

LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY



VOLUME 50 • NUMBERS 2–3

JUNE–SEPTEMBER 2010

A Penitent Pastor's Prayer

Sermon on Luke 1:26–33

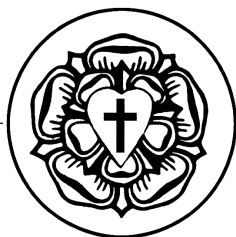
**A Different Spirit: Luther's Approach Toward
the Reformed at Marburg**

**Preaching the Text Before Us and Not Something
Else: Necessary Processes of Text Study in
Sermon Preparation**

**Polykarp Leyser (1552–1610): A Theological
Bridge Between Chemnitz and Gerhard**

Note and Book Reviews

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The theological journal of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY

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Foreword

LSQ Vol. 50, Nos. 2–3 (June–September 2010)

P RAYER IS A VITAL PART of the life of every pastor and every Christian. We each need to go to the Lord daily in prayer, requesting His pardon for our sins through His Son's blood and asking for the strengthening of the Spirit through the means of grace so that we can continue our life of service. The Rev. Frederic Lams reminds us of this truth in his sermon based on Psalm 51:10–13 with the theme "A Penitent Pastor's Prayer." The Rev. Lams is the pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Hobart, Indiana.

The church remembers the great heroes of faith, not on the day of their birth, but on the day of their death, which is their birth into the new and glorious existence of heaven. The feast day of the blessed Virgin Mary is August 15. Commemorating that feast in the church year, the Rev. David Jay Webber uses Luke 1:26–33 for the text of his sermon. The Rev. Webber is the pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Scottsdale, and Sun of Righteousness Lutheran Church in Queen Creek, Arizona.

The year 2009 was the 480th anniversary of the Marburg Colloquy in 1529. At this summit the growing divisions among Protestants came to a head. Zwingli and Luther were the two leading antagonists. Their differing views on the Lord's Supper, which were symptomatic of many other differences, led to a permanent break in the Protestant camp. The Rev. Shawn Stafford, in his essay "A Different Spirit: Luther's Approach Toward the Reformed at Marburg," presents this history showing the

biblical basis for Luther's theology. The Rev. Stafford is pastor of Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Bagley, and St. Paul Lutheran Church in Lengby, Minnesota.

As heirs of the Lutheran Reformation, *sola scriptura* not only defines the basis for our theology and the basis for the assurance of our salvation, but also the basis for the message that Lutheran pastors preach. All Lutheran preaching is based on Scripture and upon a proper Scripture text. This is the point of the essay "Preaching the Text Before Us and Not Something Else: Necessary Processes of Text Study in Sermon Preparation." This essay was written by the Rev. Thomas Heyn, who is pastor of Western Koshkonong Lutheran Church in Cottage Grove, Wisconsin.

This year is the 400th anniversary of the death of Polykarp Leyser (1552–1610). He spans the time between Chemnitz and Gerhard and was closely associated with both of them. He was called as superintendent in Braunschweig in 1587 where he became familiar with the writings of Martin Chemnitz and published a new edition of Chemnitz's *Loci Theologici* in 1592. In addition, he continued the harmony of the Gospels begun by Chemnitz and finished by Gerhard, which is known as *Harmonia Evangelica*. Later, in 1594, he was superintendent and court preacher to the Saxon Elector in Dresden. His life and work are summarized in the essay "Polykarp Leyser (1552–1610): A Theological Bridge Between Chemnitz and Luther."

The current 55 volumes of the American Edition of Luther's Works were published from 1955 to 1986. Twenty new volumes are slated for publication. The first new volume, volume 69, comprising sermons on the Gospel of John, was made available in 2009. The second release, volume 58 coming this fall, will contain sermons of Luther written from 1521–1546. This information is presented in a note written by Candidate of Theology Nicholas Proksch, who has assisted with the translation of the new volumes of the American Edition.

Also included in this issue are two book reviews. The book *The Genius of Luther's Theology*, written by Robert Kolb and Charles Arand, was reviewed by the Rev. John Moldstad, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The book *Treasures Old and New*, written by John Jeske, was reviewed by the Rev. Michael Smith, professor at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary.

– GRS

A Penitent Pastor's Prayer

Frederic E. Lams
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LSQ Vol. 50, Nos. 2–3 (June–September 2010)

Text: *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee. (Psalm 51:10–13; KJV)*

WHILE ATTENDING SEMINARY in Fort Wayne, I was assigned to serve a field work congregation in that area where a good number of sem professors and sem students attended. The thought of preaching to those professors and seminary students frightened me. I remembered how many of my professors had complained about some of the preaching being done at that time. I also knew how critical some students are, being enrolled at that time in homiletic classes. I could only imagine how my sermon would be cut to shreds by the criticism of this awesome audience. I mentioned my fears to my supervising pastor. His reply was short and blunt: “Forget it. They’re all sinners, as you and I are. We all have to stand before God.”

Today I am standing with some trepidation before a group of veteran pastors who know how to handle the Word of God and who also are quick to recognize when the Word is not being handled properly. And there comes back to mind the advice of my former supervising pastor: “Forget it. They’re all sinners, just as you and I are.” So here we are, sinners all, invited to stand before God. An appropriate prayer for a time like this is the prayer spoken by penitent King David when he

finally woke up to the fact that one may hide his sin from man, but you still have to face God. This afternoon let me make this **“A Penitent Pastor’s Prayer.”**

I. A Plea for Pardon. It will help us understand the urgency of this prayer if we recall that the sins of which David had become guilty became possible because of his profession in life, his position as King of Israel. If he had not had the power of a king, it is doubtful that the naked woman he saw bathing would have come in to him at the request of a messenger. And only a king could have given the command for Uriah, Bathsheba’s husband, to be put in the front line of the army, where an enemy soldier would unknowingly do the King’s dirty work for him. So David’s adultery and murder, for which the hand of the Lord was now heavy upon him, were closely connected with his position as King.

You and I are subjected to all the temptations of all mankind. In addition to that, we are subjected to the temptations and sins that beset one who holds the office of pastor. The stole we might wear is not only a yoke symbolizing the burdens we bear, but all too often serves as a mask hiding the sins, the professional sins, of which we become guilty. That is why we need to make this plea for pardon as much as David needed it.

God help us then to take a good honest look at ourselves as we speak to Him this plea for pardon, “Create in me a clean heart, O God.”

“Create a Clean Heart.” When our wife or a member of the Altar Guild launders and presses our robe, we want her to have clean hands for we do not want that white garment to be spoiled with dirty marks when we appear before God’s people. It is far more important that we have a clean heart when we appear before the God of our people. “Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord: and who shall stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart” (Psalm 24:3,4).

When we stand before the Lord, who searches and knows us, who discerns our thoughts from afar off, who is acquainted with all our ways, including the thoughts and ways we have successfully hidden from our fellowman, then we must confess, “My heart is not pure, O Lord. Create in me a clean heart.”

In our heart there lurks the sin of pride, the besetting sin of everyone in a position of leadership, also the leadership of a Christian congregation. This is the pride that makes us feel we are just a little better in the sight of God than our parishioners because of the training we have had. This is the pride that is flattered when we are complimented for a sermon or wounded when compliments fail to come. This is the

pride that makes us loveless in dealing with a fallen brother, causing us to forget that we should “restore him in the spirit of gentleness lest we also be tempted” (Galatians 6:1). This is the pride that makes us poor listeners, convincing us that what the other person has to say cannot possibly be as important as the wisdom we are about to impart. “Create in me a clean heart, O God. Forgive my pride.”

Of course, the word “create” implies that God will have to start from scratch. There is nothing good left in my heart. Just as God created the world out of nothing, so I ask God to start anew with this heart of mine, which I have spoiled by sin.

“Renew a Steadfast Spirit.” Because of this sin that defiled my heart, I also pray, “Renew a right or steadfast spirit within me.” How unstable am I in my attitudes! One day I’m up in the clouds, and the next I’m down in the dumps. One day I’m consumed by zeal for the Lord’s work, and on another I’m bored stiff with it. I’m assured by my risen Lord that He’s always with me and am therefore encouraged to “be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58), but so often, I am only immovable. “Moreover; it is required in stewards that they should be found faithful” (1 Corinthians 4:2). Have we been trustworthy, true, faithful, steadfast at all times? “Renew a steadfast spirit within me. O Lord.”

II. A Request for Restoration. “Restore unto Me the Joy of Thy Salvation.” Having now recognized my sin and relying on God’s gracious promises, the penitent pastor’s prayer is also a request for restoration. “Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation.” “Fill me with joy and gladness. Let the bones which You haven broken rejoice” (Psalm 51:8). By the merits of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who perfectly kept the Law for me, who suffered for me, who died on the cross for me and all the world, and who rose again, “clothe me with the garments of His salvation and cover me with the robe of His righteousness and His complete forgiveness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments and as a bride adorns herself with jewels” (Isaiah 61:10).

“Then I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; and my soul shall be joyful in God” (Isaiah 61:10). Speak to me, O God, of Your peace and of the full remission of all my sin, through my Lord Jesus Christ, Who comes to me in Your Word and Sacrament. Renew in me Your forgiving grace.

III. A Promise of Service. “Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.” Released from the

dark prison of my sin and breathing again the pure, fresh air of Your forgiveness, I am free to do again the work to which You have called me. Let my tongue sing aloud of Your righteousness, and let my mouth show forth Thy praise. Then, restored and sent again like Peter, I will feed Your lambs and tend to Your sheep. I will again proclaim the life-giving message of Your Law and Gospel, to open the eyes of sinners, to “turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to the love of God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins” (Acts 26:18) and a place in your family with all who believe in Christ as Savior.

