the new Probst.⁷ In his letter of recommendation Gerhardt is characterized as being "of well-known diligence and scholarship, of peace loving disposition and blameless life, besides being loved and esteemed by both high and low in Berlin."⁸ Upon the successful outcome of this recommendation, Gerhardt was ordained Probst of Mittenwalde on November 18, 1651, entering his new office in December of that year.

Like all the communities in Germany, Mittenwalde had suffered greatly from the Thirty Years' War. Not only had sons, fathers, and brothers been lost, but like Gräfenhainichen the town had suffered severely in 1637 from the Swedish marauders and attacks of pestilence. The war and the suffering it brought were nothing new to Gerhardt; it had been a sad reality for most of his life. But now he was in a position where he needed to minister to other people who were suffering, to both the parishioners and clergy of Mittenwalde.

One way in which Gerhardt accomplished this task was through his hymnody. Unfortunately (or maybe you are thinking "fortunately"), we cannot analyze all of Gerhardt's hymns in this paper. But we can look for some over-arching themes, take time to look a bit more closely at three hymns that are good illustrations of certain periods in Gerhardt's life, and see how he used his hymns as pastoral instruments.

First, *Gerhardt's hymns are very devotional*. One of the first

things I remember being taught in my grade school hymnody classes was that we should think of the hymns as sung prayers. However, singing Gerhardt's hymns you find that he is not so much composing prayers as devotions: his hymns often take a theme based on a biblical text and develop it around the division of Law and Gospel. This is especially true of the hymns published after his ordination. Their devotional nature becomes much more personal as they focus on the impact of the cross on the life of the Christian.⁹ Compare these two stanzas from "Now Rest Beneath Night's Shadow" (one of his early hymns) and "O Enter, Lord, Thy Temple" (a hymn written during his time in his first parish):

Lord Jesus, who dost love me,
O spread Thy wings above me
And shield me from alarm.
Though evil would assail me,
Thy mercy will not fail me,
I rest in Thy protecting arm.

O Holy Spirit, hear us
And make our sorrow cease;
Thy scattered flock restore now
To union, joy and peace;
Bid flourish once again
The lands by men forsaken,
The churches, spoiled and shaken
By war's unhallowed train.

Both ask for God's protection and relief from evil, but the latter has in mind a specific cross that is troubling God's people, and from which we seek comfort and relief.

Also along these lines, *Gerhardt's hymns are biblical*, not only in that they are based on the Bible, but they are rich in biblical pictures and allusion. There are many, many examples of this, but one excellent example is "A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth." While a Lenten hymn, it does not limit itself to Lenten themes and pictures but wanders off into Psalm 1, St. Luke 15, St. Matthew 22, St. John 6, Jonah 4, and Revelation 21 to use pictures of the water of life, the prodigal son, the robe of righteousness, the bread of life, and the church as a bride, just to name a few. Two of Gerhardt's favorite themes, demonstrated in "A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth" and many of his other hymns, are those of Jesus as our Light in darkness (St. John 9), and our true Treasure (2 Corinthians 4:7).

Thirdly, *Gerhardt always treats the cross as something real*. It is often tempting, for both comforter and sufferer alike, to belittle suffering. People at times feel guilty, even become apologetic, that they should be troubled by a cross in their life, believing they should

not allow themselves to be bothered by such things. Or sometimes they believe their suffering is trivial compared to that of others, and for that reason they should not feel afflicted or trouble God for help. (“Yes, Pastor, thank you for asking, I have been feeling depressed and lonely. No, Pastor, don’t come visit me; you’ve got more important things to do.”) And it is tempting at times for the one who is sought for comfort to take his cue from Job’s comforters, or to trivialize the cross given to another. (“It’s just a goldfish; you’ll get over it.” “You think you’ve got troubles, listen to what I’m dealing with....”) In his hymns Gerhardt shows he understood the suffering of his parishioners was real, whether it was from having lost loved ones in the war or being afraid of the dark. Very often he brings across this reality by addressing specific crosses, such as in the stanza we looked at above.

Yet as real as the suffering is, the comfort and providence of God is portrayed as being just as real.

Thy way and all thy sorrows
 Give thou into His hand,
 His gracious care unfailing
 Who doth the heav’ns command;
 Their course and path He giveth
 To clouds and air and wind;
 A way thy feet may follow
 He, too, for thee will find.

This stanza illustrates another way in which the reality of suffering and the comfort of God comes out in Gerhardt’s hymns: the use of vivid and tactile images. Again, there are many examples of this; thus rather than list any here I will just tell you to watch for them as we look at the hymns.

Finally, *Gerhardt sees God in suffering*. Suffering and the cross are real and cause real distress in the life of the Christian, yet we are assured by our Lord that our suffering does not mean God has abandoned us. Rather God often masks Himself in our suffering and by it He works out a wholesome purpose. Gerhardt also reminds us that our suffering will have an end. Our Father in heaven will deliver us from evil, if not here, then by taking us to Himself in heaven. One thing you quickly notice about Gerhardt’s hymns is

that even as they speak of the cross they have a triumphant tone to them, almost always ending with a reminder that our ultimate end is in heaven with Jesus. Thus while there is melancholy in Gerhardt's hymns there is never despair.¹⁰

“O Enter, Lord, Thy Temple”¹¹

This is not one of Paul Gerhardt's more well-known hymns; in fact every time it gets put into a hymnal it seems to lose a stanza or two.¹² However, it is a good hymn for us to consider, since it is a good example of a hymn written during Gerhardt's time in Mittenwalde. It also shows how he used hymnody as a tool of pastoral care; additionally it touches on current events.¹³ It seems to begin as a general hymn of invocation but it soon becomes apparent we are praying directly to the Holy Spirit and focusing on His work of sanctification. This focus begins in a very specific sense: our personal sanctification. We are praying that just as the Holy Spirit gave us “a second birth more blest” that now He would continue that work in us and keep us as the possession of God. The hymn constantly emphasizes that we are now the possession of God through baptism: we are the grafted olive branch (st. 3), the people of God (st. 4).

This status is meant to be a comfort to us in the face of the cross, reminding us that because we are the possession of God, He hears our prayers and cries for help (st. 5). It may seem at times that they go unheard, but this is an impossibility; “they pierce the highest heaven, Unheard they cannot fall ‘Till He His help hath given Who surely helpeth all” (st. 5).

With this stanza the hymn transitions into the cross suffered by a people living in a time of war. We pray that the Holy Spirit, who “hateth enmity” but loves “peace and friendship,” would widen His work of sanctification so that peace would be brought to wherever “wrath and discord reign.” Yet our prayer is not only for temporal peace, but spiritual peace as well. We pray that the hearts of the wicked might be converted and those hearts which have been hardened with hate might be softened that the Gospel might have free course (st. 9).

The tenth stanza is a special prayer for native land and government:

On those that rule our country
 O shower Thy blessings down,
 And in Thy loving-kindness
 Adorn, as with a crown,
 With piety our youth,
 With godliness our nation,
 That all, to gain salvation,
 May know Thy heav'nly truth.

The last three stanzas return to a request for our personal sanctification. We pray for our rulers, we pray for our youth, we pray for the godliness of our nation, but we then spend three stanzas praying for ourselves. Gerhardt again transitions from the earthly conflict to the spiritual one. We pray that the Holy Spirit would “make the Foe to flee,” not speaking of any earthly foe, but the old, evil Foe. He must be driven from *our* hearts, because we too are sinners who struggle with the Old Adam and with temptation, who often cause discord among one another instead of peace. Thus we pray that the Holy Spirit would “Help us to battle well,” but again, recognizing that “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12; ESV).

The hymn concludes, as most Gerhardt hymns do, in heaven. We are reminded that while we struggle and bear the cross in this life, when this life is over we will have true, eternal peace.¹⁴

It is not difficult to see Gerhardt’s pastoral heart in this hymn as it speaks to a people who for 35 years had lived in a land plagued by war. As with all of Gerhardt’s hymns, it expresses the reality of the suffering brought by war but at the same time sees God’s presence and expresses faith in God’s gracious help even during this evil time. It also maintains a very Lutheran understanding of sin and evil. When a person is especially afflicted by evils outside of himself, such as during wartime, it can be very easy to fall into self-righteousness. (“If only we had a better president, better generals. What, O Lord, do you plan to do about all those bad people? O

Lord, if only You would smite those wicked people, or provide more people as righteous as I am, who support the war/work for peace like me.”) In this hymn Gerhardt does pray for God’s deliverance from our enemies and from the evils of war, but he never loses sight of the fact that the true evil with which we are to be concerned is not the one out there, in the heart of my enemy, but the sin and evil that lives in my own heart. This is the true enemy that needs smiting.

This hymn, along with a number of others, was published in 1653 in the *Berlin Hymn Book*, and later in other collections in Brandenburg and Saxony. Because of this Gerhardt soon found himself a popular hymn writer and preacher.

The Berlin Years: The Pastor & the Cross in His Professional Life

While Gerhardt was a devoted pastor in Mittenwalde it appears he missed Berlin and often returned there to visit. Or perhaps he had found someone to miss. On February 11, 1655, at the age of 48, he married Anna Maria Barthold, another daughter of Andreas Barthold. Their first child, born to them in 1656, died in infancy and a memorial tablet in the church in Mittenwalde shows their grief. That same year Gerhardt was called to be a deacon in the St. Nicholas Church in Berlin and began his work there in the summer of 1657. He seems to have had some hesitation about leaving Mittenwalde since it was only after long deliberation that he accepted the call to Berlin.

When Gerhardt came to Berlin he entered a city full of sharp strife between the Lutheran and the Reformed clergy. To make matters worse for Gerhardt, Prussia at that time was governed by Frederick William, “The Great Elector.” Of his nearly 300,000 subjects, only around 15,000 were Calvinist,¹⁵ but *cuius regio eius religio* was the “rule” of the day, and the elector was a staunch Calvinist. Indeed, it was through his efforts at the Peace of Westphalia that the Calvinists obtained the same legal recognition as the Lutherans.

Elector Frederick also wanted to make peace between the two church bodies within his land, although by “make peace” he meant “make entirely Calvinist.” He began placing pastors in

parishes without making them swear agreement with the Formula of Concord, i.e., Calvinist or crypto-Calvinist pastors. He then removed the Lutheran professors at the University of Frankfurt, and on June 2, 1662, issued an edict requiring Lutheran pastors to say nothing against the “true Evangelical Reformed religion.”¹⁶ Two months later he forbade students from his lands to study at the University of Wittenberg and demanded those currently studying there to return within three months.

But just to show he was fair-minded, the elector also arranged for a series of conferences for the leading clergy of both church bodies to discuss the points of dispute between them, in the hope of arriving at some consensus, or at least get a declaration from the Lutherans that the points of difference were “non-essential.” The result was the exact opposite: the more the two sides argued, the further apart they found themselves. Not only that, but they took their arguments into their pulpits and preached against each other.

As a deacon of the St. Nicholas Church, Gerhardt could hardly avoid being involved in this controversy. In fact, Gerhardt was a leading voice among the Lutheran clergy. Gerhardt drew up most of the statements which explained or defended the Lutheran teachings. By all accounts he was diligent in attending the conferences and did so with the sincere hope to come to some sort of consensus with the Calvinists. At the same time he was concerned not only with preserving the confession of the Lutheran Church, but with keeping a clear conscience in regard to his behavior as well. Gerhardt was renowned for acting fraternally not only to the Lutheran but also the Reformed clergy. His sermons as well as his writings were so free from controversy that many Calvinists attended his services, and the wife of the elector, Louisa Henrietta, was a great admirer of him and his hymns.¹⁷

The elector, however, was getting impatient with the lack of success (at least the success he was looking for) at his conferences. He put an end to them in 1664 and published an edict requiring both the Lutheran and Reformed clergy to abstain from attacking each other’s doctrines in the pulpit or anywhere else, and demanding every Lutheran clergyman sign a document pledging himself to observe the terms of this edict.

This was something Gerhardt and most of the Lutheran clergy were unable to do, especially since one of the terms of the edict disallowed the use of the Formula of Concord as a confession of faith, since the Reformed clergy found it especially offensive. Gerhardt was ill when the deadline for compliance approached, yet he assembled the Berlin clergy at his sickbed to encourage them to be steadfast in their confession.

Unable to subscribe to the elector's edict, Gerhardt was removed from his position as a deacon of the St. Nicholas Church on February 13, 1666, and ordered to leave Berlin. Despite this his former congregation continued to support him and even treated him as their pastor; many came to his home for religious counsel and even for worship. The elector was not pleased with these little "cell group" meetings and thus issued an edict which prohibited Gerhardt from performing any functions of his office even in private. When friends came to console him Gerhardt remarked that it was "a small Berlin sort of martyrdom,"¹⁸ yet it seems he was in reality deeply hurt by these events. He was also dealing with much private sorrow at the same time. Three of his five children had already died in infancy, and now he lost one of his two remaining sons, while his wife, worn out by sorrow and anxiety, fell into a long and slow decline.

Meanwhile the city of Berlin did not take the loss of its favorite preacher quietly.

The guilds of Business Men, the Tailors, the Weavers, the Shoemakers, the Leather Workers, the Butchers, the Bakers and the Tanners held a mass-meeting, passed resolutions of protest, and sent them to the Mayor and Aldermen. Though some of the Aldermen were Reformed, they endorsed the protest and sent it to the Elector, adding that "the beloved preacher and pastor" had never attacked the Reformed faith, much less slandered it...

The Elector would not yield...[Then] the guilds of the Cabinetmakers, and the Blacksmiths, and the Weaponsmiths, on March 13, 1666, joined the others in a second petition to the Elector.¹⁹

Finally, the estates of Brandenburg began pleading for Gerhardt, and their request was rumored to have the private support

of the electress herself. In the face of this the elector relented and declared that considering the tender conscience of Gerhardt, and that he had never been guilty of bitterness and uncharitableness in the pulpit, an exception should be made in his case and he should be permitted to resume his office without subscription to the edict. The whole city rejoiced, but it proved to be an anti-climax. The elector had sent word to Gerhardt by his private secretary that he was relying on Gerhardt's well-known moderation and loyalty, that even without formal subscription he would act in conformity with the spirit of the edict.