Now, having been turned myself, I can strengthen my brothers and my flock by saying, “Repent and turn to Jesus, that your sins may be blotted out, and that our gracious Lord may restore you and uphold you in the joy of His salvation.” Equip me Lord, “to teach sinners Your ways that they may be converted unto Thee.”

May these familiar words of God spoken through the Psalmist be for each of us A Penitent Pastor’s Prayer: a plea for pardon, a request for restoration, and a promise of service. LSQ

Sermon on Luke 1:26–33

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LSQ Vol. 50, Nos. 2–3 (June–September 2010)

Text: *In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."* (Luke 1:26–33, ESV)

THIS PAST SATURDAY WAS the feast of the mother of our Lord. It is therefore fitting for us to listen today to the familiar story of the annunciation by the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, concerning the miraculous conception and birth of Jesus. And I'd like to draw your attention in particular to this portion of that text: "And [Gabriel] came to her and said, 'Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!' But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be."

It's interesting to see that Mary was not particularly troubled by the actual appearance of the angel. We might expect that this would be the scary thing. But that's not what Luke tells us was startling and troubling

to Mary. What troubled her was *what the angel said*: “Greetings, O favored one.”

A different translation of this greeting that is as well-known as it is inaccurate goes like this: “Hail, full of grace.” But in the original Greek of the New Testament, the word for “grace” or “favor” that is used here does not refer to something that is *in Mary*. *She* is not full of grace. Rather, *God* is full of grace. When he thinks of Mary, God’s own heart is full of grace and favor and acceptance and mercy. God sends his angel to Mary because God has a favorable attitude toward Mary. He thinks well of her.

But she is troubled by this. “Why does God think well of me?” we can imagine her asking.

She would have known that in and of herself, she would not have deserved God’s favor. As a pious Jewish girl, Mary would have been familiar with Psalm 14: “The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.”

Mary knew that she was indeed among the “children of man” – that she, too, just like everyone else, would have a reason to fear God’s judgment and punishment, and not automatically to expect God’s favor – at least not based on anything inside of herself.

There is no biblical warrant for the belief that Mary was without sin. Rather, the Bible teaches that “*all* have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.” I hope that no one is scandalized by this, but “all” means “all.” “All” includes Mary.

We should not speculate about what kind of selfish or prideful or judgmental thoughts Mary may have ever had in her life. But we know that such thoughts, of one kind or another, were there, because Mary was a child of man. And therefore, in her thoughts and perhaps also in her actions, she did from time to time turn aside from God and his ways. Mary would have admitted that. And so, as the angel makes this unexpected declaration to her, “Greetings, O favored one,” she is troubled and perplexed. What could this mean?

And what is even more frightening is the phrase that follows: “The Lord is with you.” Those with a troubled conscience, who are aware of their weaknesses and shortcomings before God, sometimes like to comfort themselves with the thought that God is not close by. “Maybe God is not noticing my sin,” they imagine. But of course this is just an illusion.

God knows all, and sees all. You cannot escape from the Lord's awareness of you and of everything that is going on in your life. You cannot hide from God, as Adam thought he could in the Garden of Eden. God will call out to you, as he did to Adam: "Where are you?" And God will find you.

So, when someone like Gabriel would tell a person, "The Lord is with you," that can be a *scary* thought. He is not far away, preoccupied with other things. He is right here, up close. Whatever is going on in your life right now, in thought, word, or deed, he knows about it.

And Mary was afraid. We know that from the words that the angel then said to her: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High."

The angel emphasizes that she should *not* be afraid. He assures her that the Lord really is favorable toward her. He is not approaching her in order to judge her or to punish her for her sins, but to reveal his grace to her in a very special way.

And these words of assurance are not just empty talk. There is a reason why these things are true. There is a reason why Mary should not be afraid. There is a reason why Mary should believe that God truly is gracious and favorable toward her. It's because God is giving to Mary – and to the human race *through* Mary – the greatest of gifts: his own Son. God's Son, begotten from all eternity, will now become Mary's son, conceived in her by the Holy Spirit. The Second Person of the Holy Trinity will take to himself a true human nature, in order to become the Savior of humanity. And he will take that human nature from Mary.

Mary was not encouraged to "wish away" her fear through "positive thinking." She was encouraged instead to believe the joyful Good News about Jesus her Lord. Mary was not told that she is actually without sin, and that she therefore should never be fearful at the thought of being in the presence of a holy God. She was told instead that her *Savior* from sin was now coming into the world, to accomplish his work of redemption and forgiveness.

That's why Mary ceased to be afraid. That's why the words of the angel, "The Lord is with you," became a message of comfort and joy, and ceased to be a troubling and frightening message.

Angels don't appear to God's people today with personal messages from God – at least not very often. But messengers sent to his people by God do perform some of the functions that Gabriel performed in

today's Gospel. The church's pastors, called to their office by the Lord of the church, say *these* words to God's people two or three times in the course of each Sunday's worship service: "The Lord be with you." This is essentially the same thing that the angel told Mary when he said, "The Lord is with you."

And what reaction do *we* have to these words? My guess is that people have heard these words so often that they probably don't have much of any reaction. But they should have a reaction. These words speak of something very important in their life—in *our* life—just as they spoke of something very important in Mary's life.

If you would think about it, perhaps your initial reaction will be the same as Mary's initial reaction. She was frightened. And you too, might be frightened—understandably so—when you begin to think about the Lord's imminent presence: here and now, up close. The statement, "The Lord be with you," can be an alarming statement, to the extent that you would then think of the sin that still permeates your life.

What is actually going on in your thoughts, at each of those points in the liturgy when that phrase is spoken? Do you want God to measure you and evaluate you on the basis of everything that is in your mind and heart at that exact moment? Probably not! And it doesn't even have to be some overtly evil thought that might be running through your mind.

Maybe, instead of paying attention to what is going on in the service, you're thinking about what you plan to do after church. Or maybe you're daydreaming about something else – something other than God's Word, and what God wants you to learn from his Word that day. "The Lord be with you" can be a scary idea, when you'd rather that the Lord not be close enough to notice your failures, your hypocrisies, your half-heartedness, your confused priorities. But the Lord is with you. He knows all.

And therefore he invites you—he *implores* you—to stop trying to avoid him, to stop justifying yourself, and to stop making excuses. The Lord causes himself to be with you—accessible to you, and ready to hear what you have to say—so that you can repent of your sins, and seek his pardon.

From that perspective, therefore, it's a good thing that the Lord is with you, here and now, so that you can confess your sins to him. And it's also a good thing that the Lord is with you, so that you can then receive from him what he wants to give you.

In the case of Mary, he gave her the gift of a Savior, who would rule among his people in love and righteousness. And that's also what he

gives to us. Now, Jesus certainly doesn't come to us in the same way as he did with Mary. God's Son doesn't enter into our bodies in the way that he entered into the womb of his mother. But he does enter into our hearts in an equally miraculous and wonderful manner.

The hymn writer Phillips Brooks expresses the thought very beautifully in his well-known Christmas carol:

O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in, Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell:
Oh, come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!

That's what happens to you when Christ absolves you of all our sins. Jesus thereby casts out your sin, and once again "enters in" – as he did in your baptism, and as he continues to do whenever the grace of your baptism is recalled in this way. He renews to you the gift of his Spirit. He strengthens within you the mystical bonds of faith that unite him to you. He lives within you with his regenerating, life-changing power.

And so, when "the Lord is with you" in this way, and for this purpose, it is a wonderful thing! Do not be afraid! The son who was born to Mary is there, once again, to save you, and to take away all your fear. With Mary, and for the sake of Mary's son, we, too, are "favored" by the Lord. When God thinks of us in Christ, his heart is once again full of grace – and favor, and acceptance, and mercy!

"Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High." ^{LSQ}

A Different Spirit: Luther's Approach Toward the Reformed at Marburg

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IN OCTOBER 1529, THE RECOGNIZED leaders of the Protestant movement convened at Marburg, Germany, representing different regions and traditions. But this wasn't a Pastoral Leadership Summit, such as the one at Willow Creek, highlighted by guest appearances by Bono and Tony Blair, or whoever the equivalents of that day would be. They weren't there to discuss the church's responsibility to address global pandemics. In fact, they had to adjourn early in order not to catch the latest flu strain. They weren't there to form one world religion to unite under one world government, though that goal may be close to what the ruler who summoned them had in mind. No, these men assembled were theologians, called to discuss, of all things, doctrine, more specifically, the doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

This was an event several years in the making. For the previous five years, these men had been engaged in heated debate, in the form of polemical treatises. Each treatise would step up the controversy both in depth of argument and length of title. This would be the first time and in some cases, the last, that they would meet in person. As those of us who have engaged in internet discussions of doctrine can attest, you cannot always ascertain the tone and intent of what a writer is saying in such a format. In person we are able to see the speaker's gestures, hear their inflections, make eye contact with them, and engage in both verbal and non-verbal communication. This meeting in Marburg was an opportunity to hear straight from each other's mouths their positions

and arguments, to move beyond polemics and get down to what the actual differences in theological position were.