This message troubled Gerhardt, since he felt an implied subscription was as binding as any formal subscription could be, and he therefore felt unable to accept the office on these terms. A long period of fruitless negotiations ensued, and much mental anguish on Gerhardt's part. Many of Gerhardt's friends thought his scruples a bit exaggerated, but the fact that his conscience was truly bothered is shown by his persistency and his letters to the town council and elector, to whom he wrote:

It was only the most urgent necessity which induced me to retire from my pastoral office, and should I now accept it again on these terms, I should do myself a great wrong; and, so to speak, with my own hands inflict on my soul that wound which I had formerly, with such deep anguish of heart, striven to avert. I fear that God, in whose presence I walk on earth, and before whose judgment-seat I must one day appear; and as my conscience has spoken from my youth up, and yet still speaks, I can see it no otherwise than that if I should accept my office I should draw on myself God's wrath and punishment.²⁰

Gerhardt thus resigned his position and was once again without a call.

“If God Himself Be For Me”²¹

Unlike the first hymn we examined, this is one of Gerhardt's most well-known compositions. It was written in 1656, near the time of the death of his first child and his call to the St. Nicholas Church. It is a hymn which is clearly written as a devotion on Romans 8:31–

39, highlighting the theology of the cross. Unlike “O Enter, Lord Thy Temple,” this hymn is not written to address a specific suffering, but of the cross in general and why the Christian can be confident while suffering under the cross. It is also a great illustration of the four points previously made about Paul Gerhardt’s hymns.

The reality of the cross is seen in the very first line: “If God Himself be for me, I may a host defy.” It is taken for granted that the Christian is going to feel the cross in this life, yet it is also taken for granted that the Christian is not abandoned to his suffering; God will be with him. It should be understood that while the “if” in the first line introduces a conditional clause, it is a real condition that expects fulfillment; in other words, you could substitute “since” for “if” in the sentence.²²

Typical also of Gerhardt’s hymns are that the words “I” and “me” are used all over the place and yet the subject of the hymn is clearly God. One of the ways this is seen is that following the first two stanzas Gerhardt begins to expound on Romans 8:32, revealing that the foundation of this trust in God is not some ethereal feeling, but rather

I build on this foundation:
That Jesus and His blood
Alone are my salvation,
The true, eternal good.

Thus stanzas 3–6 are Gerhardt’s exposition that his confidence is grounded in his justification. The fact that God has already shown him His love in the death and resurrection of His Son gives the confidence that God will freely give all other things as well. Christ’s grace is the shield which keeps the Christian safe during the troubles of this life.

Gerhardt then spends four stanzas speaking of the work of the Holy Spirit during times of the cross, especially as He moves us to prayer, not only of words, but also

[W]hen my soul is lying
Weak, trembling, and oppressed,
He pleads with groans and sighing
That cannot be expressed;

But God's quick eye discerns them
 Although they give no sound,
 And into language turns them
 E'en in the heart's deep ground.

The hymn comes to a close by once again picking up on Romans 8 and the theme that nothing shall separate us from the love of God:

Not fire, nor sword, nor thunder,
 Shall sever me from Thee;
 Though earth be rent asunder
 Thou'rt mine eternally.
 Not hunger, thirst, nor danger,
 Not pain, nor pinching want,
 Nor mighty princes anger,
 My fearless heart shall daunt.

No angel, and no gladness,
 No throne, no pomp, nor show,
 No love, no hate, no sadness,
 No pain, no depth of woe,
 No scheme of man's contrivance,
 Though it be great or small,
 Shall draw me from Thy guidance,
 Not one of these, nor all!

These stanzas are one reason why this hymn serves as such a good example of this period of Gerhardt's life: he would come to know the truth of those stanzas over the next ten years, when he did face want, the anger of mighty princes, pomp and show, love and hate, as well as depth of woe for remaining faithful to his confession.

The hymn concludes on the same triumphant tone on which it began:

My merry heart is springing
 And knows not how to pine;
 'Tis full of joy and singing,
 And radiancy divine.
 The Sun whose smiles so cheer me
 Is Jesus Christ alone:
 To have Him always near me
 Is heav'n itself begun.

Once again, we see how Gerhardt ends by reminding us that our true end is in heaven.

The triumphant tone of this stanza, and indeed of the entire hymn, is another reason why it serves as a good window into Gerhardt's life at this time. This was likely the most difficult period

in Gerhardt's life, as he dealt not only with the cross of being asked to compromise his confession, but also the death of three children and the illness of his wife. It would have been very easy for him to become bitter and a rather unpleasant person to be around, especially in his dealings with the Calvinists and the elector. Yet "his religion and his temperament alike made him cheerful, and not all the many disappointments of his life seem ever to have embittered his mood."²³ Gerhardt, it seems, was able to remain faithful to his confession and act with sincere fraternalism even during this time of great difficulty, even toward those who were responsible for many of his difficulties.

There is another interesting aspect to this hymn which shows how some things are often lost in editing. The hymn has fifteen stanzas, though almost never are all of them printed.²⁴ The rationale behind this is often that the hymn is rather repetitive, thus around six of the stanzas are usually kept, the rest discarded because they essentially say the same thing. Among the first to go are always the four stanzas that speak of the work of the Holy Spirit during times of the cross, since they do not speak so much about suffering but about the work of the Holy Spirit (and we have plenty of Pentecost hymns, right?). However the removal of these stanzas is unfortunate, since now, in this great hymn on the theology of the cross, is lost the part of the hymn that gives the clearest statement on the purpose of the cross in the life of the Christian: to drive the Christian to prayer and a deeper reliance upon God.

Later Years: The Pastor & the Cross in His Personal Life

For some years Gerhardt lived in Berlin without any position, supported by his friends in his congregation. Ironically within a few months of his resignation the edict was withdrawn, although by this time his patroness, Electress Louisa Henrietta, had died and so he was still without a position.²⁵ All but one of his children, Paul Friedrich, had died in infancy, and on March 5, 1668, his wife died. She had been as strong a follower of the Lutheran faith as he, and had even encouraged him in his stand of not signing the edict.

After the death of his wife Gerhardt took her sister, who had

herself been widowed, into his home to keep house. He also had his son Paul, and his correspondence speaks of three or four servants. Although he apparently had pupils whom he tutored during these years, he evidently wished for some definite occupation.

On October 14, 1668, Paul Gerhardt preached a trial sermon in Lübben. The following day the city council, with the unanimous consent of the citizens, called him as pastor. Gerhardt said he was willing to serve there but after going there to see the church and parsonage told them the parsonage was too small; it did not have a study where he could work and “if a pastor could not study at his sermons, of what use would a pastor be?”²⁶ The town conceded this point and promised to make more room. The formal call was issued on October 18, and Gerhardt sent his letter of acceptance November 6.

Gerhardt planned to take up his duties in Lent, but his son and sister-in-law became ill and so he could not move them. This apparently bothered some of the Lübbeners, who grumbled that perhaps his family was too large. And come to think of it, the parsonage had been good enough all these years before, so why should it not be good enough now? They also thought it necessary to now get assurance from Gerhardt that he would not run away if the plague broke out, and they also wanted his promise that he would not compete with them in the beer business. Gerhardt promised them he would be faithful even during plague and that “he had no thoughts of running a saloon in connection with the parsonage...[but] no one could hinder him in his own house from laying in a stock of Zerbst, Bernau, or Torgau beer.”²⁷

That winter Gerhardt made a trip to Lübben and found that work on the parsonage had not yet even begun. He then wrote to the Superintendent and to the local officials, which put matters in motion. Gerhardt then made the move to Lübben, taking the pulpit on Trinity Sunday 1669. He was 63.

Gerhardt spent the last seven years of his life in Lübben, but they were sad years, for his wife was gone, his only child was often ill, and he was living in a land of strangers. Lübben was a small place, and the town council was composed of rough and half-educated people, who did not appreciate Gerhardt and subjected

him to more than a few annoyances. He found his refuge in writing hymns, in circumstances which, says one of his contemporaries, “would have made most men cry rather than sing.”²⁸

Shortly before his death he composed a sort of last testament or will of a moral nature for his son Paul. He commends to the boy the study of theology at reputable universities and also the avoidance of the syncretists, on the ground that they aimed at temporal things and were loyal to neither God nor man.

Gerhardt died May 27, 1676, with this prayer on his lips:

Kann uns doch kein Tod nicht töten,	Death cannot destroy forever;
Sondern reißt unsern Geist	From our fears, cares, and tears
Aus viel tausend Nöten;	It will us deliver.
Schleußt das Tor der bitterm Leiden	It will close life's mournful story,
Und macht Bahn, Da man kann	Make a way That we may
Gehn zur Himmelsfreuden.	Enter heav'nly glory. ²⁹

He was buried in the vault of the Lübben church. The congregation also commissioned a life-sized painting of him for the church where it still hangs. His son undertook his own memorial to his father, revising and republishing his hymns.

“Evening and Morning”³⁰

Written in the last year of Gerhardt's life, this hymn nicely summarizes his life and career as a pastor. What we have in English is only a portion of a longer hymn in German; the original has twelve stanzas, English hymnals have between two and four. What we have in the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* are stanzas 4, 9, 12, and 3.

The theme of the hymn is God's merciful providence at all times and all situations in our life. This in itself is not unusual; as we have seen it is a theme prevalent in many of Gerhardt's hymns. What makes this hymn unique is that nowhere does it ask for God to remove the cross. Rather it assumes a joyful and confident spirit that our whole life, even the ills that do grieve the Christian, can safely be committed into the hand of the Father. It should also be noted that again, while the theme of the hymn is God's providence even among the crosses of this life, Gerhardt does not lose sight of how his own sin has been the cause of trouble, to himself and others. The

second stanza is a confession of sin, recognizing that true peace is only found in the peace of Christ, who blots out our errors.

From the pattern we have seen in other Gerhardt hymns you might think the third stanza in English should actually be the final stanza, since it ends with the reminder us that joy and peace will once again reign in our lives, if not now, then certainly “when in His mansions God grants me a place.” If you were thinking that, then pat yourself on the back. In the original hymn it is the final line of the hymn. The stanza that follows in English versions is actually stanza 3 in the original. While this is an editorial invention, there is also something to be said for ending the hymn with a stanza of praise. It reiterates the theme of the hymn that we can rejoice in the Lord always.

Epilogue

One of the great learning moments in my career as a pastor was at the 1995 youth convention. Cary Thompson had been asked to speak to the youth and she gave a very good talk on facing death as a Christian. She spoke of the realities and sadness of her situation, yet she was not morose, and the focus of her talk was clearly Christ. When she was finished, Pastor Mark Bartels, who was the convention chaplain that year, said to the kids, “Let’s close with a prayer.” Now as most of you know, Mark is a fine pastor and a good preacher; he could have composed a satisfactory *ex corde* prayer to close that event. Since he knew about the event ahead of time he could also have chosen to write something down, which I am sure would have been very eloquent as well. However, he did neither of those things. Instead he asked everyone to bow their heads and he prayed:

Lord Jesus, who dost love me,
O spread Thy wings above me
And shield me from alarm.
Though evil would assail me,
Thy mercy will not fail me,
I rest in Thy protecting arm.

Now I do not know if it was laziness or inspiration that made him use that well-known Gerhardt stanza as his closing prayer, but

whichever it was it was the absolute best prayer he could have used. He took a hymn stanza, well known to many of the teens and adults in that room, and made it more meaningful than they had before imagined. This hymn stanza, which most of them had probably used many times before without much thought, suddenly became a prayer about facing the crosses in their lives and about facing death. By using it in that context he allowed them to recognize the theology of the cross encapsulated in that hymn stanza, with both its reality and the comfort that lies behind it, and appropriate it as their own. In short, he had used the hymn with the ultimate intent of Paul Gerhardt: as a pastoral tool to address the crosses in the lives of Christians.

In talks with teachers I have often used that event to illustrate the importance of teaching hymns to our children and the impact their work can have later on in the spiritual life of those children. But this event also illustrates the same for us as pastors. Pastors often expend a great deal of effort at having an effect on the spiritual lives of their people. Much of what we do is functionary and at times we may even wonder about the impact we actually have on the lives of our parishioners. I believe much of the impetus for contemporary worship is driven by a desire to see immediate results from what we do, since as pastors we want to see our people deriving joy and comfort from the Gospel especially during times of suffering. And yet, very often contemporary worship is like spiritual junk food that gives an immediate sugar rush yet offers neither nutrition nor the power to sustain.

On the other hand, Paul Gerhardt's hymns, like the one above, offer quite a bit of spiritual sustenance. They are great tools to aid in the teaching of our faith and especially in the understanding of the theology of the cross. Like the well-known stanza above, many of his hymns are modern psalms which give expression to the reality of the cross in the life of the believer but at the same time express the comfort that comes from faith in the merciful providence of God. Thus they are a ready tool for us and our people to understand the cross in our lives, to know that God is present even in our suffering. John Kleinig summed it up well:

The keynote, the main theme of Gerhardt's songs is joy. They take us on a joyful journey through life, our journey together

with the crucified and risen Lord Jesus. That heavenly journey does not take us on a detour around trouble and pain, but takes us right through them. It does not offer us a way of escape from all the difficulties of human life on earth, difficulties that Gerhardt knew all too well and lamented so often. Nor does that heavenly journey bypass all that is good in this good world. Rather it takes us from blessing to blessing, blessings that we receive with thanksgiving to God as his gifts for our enjoyment. Here on earth we are his guests who live in his tent for a while and enjoy his hospitality. Yet our journey does not end here with death. All that is good in God's good world is but a foretaste of the best that is still to come. We therefore look forward to a life of full, complete enjoyment, eternal life in God's lovely house in heaven.³¹

This is the comfort we want for ourselves and for our people, that with Gerhardt we may learn to see through the cross and joyfully look ahead to "After the Storm."

Appendix A

Chronological Table of Paul Gerhardt's Life

Dates or Years in *italics* are approximations based on best available information.

March 12, 1607	Paul Gerhardt born at Gräfenhainichen, near Wittenberg
1622–1627	At school at Grimma
1628–1642	Student at Wittenberg
1637	Gräfenhainichen burned by Swedish soldiers
1642–1651	At Berlin, where he begins writing <i>Gelegenheitsgedichte</i> and hymns, and begins his friendship with Johann Crüger
Nov 1651	Ordained as Probst at Mittenwalde
Feb 11, 1655	Married to Anna Maria Barthold
Oct 1656	Called to Berlin to the St. Nicholas Church
Summer 1657	Started work in Berlin
1662	Elector issues edict
Feb 6 or 16, 1666	Summoned to Consistory and threatened with deposition
March 5, 1668	Death of his wife
Autumn 1668	Called to Lübben
May 27, 1676	Dies in Lübben

Appendix B

Johann Crüger

Johann Crüger was born at Gross-Breesen, Brandenburg, on April 1, 1598. He studied at schools in Guben, Sorau, and Breslau, the Jesuit College at Olmütz, and the Poets' School at Regensburg. He traveled through Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, and Moravia and then settled at Berlin in 1615. Here he employed himself as a private tutor until 1622, except for a short residence at the University of Wittenberg in 1620. He received a thorough musical training under Paulus Homberger in Regensburg, a pupil of Giovanni Gabrieli. In 1622 Crüger was appointed cantor of St. Nicholas Church at Berlin and also one of the masters of the Greyfriars Gymnasium. Crüger wrote no hymns, but he was one of the most distinguished musicians and tune composers of his time. He composed 71 chorales, of which 18 have received a wide usage in the Evangelical [i.e., Lutheran, ed.] churches of the world. His church-hymn collections include *Neues vollkömmlisches Gesangbuch*, 1640; *Praxis pietatis melica*, 1644, which appeared in many editions; *Geistliche Kirchenmelodeyen*, 1649; and *Psalmodica sacra*, 1658. He died at Berlin, February 23, 1662 (From *The Handbook to The Lutheran Hymnal*).

To say that some of Crüger's tunes "received wide usage" is an understatement. The hymns "Now Thank We All Our God," "Jesus Priceless Treasure," and "O Dearest Jesus" all use melodies written by Johann Crüger and are well known even outside Lutheran circles. "Soul, Adorn Thyself with Gladness" and "Lord, to Thee I Make Confession" also have melodies written by Crüger but are probably best known among Lutherans.

Crüger and Paul Gerhardt became a Lutheran version of Gilbert and Sullivan (or I guess, "Sullivan and Gilbert"). Below are some of the more well-known hymns on which they collaborated (titles are from ELH).

"O Enter, Lord, Thy Temple"
 "All Ye Who On This Earth Do Dwell"
 "O How Shall I Receive Thee"
 "All My Heart Sings and Rejoices"
 "O Jesus Christ, Thy Manger Is"
 "Awake My Heart With Gladness"

Appendix C

“O Enter, Lord, Thy Temple”

P. Gerhardt, 1653

Tr. composite

1. O enter, Lord, Thy temple,
 Be Thou my spirit's Guest,
 Who gavest me, the earth-born,
 A second birth more blest.
 Thou in the Godhead, Lord,
 Though here to dwell Thou deignest,
 Forever equal reignest,
 Art equally adored.

2. Oh, enter, let me know Thee
 And feel Thy power within,
 The power that breaks our fetters
 And rescues us from sin;
 Oh, wash and cleanse Thou me
 That I may serve Thee truly
 And render honor duly
 With perfect heart to Thee.

3. An olive wild by nature
 Thou graftedst me anew;
 Death preyed upon my vitals
 And claimed me as his due:
 But Christ's atoning blood,
 In death true comfort granting,
 Drowned death with all his vaunting,
 In His Baptismal flood.

4. Thou art, O Holy Spirit,
 The true anointing Oil,
 Through which are consecrated
 Soul, body, rest, and toil
 To Christ, whose guardian wings,
 Where'er their lot appointed,
 Protect His own anointed,
 His prophets, priests, and kings.

5. Thou, Holy Spirit, teachest
 The soul to pray aright;
 Thy songs have sweetest music,
 Thy prayers have wondrous might.
 Unheard they cannot fall,
 They pierce the highest heaven
 Till He His help hath given
 Who surely helpeth all.

6. Thy gift is joy, O Spirit,
 Thou wouldst not have us pine;
 In darkest hours Thy comfort
 Doth ever brightly shine.
 And, oh, how oft Thy voice
 Hath shed its sweetness o'er me
 And opened heaven before me
 And bid my heart rejoice!

7. All love is Thine, O Spirit;
 Thou hatest enmity;
 Thou lovest peace and friendship,
 All strife wouldst have us flee;
 Where wrath and discord reign,
 Thy whisper kindly pleadeth
 And to the heart that heedeth
 Brings love and light again.

8. The whole wide world, O Spirit!
 Upon Thy hands doth rest;
 Our wayward hearts Thou turnest
 As it may seem Thee best;
 Once more Thy power make known,
 As Thou hast done so often,
 Convert the wicked, soften
 Thyself the hearts of stone.

9. O Holy Spirit, hear us
 And make our sorrow cease;
 Thy scattered flock restore now
 To union, joy and peace;
 Bid flourish once again
 The lands by men forsaken,
 The churches spoiled and shaken
 By war's unhallowed train.

10. On those that rule our country
 O shower Thy blessings down,
 And in Thy loving-kindness
 Adorn, as with a crown,
 With piety our youth,
 With godliness our nation,
 That all, to gain salvation,
 May know Thy heavn'ly truth.

11. With holy zeal then fill us
 To keep the faith still pure;
 And bless our lands and houses
 With wealth that may endure;
 And make the Foe to flee,
 Who in us with Thee striveth,
 From out our hearts he driveth
 Whate'er delighteth Thee.

12. Grant steadfastness and courage
 That bravely we contend
 Against the wiles of Satan;
 O Lord, Thy flock defend!
 Help us to battle well,
 To triumph o'er the Devil,
 To overcome the evil
 And all the powers of hell.

13. Our path in all things order
 According to Thy mind,
 And when this life is over
 And all must be resigned,
 Oh, grant us then to die
 With calm and fearless spirit
 And after death inherit
 Eternal life on high.

Appendix D

The Use of Longer Hymns in the Parish

If you look at hymnals printed over the past 60 years you will notice that the hymns are getting shorter. There is a reluctance to publish hymns with more than five stanzas unless the stanzas are not meant to be sung all at once (such as in hymns based on the seven words from the cross) or the stanzas are very short (such as “From Heaven Above”). Even then some shortening usually takes place, so that hymns of twelve or fourteen stanzas are shortened down to six, or sometimes broken up into two hymns.

Sometimes there are good reasons for this; many times hymn writers included stanzas that spoke to very specific situations. Sometimes the stanzas were overly florid or repetitious. Sometimes they simply were not that good, and the hymn is actually better for its loss. Other times the hymn is shortened just to make it shorter, and this can be unfortunate for a number of reasons.

First, omitting stanzas can break up a poetic rhythm; it can remove thoughts or ideas the author intended to use to emphasize his theme. Sometimes this is covered in translation; other times it is not and the result can be somewhat jarring, such as the way “Salvation Unto Us Has Come” ends in many hymnbooks.

More importantly, drastically editing hymns can reveal a limited understanding on the use of hymnody within the parish. Now on the one hand, singing all fifteen stanzas of “If God Himself Be For Me” in one sitting can get tedious quickly. But there are other ways to sing through the hymn and yet keep it interesting.

1. Break up stanzas with the readings for the day. For instance

OT Lesson

Hymn 517 vv 1–4

Epistle Lesson

Hymn 517 vv 5–8

Gospel Lesson

Hymn 517 vv 9–15

(or use some stanzas at the end of the service)

This works really well on the very thematic Sundays, like the Gesima Sundays and the Sundays in Lent and Advent. For even more variety...

2. **Vary the melody for each stanza grouping.** This can often help give color to the text as well, such as in Melancthon's angel hymn "Lord God, We All to Thee Give Praise" (ELH 545): try singing stanzas 1–3 to "Old Hundreth," then stanzas 4–6 to "Erhalt Uns Herr" (the tune for "Lord Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word"), then switch back to "Old Hundreth" or another tune for the remaining stanzas.
3. **Give stanzas to a choir, soloist or the organ alone.** This works especially well in the Gerhardt hymns since they are so meditative.
4. **Use the hymn for communion distribution.** Hymns like "O How Shall I Receive Thee" and "From Heaven Above" make wonderful communion hymns during Advent. "O Sacred Head" and "O Dearest Jesus" are good for Lent.
5. **Break up the hymn over the course of many services.** I have done this a couple times with hymns like "A Lamb Goes Uncomplaining Forth" as a thematic hymn by singing a couple stanzas at each Lenten service. This could also be done easily in a classroom or family devotional setting.

There are other suggestions as well, and you probably have your own ideas, too. The point is, there is benefit to singing more than stanzas 1–4 at times. Take opportunities to use the longer hymns as devotional tools and expose your people to the richness that often lies in the stanzas outside the music.

Bibliography

- Anderson, Douglas D. "Paul Gerhardt." *The Hymns and Carols of Christmas*. Retrieved July 10, 2007, from http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Hymns_and_Carols/Biographies/paul_gerhardt.htm.
- Dallman, William. *Paul Gerhardt: His Life and His Hymns*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921.
- Hewitt, Theodore Brown. *Paul Gerhardt as a Hymn Writer and his Influence on English Hymnody*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1918.
- Kleinig, John W. (2007, May 26). "Need Lutheran Spirituality? Try Paul Gerhardt." *Northwoods Lutherans*. Retrieved July 3, 2007, from <http://lutherimwald.wordpress.com/2007/05/26/need-lutheran-spirituality-try-paul-gerhardt>.
- Saar, David. "Review: Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary." *Lutheran Theological Review*, Vol. 9 (Academic Year 1996–1997), 84–91.
- Simon-Netto, Uwe. "Lutheranism's Sweetest Voice." *The Lutheran Witness*, Vol. 126, No. 3 (March 2007), 24–25.

Endnotes

¹ Theodore Brown Hewitt, *Paul Gerhardt as a Hymn Writer and his Influence on English Hymnody* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1918), 8. And in case your German is as good as mine, the phrase means “The Fear of God and Good Morals.”

² William Dallmann, *Paul Gerhardt: His Life and His Hymns* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 8.

³ In English this hymn is “The Will of God is Always Best,” #477 in ELH.

⁴ A “Wedding Ode:” a poem or song composed for the occasion of a marriage.

⁵ Poems written for specific occasions, except weddings.

⁶ See Appendix B for information on Johann Crüger.

⁷ Lutheran churches of Paul Gerhardt’s time had three clerical positions: *Superintendent*, *Propst* and *Deacon*, and we will encounter all of them in this paper. A *Superintendent* was the equivalent of our Bishops or Circuit Visitors; the book *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments* by Chemnitz was a manual for a Superintendent to use in his examinations of the clergy in his parish. A *Propst* (or in English, “Provost”) was the head pastor in a parish with more than one pastor. *Archdeacons* and *Deacons* were akin to Associate and Assistant Pastors. They were ordained but were under the supervision of a *Propst*.

⁸ Hewitt, 9.

⁹ Being a parish pastor seems to have honed Gerhardt’s hymnwriting in the same way that it often hones the homiletical ability of pastors; you go from preaching at your people to preaching to them. The same thing happens in Gerhardt’s hymns: those written after 1651 take on a more pastoral tone. But that is another paper.

¹⁰ While Gerhardt was a master at this, he was by no means the first. Lutheran hymns were often known for their “funeral doxologies,” as others have noted: “In keeping with the theology of the cross, one of the characteristics of classic Lutheran hymnody was often a final stanza on death” (David Saar. “Review: Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary,” *Lutheran Theological Review*, Vol. 9 [Academic Year 1996–1997], 90).

¹¹ See Appendix C.

¹² See Appendix D for comments on the use of longer hymns in the parish.

¹³ Okay, so now remember your assignment. Look for 1) how the hymn functions as a devotion, 2) biblical illustrations and allusions, 3) how the hymn expresses the reality of suffering with vivid, tactile images, and 4) how the hymn expresses God's presence in suffering and its ultimate end.

¹⁴ Except for the last stanza, the latter half of the hymn is the part usually omitted in modern hymnals, probably because it speaks very specifically to a time of war. There is something unfortunate about this since every Lutheran hymnbook has been in use during a time of war, and this hymn treats the topic in a very Lutheran way.

¹⁵ Dallman, 22. He actually quotes Frederick Wilhelm as having almost 3 million subjects, but that number seems high considering 1) world population at the time is estimated as being between 500 and 545 million. If Frederick Willhelm had 3 million subjects that would put almost 1% of world population in Prussia at the time; and 2) the population of Berlin itself during this time is estimated at only 9,000. For these reasons I adjusted the number down.

¹⁶ Dallman, 21.

¹⁷ The irony here is that this is where Gerhardt was waging his battle against the Calvinists: in his hymnody. You can hardly sing Paul Gerhardt's hymns without learning two very anti-Calvinistic ideas: that God is a loving Father over all His creatures, and that Christ died for all.

¹⁸ Uwe Siemon-Netto. "Lutheranism's Sweetest Voice," *The Lutheran Witness*, Vol. 126, No. 3 (March 2007), 25.

¹⁹ Dallman, 27–28.

²⁰ Douglas D. Anderson, "Paul Gerhardt," *The Hymns and Carols of Christmas*, retrieved July 10, 2007, from http://www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com/Hymns_and_Carols/Biographies/paul_gerhardt.htm.

²¹ ELH 517.

²² Another good example of this is Genesis 28:20–21 where Jacob says, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I

come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God." Jacob is not making a deal with God, "If You do this, then I will do my part;" he is recognizing God's faithfulness: "Since God will be with me, then He will be my God." As you can tell, this is a bit of a hobby-horse for me.

²³ Anderson.

²⁴ From what I can tell, *The Lutheran Hymnal* was the first English hymnbook to include all 15. Since then all hymnbooks with the exception of the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* have pared it down to as few as 4 stanzas.

²⁵ The withdrawal of the edict may or may not have had something to do with the fact that the elector's second wife was a Lutheran. Apparently the full quote is "*Cuius regio eius religio, quamdiu vult lectulo dormire*"-- "Whoever's region, his religion, as long as he is willing to sleep on the couch."

²⁶ Dallman, 33.