Even before the Marburg Colloquy was proposed, the idea of a religious disputation had been floating around since the 1519 Leipzig Disputation. The Leipzig Disputation popularized this method of dealing with religious differences. Such a disputation had taken place in January 1523 in the city of Zurich, with the result that the city pledged itself to the theological position of Zwingli. In a letter to the humanist Wilibald Pirckheimer in Nürnberg in April 1525, Oecolampadius of Basel expressed a desire to arrange a disputation to deal with the current dispute over the Lord's Supper. Likewise, Zwingli, Capito, and Bucer proposed religious colloquies to deal with this controversy. In a 1526 letter to Justus Jonas, Martin Bucer of Strassburg, proponent of a "middle way" between Zwingli and Luther, was first to suggest a personal meeting between the parties to discuss their differences concerning the Lord's Supper. Under Bucer's theological leadership, Strassburg became the birthplace of what today is called "Protestantism," a movement transcending Lutheranism and Zwinglianism. This same city brought together Zwingli and Landgrave Philip of Hesse, both of whom championed a "noble attempt to save the cause of reformation by political action."¹

At age 20, Philip of Hesse had accepted the Lutheran Reformation for himself and his territory in 1524. In 1526, Philip was a leading figure of the Gotha-Torgau federation of Lutheran princes. At that time a Lutheran by conviction, he strongly expressed himself against what he called the error of Zwingli concerning the sacrament. Soon, however, Philip began to waver in Lutheran conviction under the influence of the Strassburg theologians and Swiss reformers. Philip's cousin Ulrich of Würtemberg became friends with Oecolampadius in Basel, where he lived in exile before he went to live with the landgrave. In 1526 Wolfgang Capito of Strassburg attended the First Diet of Speyer and there came into contact with Landgrave Philip. Capito initiated a correspondence between Philip of Hesse and Zwingli. Both were favorable toward the idea of political federation of all Protestants, including Anabaptists, to counterbalance the Roman Catholic territories. Though these contacts, Philip began to appreciate the *via media* of Strassburg and soon accepted it. From Bucer, Philip was led to believe that the differences between

¹ Hermann Sasse, *This is My Body: Luther's Contention for the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1959), 199.

Luther and Zwingli not insurmountable and it should be possible to find a “syncretismus” on the basis of a common study of the Bible.

For Landgrave Philip, theological and political development went hand in hand. Philip accepted the view of Zwingli and politicians and theologians of Strassburg that nothing short of a federation of all Protestant territories could save the cause of the Reformation. Philip enlisted Zwingli’s help in bringing the colloquy about. This was the first step toward a project Philip had in mind for several years: “a religious conference leading to an agreement on which an alliance of evangelical states could be built.”² Zwingli enthusiastically greeted the plan. In order to further this political plan, in 1527, Philip proposed a colloquy to Luther. This proposal was decidedly rejected by Luther. In Luther’s opinion, both sides had written sufficiently about their views. No new arguments would be presented at such a colloquy.

With his *Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper* of 1528, Luther regarded his discussion with Zwingli as finished. This “Great Confession” was designed to be his final defense of his teaching on the Lord’s Supper. It dealt with many objections brought against his view of the Lord’s Supper by Zwingli, Oecolampadius, Bucer, and others. He clearly presented his doctrine of the Lord’s Supper in a clear, detailed, and masterful manner. He concluded the Great Confession,

it is my purpose in this writing to confess my faith point by point, before God and all the world, in which I intend to abide until my death, and therein (so help me God) to depart from this world and to appear before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ.³

If after my death anyone should say: If Dr. Luther were living now, he would teach and hold this or that article differently, for he did not sufficiently consider it, in reply to this now as I would then, and then as now, that by God’s grace I have diligently compared all these articles with the Scriptures time and again, and have often gone over them, and would defend them as confidently as I have now defended the Sacrament of the Altar.⁴

² Mark U. Edwards, Jr., *Luther and the False Brethren* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1975), 104.

³ Martin Luther, “Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper” in Sasse, *This is My Body*, 187; LW 37:360.

⁴ Sasse, 188; LW 37:360.

The Great Confession clearly demonstrates that, “The incarnation, the true divinity and true humanity in the one Person of the God-man, the virgin birth of Christ, His bodily resurrection, His exaltation to the right hand of the Father, His advent in glory, our own resurrection – all of these are linked to the Real Presence of His true body and blood in such a way that the denial of this Presence is either the cause or the consequence of the denial of the other articles.”⁵ Heresies will abound if even one article of the faith is abandoned.

At the Second Diet of Speyer in 1529, it was decided that stringent measures would be taken to halt the spread of the Reformation. In response, Philip of Hesse, along with five other princes and fourteen cities, formally signed a protest and appeal. This action resulted in calling those at variance with the Roman Church “Protestants.” On April 22, 1529, three days after the “Protestation,” Philip formed a secret alliance with Electoral Saxony, Nuremberg, Strassburg, and Ulm. Planning a wider alliance, Philip wrote in a letter to Zwingli the same day, “We are endeavoring to bring together at some suitable place Luther and Melanchthon and some of those who hold your view of the sacrament, so that if a merciful and almighty God grants us His favor, they may come to some Scriptural agreement about that doctrine and live in harmony as becomes Christians.”⁶

Soon afterward, Philip wrote the Lutherans in Wittenberg about the proposed colloquy. He carefully omitted the fact that Zwingli had been invited and that he had been the first to accept the invitation. Instead, Philip wrote of “Oecolampadius and those of his opinion” when names were mentioned at all. Philip realized Luther and Melanchthon’s opposition would have been even greater had they known that Zwingli was invited. In fact, it was not until they had already embarked on their journey to Marburg that Luther and Melanchthon first heard even unofficially about the invitation that had been extended to and accepted by Zwingli. Understandably, Sasse wonders aloud at this point in the story, “Why was such secret diplomacy employed by Philip instead of appealing to their Christian duty to do the utmost in order to save the true unity of the church? Was it really the unity of the church that the Landgrave had in mind?”⁷

Philip’s plans for an alliance and religious colloquy met determined resistance from the Wittenbergers. Luther responded to news from

⁵ Sasse, 190.

⁶ Edwards, 102.

⁷ Sasse, 212. “All this explains the attempts made by Luther and his colleagues to persuade the Elector to reject Philip’s plan.”

Melanchthon about the proposed alliance with a letter to the Elector laying out weighty theological objections. Luther knew that what is required of us is the fearless confession of the eternal truth of God's Word. "This is the reason why Luther refused to continue the controversy and why he rejected the idea of settling the question by means of a colloquy."⁸

How, then, did the colloquy ever come about in spite of Luther's refusal of 1527? With centuries of hindsight, we now recognize that the papal bull "Exsurge Domine" of 1520 destroyed the unity of the Western Church, making the Reformation of the whole church humanly impossible.⁹ But at the time, no one had completely given up hope that the unity of Christendom would or could be preserved or restored. The goal of the reformers was just that, to reform the church, not to build a new church or even several churches. The big question in Germany in the late 1520s was whether or not the Edict of Worms against Luther and his followers would be carried out in the absence of the Emperor. Charles V had left Germany right after the Diet of Worms to fight against Francis, only to return before 1530 for the Diet of Augsburg.

In spite of their great misgivings, Luther and Melanchthon, at the urging of the elector, accepted the landgrave's invitation to Marburg. The elector had already been won over to the landgrave's position to support his plan of a meeting between Luther and Zwingli. Luther still had serious doubts about the value of a personal meeting with Zwingli to discuss their differences. In a letter to the landgrave, he did not hesitate to point out that the colloquy might make matters worse between the two parties than the existing deadlock. It was inevitable that if Luther's opponent did not yield, the participants would go their separate ways without having accomplished anything.¹⁰

Therefore, if your Grace is willing to do it, I should be glad if your Grace... would inquire of the other side whether they are inclined to yield their opinion, so that the trouble may not become worse than ever. For your Grace can readily understand that all conferences are wasted and all meetings are in vain if both parties come to them with no intention of yielding anything. It has been my past experience that they will insist on their own ideas after our arguments have been fairly presented;

⁸ Sasse, 192.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 194.

¹⁰ Edwards, 106.

that I cannot yield after their arguments have been presented, I know as certainly as I know they are in error.¹¹

This sentiment, seconded by Melanchthon and others and reinforced by the Elector's own political and theological scruples, led Electoral Saxony to insist that, "a common religious confession was the prerequisite of any political alliance."¹² "Errors can be removed by a thorough discussion. Heresies must be refuted and avoided.... Modern Christendom, even modern Lutheranism, seems to have forgotten this fundamental rule, as is sufficiently proved by the endless and fruitless ecumenical discussions that are not carried out on a firm basis in articles concerning which 'there is no contention or dispute.' Here lies the deeper reason why even Lutherans no longer understand Luther's attitude toward the proposed colloquy and the stand he took at the colloquy itself."¹³ As the basis for such a confession, the Schwabach Articles were drawn up by Luther and other theologians. The Schwabach Articles faithfully reflect Lutheran teaching, especially in the doctrine on the Lord's Supper.

Why did Luther accept the landgrave's invitation? "With this confession as a kind of platform for unity among the evangelicals, Luther went to Marburg with a good conscience."¹⁴ In a letter to Philip of Hesse, Luther writes, "for I truly do not want (God willing) to allow our opponents to boast that they were more well disposed to peace and unity than I."¹⁵ Luther was determined from the outset not to budge an inch on the central issues, never prepared to deny, or even compromise on, what he had recognized to be the clear doctrine of Holy Scripture. "Thus Luther went to Marburg, not as a negotiator, but as a confessor. Not as a confessor of some private opinion, but of the Word of God. This Word was for him *extra controversiam*."¹⁶

Invitations went out to other theologians, such as Oecolampadius, Bucer, Brenz, and Osiander. The plan was to have only the four major theologians take an active part in the discussions: Luther and Melanchthon opposing Zwingli and Oecolampadius. The others would view the proceedings. Some states sent political as well as

¹¹ LW 38:8.