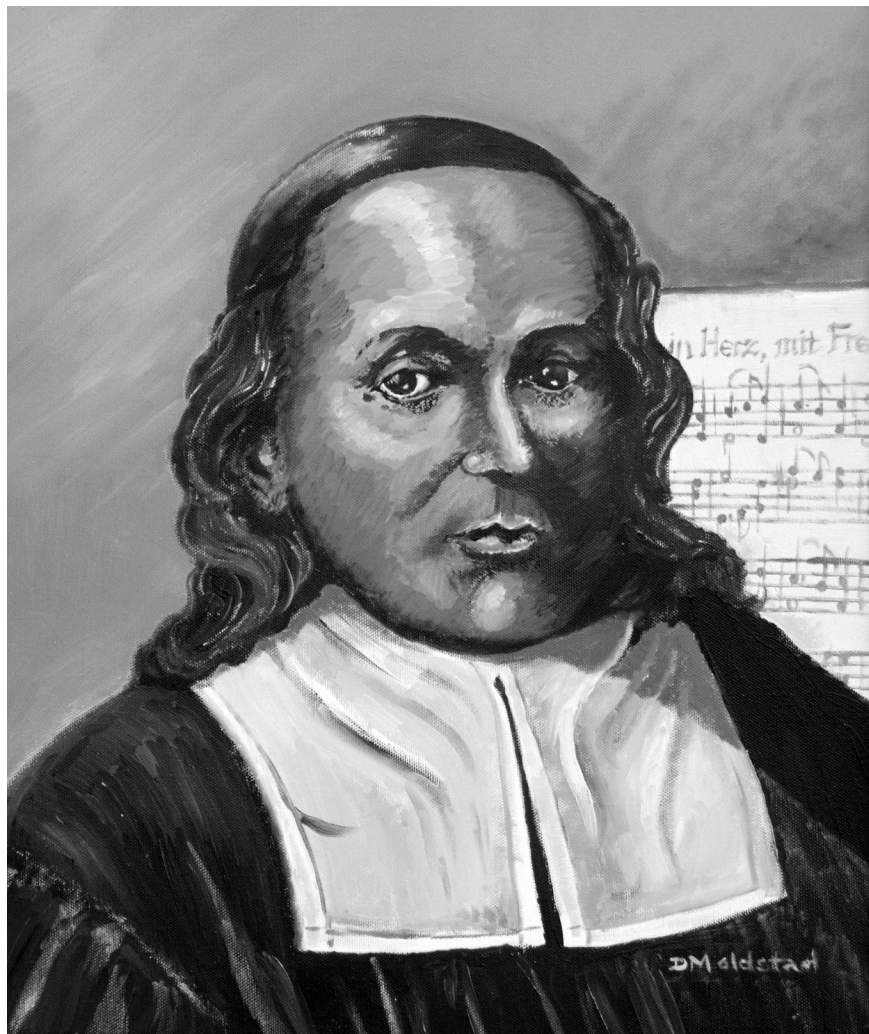
²⁷ Dallman, 34.

²⁸ Anderson.

²⁹ This is stanza 5 from his hymn "Why Should Cross and Trial Grieve Me." The English translation is from the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary*.

³⁰ ELH 57.

³¹ John W. Kleinig, "Need Lutheran Spirituality? Try Paul Gerhardt," *Northwoods Lutherans*, retrieved July 3, 2007, from <http://lutherimwald.wordpress.com/2007/05/26/need-lutheran-spirituality-try-paul-gerhardt>.



Funeral Sermon on Psalm 86:11

*For Anna (nee Floering) Weber Held on February 10, 1661 at
the Nikolaikirche in Berlin*

By Paul Gerhardt

Translated by Wade R. Johnston

In the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who sustains our hearts in this one thing, that we fear His name. This same Jesus will support us on all sides when we are frail; He will strengthen us when we are weak; He will comfort us when we are sorrowful, and when our body and soul are fading He will be the stronghold and portion of our hearts; with His Father and the Holy Spirit most highly honored and praised now and forever. Amen.

Beloved and Chosen in the Lord Christ Jesus!

When our most beloved Lord and Savior says this in the tenth chapter of the Gospel according to Luke: “One thing is needful! Mary has chosen the good part; that should not be taken from her,” He in that way here praises and commends the good fortune of a pious woman, how the same can also freely have the most necessary and beautiful thing of all that a man can and should have, as she indeed has grasped and so faithfully understood. That is the love of the Word of God and the fear of His most holy name, which Mary, the sister of Lazarus at Bethany, had in her heart. For while her sister was very busy in worldly and housekeeping affairs that serve for the nourishment and maintenance of the body, Mary sat at the feet of the Lord Jesus, listened to Him diligently, and rejoiced in the Word of God; she paid careful attention to the obedience of the kingdom of heaven and built herself up in the knowledge and fear of her God. That now pleased the dear Son of God above measure and He praised and commended it with His mouth. That is the one thing, He says, that is needful; that is the good portion that Mary has chosen, and that should also not be taken from her.

What the dear, faithful Son of God has now praised here above all about Mary, the sister of Lazarus, that you have also indeed

recognized during the time of her life in the late, well-respected, honorable, and very virtuous Anna nee Floering, the blessed wife of the mayor, who is now resting in God and placed in the coffin before our eyes, the former beloved spouse of the well-respected, highly estimable, learned, and very wise Mr. M. George Weber, the well-appointed and worthy mayor of this praiseworthy capital Berlin. For as she realized very early in life how the world and everything that is in the world was so full of vanity, and that her heart could not stand and rest upon that, she therefore chose the one thing that is needful and all the time prayed diligently and appealed to God to grant this to her. “Preserve my heart in the one thing,” she has prayed from Psalm 86 with David: “Preserve my heart in the one thing, that I may fear Your name.”

As we are now gathered in the house of the Lord, therefore, to consider and to ponder with one another such words of David for today’s Christian funeral, we thus pray first and foremost to the Father of all grace and mercy, that He would bestow on us in addition to this the grace and aid of His good Holy Spirit, that our doing and intention may redound to His honor, for the comforting of the troubled mourners and on all sides for our blessed edification. In order to attain to such great grace from the most high God, we want to humble ourselves from the heart and to pray with one another the holy Lord’s Prayer.

In Christian love, you would surely want to hear the words that have been chosen as the funeral text for this occasion read with blessed devotion and for me to explain them. The same are to be found in Psalm 86 of the king and prophet David, and especially in that very same verse 11 just read:

Teach me Your way, O Lord, so that I may walk in Your truth; preserve my heart in the one thing, that I may fear Your name.

Beloved and chosen in the Lord Jesus Christ!

In the twenty-third chapter of the first Book of Moses we read about an especially thought-worthy funeral that the famous patriarch Abraham had arranged in Hebron in the land of Canaan.

For when in that place his faithful and most beloved housemother [*Hausmutter*], Sarah, had died in the hundred and twenty-seventh year of her age, he did not merely mourn and grieve alone, but also considered a fitting and honest little resting place where he might lay her to rest. And he was not reproached or accused of impropriety by anyone, but each, whoever could here serve him in some way, accommodated and helped him, so that he could bury his wife honorably. We appropriately call that a memorable and noteworthy funeral. And indeed [it was].

1. Because the ones suffering had to attend to and bury the dead body. The widower with us today is like the patriarch Abraham, a pious and god-fearing man, an honorable and deserving man, also an old and beleaguered man. This Abraham had, among other earthly and temporal goods, received a pious, god-fearing and dutiful spouse from God the Lord, who was always been a faithful helper to him, a companion of his cross and a comforter of his sadness and concerns. After, however, both these married people had indeed been united for the span of their life and had gotten along amicably with one another, it finally nevertheless came to pass that they arrived at a parting and separation: Sarah died and her dear old spouse was torn from her sight and from her side. And although now Abraham certainly knew that it could not be otherwise: death and separation must one day arrive; although he was certainly all the same assured that Sara had died blessedly and that afterward her soul was already in heaven with God and His holy angels; in addition, he similarly had the same faith and hope that they would see each other again one day in heaven and in great joy, still he could not keep himself from weeping, but Abraham mourned and grieved his Sarah. He reflected upon the many long years which they had lived with each other and spent upon the earth; he remembered all the love and faithfulness that he had always enjoyed with this, his spouse; he considered her friendly words, her sweet conduct, her honorable and virtuous walk, and he lamented that everything that they once had with one another must cease and come to an end.

2. This [Old Testament funeral] is a memorable and

noteworthy funeral for a second reason as well, with respect to the departed herself, to whom all had been attending and whom they were burying, that is, Sara, the highly beloved mother of all Christian and virtuous women. For the holy Apostle Peter introduces her as such in his first epistle, in the third chapter, where he wants to instruct the female gender about that which should be its chief and most beautiful adornment, namely, that it does not consist of external things—braided hair, gold necklaces, or clothing—but of the inner adornment of the heart and soul, the hidden man of a steady heart with a gentle and quiet spirit. “For this,” he says, “is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening,” (1 Peter 3:5,6). This high and worthy mother, who has [received] such marvelous praise and testimony, who has been endowed with such beautiful, precious virtues that the Holy Spirit Himself sets her forth as the master teacher of all other women, must now nevertheless also die and become a corpse. She lies here before her husband and he must allow himself to mourn and grieve with many fervent tears. Yet she certainly does not for this reason lack anything with respect to her praise and honor; but just as she has honored God the Lord in her life, He thus honors her now also in her death, and just as she has always allowed God the Lord to rest and live in her heart, He thus cares for her also now after her death with one fine, comfortable little resting place, where she can sweetly rest and repose for the resurrection until the day of Christ.

3. The funeral of Sarah is a memorable and noteworthy funeral for a third reason, with respect to the good heart and disposition that Abraham experienced in that regard. For as he intimated the powerful sorrow having befallen him to the children of Heth, among whom he lived, so he was not left not without a brotherly and friendly fellow mourner. And when it came to point that he wanted to honorably bury his dead, there was not one of them who did not recognize him as sincere and would not have served and supplied him some of his own property for the occasion. And this was on account of for the good conduct that they had found in Abraham up to now, for he had been a beneficial man for them, he had been a prince of God among

them, as they themselves call him [Genesis 23:6]; that is, he had been set among them by God as a leader and had provided them much faithful and useful service, so that they now considered it fair to let Abraham in return use and buy their land. Such a good heart and disposition we now also fairly allow our presently troubled and grieving old lord burgermeister to see and experience from all sides. The same [widower] is indeed a father of this praiseworthy citizenry and a head of our dear, worthy city and community, whose many years of faithful governmental work is certainly well-known and renowned to each among us. Who then does not now want to offer their heartfelt sympathy, since now in his old age the mother of his household and the most faithful friend of his heart has been taken from him and torn from his side? And who would not himself readily and willingly want to be present at the honorable funeral and Christian burial of such a virtuous, pious matron as this one has been?

Now that we have accompanied the deceased's body into the house of the Lord, we also want at this time to take up and to consider in the true fear of God and Christian simplicity the funeral text just read, which our blessed wife of the mayor herself chose a long time ago, having written it down with her own hands, and later desired to have it preached to her. In order, however, that such consideration does not pass without benefit and fruit, our dear God and Father in heaven wants once again to bestow upon us His grace and Holy Spirit, for the sake of Jesus Christ, His dear Son. Amen.

Beloved and chosen in the Lord Christ Jesus!

When we now look at the words of our funeral text, already now read aloud and undertaken, we find again three separate thought provoking points that we, with the help of God, want to touch upon one after the other in an orderly and brief fashion. As

- I. The most blessed diligent study that a Christian soul can encounter.**
- II. The one thing most desired of all to which a Christian soul can attain.**
- III. The most certain interpretation that a Christian**

soul can have of that one thing.

I. Concerning the first question, the words run in this way: “Teach me, Lord, Your way, that I may walk in Your truth.” In these words the most blessed diligent study that a Christian soul can encounter is set forth, and we have to take into consideration in that regard:

A. The high knowledge in which a Christian soul wants to be taught and instructed. That is the knowledge of the way of the Lord. The way of the Lord, however, is understood in Holy Scripture in different manners and ways. Here especially the established way, apart from which we are not able to find our way into heaven and to the eternal Father, is found. That way is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who says in John, chapter 14, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.” With Him is the way to the providence and the rule of God, upon which God Himself proceeds and which He takes into consideration in all His counsel and plans, works and affairs. For that reason, [this way] is explained in Holy Scripture in part through the thoughts of God, as in Isaiah 55[:8,9]: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts;” in part also through the deeds of God, as in Psalm 103[:7]: “He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the people of Israel;” in part also through the salvation of God, as in Psalm 67[:2]: “that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations.” Finally, it is also the way of the revealed Word of God, which He has recorded for us men and in which He has admonished that we should walk and proceed. That is elsewhere called the way of His law, the way of His commands, the way of His rules, the way of His testimony, and thereby the holy Christian teaching is signified through which we will be transferred out of the darkness into the light, out of death into life, and out of hell into heaven. In the New Testament, it is now and again called the way of the Lord, the way of peace, the way of salvation, the way of the truth, since through it He guides and leads us into the one peace,

the one salvation, the one truth. And this way is now also all here comprehended in our funeral text, that is, the way of the dear saving Word of God, the way of Christian teaching, the way of the truth, as David himself explains it, which especially keeps us free and secure from error, and brings us certainly and truthfully to that place where it will be eternally wonderful for us and our souls.

B. Concerning the second, we have to take into consideration here the great Master who should teach and instruct the Christian soul. He is the Lord Himself. “Lord,” says David, “teach me Your way.” David does not in any way unreasonably take the Lord as His refuge here, since otherwise there is indeed no one in all the world able to serve and help him in this regard. A man surely cannot find and grasp the way of God by Himself, but it takes place as the Book of Wisdom says in chapter 9: “We poor mortals scarcely grasp that which is upon the earth, and we devise with difficulty what is under our hands. Who will, therefore, investigate what is in heaven? And who will come figure out the counsel of God?” And although wise people have always been found upon the earth, who have revealed all kinds of mysteries and brought all kinds of secret things into the light of day through their understanding, yet nevertheless no one has been found who could show and reveal to us the way of God. “For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom,” Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1[:21]. Indeed, not only has the world not known the wisdom of God, but even if the same is indeed shown and revealed, they still cannot understand it with their powers and abilities. For, “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them,” Paul reiterates in 1 Corinthians 2[:14]. God the Lord Himself must therefore now show and teach us His way. And indeed He does that faithfully and candidly. And once certainly through His most beloved only-begotten Son. For, “No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, He has made Him known,” the Evangelist John says in chapter 1[, verse 18]. And the Epistle to the Hebrews says in chapter 1[, verses 1 and 2], “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.”