¹² Edwards, 105.

¹³ Sasse, 193.

¹⁴ Martin Lehmann, *Introduction to the Marburg Colloquy and the Marburg Articles*, LW 38:8.

¹⁵ Edwards, 105; LW 49:229-231.

¹⁶ Sasse, 215.

theological representatives. “Though the theologians may have wished to separate the religious issues from the political, the secular authorities, especially Philipp himself and the Strassbourgers, saw them as closely interrelated.”¹⁷ Zwingli expressed his wish that the debate might be open to any who wished to attend. Luther, on the other hand, stated that it was not advisable to give the colloquy such wide publicity. Philip of Hesse agreed with Luther on this. Karlstadt tried to gain admission but was turned down.¹⁸ All other major principals in the preceding years of dispute agreed to come to what was to be their first and only face-to-face meeting.

The Swiss delegation arrived on September 26 at Marburg. The landgrave hospitably received them as guests. The delegation included Zwingli, Rudolph Collin, Ulrich Funk, and printer Froschauer from Zurich; Oecolampadius and Rudolph Frey from Basel; and Hedio, Bucer, and Jacob Sturm from Strassburg. They were accompanied by five servants to attend to their needs. During the time between the arrival of the Swiss and the Germans, news arrived that a peace treaty had been signed between Emperor Charles V and the Pope, who had been the ally of Francis. This made Protestantism’s situation even more dire. As the Swiss waited in Marburg, the landgrave invited Oecolampadius, Hedio, and Zwingli to preach before him. These days of waiting also afforded an opportunity for political discussions between Philip and Zwingli. Through these discussions, “Zwingli had already obtained what was most important for him, even before the delegates from Saxony had appeared.”¹⁹ While this is perhaps overstating the case, for these two great protagonists of an all-Protestant political union the coordination of plans was of utmost importance.

The Wittenberg delegation, consisting of Luther, Melanchthon, Justus Jonas, Caspar Cruciger, George Rörer, and perhaps Veit Dietrich, arrived at Marburg on September 30. They too were cordially welcomed by Philip of Hesse and remained in the castle as guests. Upon arrival, Luther half-jokingly greeted Martin Bucer by saying, “You are a naughty boy,”²⁰ due to Bucer’s publication of editions of Luther and Bugenhagen’s writings with his own introductions and comments in which he interjected his own views regarding the sacrament.

Not until Saturday afternoon, October 2, did the Lutherans of South Germany arrive. This group consisted of Osiander from Nürnberg, Brenz

¹⁷ Edwards, 107.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Th. Kolde, *Martin Luther* (1893) Vol. II, p. 312 in Sasse, 216.

²⁰ Sasse, 217.

from Schwäbisch-Hall, and Stephan Agricola from Augsburg. Since they arrived late, they missed the entire first session of the colloquy that took place that morning.

While Zwingli estimated no more than 24 persons assembled in a large living room of the castle to witness the debate, Brenz calculated between 50 and 60 in attendance at the colloquy. In addition to representatives of both parties, several men of noble rank besides Philip of Hesse, some prominent laymen, theological professors, and pastors from throughout Germany were present as witnesses.

Zwingli would have preferred the dialog to take place in Latin because he thought the Swiss dialect of German he spoke might not be readily understood by all those present. Since the landgrave and other laity, who were following the debate with interest, wouldn't have been able to understand Latin, the German language was used. Zwingli also desired that official minutes of the colloquy be recorded, but Luther insisted no official minutes be recorded. This means that what occurred at the Marburg Colloquy must be reconstructed from the notes and later recollections of participants. Volume 38 of the *American Edition of Luther's Works* contains seven separate reports on the colloquy translated from the *Weimar Ausgabe*.²¹ Harmonizations and reconstructions of the

²¹ The following description of the seven reports is based on LW 38:11-12.

¹ Caspar Hedio of Strassburg, in Latin, is based on notes taken during the colloquy. This is a most important source concerning the debate as a whole, not elaborated upon or changed afterward.

² Anonymous, in Latin, is similar in nature to Hedio's. This report first appeared in print in 1574 as an eyewitness account. Evidence suggests that it was revised and reformulated in clear and theologically precise language. The unknown author is someone from the circle of Luther's close friends, perhaps George Röer, Luther's personal secretary, or Frederick Myconias, a pastor at Gotha.

³ Rudolph Collin, Zwingli's colleague and travel companion from Zurich, in Latin. Collin's report agrees in many respects with Hedio's. It is either an independent report or he may have used Hedio's notes.

⁴ Osiander, letter to city council of Nürnberg in German. Since Osiander was not there at the start of the colloquy, he may have used to notes to supplement parts of the debate he missed. His letter contains important information about negotiations following the colloquy.

⁵ Brenz's letter to Schradin and the people of Reutlingen, mainly in Latin and in German. Brenz does not reproduce original words of the debate. He did not want his letter to be published since he had not been asked to report on the proceedings at Marburg.

⁶ *Rhapsodies on the Marburg Colloquy*, author unknown, written in Latin. A copy of this report was made by Luther's secretary Veit Dietrich. It is not tenable that Luther himself is the author. Or perhaps it is a summary account by one of Luther's friends

debate have been prepared by Walther Koehler and Hermann Sasse.²² Because of the wide availability and readability of the English translation by Sasse, his reconstruction will be used in this paper.

The title of this paper, “A Different Spirit,” is derived from one of the best-known statements of Luther at Marburg. Near the close of the colloquy, when Bucer asked Luther to recognize him as a brother, Luther replied, “Our spirit is different from yours; it is clear that we do not possess the same spirit, for it cannot be the same spirit when in one place the words of Christ are simply believed and in another place the same faith is censured, resisted, regarded as false and attacked with all kinds of malicious and blasphemous words.”²³

These words summarize well Luther’s approach toward the Reformed at Marburg. As Mark U. Edwards demonstrates, it was characteristic of Luther’s dealing with his theological opponents to attack the spirit rather than the man. In this study, rather than reconstructing a chronological play-by-play of Marburg, we will examine arguments and statements of Luther and his opponents that demonstrate the validity of Luther’s observation that his Reformed opponents possess “a different spirit.” We will view the arguments presented at Marburg in the context of writings of the participants in the years leading up to Marburg and also certain presuppositions of Luther and his opponents that manifested themselves at the colloquy.

A Different School of Thought

To investigate the contributing factors leading to the different theological approaches of Luther and Zwingli, a logical starting point is to compare their educational backgrounds. They were trained in different schools of thought.

Luther was trained in the *via moderna* of Occam, emphasizing the antithesis of reason and revelation. An Augustinian in outlook as well as order, Luther learned from the church father to despair of self and to believe in the God of the Bible, that our salvation is “sola gratia.” His theology is based on the Word alone, rather than the logic of

that was sent to Spalatin by Luther. It contains important statements not found in other reports.

⁷⁾ The *Summary Report Concerning the Marburg Colloquy*, by Heinrich Utinger in German. The editor of *WA* believes it was based on notes by Zwingli, but Koehler disagrees. The manuscript was first discovered in the nineteenth century.

²² Walther Koehler, *Das Marburger Religionsgespräch: Versuch einer Rekonstruktion* (Leipzig 1929) and Sasse, 215–268.

²³ Edwards, 110; LW 38:70–71.

Aristotle in vogue in Roman Scholasticism. The God of the Bible is *Deus absconditus*, hidden outside Christ and revealed, *Deus revelatus*, in Christ, only in such a way that even Christ's divinity is hidden behind His humanity. The incarnate Christ remains hidden in His humanity, hidden in the church, hidden in the Sacrament of the Altar, where He is "most hidden."²⁴

On the other hand, Zwingli may be called a "secular priest." He never studied under a theological faculty but took holy orders after attaining a Master of Arts degree. Zwingli was trained in the philosophical and theological system of Thomas Aquinas, the *via antiqua*. Even after becoming a reformer, Zwingli remained a Thomist, for whom revelation can never contradict reason. "Here is perhaps the deepest contrast between him and Luther who in the Word of God always found that which contradicts human reason."²⁵ Zwingli would never be able to say with Luther that the wisdom of God is hidden under the appearance of foolishness, the truth of God under what seems to human reason to be a lie, or that the Word of God always comes to us as something that contradicts our mind.

Zwingli's Thomism was further enforced by a second strain of thought that shaped his thinking: the humanism of Erasmus. Early in his ministry, Zwingli befriended Erasmus and became a shining light among the *Christianismus renascens*. Aspects of this Christian humanism included high regard for the ethics of ancient paganism and a moralistic understanding of the gospel. The slogan of the Christian Renaissance was *Ad fontes* – "to the sources!" Under Erasmus' influence, for Zwingli the sources of pure original Christianity were the Greek New Testament, recently edited by Erasmus, and the early church fathers. Zwingli also followed Erasmus in his personal piety, practicing the *devotio moderna* of the Late Middle Ages. This idealistic approach to Christian devotion drew a sharp division between mind, body and soul and understood salvation in purely spiritual terms. This dualism between the spirit and the body would later come into play in his doctrine of the Lord's Supper. At Marburg, Zwingli's Erasmian humanism and Thomist harmony of reason and revelation would rear their heads even before the colloquy began. Prior to Luther's arrival, Zwingli preached on his pet topic of "Divine Providence." In his message, describing the bliss of heaven, he pictured the great ethical heroes of pagan antiquity there.