And the disciples of the Pharisees, although they were like raving enemies to the Lord Christ in their heart, still testified about him with their own mouths that He was true and rightly taught the way of God (Matthew 22). God the Lord also teaches His way to us through His Holy Spirit and the faithful servants and the instruments of the same. Also the holy Apostles are testified in Acts 16[:17] to be the servants of the most high God who proclaim the way of salvation to men. And when they have instructed someone in the holy gospel it says they have laid out the way of God and have instructed him in the way of salvation (Acts 18[:25]). What the Apostles have given for teaching and instruction, however, they have given not from themselves, but from the Holy Spirit, according to the consolation of the Lord Christ, which He gave to them multiple times before His departure.

C. Concerning the third, we also have to take into consideration here the perfection to which this master Teacher should bring the Christian soul: that, namely, it walks in His truth. All that lives and moves upon the earth has its way upon which it walks. But not all are good ways, not all are the way of God, not all are the way of the truth; but, on the contrary, most are crooked ways, are erroneous ways, are false, seductive ways. And although they sometimes have a nice glimmer and appearance, and indeed are also held by the children of this world as good and right ways, they are nonetheless still pure shams, ways of death that throw men into destruction and limitless misfortune. Therefore David now prays, and each pious Christian soul, that God would still want to allow him to walk in His truth, in His right, true way that would guide him rightly and well, and that He might never again allow him to err and be found lacking.

And this first part now shows us how God the Lord so gladly wants men to have life and to inherit eternal salvation. We can learn that well from the first part of the Davidic text before us, where this holy man sighs and prays, “Lord, show me Your way, that I may walk in Your truth.” For in that way he indeed explains sufficiently how God has prepared a way for us on which we should go and a truth in which we should walk. A way, namely, that leads us to

life, and a truth that leads us to eternal salvation and blessedness. Disaster has befallen us poor men through the fall of our first parents, so that we have tumbled from life into death, and from salvation into damnation. And it is surely not only the earthly paradise of which we have been deprived, but we have also been shut out of the heavenly paradise; and if we had been left to ourselves, we would have eternally walked about in error and never again found the right place. But God has prepared a way for us and made available a truth that should lead us back again to the place from which we have fallen. Yes, not only has God prepared this way for us, but He also points us to the same, He shows us the same, He reveals to us the same, since we would otherwise not find it by ourselves. That is certainly now clear evidence that God does not want us to suffer nor eagerly desires our destruction. It brings Him no joy that we get mixed up in error and wander about in the darkness of tribulation. He does not want us to be deprived of His heavenly kingdom and to be eternally cast away from His countenance. For, if that were so, He would surely not show us the way that leads us to life and the truth which leads us to salvation. For that reason, our God is a true and pious God, a faithful, merciful, and good God, a lover of life and One showing compassion to the fallen and lost human race, for which we can never offer Him enough praise and worthily expound upon His honor.

II. The second part in the funeral text before us is the one thing most desired of all to which a Christian soul can attain here upon earth. That is all described for us here.

A. As a benefit of the heart. "Preserve my heart," David says, "preserve my heart in the one thing." Dear David has still more powers and members of his body that he can use and employ to honor his God. As one instance, he thus has his eyes, to which he refers a number of times, that they always see the Lord [Psalm 25:15], that they look upon the Lord, their God, as the eyes of the servants to the hands of their masters and as the eyes of maidservants look upon the hands of their mistresses [Psalm 123:2]; indeed, that he lifts them up to the hills from which his help comes [Psalm 121:1].

In addition to that, David also has his hands, about which he says that they also are stretched out in the night, that he lifts them up as an evening sacrifice and stretches them out to the Lord [141:2] his God. Moreover, David also has his mouth, about which we so often hear, that he calls and cries out to the God, that He sighs and prays to God, that he speaks and preaches about God, that he praises and thanks God, proclaims His glory and declares all His wonders that He does for the children of men. But David lets all that go by the wayside and concerns himself only with his heart, that that may be good and pious [Psalm 119]. And he also has good reason for that. For just as the heart is the wellspring of all evil [Proverbs 10:11], out of which all slander and vice springs forth and floods the entire life of men, the opposite is also true, wherever the heart of a man is good, everything also is good; wherever the heart is pious, there the entire man is pious; wherever the heart is beautiful and well adorned, so is the entire man beautiful. For that reason, the heart is indeed the first thing that God looks at and inspects in a man. Therefore, according to the same He judges the entire man with all His actions and essence. Therefore, a person may be as close as he wishes to be to God with his lips: where the heart is not in it, so he will not be pleasing to God. The man may outwardly set himself up as pious, as repentant and humble as he wishes, he may give alms as he wishes, he may come to church and to the Holy Supper as he wishes: where the heart is not in it, where the heart is not pious, repentant, humble, virtuous and generous, so indeed all that external work will not be pleasing to God the Lord.

B. In the second place, the one thing is described here as the best of all, as the most useful and necessary good. For David indeed calls it the one thing here to indicate thereby how all his salvation and well-being, all his weal and woe rests in that. He may otherwise have whatever he may have in all the world: whenever he does not have the one thing, it thus could surely not go well for him. Whereas whatever he may be in need of or lack here upon the earth: wherever he has this one thing, he thus has entirely enough and moreover will be happily satisfied and make do. The human heart has very many and all kinds of good things which it otherwise idolizes and for which

it longs. The human heart is also entirely erratic in the choice and high estimation of such good things; at one time it regards this, at another it regards another thing as its highest good; one wants this, another wants that; one wants here, the other wants over there. For that reason, as God the Lord found pleasure in Solomon's heart and wanted to do well for him according to his selfless wish when He did not dictate to Solomon what good thing he should pray for and desire from Him, but gave Him a free, unlimited power to pick for himself what he wanted to have. And when Solomon then decided upon and requested wisdom, that God might give him only a wise and understanding heart, God the Lord explained to him how many men, if given the same opportunity, would have asked for something else; namely, the one would have desired riches, the other a long life, the third victory and the conquering of his enemies. David now has all this before his eyes here; he knows well what marvelous gifts honor, riches, long life, power and strength, might and dominion would be. But he wants to turn his back on such things and let go if only God will give him the one thing. And if he can only have this one thing, then God may add to him some of the other things or none of them [however He'd like], either way it should still all be good for him.

C. In the third place, the one thing is also described for us here as such a good thing as to again tear us away and turn us back from what the heart gladly cherishes [apart from grace]. For that reason. David prays with regard to preservation: "Preserve my heart in the one thing." But God the Lord must preserve the heart against very great, mighty, and powerful enemies, especially against Satan and his dandruff [*Schuppen*], against the world and its children, and finally also against our own flesh and blood. For they all are occupied with trying to avert the heart from the one thing. And such either upon the right or upon the left hand; upon the left indeed, that the heart despairs of God and regards itself unworthy of all His grace and kindness; upon the right, however, that the heart despises God and seeks its desire and joy instead in something other than His grace and goodness. In both cases, the preservation of God must do the best, which must help us "to the right hand and to the left hand,

so that we offer strong opposition, firm in faith and well armed, and through the comfort of the Holy Spirit.”¹

And this second part now shows us how a refined, quiet, tranquil and peaceful disposition may yet exist among the true children of God and the heirs of eternal life; namely, when others are not able to be satisfied, they then nonetheless have entirely enough in their God and desire to have no more. We can learn that from the second part of the little Davidic phrase before us, where we hear about the one thing desired most of all to which a Christian soul can attain. “Preserve my heart in the one thing,” David says. And he indicates how [the Christian] does not make great work for his heart with cravings and hankerings, but he desires only one thing; if he may have that, then he makes do and indeed is thoroughly contented with the dear God. If one looks at the hearts of the children of the world, the same for the most part are stuck in the great day to day troubles of running after the world and plagued with unending and insatiable hankerings. No one wants to be content with his condition in that regard, no one wants to make do with that which God has apportioned and measured out for him according to His gracious will; but he always wants to have more; when he has the first thing, then he desperately wants to have the second thing as well; when he has the second thing, then he pines for the third thing, the fourth, and so forth. When one is sick, then he longs to be well; when he gets well, then he longs to be rich as well; when he becomes rich, then he longs to live long as well, and in that way the misery thus proceeds. For since everything that a man has in this world yet must be subjected to alteration and change, either the man leaves the goods, or the goods leave the man, so it now comes to whatever it wants, so it then ends in worry and anxiety, grief and angst, and all comfort and joy comes to an end. But whoever hangs on to the one thing with dear David need not be subjected to such misery and trouble; but when others desire much, so this one lets himself to be content with the one thing. And although all other things fade and pass away, and only this one thing remains standing, still the man nevertheless has lost nothing. And even when he also should die and leave this world, still this one thing all the same comforts him also in death so that he can sing and say with old Simeon: “With peace and

joy I depart according to God's will, my heart, courage, and mind are comforted, calm and quiet, as God has promised me; death has become my sleep." ²

III. The third and last part in the funeral text before us consists of the most beautiful and certain interpretation which a Christian soul can have of this one thing. The text thus says: "Preserve my heart in the one thing, that I fear Your name." That is an interpretation of three words, and each word has its special power and emphasis.

A. The first is the little word "fear," where David suggests that he longs to fear God. He in that way seizes upon the first commandment, which requires that we should hold the one true God as our God and serve Him. For that is the manner of the Holy Scriptures, that, when they want to say: The man holds this or that as his God, he worships this or that God, they say: He fears this or that God. Also it is various times said about the people of God that they have feared the heathen gods, and it is at once explained that they had attached themselves to the heathen gods, that they had followed the heathen gods, that they had given honor to and worshipped the heathen gods. And when King Darius of the Medes wanted to proclaim that all his subjects should receive the God of Israel as their God, should honor, serve, and pray to Him, he thus said: they should "fear the God of Daniel," (Daniel 6[:26]). The reason, however, for such a way of speaking is without a doubt this, that in all worship [*Gottesdienst*] one finds a fear, namely a fear of God's majesty, a fear of His wrath, a fear of His revenge and punishment, which one gladly would like to stave off. And that is in the righteous servants of God a childlike fear, that when a pious heart indeed is frightened and reverent before God, it may also nevertheless still have a childlike confidence and trust in that regard, may love God for the sake of His goodness and mercy, displayed in Christ Jesus, and may offer praise and thanks to Him for all His good deeds.

B. The second is that little word "name," when David says that he would like to fear the name of God. The name of God,

however, is in most instances in Holy Scripture the same as God Himself; it is also entirely usual that one is mingled and transcribed with the other, as in Psalm 20[:1]: “May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble! May the name of the God of Jacob protect you!” and in Psalm 72[:18]: “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel and blessed be his glorious name forever.” As when Psalm 124[:8] says, “Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth,” so Psalm 68[:20] explains it: “Our God is a God of help, and to GOD, the Lord, belong deliverances from death.” So also in the New Testament one is called to believe on the name of the only-begotten Son of God as often as to believe on the Son of God Himself (John 3[:18]). The interpretation of this way of speaking is given by the scholars in this way, that we deal with God and about God in no other way than as He Himself has named Himself in His holy Word, that is, has revealed Himself. And the name of God would also be as much as the named God, the preached God, the revealed and proclaimed God, the glorious, most praised and widely called upon God, whose honor proceeds as far as heaven is and His truth so far as the clouds [Psalm 57:10].

C. The third is the little word “Your,” when David says: “That I may fear Your name.” For in this way He speaks with God, the God of his fathers, with Jehovah, as He has called Him in the beginning of our text, with the great God, with the true, living, and almighty God, who is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He has certainly now revealed Himself in His Word, that He is in three persons and called God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, but He still for that reason does not want to be a threefold God, but He is one God, one Lord, one individual, undivided and inseparable essence. Therefore, although he equally fears the names of all three persons: he fears the name of God the Father, he fears the name of God the Son, he fears the name of God the Holy Spirit, he nonetheless did not want to accordingly make three different names in this way, but he sticks with one name: “Preserve my heart in the one thing, that I may fear Your name.”

And this third part now shows us how it would not be enough for eternal salvation that a man has the right true God over

him, but he must also render and conduct himself correctly toward Him. We can learn to do that from the last part of the little Davidic passage being presently expounded before us now, where this holy man makes an interpretation of that one thing for which he has such a fervent craving and longing. For there he sets forth the fear of the name of the Lord. Lord, he says, that is the one thing that I wish and desire from You: that I may fear Your name. He indicates with these words with complete clarity that he and his soul are not helped by the fact that the name of the Lord may be in and of itself great, glorious, and praised, that He may dwell over him in heaven and have the highest power and dominion in all the world, that He may also be by and with him and ceaselessly show him love and kindness; but he must also conduct himself fittingly and worthily toward this Name, he must open his heart to Him and let Him move in and dwell there, he must have fear and knowledge of Him and place all his trust, hope, and confidence upon him. And appearances and daily experience also demonstrate that. All the heathen, who from the beginning of the earth have lived here, have had the name of the Lord over them. For there has still never arisen any other god that has set its throne in heaven and has had authority and power over all that exists except for the one real true God, the Lord, the God of all flesh, who gives His honor to no other and His name to no idol. He has always had all nations and heathens under His hand; He has created and prepared them, He has sustained and preserved them, He has given them food and drink, He has showered them with His good gifts and has provided them with all that is necessary and required for their body and life. And yet not all heathen have become partakers of eternal life, but most have come into eternal ruin and destruction. And that is the case for this reason, that they have not feared the name of the Lord that they have over them. They have not known the real true God, not loved Him, not honored Him, but have given themselves over to the works of their hands and have said to their self-made idols: "These are our helpers, which have saved us, which we want to fear, honor, and worship." So it goes and remains still in the present day. There is no people under the sun so barbaric, so insolent and wild, that it did not have the name of the Lord over itself, that is, that it was not under the jurisdiction and rule

of the real true God, and yet did not have a great many of them turn away from eternal salvation, for the reason that they do not fear the name of the Lord that they have over them, but rather blaspheme, reproach, and curse it. Indeed, what may I say about wild barbaric people? One may look upon us Christians, how we now and then live and dwell in the world. Have we not all the name of the Lord over us? Is not the name of the Lord Jesus daily preached and proclaimed among us? And yet it is known how not all who live in Christendom become children of life and of eternal salvation and that we do not all fear the name of the Lord that we have over us. We do not all have the Christ, after whom we are named, in our hearts. We do not all know Him, we do not all believe on Him, we do not all set our trust, hope, and confidence upon Him. Therefore, it will also be said one day regarding most: "I have never known you; depart from me all you evildoers" [Matthew 25:12; 25:41]. In whomever there exists an earnestness for the salvation of his soul, let that one surely see to it that he does not in this way miss out on or forsake anything in this regard. May he allow the Lord, his God, not only to sit over him and to daily give him all love and good, but also learn to properly render himself to Him and conduct himself for Him. May he not only allow the name of the Lord Christ to be preached and expounded to him daily, but also let Him come into his heart and dwell and abide in that place, may He fear the name of the Lord, love the name of the Lord, praise and glorify the name of the Lord, and serve and follow Him so long as He lives, thus will his name also then be written down in heaven and his portion be in the land of the living [Psalm 142:5]. God will give him a beautiful inheritance, a glorious, beautiful inheritance, an inheritance, namely with His saints and elect, "coming out of the great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence" [Revelation 7:14b, 15]. Such a blessed and glorious inheritance that has already been prepared [for her], the soul of our blessed, deceased wife of the mayor, who is now also resting in God, has now certainly without a doubt attained. For just as she has so often not in vain sighed and prayed to God: "Preserve my heart in the one thing, that I may fear Your name," but God has granted her that prayer and has given the fear of His name into her heart, so also her

Christian walk here upon heart has adequately attested it, indeed God the Lord has recognized her to the end of her life as part of His family, and the soul, which has always been faithfully devoted to Him, He has received into His kingdom. “There she will now eternally live together with Him in joy.”³ Now she sees the comfort of her heart and the joy of her soul, for which she has so often longed in this life. God has her in His fatherly arms and lap. And He, to whom she has here appealed for the one thing, gives to her there the entire store of His riches, the fullness of joy and lovely pleasures at His right hand always and eternally.

To His holy name be praise, honor, blessing, thanks, and glory now and for all eternity. Amen.⁴

Endnotes

¹ This may be a quotation from a sermon on Matthew 13:24-30 for the fifth Sunday after the Epiphany of Christ by Hermann Samson, an early seventeenth-century Lutheran preacher. The language is almost identical. Samson himself may have been quoting someone else. Samson preaches, “to the right hand and to the left hand, help us offer strong opposition, firm in faith and well armed through the power of the Holy Spirit” (Wilhelm Beste, *Die bedeutendsten Kanzelredner: Der älteren Lutherschen Kirche von Luther bis zu Spener in Biographien und einer Auswahl ihrer Predigten*, [Leipzig: Vorlag von Gustav Mayer, 1856], 113. This book can be accessed on the internet at: <[² This seems to be a quotation of Luther’s hymn, *Mit Fried’ und Freud’ ich fahr’ dahin* \(“In Peace and Joy I Now Depart,” ELH:48 vs. 1\).](http://books.google.com/books?id=iRwMerrMkyUC&pg=RA2-PA113&lpg=RA2-PA113&dq=%22zur+rechten+und+zur+linken+hand%22+%22starken+widerstand%22&source=web&ots=b3zVaNBM_e&sig=-VKLoQ9rAQIF4do5cIgE8q5FyuZI#PRA2-PA104,M1>”).</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

³ This is taken from Paul Eber’s hymn, *Herr Jesu Christ, wahr Mensch und Gott* (“Lord Jesus Christ, True Man and God,” ELH:238 vs. 10).

⁴ This translation is from the German found in *Paul Gerhardt als Prediger: Vier Leichenpredigten desselben aus den Jahren 1655, 1659, 1660 und 1661*, (Zwickau: Druck und Verlag von Johannes Herrmann, 1906), 84-109.

Funeral Sermon on Psalm 71:9

For Joachim Schröder Held on May 17, 1655 at the Church at Zossen

By Paul Gerhardt

Translated by Gaylin R. Schmeling

In the Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who allows us to undergo considerable anxiety and then makes us alive again and draws us from the depths of the earth. He increases our greatness and comforts us again (Psalm 71:20–21), who with the Father and the Holy Ghost is highly praised, glorified, and extolled now and in all eternity.

“Be faithful unto death so I will give you the crown of life” (Revelation 2:10). Thus, you beloved and elect in the Lord Christ Jesus, this our high deserving Lord and Savior writes to the angel or bishop of the congregation at Smyrna in the second chapter of the Revelation of Saint John. Here He clearly explains in the **first part** what gracious love and pleasure He bears concerning such Christians who have an upright, faithful, steadfast, and immoveable heart. They cling to their Redeemer and Savior in love and service not only in good but also in evil days; not only when things go well and successfully but also when they are overtaken with all kinds of tribulation and adversity; not only when they see the Lord in the land of the living but also when their eyes sleep in death, when they die and must say a blessed farewell to this world.

In the **second part** our dear Lord and Savior wants us to be aware that such a faithful and steadfast Christian heart is not a work of men. It does not come from our own flesh and blood that a Christian clings securely and immovably to his Redeemer and Savior. Rather it occurs only and alone through His divine power and strength that He Himself inculcates a lion’s heart and a hero’s courage to a Christian, particularly that He sets before his eyes the beautiful crown of life and honor which hereafter will be put on those who fought valiantly through life and death to reach their Lord Christ.

For a long time the eternal Son of God has allowed us to see and perceive His divine power and strength in the deceased well-

educated, honorable, and distinguished Mr. Joachim Schröder, the well-appointed and worthy Secretary¹ of electoral Brandenburg here at Zossen² but now sainted. For some years he received and endured hard and difficult suffering from the hand of his God, still through the grace of his and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ it was shown that in that suffering one could observe and find nothing other than an upright, faithful, steadfast, and immoveable heart in him. Since he did not on account of his allotted cross deviate a foot's width from his Savior, but through obedient patience and devotional prayer continually stepped closer to Him until, on this past May 6, he finally handed over his exhausted soul and commended it into faithful hands.

Then if it is Christian and proper that we show respect and honor to those who have remained faithful to their Lord Christ until death so we would not only place in his grave the lifeless body of the sainted Mr. Secretary and bring it to rest, but also at such a funeral we would have a Christian sermon and indeed from the words that the blessed deceased himself has chosen and directed for his funeral text. These words are found in Psalm 71:9 and read thus:

Do not cast me off in my old age; do not forsake me when I become weak.

Beloved and elect in the Lord Christ Jesus!

When God visited him with severe bodily troubles, the sainted Joachim Schröder selected certain beautiful passages from God's Word for the time in which God would arrange that one of them be declared and used at his funeral. The first of these passages, as much as one can discern from the information, was Psalm 26:8 where David says, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Your house, and the place where Your honor dwells." The second is the conclusion of the fifth chapter of Nehemiah that reads thus, "Remember me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people" (5:19). The third passage is the selected verse of Psalm 71: "Do not cast me off in the time of old age; do not forsake me when I become weak." All three passages are such that we can infer and observe the good thoughts with which the blessed deceased was often occupied.

1. As regards the first passage, it indicates his Christian and godly grief that he would have liked to have gone to church with other pious Christians and be present at the divine service. Therefore he sighed with David: “Lord, I have loved the habitation of Your house, and the place where Your honor dwells” (Psalm 26:8). This indicates how it pained him and how heavily he suffered and was burdened because he had to refrain and abstain from such lovely places which he in his heart loved and held in high regard. This place was a lovely place to him because it was the place of the house of the Lord, or as Jerome rendered it, “the ornament and decoration of the house of the Lord.” However the ornament and decoration of the house of the Lord is not merely the gold or precious stones with which the temple at Jerusalem was covered by Solomon. It is also not the many gold, silver, and brazen vessels that the skillful Hiram of Tyre made in the temple of Solomon. Rather the ornament of His house is the Lord Himself who dwells in this place. Where God the Lord has His fire and hearth, where God Himself with His Word and Spirit are found, there is the ornament above all ornaments, there is the decoration above all decorations even if it is only a poor village chapel or a humble peasant’s hut. This location is a delightful location for pious and God-fearing hearts because the honor of the Lord dwells there. The honor of the Lord is either the Lord Himself who is the highest and greatest honor of His people and who only and alone deserves all honor, or the honor of the Lord is the voice of thanksgiving and the preaching of the wonders of God to which David alludes when he states, “I will continue at your altar, O Lord, that one may hear the voice of thanksgiving and proclaim all Your wonders” (Psalm 26:6–7). On account of such ornament and honor this local house of God was a dear place to the blessed deceased. For him it was not an insignificant joy to hear a beautiful and spiritual sermon or to raise his voice and praise God in the assembly of Christians. Therefore when he was not able to attend because of the existing weakness, as he previously did in healthy days, it was a great sorrow to him. No doubt when he saw other pious people go to church he cried out secretly and said with the words of the psalm, “Oh how I would like to go along among the multitudes and travel to the house of the Lord with joy and thanksgiving among the

multitudes that celebrate the feast” (Psalm 42:4 [42:5]).³

2. The second passage which the blessed Mr. Secretary chose for a funeral text shows us his continual love and affection for his fellow man and especially for the ones over which he had been entrusted with authority by God and the government. Therefore with Nehemiah he prayed and said, “Remember me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people” (5:19). Here he asks the all-knowing God to try his heart and reins as witness to the good intention and purpose that he had in his heart during the administration of his office. He did not seek the harm or injury of anyone, rather, according to the example of Nehemiah, he sought to uplift and build up his poor people. Nehemiah was a man of a very fine and good heart who had in all his counsel and actions this one purpose, namely, that everything work for the good of the people and the common Fatherland. To accomplish his purpose was particularly difficult for this dear pious man. First, since Jerusalem at that time was still a wasteland and nothing but a stone pile, not only did he obtain the power and authority to rebuild Jerusalem from his lord the Persian king, Artaxerxes, but also he strived with all his power and ability in this construction and was not able to rest his head until the gates and walls of Jerusalem were again raised up. Then because in the protracted misery of the time, the people became depraved and fell into all manner of heathen wickedness and vice, he worked with all diligence against this and with rigor and proper earnestness to the end that he restrained the evil and abolished the cunning disorder. As a result of this work Nehemiah was hated and spoken against both by the enemies of his people and by some of his unruly subordinates themselves. Yet Nehemiah did not let this trouble him, rather he comforted himself with the fact that God in heaven knew his heart. “Remember me, my God, for good,” he spoke, “according to all that I have done for this people” (5:19). With such a heart and mind has the blessed Mr. Joachim Schröder presented himself to his God in heaven. “Remember me, my God, for good,” he said, “according to all that I have done for this people.” Should one or another be found who would say that perhaps I did not intend the best in this or that which I did for this

people, then remember me, my God, for good. Speak to my cause and look to the right. You know well what and how much good I have done for this people; You already know how You will reward and repay such things to me and mine out of grace.

3. The third passage which the blessed departed chose for a funeral text shows his hearty, fervent, confident faith and trust he had toward his God and Father in heaven during the time of his continued illness. For thus he himself relied on the words of Psalm 71 and said with David, “Do not cast me off in my old age; do not forsake me when I become weak,” because he noted well how through these words he was comforted powerfully and was strengthened to hope confidently for all good from God until the end of his life. Flesh and blood is so ill-natured that it trusts in God the Lord no farther than it sees with the eyes. So long as it goes well and our fortune stands in full bloom and growth, so long we believe that God is intending good for us, and that He is our good friend and our loving kind Father. But when our situation begins to change, when the sun of joy ceases to shine and the storms of tribulation come, then such faith and trust diminishes noticeably and we are not able to have any other thoughts than that God has changed His attitude toward us and has become our enemy. When I was young, we say, then I could perceive the blessing, favor, and grace of God, but now that I am old and weak God dismisses me and denies me all grace and friendship.

Against such thoughts David teaches the human heart to fight and struggle when he says, “Do not cast me off in my old age; do not forsake me when I become weak” (71:9). He pictures for us the loving God in another form than the one our flesh and blood portrays, namely, that not only in youth but also in old age He will be our God and Father. He will keep us for His children not only in good health and bodily strength but also when we become weak, frail, and powerless. Yes when our body and soul languish He still will be the comfort and portion of our hearts.

The passage from Psalm 71, even as it is the last passage on which the blessed Mr. Secretary rested and upon it fell asleep in the Lord, we will permit it to be properly and principally his funeral text

and together briefly and simply consider it.

This, our chosen and main passage, can appropriately be divided into three distinct concise statements or parts:

- I. The first: I will one day become old or my old age will one day come.**
- II. The second: When my old age comes I will become weak.**
- III. The third: When I am old and weak my God will neither reject me nor forsake me.**

A. In Holy Scripture principally **two kinds of old age** are found. One can appropriately be named the old age of the mind and the soul when a man is of an intelligent, wise, and understanding heart notwithstanding that he is otherwise young in years and tender and not grown in body. The fourth chapter of the Wisdom of Solomon speaks of this old age in particular. Here the book deals with pious well-bred children who are endowed with heavenly wisdom, that is, with a loving fear of God and die early in their youth; nevertheless I say, the book of the Wisdom of Solomon introduces them as people who have acquired gray hair and a high age. “The righteous one,” it says, “though he die early is still at rest. For old age is honorable not because it lives long or has many years. Rather understanding among men is the proper gray hair and a blameless life is the proper old age. He (the righteous one who dies early) is immediately perfect and has experienced many years” (4:7-9). This old age is alluded to in the little book of Tobit. Here the well directed youth of aged Tobit is described thus although he was a young man. In chapter one it states: “Although he was the youngest man in the tribe of Naphtali, he did not behave childishly” (1:4), that is, he did not behave disorderly, unreasonably, and imprudently. When Holy Scripture speaks of being childish it refers to one without common sense or understanding as is seen in the third chapter of Isaiah. Here God the Lord threatened His people that He would remove the prudent and wise people from the land, that is, He would give them such rulers that were perhaps old enough to be rulers but in regard to understanding they would be young and imperfect. They would in

their activity and nature show themselves to be foolish and stupid as at times children and inexperienced youth are accustomed to appear (Isaiah 3:4-5).