²⁴ WA 3, 124, 137 in Sasse, 117.

²⁵ Sasse, 118.

A Different Approach to the Two Kingdoms

Luther and Zwingli had different goals as to the outcome of the Marburg Colloquy, due their differing approaches to the two kingdoms. At issue was the relationship between *confession* and *federation*. “Federal action does not, of course, presuppose a common confession if only secular matters are involved. Luther would never have objected to a common action of Catholic and Protestant states against the Turk.”²⁶ 1528 found Germany on the brink of a religious war, which was avoided at the last moment. Tensions were growing in Switzerland and war seemed inevitable since the Catholic cantons had reached an agreement with Ferdinand. Meanwhile the Turks were beating on the gates of Vienna. Emperor Charles V, having defeated Francis I of France, was now expected to return to Germany.

How did Luther react to these trying times? One need look no further to find his reaction than the words of the familiar hymn, “A Mighty Fortress is our God,” which appeared in the critical days of 1528: “Stood we alone in our own might, Our striving would be losing; for us the one true Man doth fight, the Man of God’s own choosing.”²⁷ Luther did not approve of any religious war, any “crusade.” He did not view a political alliance as the proper means to defend the church, especially when representatives of various confessions comprised this alliance.²⁸ Luther “rejects every political alliance meant to defend the Gospel, because Christ alone can do that.”²⁹ In Luther’s view, such an alliance was not of God but a human device and Satan hard at work. If a true alliance were to come into being, God would provide it without our seeking it. The Gospel is not to be defended by human arms or calculations.³⁰

Philip of Hesse and Zwingli took a different approach to these issues of church and state, asking the question, “What ought *we* to do in that desperate situation of the Church?” For Zwingli a separation of church and politics was impossible. A monument in his honor in Zurich shows him holding a Bible in his right hand a sword in his left hand. Zwingli was an active politician who never could understand Luther’s idea that the minister of the Gospel should not meddle in politics. Zwingli believed that “One must help the Lord Jesus to become the

²⁶ Ibid., 202.

²⁷ ELH 251:2.

²⁸ Sasse, 208.

²⁹ Ibid., 202.

³⁰ Edwards, 104.

ruler of the country.”³¹ He justified political means to *force* the Catholic cantons of Switzerland to accept the Reformation.

Zwingli shared the landgrave’s desire for a political union of evangelicals in order to safeguard and strengthen the Reformation movement in Switzerland and Germany. “It is a most remarkable fact that the same Zwingli who wanted to promote the cause of the Reformation by political and even military means, when he arrived a few days before the colloquy at Marburg, submitted to the Landgrave a political plan which included an alliance with anti-Habsburg enemies of the Gospel, like the King of France; in fact, both Zwingli and Philip in the years that followed, tried to bring about a great coalition in which all anti-Habsburg powers of Europe including the Turk would fight for the Gospel by fighting against the Emperor.”³²

To the amazement of the Lutherans, Zwingli appeared at Marburg with a sword, a symbol of the way things ecclesiastical and things secular belonged together as far as he was concerned. His appearance with a sword “symbolized at the same time the tragedy of his life as a minister of the Gospel, which had led him to the battlefields of Pavia and Marignano, where he served as a chaplain, to the battlefield of Kappel, where he was killed in 1531 in a bloody massacre as a brave soldier who gave his life for the ideals, ecclesiastical and political for which he had fought for so many years as a Christian politician and a Christian soldier.”³³

A Different View of Fellowship

Zwingli held that the doctrinal differences between Zurich and Wittenberg with regard to the Lord’s Supper in no way obstructed genuine fellowship between the two Protestant parties. “Luther and I possess one faith in Him,” declared Zwingli. “There is no discord among believers because of the faith, for they possess *one spirit*.”³⁴ Bucer concurred. Bucer believed that a doctrinal compromise could be achieved without endangering the fundamentals of the faith. “While for Luther the doctrine on the Sacrament of the Altar was to be included in such an agreement, Bucer and Zwingli were convinced that this was not an article of faith in the strict sense and that a broad formula that would leave freedom of interpretation could be accepted by either

³¹ Sasse, 119.

³² *Ibid.*, 208.

³³ *Ibid.*, 120.

³⁴ Koehler, *Zwingli and Luther*, II, 4 in LW 38:7. He appears to want to base fellowship on personal, saving faith in Christ, rather than on the faith confessed.

side.”³⁵ During a public disputation at Bern in 1528, Bucer stated that the doctrinal divergence over the sacrament between the Swiss and the Strassburgers, on the one hand, and the Lutherans on the other was not important because it did not concern “the essence of the faith.”³⁶ “The latitudinarianism of this side actually meant a subordination of the ‘confession’ to the ‘federation’ and of doctrine to politics. It was politics if Philip and Zwingli demanded a federation irrespective of the grave difference concerning the sacrament.”³⁷

Luther strongly objected to Philip’s plans for an alliance and religious colloquy because of the existing doctrinal differences. He held that doctrinal agreement is essential for true Christian fellowship. As he wrote in a letter to Elector John in May 1529, “The worst thing of all is that in this league most of the members [e.g., Strassburg and Ulm] are those who strive against God and the Sacrament, willful enemies of God and His Word. By making a league with them we take upon ourselves the burden of all their wickedness and blasphemy, become partakers in it and defenders of it. In truth, no more perilous league could be proposed for the shaming and the quenching of the gospel and for our own damnation, body and soul. That is what the devil, sad to say, is seeking.”³⁸

Luther’s insistence that full agreement in doctrine is a prerequisite for fellowship was demonstrated during the preliminary discussions at Marburg on Friday, October 1. On the outset, Luther and Melancthon pointed out to Oecolampadius and Zwingli a number of errors in their teachings over and above denial of the real presence:

1. [Zwingli] has written that there is no original sin, but that sin consists only of outward evil works and actions, while original sin denotes only innate impurity and lusts of the heart. [Zwingli also teaches] it is not sin if by nature we do not fear God and believe in Him. This indicates clearly that Zwingli does not know much about true Christian holiness, because he finds sin in outward deeds only, like the Pelagians and all papists and philosophers.³⁹
2. Secondly they err gravely concerning the ministry of the Word, and the use of the sacraments. For they teach

³⁵ Sasse, 202.

³⁶ Koehler, *Zwingli and Luther II*, 8 in LW 38:7.

³⁷ Sasse, 203.

³⁸ Edwards, 105; LW 49:226.

³⁹ Melancthon in Sasse, 217.

that the Holy Ghost is not given through the Word and the Sacrament, but rather, without the Word and the Sacrament. That is what M nzer taught and what caused him to fall back on his own ideas. For that is the necessary consequence if one claims to receive the Holy Ghost without the Word.⁴⁰

3. Thirdly it has been reported that people in Strassburg do not believe correctly concerning the blessed Trinity. We want to hear their opinion about that, for we have learned that some of them speak about the Godhead as the Jews do, as if Christ were not true, essential God.⁴¹
4. Fourthly, they do not speak and write correctly about how man is justified before God. They do not stress sufficiently the doctrine of faith, but rather speak about it as though the works which follow faith were our righteousness.⁴²
5. They also teach falsely how man can attain faith.⁴³

During the first session of the colloquy on Saturday, October 2, beginning at 6 a.m., Luther first asked his opponents to express views on seven other issues in which they seemed to be in error:⁴⁴

1. Some in Strassburg say Arius is more correct in his doctrine of the Trinity than Augustine or other Fathers.
2. The two *natures* of Christ are distinguished in such a way that they appear to teach two *persons* in Christ.
3. Some deny original sin is damnatory.
4. On baptism, some teach that it is not the seal of faith, but a sign of external association with the church only.
5. Justification is attributed not only to faith in Christ but partly also to our own abilities.
6. There seem to be errors as to the oral word and the ministry of the Word.

⁴⁰ Sasse, 224. Cf. AC V (Trig. 45) and SA II, 8 (Trig. 495).

⁴¹ Ibid. This was due to the 16th-century Antrinitarian Anabaptist L. Haetzer's ideas being discussed in Strassburg, where he stayed from 1526-1528.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Sasse, 224-5. Melancthon notes, "Now they were instructed by us concerning this article on that occasion, as far as it could be done in so short a time. The more they heard about it, the more they liked it. They yielded in all these points, though earlier they had written otherwise" (Sasse, 225).

⁴⁴ Sasse, 230.

7. They think that Luther does not teach correctly on purgatory.

Luther then stated, “Unless we first make sure that we agree in all things we should in vain deal with the real dignity of the Eucharist.”⁴⁵ To this Oecolampadius replied, “I am not aware of ever having taught in the articles mentioned anything contrary to Luther’s doctrine. The present colloquy has been called in order that we may discuss our opinions on the Eucharist.”⁴⁶ Zwingli likewise stated that he had already discussed these things with Melanchthon and that discussion should deal with the Lord’s Supper. The other issues should be discussed when finished with that. Luther agreed with this procedure, “but I testify publicly that I do not agree with the writings of these people with reference to the articles mentioned.”⁴⁷

A Different Hermeneutic

“When these two contemporaries, Luther and Zwingli, searched the Scriptures to find the real meaning of the words of Christ in contradistinction to the errors of the Papal Church, the results were bound to be very different. If anywhere, the difference was to become quite clear in the understanding of the Sacrament of the Altar.”⁴⁸ In 1528, Zwingli stated the issue: “*De intellectu verborum est contentia*,”⁴⁹ “The words of institution constitute the problem at stake.” Specifically, “Are these words, spoken by the Son of God at the most solemn occasion, to be understood literally or figuratively – this old question is the real problem. All further questions are contained in this fundamental exegetical problem.”⁵⁰ “That was the conviction of either side. The fact that the discussion of that problem did not lead to an agreement seems to indicate, first, that there is no middle road between Zwingli and Luther, as both realized, and secondly, that the exegetical problem is closely connected with a fundamental doctrine on the Word of God and the Person of Jesus Christ.”⁵¹

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 231.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 120.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 144.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

The Development of Zwingli's Interpretation of the Words of Institution

Up to the year 1523, Zwingli confessed the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation, "though it seems that he, like many priests at that time, did not take it very seriously."⁵² In Zwingli's own words, "In my opinion no one has ever believed that he eats Christ bodily and essentially, though almost all have taught this or at least pretended to believe it."⁵³ Like many humanist theologians, Zwingli accepted transubstantiation along with the other doctrines of the church, but attempted to interpret it in a more spiritual way. Early on, Zwingli had no desire to give up the doctrine of the Real Presence. Evidence of this may be seen in his treatise on fasting, an important document of the Reformation in Zurich, where he uses terms for eating and drinking the Lord's Supper that would exclude a figurative understanding. His initial criticisms of the Roman Mass were directed against communion in one kind and against the sacrifice of the Mass, but not against the Real Presence. In the eighteenth of his Theses (*Schlussreden*) of January 1523, Zwingli wrote that the Mass is "not a sacrifice, but a remembrance of the sacrifice and an assurance of the redemption that Christ has gained for us."⁵⁴

His first attack against transubstantiation is found in a June 1523 letter to Th. Wytenback. In this letter he still maintains a "real presence," but "all the same it is not that Presence which Luther taught."⁵⁵ According to Zwingli's view, "The believer eats Christ, who otherwise is in heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father, but who miraculously descends in this sacrament. How this is possible, no one knows. By an inscrutable miracle Christ enters the soul of the believer."⁵⁶ What the actual relationship between the elements and the body and blood of Christ is, Zwingli is unable to say. Nor is he able to answer the question: What do the unbelievers receive?⁵⁷

Zwingli's teaching at this point is an example of neology. He uses the old terms, writing of "eating the body," "drinking the blood," while the meaning of these expressions remains ambiguous and obscure. When one gets beyond this terminology to what is actually being said,

⁵² Ibid., 120.

⁵³ Ibid. In other words, Zwingli thought it was acceptable to profess publicly one thing and to hold to another teaching privately.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 121.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

one finds that for Zwingli, “In fact, the believer receives Christ in the sacrament by faith only.”⁵⁸ If this is the case, the question naturally arises whether the sacrament gives anything that we do not receive outside the sacrament by faith. Already in these writings of 1523, Zwingli refers to John 6 and concludes from that chapter that when we believe Christ’s redeeming death, our soul eats the body and drinks the blood of our Lord.

The chief characteristic of this early phase of Zwingli’s doctrine of the Lord’s Supper is an attempt to spiritualize the Roman doctrine. In this he follows his teacher Erasmus, who, in fact, rejected transubstantiation but believed in a miraculous inexplicable presence of Christ in the sacrament. In this early stage of Zwingli’s development there are “not the slightest traces of a figurative understanding of the Words of Institution.”⁵⁹ This spiritual understanding does not necessarily include a figurative interpretation of the sacramental words.

Zwingli’s doctrine of the Lord’s Supper reached its second and final stage in 1524 under the influence of a treatise by the Dutch humanist, Cornelius Hoen (Honius). Honius placed a new view of the Lord’s Supper onto the 16th-century theological landscape. While he was the first in his time to posit a figurative understanding of the Words of Institution, he was in fact picking up the mantle of Berengar, Wycliff, and Wessel Gansfort (1420–89).⁶⁰

Honius understands the Sacrament of the altar as “a visible pledge that Christ added to the promise of the Gospel, just as a bridegroom as a token of his love gives his bride a ring which will always remind her of his promise.” Therefore, “through the Lord’s Supper we are reminded to trust Christ’s promise” and “to have such confidence in Him means, according to John 6, to eat His body and to drink His blood.”⁶¹ Honius finds a three-fold “spiritual” bread in the Bible: Christ eaten by faith (John 6:48–50), the manna given to the Fathers, and the eucharistic bread of the Christians. The manna points forward to, while the Eucharistic bread reminds us of, Christ crucified, who is our true Bread

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 122

⁶⁰ Ibid. Gansfort was a disciple of Thomas á Kempis and proponent of the *devotio moderna*. He developed a purely spiritual doctrine of sacraments, which he laid out in a book on the Lord’s Supper. Without denying the bodily presence of Christ or even the doctrine of transubstantiation, he “laid all the emphasis on the faithful commemoration as the real communion.” For Gansfort real eating and drinking were the spiritual eating and drinking of John 6, which could take place, with the same blessing, even outside of the Lord’s Supper.

⁶¹ Ibid.

of life. Eating of the Eucharist signifies for the true believer the eating of the true and living bread of life by faith. According to Honius, Christ can be seen only by faith and not, like the host, by human eyes.

Most significant for the development of Zwingli's interpretation of the Verba, Honius interpreted *est* to mean "signifies." According to his hermeneutics, the words, "This is My body" must be understood figuratively, as in the following verses: Matthew 11:14 (John is Elijah), John 19:26 ("Behold thy son"), Matthew 16:18 (Peter the rock), 1 Corinthians 10:4 ("The rock was Christ," i.e., represented Christ) and Jesus' words in which He calls Himself "the door" (John 10), "the way" (John 14:6), and "the true vine." (John 15) Thus *Hoc est corpus Meum* can be understood only as meaning, "this signifies my body," since the word *est* is used often in that sense in Scripture, e.g., Genesis 40:12 ("the three branches are three days"), Genesis 40:18 ("The three baskets are three days"), and Genesis 41:26 ("the seven good kine are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years").

Honius' interpretation commended itself to Zwingli through its simplicity and seeming clarity(!).⁶² "For Zwingli clarity was always a mark of the Word of God, even if such clarity was reached at the expense of the inexhaustible depth of the divine Word."⁶³ For example, he was not able to realize that "I am the true Vine" cannot be put on the same level with "the three branches are three years," since the former case is an assertion of the inscrutable mystery of the eternal Son of God, and the second case is the interpretation of a dream. When Luther heard of Honius' writing on the Lord's Supper, he at once rejected it. With Zwingli the theory of Honius met wholehearted acceptance when his book was brought to him in 1524. From then on the *spiritual understanding* of the Real Presence that Zwingli once shared with Erasmus was replaced by a *figurative understanding* of the Words of Institution.

Another figure that helped Zwingli to develop his figurative understanding of the Words of Institution was Luther's former co-worker Andreas Karlstadt. Karlstadt's interpretation of the Words of Institution was that when Jesus said the words, "This is My body," He pointed to Himself, rather than directing these words at the bread. Karlstadt also denied that the Lord's Supper is a pledge that assures the believer of the forgiveness of sins. Zwingli rejected these aspects of Karlstadt's interpretation of the Supper but was lenient in his criticisms.

⁶² Ibid., 127.

⁶³ Ibid.

What Zwingli learned from Karlstadt was the Augustinian argument that Christ's body is in heaven and cannot, therefore, at the same time be in the bread.

Zwingli's doctrine on the Lord's Supper was completed in 1524, the same year in which the great controversy on the Sacrament of the Altar was inaugurated by Karlstadt's attack on the doctrine of Luther. During the next few years, Zwingli learned to make use of more Scripture passages to support his view. His "diamond," was John 6:63, "the flesh profiteth nothing." The use of Exodus 12:11, "This is the Lord's Passover" to support a figurative understanding of the Words of Institution, occurred to him in a dream as a sort of revelation. He also employed Matthew 26:11, "Me ye have not with you always," to support the idea that Christ is not present in the bread and wine of the Sacrament.

At this point in time, both Zwingli and Luther regarded John 6 as not dealing specifically with the Lord's Supper. The reformers were agreed that John 6 spoke of spiritual eating and drinking, that is, faith. To Zwingli, however, this chapter was of utmost importance since to him it demonstrated that Christ recognized *only* a spiritual eating and in verse 63 rejected all bodily eating.

Oecolampadius' Interpretation

In August 1525, Oecolampadius of Swabia published a book in which he tried to enlist the church Fathers as allies in his fight for his symbolic doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Oecolampadius' own interpretation of the Words of Institution differed somewhat from Zwingli's. He argued that since Jesus spoke Aramaic, which does not have the copula *est*, the trope is not to be found in the *est* but rather in *corpus*. The meaning was not, "This *signifies* my body," but "this is the *figure* of my body."⁶⁴ Finding the phrase *figura corporis mei* in Tertullian, Oecolampadius read it through the eyes of a 16th-century humanist, with *figura* indicating a mere symbol of something absent.⁶⁵

Like Zwingli, Oecolampadius argued at Marburg, "It is the sixth chapter of John that explains the other passages of scripture."⁶⁶ Oecolampadius also followed Zwingli in stating that John 6:63 "indicates that He declined once and for all the carnal eating of His

⁶⁴ Ibid., 141.