The second old age is the old age of the body when a person lives long on the earth. Indeed, he grows in the years of his temporal natural life but the power and ability of his body more and more diminishes. Concerning this bodily age, David speaks here in our passage (Psalm 71:9) in contrast to the statement he made before this. For here he places old age in contrast to youth and indeed that kind of youth that God drew him out of his mother's womb as he says in Psalm 71:6.

B. Secondly the little **“my”** is noteworthy and interesting where David says, “Do not cast me off in my old age” (Psalm 71:9). With this he brings home to us the various lengths of bodily age which men are accustomed to reach. Before the Flood the age to which men climbed was exceeding high, namely almost to one thousand years. As chapter five of Genesis informs us, Enosh failed to reach one thousand years old by 95 years. Cainan missed being one thousand years old by 90 years; Seth by 88 years; the first father, Adam, by 70 years; Jared by 38 years; but Methuselah lacked only 31 years.

Concerning Noah, who lived partially before and partially after the Flood, it is announced that he became 950 years old. He was 600 years old when the Flood came and after the Flood he still lived 350 years. However those who lived after Noah did not nearly come to such a high age. Shem who was the oldest person after the Flood was not older than 600. Eber, from whom the Hebrew name is derived, was 464 years old and Arphaxad was 438. But Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, and Terah remained around 200 and did not reach 300. Finally their descendants were no longer able to live to see 200 years rather their life span remained around 100 and some years. Jacob lamented about this in his conversation with Pharaoh the king. When he was asked by Pharaoh how old he was, Jacob answered: “The time of my pilgrimage is one hundred and thirty years. Few and evil have been the days of my life and they have not attained to the time of my fathers in their pilgrimage” (Genesis 47:9).

Yet from the time of Jacob and the holy fathers until the time of David the measure of human life so diminished that they did not reach the one hundredth year anymore or at least very seldom. “Our life lasts seventy years, if it reaches higher it is eighty years” (Psalm 90:10). David himself sang this at his time together with other Israelites, and as he had sung so it happened to him. When he had reached seventy years he concluded his life and was considered to be a very old and aged man. But as limited as David’s age was compared with the age of the previous fathers, still he did not place the care of his life upon himself, rather, he yielded it to the gracious direction of his loving God and prayed for fatherly care, protection, and preservation.

This first part gives us a salutary teaching which is this: one should think about old age early in life. Dear David is here teaching us this with his example when in our passage he states, “Do not cast me off in my old age.” In this way this pious and holy man is letting it be understood that he did not always only think about his previous and past time, how it went for him in his youth, what he faced in his childhood, and what happened to him. Instead he also considered the future time, when he would be very old, what kind of situation he would face, and how he would receive the necessary power, strength, help, and assistance. Now this we and other pious Christians should also do. We also should consider the future years; we should remember concerning our old age what God according to His gracious will would like us to experience. Yet this is not accomplished when one only thinks of old age lightly; rather one must see to it that he does not misuse such thoughts.

Some people, when they consider their old age, take the opportunity to delay their spiritual growth and conversion thinking and saying in their heart, “Why do I want to vex and grieve myself greatly in my youth? When once I am old there will be time enough to be pious. I have many days before me wherein I may indeed improve myself and turn from sin when affliction increases.” In the face of such thoughts Sirach warns in chapter 18, “Do not use repentance sparingly until you become sick, but reform yourself because you still are able to sin. Delay not to be pious, and wait not with the improvement of your life until death” (18:22). Some people, when

they consider their old age, take the opportunity to wallow around in all kinds of epicurean lust and luxury, thinking and saying in their heart, “Why should I tame or force my young body? When once I am old without all that, indeed it will learn to live quietly and modestly. In the meantime let us live a life of pleasure because it exits and because of the needs of our body since it is young” (Wisdom of Solomon 2:6). These are evil and irresponsible thoughts not suited for Christians and the children of God. What righteous Christians desire to be that they should consider at their age that they take occasion to spend their youth in all fear of God, chastity, virtue, and honesty. It is violently evil and a very improper separation when one offers the prime of his life to Satan but the scum to God the Lord. It is a great misfortune when the rod is restrained in one’s youth and then he must be chastised in old age. On the contrary it is a sweet comfort and a noble staff in old age when one is able to boast and say with Job, “My conscience does not pang me on account of my youth and my entire life” (Job 27:6). A Christian should consider old age that he may take occasion in his youth to learn something honorable and honest, that in his office, position (*Stand*), and calling he be faithful and diligent, and also that he care for and save that which he obtains through God’s blessings. “For if you do not gather in your youth, what will you find in old age?” (Sirach 25:3 [25:5]). However this thriftiness (saving) is to be conditioned that it does not go too far and finally lose the name (thriftiness) and be transformed into covetousness when one so cares for and saves that one is never happy with the obtained privilege and abundance and does nothing good for himself in advanced old age but rather gathers until he is in the grave and even then continually fears that he will die of hunger. That is rightly a *monstrosum vitium* (monstrous vice) as the intelligent orator Cicero designated it, “The covetousness of aged people is not unlike a monstrous astounding beast. For what is more absurd than when one is still going about piling up supplies for the journey when the journey is almost to an end?” This is an evil plague as wise Solomon states in Ecclesiastes, “This is an evil plague that a man go (out of this world) such as he came. What does it help him then that he has labored in the wind? His life long he has eaten in darkness and in great grief, sickness, and sorrow” (5:16–17 [5:15–16]).

Finally, a Christian should so consider old age that he may take occasion to be prepared and ready for his last hour. For old age is the next step to death. Whoever is old has nothing more certain to expect than death. For elderly people, death (the aging process) takes away the best and greatest part of their life and there remains indeed very little. If anyone forgets about his mortality in his youth, he will remember the same in his old age. If anyone has forgotten death as it secretly and cunningly creeps after him, so he remembers it when it stands at the door and allows itself to be seen openly. And thus he prepares himself for a blessed departure. He behaves as one whose abiding place is no longer here but far away from here. He rejoices in his approaching Simeon's hour when he will depart in peace and reach eternal genuine, true, perfect rest (Luke 2:25–32).

II. The second phrase of our intended Davidic text reads thus: When once my old age comes I will become weak.

A. To be sure this is not all that is said. In the Holy Scriptures dear old age has various and many glorious predications and honorable titles that indicate that it is held in great and high esteem. For at one time its nobility and excellence was so extolled that namely it is one of the noblest and most precious gifts of the Most High God which He imparts to His dear intimate relatives and best friends (those who are the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior). This we can gather from the promise that God gave to Solomon when He indicated how much it pleased Him that Solomon asked for wisdom and for nothing else. The Lord God named an abundance of gifts all of which He would give him but the best He kept until the last: "If you remain pious," said He, "thus I will also in addition give you a long life" (I Kings 3:14). The venerableness of dear old age is extolled in the Holy Scriptures which God Himself ratified through a particularly earnest statute in Leviticus 19: "Before the gray heads," He says, "you should arise and honor the aged. For you should revere your God; for I am the Lord" (19:32). Also the wisdom and experience of dear old age is extolled in the Holy Scriptures: "By the aged ones (*Grossvätern*) is wisdom and by old age is understanding," states Job (12:12). For which reason Sirach

admonishes that young people who need good counsel or want to learn something should diligently keep themselves close to aged people: “Gladly be by the elderly,” he states in chapter 6:36 [6:35], “and where there is a wise man keep close to him.” And in chapter 8:8-11 [8:9-12], he states, “Do not despise what the wise say but conform to their discourse. From them you can learn something and learn how you should behave toward great people. Do not consider yourself wiser than the aged ones, since also they have learned from their fathers. For from them you can learn how you should answer where it is necessary.”

As glorious as these predications and honorable titles are, yet dear old age also has its great needs and infirmities. Here in our text this weakness is described when David says, “Forsake me not when I become weak.” *Cum dereliquerit me virtus mea* means in our language “when my strength forsakes me.” Therein it is clearly indicated that the strengths of older people do not only not increase but from day to day they are lost, and the longer one lives the less they become.

B. This weakness of old age is such an occurrence which is not caused by long life in and of itself, but it is a fruit of sin that grows out of Adam’s Fall and can indeed be changed and warded off through the grace of God. For if Adam had remained in the state of innocence he would have surely, because there was no death, been able to reach long life and a great age, yet he would not have been subjected to the weakness of old age and the decrease of strength.

We have also an example in Moses and Caleb that they indeed became old in God the Lord and still at the same time they did not experience the weakness of aging. Concerning Moses it is written, “Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes did not become dim and his strength did not decline” (Deuteronomy 34:7). About Caleb it is written in the little book of Joshua that he himself avowed and confessed, “Behold I am eighty-five years old and am still today as strong as I was in the day that Moses sent me out [as a spy]. As my strength was at that time so it is also now, to fight and to go out and to go in” (Joshua 14:10-11). But even as these are extraordinary examples as God the Lord performed

something special on these individuals so also other individuals in general have had another situation in their old age. There no one could say that he is still so strong in his eightieth year as he was previously in his thirtieth year or fortieth year. Rather when as men become old, they become weak, they decline and become more and more unable as far as their strength is concerned.

Here it occurs as Solomon says in Ecclesiastes chapter 12 that after the passing of youth the difficult days come and years draw near when one says, "They do not please me. There the sun and light, the moon and stars are darkened" (12:1-2), that is, the inner light of the heart, all understanding, humor, and calculation disappear. "The clouds return after the rain" (12:2), that is, it happens with elderly people that there is one sorrow after another, one worry, care, and distress after another. When one misfortune is over a new one is already there. "The guards of the house tremble and the strong ones stoop," that is, the hands and feet are not as agile as in youth. "The grinders stand idle for there have become so few of them" (12:3), that is, the teeth which must crush and grind the food become dull and fall out. "The ones viewing through the window become dark" (12:3), that is, the eyes are darkened and must be assisted with glasses. "The daughters of song are bent low" (12:4), that is, the ears that judge music and song do not hear well anymore. They are deaf and must bend themselves and more incline if they desire to receive and properly understand. And that continues until the dust returns to the earth as it had been and the spirit returned to God who gave it.

This second part again gives us a teaching that means: One should not all too strongly wish or desire to become old (to have long life). This teaching proceeds here from the fact that old age has its great needs and infirmities. It is subjected to weakness and finally affects all one's powers and abilities. That many men have a great desire and love for old age and so gladly desire to obtain a long life here on earth comes without a doubt from this: that they would like to partake of and use God's gifts and goods longer which He has bestowed on them in this world. As an example, the one who so lives in the world that he knows no painful sickness, no headache, no fever, no gout, colic, and the like to speak of, rather he is always vigorous and healthy, his food and drink taste good, and

he can apply himself unhindered to his position and calling, thus it seems to him that this is a good life and he wishes to continue in it a long time. Who so lives in the world that he knows neither poverty nor need to speak of, rather the blessing of the Lord makes him rich, his store rooms are able to deliver one provision after the other, and what his heart wishes and desires that he has in abundance and plenty, it seems to him even if he should live over one hundred years still he would not tire of or be weary of such a life. Who so lives in the world that he is faithful to the fatherland, is able to render useful service and on account of his service by human kindness and love also obtains honor and a great name, he wishes not only for himself the lengthening of life but all the world regrets and deploras it when such a man dies. When such a man dies prematurely, “Ah it is a shame about the man,” one says, “it would have been good that he reached a high and great age.” But for all these thoughts the end and measure lies hidden through the one little word “weakness” when David says, “When my old age comes, I will become weak, my strength will forsake me, I will decline and from day to day the more unable I will be.” If this word was not standing by old age there would be still something good about a long life. But because it declares that the aged one is weak, the aged one loses his strength thus the value of old age is greatly diminished. One perceives concerning a man that in his youth he is lively and healthy, still what is his situation when he is old? Then old age for him results in sickness. If in his youth he was full of power and strength old age will cause him to be feeble and powerless. If in youth one was beautiful and handsome old age will cause him/her to be ugly and deformed; his beauty will be devoured as from moths. If in youth he is full of warmth and passion old age will chill him considerably as was the case when David could no longer be warmed (1 Kings 1:1).

One perceives concerning a man that in his youth in regard to his property he has good courage and a joyful heart but what a change happens when he is old. For if he even had all royal and princely glory before him, still he is not able to use the same any more but he must lament with Barzillai, “I can no longer discern what is good or evil, I can no longer taste what I eat or drink, I can no longer hear what the male and female singers sing” (2 Samuel

19:35). Thus one may look at a man to whom life has become difficult in his youth and see that he might achieve something significant for the general good and for his country and people. How poorly it goes for him, however, when he becomes old. Because his strength abandons him he can no longer work as previously. Because the liveliness of spirit is gone his creations and calculations are not as they were before. Because his decision-making ability and thought process have deteriorated his conversations and writing and all that he begins by far do not have such capability as in the prime of youth. When an individual reaches this situation he also is no longer held in high regard in the world but it happens to him as it did with Samuel. “You have become old,” one says, “you assist us no more, we must have another in your position” (1 Samuel 8:5).

Therefore the fact may be that that an individual does not desire a long life and does not let himself greatly long for a great age, rather he learns to restrain his desires and longings. He places the years of his life in the hands of his dear God and leaves it to Him to do according to His wise counsel and will. If God allows one or another individual to become old he receives it with thanksgiving and praises the wonderful wisdom of the Most High. If God takes one or another away in an untimely manner he will not be indignant as though he experienced great sorrow. Oh no! Nothing harmful has happened to him, rather in the face of great sorrow and suffering of the heart he is snatched away from that which by the lengthening of his life he would not have been able to flee or escape.

III. The third phrase in our intended text reads thus: When once I become old and weak my God will not reject nor forsake me. David speaks this in the manner of a heartfelt, fervent sigh. “Do not cast me off in my old age,” he states, “Do not forsake me when I become weak.” In this one little sigh two different moving concluding statements are contained.