⁶⁵ Ibid. The early church fathers would understand a figure as participating in the reality.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 232.

body. It should follow that He neither would nor could later institute what He had once rejected.”⁶⁷ Although Zwingli and Oecolampadius employed slightly different arguments to support their positions, they were substantially agreed in denying Christ’s physical presence in the elements of the Lord’s Supper. Specifically, they denied that Christ’s body and blood were or even could be literally and physically present in the elements either through the transformation of the substance of the bread and wine, or by “coexistence” in and under the bread and wine. They argued that the Verba must be taken tropologically, symbolically, metaphorically, or as a metonymy. To them, the words “This is My body,” mean “This *represents* My body” or “This is the *sign* of My body.” They did acknowledge a *spiritual* presence: Christ was truly present through and in the faith of the participants in the Supper. But this presence was not tied to the elements, and it depended upon and was mediated by the faith of the communicants. Hence they could speak of a spiritual eating by faith in Christ’s act of redemption.

In spite of Zwingli’s Augustinian biblicism, he “recognizes something as higher than the *letter* of the Bible.”⁶⁸ “Underlying this tropological interpretation, especially in Zwingli’s mind, was a very different understanding from Luther’s of what the biblical concept of spirit and flesh entailed. For Zwingli it sharply distinguished man’s soul from his body and Christ’s divinity from His humanity. If man’s soul was a spiritual entity, it must have spirit as its object of trust and love, Zwingli contended, and could only be nourished by spiritual food. While insisting that he was not unduly separating Christ’s divinity from His humanity, Zwingli argued that it was only Christ’s divinity that could save man’s soul.”⁶⁹

Luther and Melancthon’s Literal Understanding of the Words of Institution

During the preliminary discussions at Marburg, on Friday, October 1, Melancthon quoted the text, “This is My body,” stating that we must not, without the clear testimony of the Scriptures, deviate from the proper meaning of the words.⁷⁰ Likewise, as discussions began on Saturday, Luther stated firmly, “I for one cannot admit that such clear words present a (hermeneutical) problem (*quaestio*).”⁷¹ In an action that

⁶⁷ Ibid., 234.

⁶⁸ Sasse, 145.

⁶⁹ Edwards, 85.

⁷⁰ Sasse, 227.

⁷¹ Ibid., 231.

epitomized his position at Marburg, Luther chalked the words “This is My body” on the table on the first day of discussions and referred to these words throughout the discussions.

In 1527, Luther published *That These Words of Christ “This is My Body,” Etc. Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics*. This treatise presented his understanding of the controversy, his convictions concerning the Supper, and his judgments of his opponents’ arguments. His later writings would not show any great change or modification in the sentiments expressed here. The central issue was how the Words of Institution should be understood. Luther was convinced that the Words of Institution were to be understood literally. He challenged Zwingli to prove they must be understood figuratively, *not* that they *could* be figurative, or *might be* figurative, but that they *must be* figurative.⁷² Luther summed up Zwingli’s two basic arguments in this way: 1) that Christ’s ascension to sit at the right hand of God removed him physically from the world; and 2) that John 6:63 “the flesh is of no avail” made His physical presence unnecessary.⁷³ Luther attacked the first argument by attacking reason itself. For Luther, reason cannot prove or disprove any matter of faith.

Luther retained the real presence, because he was convinced that the real presence was deeply rooted in Holy Scripture. When Honius’ letter was presented to him, he saw at once that the words *Hoc est corpus Meum* defied a figurative interpretation.⁷⁴ According to Luther the meaning of the sacramental words can be found only the words themselves. The Verba are the words of Christ, and, therefore, words in which the Holy Ghost dwells.⁷⁵ For Zwingli, the Verba cannot be understood from the letter, but by the Spirit, who makes the believer understand the words when he compares Scripture with Scripture and asks for the analogy of faith.⁷⁶ Starting with this understanding of the Word, Zwingli arrives at the conclusion that *est* in the words of institution must be understood as in other passages of the Bible, as *significat*. Although there are other passages where *est* retains the literal meaning, the reason why a figurative understanding is necessary in this case, Zwingli contends, is that otherwise an absurdity would arise, or even several absurdities. “The greatest of these for Zwingli is the idea that bodily eating could have a spiritual effect. Spirit can be influenced only by spirit. It is the idealistic

⁷² Edwards, 96.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Sasse, 127.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 145.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 146.

thinker, the humanist Zwingli, who simply cannot bear the idea of a bodily eating of the flesh of Christ in the Lord's Supper."⁷⁷

"Luther, on the other hand, starts with the words of institution as they stand. His hermeneutical rule is that the literal meaning of a passage must be maintained as long as there is either no clear indication that words are meant figuratively, as in the parables of Jesus, or unless literal sense would contradict an article of faith."⁷⁸ "Where Holy Scripture establishes something which is to be believed, it is not permissible to abandon the words as they are, unless a clear article of faith would necessitate a different interpretation or arrangement of the words."⁷⁹ At Marburg, Oecolampadius pointed out various figures of speech in Scripture to Luther, such as "John is Elijah" (Matthew 11:14), "the rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4), "I am the true vine" (John 15:1), and "the seed is the Word of God" (Luke 18:11). To these, Luther answered, "There are indeed many metaphors in Holy Scripture. But you have to prove that here, in the words 'This is My body,' a metaphor is contained."⁸⁰ "This is My body" is "a demonstrative (descriptive) sentence. Therefore you must prove that it has to be understood metaphorically."⁸¹ "Moreover it should also be proved that spiritual eating (*manducatio spiritualis*) excludes bodily eating (*manducatio corporalis*) so that there should be no bodily eating at all."⁸² "It is begging of the question (*petitio principii*) to conclude from John 6 where Christ speaks of a spiritual eating that there is not bodily eating at all. You want me to build the faith of my heart on this foundation. That means you are unwilling to produce any proof at all. Thus my faith is strengthened by your failure to give a proof."⁸³ "I have a clear and powerful text. Do justice to that text."⁸⁴

At the close of the Saturday morning session at Marburg, Zwingli and Luther exchanged heated words concerning John 6:63. Luther said, "We will let that text in John 6 go, since it has no bearing on the understanding of the words of the Lord's Supper."⁸⁵ In response, Zwingli warned that this passage would break Luther's neck. Luther countered that necks did not break so easily in Hesse as in Switzerland.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 147.

⁷⁹ Luther, *Against the Heavenly Prophets*, LW 40:157, quoted in Sasse, 148.

⁸⁰ Sasse, 232.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., 233.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 243.

Later, Zwingli explained this was just a figure of speech in Swiss dialect and apologized.⁸⁶ At the end of the Saturday afternoon session, Luther finally lifted the tablecloth and read the chalked words, “This is My body.” “This is our Scripture passage. You have not taken it from us, as you promised to do. ‘This is My body’- *I cannot pass over the text of my Lord Jesus Christ, but I must confess and believe that the body of Christ is there.*”⁸⁷ At this point Zwingli was very agitated and insisted that Luther was advocating a local presence. Luther retorted he did not want to know whether Christ is locally there or not, but he would stand by Christ’s words. The session ended with Zwingli’s bitter question, “Should, then, everything go according to your will?”⁸⁸

A Different Understanding of Christ’s Presence

As we have begun to see, there were deeper reasons for Zwingli’s view of the Words of Institution that were not exegetical. Even Zwingli could see that grammatically the words can be understood literally as Luther interpreted them. Zwingli’s rejection of a literal interpretation was due in part to logical absurdities that resulted from such a view. One of these “absurdities” to Zwingli was the idea that bodily eating could help the soul. Another was that idea that the body of Christ could be here on earth while actually it was in heaven until His Second Advent. Zwingli quoted Augustine, “*If Christ’s body is above, it must be one place*”⁸⁹ to support his view that the human body of Christ is in a certain place in heaven until the end of the world. Otherwise, it would not be a real human body. He correctly sees that, “Luther, however, makes it to be everywhere (*ubique*) as something infinite (*infinitum*).”⁹⁰

The right hand of God is everywhere

How can the body of Christ which in heaven at the same time be in the sacrament? Luther’s first answer is a merely theological one, “ubiquity”: “If Christ’s human nature participates in His divine nature, it would follow that His body must share the omnipresence of His divinity.”⁹¹ In his major treatises of 1526–1528, in which he refutes the denial of the Real Presence of Christ’s body in the Lord’s Supper, the *ubique* (“everywhere”) is expressly attributed to the body of Christ,

⁸⁶ Edwards, 108.

⁸⁷ Sasse, 247.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 258, Edwards, 108.