A. The one is this: You, my God, can and will not cast me off because my old age is here. To better receive the power of this conclusion we must give attention to the forgoing verses 5 and 6. Here David had prayed thus: “You are my confidence, Lord God, my hope from my youth. On You have I relied from birth, You have

drawn me out of the womb of my mother” (Psalm 71:5–6). Who now has drawn me out of my mother’s womb, so David wants to say, and on whom from youth and from my mother’s womb I have set all my hope and confidence, that one can and will not cast me off in my old age. Now You, my Lord and God, have drawn me out of the womb of my mother and I have from youth on and from my mother’s womb set all my hope and confidence on You. Therefore You, my God and Lord, will not cast me off in my old age.

This is not only a firm but also an unmovable conclusion that without a doubt God the Lord with His heart is moved when one conveys to Him the thought that He in the entry of our life had been our good friend and then in going out of life He would be our enemy; how when we were nothing He helped us so that we became something, and then when through His grace our nature and life have continued so long, again He would let us waste away and become nothing; how He prepared our frame so well in our mother’s womb and has clothed it with veins, flesh, and skin and then when the last hour comes would He reject and cast away this His work and creature of His hands; how He desired to hear our prayers and received them and then when even unto our gray old age we had placed our hope and confidence on Him, would He change Himself into a cruel being and tread our prayers under foot? That, David says, Your unending and unreachable mercy would never permit O God; You as loving, pious, faithful Father would never bring that out of Your heart.

B. The second conclusion of David is this: You my God can and will not cast me off because I am weak and my strength fails me. This conclusion David bases on the comforting promise of God when He pledged that He would be our helper in need, that is, He would help us when the highest and greatest need is present, and when neither we nor any creature are able to help then He will come and assist us. Now when the greatest need is present, David wants to say, so will You, my God, not forsake me because that runs contrary to Your pledge and promise. But now at present my own strength has forsaken me, the greatest need is present. For what can be a greater need than when not only my good friends, relatives, and associates

but also my own power, strength, and ability are withdrawn from me and will no longer remain with me? Therefore when my own strength has forsaken me, You, my God, will not forsake me. If You will not forsake me thus You must remain with me and must compensate for those things which through the loss of my strength are taken and separated from me. That is: because the strength of my eyes has forsaken me so You, my God, have to be my light; because the strength of my ears has forsaken me so You, my God, have to be my comfort; because the strength of my arms has forsaken me so You, my God, have to be my strength; because the strength of my feet has forsaken me so You, my God, have to be my rod and staff; because the strength of my understanding has forsaken me so You, my God, have to be my wisdom; and because the strength of my heart has forsaken me so You, my God, have to be my life.

And this third part gives us the last teaching, that is: In old age one should not despair. There is nothing more common among men than that in youth they are indeed joyful, comforted, and of good hope and confidence, but when they become old, gray, and weak then the heart and courage faint in them and begin to be fearful and despondent. This occurs without a doubt since they attribute according to human customs their preservation not so much to God in heaven as to natural means and their own strength. And because a young man according to his way of thinking is stronger and more able than an aged person, thus his heart is more joyful and comforted than is customarily the case with older people. For example, if a young man is attacked by his enemies, he relies on his manly, valiant strength, or if this does not work he comforts himself with his quick, swift legs with which he can easily escape and flee from the danger. If a young man is robbed of his property and goods, he thinks, "I am still young. I can again obtain for myself what was lost. I can go where I wish and find respectable labor and can earn my bread and livelihood." On the contrary when an aged, decrepit man burdened with years and all kinds of weakness comes upon only minor needs or dangers, he thinks, "Now I am in the situation where there is no more deliverance, pilot, or defense; now I know neither what is before me nor what is behind me; now I must certainly succumb and be defeated." Yet the man for this reason is not lost and ruined

even if he cannot advise or help himself. For when our own strength forsakes us still the Lord our God does not forsake us. And when help on earth is at an end still help in heaven is not at an end.

Rather it is said, where human help ceases there begins the help of God. And when according to our perspective everything will go to ruins and destruction, then God begins to set things right in that He helps all the distressed on earth. Therefore for this reason no one should lose heart that the strength of his youth fails and instead the weakness of old age befalls him, rather he grasps with David a confident heart and says, The God who drew me out of my mother's womb will not cast me off in my old age and even if my strength fails still my God will not fail me. My salvation and wellbeing do not depend on my youth nor on my old age but only and solely on the strength and omnipotence of my dear God and Father in heaven. When I have that One on my side His strength will be mighty in my weakness; I will again be young as an eagle and my old age will be as my youth (Psalm 103:5).

On this strong, almighty God and Father in heaven every pious Christian heart places a joyful, fearless trust. He is a faithful God and tender loving Father who will graciously allow Himself to be found by all those who take Him for their strength. "The righteous one will sprout as the palm tree, he will grow as a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of Lord, they will sprout in the courts of our God. And even when they become old they will still flourish and be fruitful and fresh. They will announce, 'The Lord is upright, He is my refuge, and there is no unrighteousness in Him'" (Psalm 92:12-15 [92:13-16]).

This truth our blessed deceased, laying before our eyes in the coffin, Mr. Joachim Schröder, formerly the Secretary here at Zossen, knew full well through the grace of God. For after he observed the time when the strength of youth would forsake him and the weakness of old age would overtake him (even though however he was not the oldest in years), he by no means allowed any fear or despondency to be perceived in him so that concerning his joyful, confident, and fearless heart one could not be more amazed.

His joy and comfort had been his upright loving God, the faithful and merciful Father who drew him out of his mother's

womb and from youth on cared for and nourished him. He had a childlike confidence and trust in Him that He would not cast him off in his old age and even when his strength would forsake him still his God would not forsake him. In such trust our loving God did not permit him to be ashamed, rather He stood by him so that not only did He bestow wonderful power and strength on his weak, sick body but also released him of his well-carried cross after his endurance had been sufficiently tried and tested and took him tenderly and blissfully to Himself in heaven. There he sprouts as the palm tree; he grows as a cedar in Lebanon. He is planted in the house of the Lord; he sprouts in the courts of our God. There he sings and leaps with the holy angels and announces that the Lord is upright, He is his refuge, and there is no unrighteousness in Him (Psalm 92:12-15 [92:13–16]). To this upright Lord and refuge of our salvation be praise, honor, adoration, thanks, and glory now and forever. ⁴

Endnotes

¹ The German word here is *Amtschreiber*. An *Amtschreiber* is probably closest to a notary public, i.e. an officer who can administer oaths and statutory declarations, witness and authenticate documents like wills and marriage certificates.

² Zossen is a German city in the district of Teltow-Fläming in Brandenburg, south of Berlin.

³ Bracketed numbers indicate different German numbering.

⁴ This translation is from the German found in *Paul Gerhardt als Prediger: Vier Leichenpredigten desselben aus den Jahren 1655, 1659, 1660, und 1661* (Zwickau: Druck und Verlag von Johannes Herrmann, 1906), 28–57.

Gerhardt and the Berlin Christmas Service of 1659

Hans Joachim Moser, *Die evangelische Kirchenmusik in volkstümlichem Überblick* (p. 60ff) as recorded in Theodore Graebner, *The Borderland of Right and Wrong* (Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), 6–8.

The church is cold. Candles are being lighted. The people are coming and taking their places. A group of schoolboys is at one side of the gallery and a choir of mixed voices at the other side. Below the pulpit we see a *Collegium Musicum*, a voluntary musical society composed of tradesmen and craftsmen, who perform on violins and wood-wind instruments, gathered around a small movable organ. Then there is a male quartet, also a military band with trumpets, kettledrums and drums. After the organ prelude a choral is sung in the following matter: Stanza 1 is sung by the congregation, Stanza 2 is sung as a solo by the cantor, Stanza 3 is performed by four girls *a cappella*, Stanza 4 is sung by a male quartet together with the wind instruments, Stanza 5 is sung by the congregation, Stanza 6 is sung *a cappella* by the schoolboys in the choir, and Stanza 7 is taken by the congregation, the organ, and all the singers.

Now three clergymen with white clergymen's bands and black robes have appeared at the altar. The entire liturgy is sung in Latin, and all the responses and anthems are sung in Latin by the choirs and the school children. Next a college student, dressed as an angel with large white wings, sings from the pulpit an Old Testament prophecy, accompanied by the *Collegium Musicum* below the pulpit.

More chanting from the altar, and then the principal door of the church opens, and in comes a procession of girls, headed by the teacher, all dressed as angels. They proceed to the high altar, where the teacher sings Stanza 1 of "Vom Himmel hoch, da komm' ich her," [ELH 123] and Stanza 2 is sung by the girls in two-part counterpoint. The third stanza is taken by the organ and the choir in the gallery as a "beautiful five-voiced motet." While the procession

has been marching down the aisle, one of the ministers chants a “Gloria,” answered by the electoral court and field trumpeters with fanfares and drum rolls.

After the sermon [by Pastor Paul Gerhardt] there is more chanting by the liturgist, and the instrumentalists play a boisterous *Te Deum*. Then follows another Latin anthem by the school children. Things now begin to happen in the organ loft. Over the railing is raised a cradle with a doll, while some boys with incessant mooing imitate the animals in the Bethlehem stable. The choir and the congregation sing a hymn, and at this point high up on the organ façade a Bethlehem star, illuminated and supplied with small bells, is turned round and round. By the aid of a mechanism, operated by an organ stop, we see three wooden images, representing the three Wise Men, with their traditional tributes, solemnly move forward and bow before the doll in the cradle. At the same time we notice two puppets, representing Moors, standing on each side of the central group. One blows a trumpet, and the other beats a drum. Throughout this scene on the gallery railing the *Collegium Musicum* plays a *ritornello*.

A boy soprano intonates *In Dulci Iubilo* [ELH 135], which is continued by male voices, accompanied by schalmeis (oboes) and bombards. The song is scarcely over before a sight “exceedingly beloved to the children” appears in the center aisle. It is Old Father Christmas himself in his white beard, with pointed cap on his head and a large sack on his back, soon surrounded by “angels” and children, who vie with one another for the good things that are to be given out. When the large sack is empty and Old Father Christmas has disappeared behind the sacristy door, then is sung as closing chorale *Puer Natus in Bethlehem* [ELH 112].

Anna of Prussia - Lutheran Confessor (1576-1625)

Gaylin R. Schmeling

Anna was not the first in her family to embrace Lutheranism. Her grandfather was Albert Hohenzollern, the grand master of the Teutonic Knights, who received the Lutheran faith in 1522 and with him all of East Prussia. This was a province of Germany far to the east near the Baltic states. Albert was converted in 1522 by Osiander on a visit to Nürnberg. The German language and a Lutheran service were used in Königsberg before they were introduced in Wittenberg. In fact East Prussia was the first Lutheran province of Germany.

Her father, Albert Frederick (1553-1618), was a rather unstable individual and some considered him to be insane. He married Marie Eleanore of Jülich-Cleves, who was heiress to the Duchy of Jülich-Cleves. This made Anna heiress to both Jülich-Cleves and East Prussia at her father's death. She married John Sigismund, who was the elector of Brandenburg.

John Sigismund (1572-1619) had been educated in Heidelberg, which was a city that accepted the teachings of John Calvin. Although John Sigismund had been raised as a staunch Lutheran, in Heidelberg he was strongly influenced by Calvinism. He remained a secret Calvinist for some years but on Christmas Day in 1613 he had the Lord's Supper celebrated at his court in the Reformed manner. This horrified Anna who cherished her Lutheran faith. John Sigismund assumed that his family and his people would follow him in embracing the Reformed faith, often referred to as a Second Reformation at the time. However, his wife, Anna, and most of his people resisted the Reformed faith.

Anna did everything possible to maintain her Lutheranism and the Lutheranism of her land. When her husband planned to have her oldest son, Georg Wilhelm, educated by Reformed teachers she protested vehemently. She knew her responsibilities as a Christian mother. She had been taught the wonderful truths of salvation. She trusted in Jesus as her only Savior from sin and she wanted her children to have the blessings of that Lutheran faith.¹ Later

she obtained a Lutheran husband for her daughter in the person of Gustavus Adolphus, the king of Sweden. A Christian marriage was important to her.²

To counteract the Reformed influence of the new pastors that her husband brought into the realm, she invited the well-known Lutheran theologian Balthasar Meisner to come to Berlin and preach at the palace chapel. Here Lutheran services continued to be conducted for the electress.³ In this way she encouraged the people of Brandenburg-Prussia to continue in their Lutheran faith.

The noblemen in the realm were inspired by Anna to resist the Calvinization attempted by her husband. She understood the Bible directive that she ought to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29). Anna loved her husband but she knew that he was leading his people in a direction contrary to the Word of God. His new pastors were telling the people that the Lord's Supper was not the body and blood of Christ and that Baptism did not work faith in the heart of an infant. Anna treasured the comfort of her Baptism and the strengthening she received from the body and blood of the Lord. Therefore, she encouraged the people to make their stand on the Word of God.

Anna's strong stand for confessional Lutheranism in Prussia bore fruit. As a result of her encouragement the noblemen withstood the demands of John Sigismund to accept the Reformed faith. Finally he had to consent to allowing the majority of his people to remain Lutherans while he and a few of his associates practiced the Reformed faith.

In Anna of Prussia we have an example of a Christian who remained faithful to confessional Lutheranism. She stood for the truth of the Bible regardless of what it would cost her. Her valiant battle against Calvinism encourages us to continue the struggle to maintain the teachings of Scripture in their truth and purity. In addition, we see that the bold confession of a Christian can indeed bear abundant fruit. Her confession of the Lutheran faith slowed the spread of Calvinism in Brandenburg-Prussia. Living our faith-life as Anna did will also bear fruit in the Gospel kingdom of Christ.

Bibliography

- Koch, H.W. *A History of Prussia*. New York: Dorset Press, 1978.
- Midelfort, H.C. Erik. *Mad Princes of Renaissance Germany*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994.
- Nischan, Bodo. *Lutherans and Calvinists in the Age of Confessionalism*. Great Britain: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 1999.
- . *Prince, People, and Confession The Second Reformation in Brandenburg*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994.
- Roy, James Charles. *The Vanished Kingdom*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999.

Endnotes

¹ Bodo Nischan, *Prince, People, and Confession The Second Reformation in Brandenburg* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 107.

² H.W. Koch, *A History of Prussia* (New York: Dorset Press, 1978), 41.

³ Nischan, *Second Reformation*, 167.