⁸⁹ Sasse, 255.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 155.

which, though seated at the right of the Father, must still be everywhere, for “the right hand of God is everywhere.”⁹² For example, in *That These Words of Christ, ‘This is My Body,’ Etc. Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics*, Luther argues that God’s right hand refers not to some physical location in heaven but the “almighty power of God, which at one and the same time can be nowhere and yet must be everywhere.”⁹³ This is not a circumscribed or local presence, but an essential presence that creates and preserves all things.⁹⁴ In addition, there is a special presence in the Lord’s Supper, for there God is present “for you” and binds His presence through the Word: “Because it is one thing if God is present, and another if He is present for you. He is there for you when He adds His Word and binds Himself, saying, ‘Here you are to find Me.’”⁹⁵ Zwingli objected that if Christ’s body was in every piece of bread and even in every part of nature, we could have it there even without the sacrament. Luther answers that there is a difference whether Christ’s body is there or whether it is there *for you*; whether it is there or where you can find it. You can find it where Christ Himself has promised that He would be found, and that is in the sacrament.⁹⁶

According to Sasse, *Dextera Dei ubique est* (“The right hand of God is everywhere”) overthrows the entire worldview of medieval science and theology.⁹⁷ If Lutheran Christology is right, according to which Christ’s divine and human nature are inseparably connected since the incarnation, then these four sentences must stand:

- (1) Jesus Christ is essential, nature, true and perfect God and man in one person, inseparable and undivided. (2) God’s right hand is everywhere: *Dextera Dei ubique est*. (3) God’s Word is not false, nor does it lie. (4) God has and recognizes many modes of being in any place, and not only the single one concerning which the fanatics talk flippantly and which philosophers call *localem* or local.⁹⁸

“Not the *way* in which the Real Presence may be understood is decisive, but the fact that it is acknowledged. As to the *how* of the Presence of the whole Christ, of His body and blood, of His human

⁹² LW 37:214 in FC SD VII, 95 (Trig. 1004, K/W 609).

⁹³ LW 37:57.

⁹⁴ Edwards, 96.

⁹⁵ LW 37:68 in Edwards, 96.

⁹⁶ Sasse, 156.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 159.

⁹⁸ LW 37:214 in FC VII, 93ff. (K/W 609); Sasse, 160.

and divine nature, there is no dogma in the Lutheran Church because Holy Scripture does not answer this question. Thus Luther himself did not repeat in later years all that he had said about the ‘ubiquity’ in his controversies in the years before Marburg.⁹⁹ Zwingli never denied that the right hand of God is everywhere and, consequently, Christ shares the omnipresence of God. However, he understood this to be true of Christ’s divine nature only. His “humanity is *not* in the same way on the right hand of God.”¹⁰⁰

The Christological Difference

During the preliminary discussions at Marburg on Friday, October 1, Melanchthon refused to say with Zwingli that the body of Christ must be in one place in such a way that it cannot at the same time be anywhere else. Melanchthon quoted Ephesians 4:10, “He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.” Zwingli, however, said Ephesians 4:10 referred to Jesus having accomplished all things and continued to argue that the body of Christ cannot be in many places simultaneously. To Zwingli, it was not evident from Scripture that His body should ever be in several places at the same time. Quoting Romans 8:3, Philippians 2:6ff, Hebrews 2:17 and 4:15, Zwingli argued, “I will not allow these passages to be passed over. They show that the humanity of Jesus was finite like ours.”¹⁰¹ Oecolampadius likewise cited various passages to demonstrate that Christ had left the world. He also discussed the properties of a true body. That a true body must occupy a certain space and exist locally was logically inconsistent with Luther’s understanding of Christ’s bodily presence in the Lord’s Supper.

The next day, Luther summarized what he believed to be his opponents’ fundamental principles regarding the Lord’s Supper: “1) You want to prove your case by way of logical conclusions; 2) you hold that a body cannot be in two places at the same time, and you put forward the argument that a body cannot be without limitation; 3) you appeal to natural human reason.”¹⁰² Luther confessed the primacy of the Word alone as our source for doctrine, not our human reason: “To the Word of God one must yield. It is up to you to prove that the body of Christ is not there when Christ Himself says, ‘This is My body.’ I do not want to hear

⁹⁹ Sasse, 160.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 148.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 255.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 231.

what reason says. I completely reject carnal or geometrical arguments.... I request, therefore a valid proof from Holy Writ that these words do not mean what they say."¹⁰³ Later, on Saturday afternoon, Luther again repeated, "I do not like to dispute any longer on mathematics. Let us not try to inquire how Christ's body is in the Lord's Supper. In Holy Scripture I do not admit mathematical dimensions. *God is higher than all mathematicians*. Christ can keep His body without space at a certain place. *He is in the sacrament (but) not as in a place*."¹⁰⁴ The Words of Institution proved that the essence of Christ's body is in the bread. Christ's body can be in many places simultaneously.

To Zwingli it sounded like Luther was reestablishing the sacrifice of the Mass. While admitting, "God certainly *can* make it possible for one body to be in different places at the same time," Zwingli and Oecolampadius demanded "proof that He does so in the Lord's Supper."¹⁰⁵ The Swiss argued that Scripture shows Christ "always in a particular place, as in the manger, in the temple, in the desert, on the cross, in the sepulcher, at the right hand of the father. From this it follows that Christ's body must always be in a particular place."¹⁰⁶ Osiander answered this line of reasoning: "Such Scripture passages do not prove more than that Christ at certain times was in particular places. They do by no means prove, however, that He always and forever has been or must be in one place and that He cannot be, naturally or supernaturally in one place or in several places simultaneously, as you think."¹⁰⁷

The most obvious weakness of Zwingli's Christology is his inability to see the real unity of the God-man. Zwingli maintained a strict distinction between the natures of Christ, characteristic of medieval scholasticism. Zwingli was not a Nestorian, just as Luther was not a Monophysite. "But within the framework of the Chalcedonian Creed he came close to the Nestorian doctrine."¹⁰⁸ Zwingli did not truly hold to what Lutherans call the *communicatio idiomatum*, which was not understood by medieval scholasticism either. Though Zwingli used the term *communicatio idiomatum*¹⁰⁹ for him it was only as "alloisis," a figure of speech in which we attribute to one nature the qualities of

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 255.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 256.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 257.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Lutheran theology defines this as the communication of attributes resulting from the personal union of the two natures in Christ.

the other. For example, Zwingli would not object to calling Mary the “Mother of God,” but saw it only as a figure of speech, since actually she is only the mother of His human nature. In the same way, when speaking of Christ’s suffering and death, to Zwingli and the medieval scholastics only the “Son of Man,” meaning the human nature, could suffer and die.¹¹⁰ In his *Commentary on True and False Religion*, Zwingli wrote, “Christ is our salvation by virtue of that part of his nature by which he came down from heaven, not of that by which He was born of an immaculate virgin, though He had to suffer and die by this part; but unless He who died had also been God He could not have been salvation for the whole world.”¹¹¹

For Luther this notion that only one nature of Christ has done this for us and thus become our Savior and not the whole Christ was quite unbearable. He answers this idea in his “Great Confession Concerning the Lord’s Supper”:

Now if the old witch, Lady Reason, the grandmother of Alloiosis should say, The divinity cannot suffer or die, you should answer, That is true. Yet because divinity and humanity are one person in Christ, Scripture also, on account of such personal unity, attributes to the Godhead everything that belongs to the humanity, and in turn...the person who is God suffers in the humanity.¹¹²

The most characteristic feature of Luther’s Christology is what later theologians call the *genus majesticum*, that group of assertions in which it is stated that the human nature of Christ shares the properties of the divine nature such as omnipotence, omnipresence, etc.¹¹³ Luther boldly confesses,

Here you must take your stand and say, Where Christ is according to His divinity, there He is a natural divine person and is present in a natural and personal way, as His conception in His mother’s womb shows.... Where this person is, there He is as one undivided person. And when you can say, Here is God, then you must also say, Christ, the man, is also here. If, however, you were to show me a place where the divine nature is and not

¹¹⁰ By contrast, Lutherans sing on Good Friday, “O sorrow dread! Our God is dead” (ELH 332:2).

¹¹¹ Edwards, 85.

¹¹² LW 37:210.

¹¹³ Sasse, 151.

the human nature, the person would be divided because then I could say in truth, Here is God who is not man and never has become man. *That is not my God.* For it would follow from this that space and place would separate the two natures and divide the person, though neither death nor all devils could ever separate and divide them.¹¹⁴

As for the argument from John 6:63, “The flesh is of no avail,” Luther insisted that this could not apply to Christ’s flesh without simultaneously negating the incarnation.¹¹⁵

Here is perhaps the most profound difference between the two reformers. “For Luther God is revealed, ‘*Deus revelatus*,’ in Christ only.”¹¹⁶ Zwingli’s “Medieval heritage made it impossible for Zwingli to accept Luther’s view that God is revealed only in the humanity of Jesus Christ.”¹¹⁷ “Luther believes and teaches the Biblical paradox that the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Jesus, not only after His resurrection and exaltation, but also since His incarnation. This is Luther’s Christology.”¹¹⁸ For Luther, “In Christ crucified there is true theology and knowledge of God”¹¹⁹ and nowhere else. “In the humanity of Christ, we have God, the true God, hidden in the suffering and cross of Him who cries: My God, My God, why has Thou forsaken Me? That is Luther’s understanding of God from the beginning to the end of His life.”¹²⁰

A Different View of the Means of Grace

In the years preceding the Marburg Colloquy, “In almost every country and every city where the Reformation took root the great discussion on the sacrament began, especially since the entire life of the church, also its economic and financial side was bound up with the mass.”¹²¹ Sasse observes, “The fact that the denial of the Real Presence and the rejection of infant baptism originated in the same circles and at the same time shows more than anything else that there must be a close connection between the two sacraments.”¹²² The question in

¹¹⁴ LW 37:218.

¹¹⁵ Edwards, 97; cf. LW 37:82.

¹¹⁶ Sasse, 152.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Cf. *The Heidelberg Disputation*, 1518, LW 31:53.

¹²⁰ Sasse, 149.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 138.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 137.

these discussions was not whether or not the Sacraments are signs, but whether according to Scripture they are *more*. “The question for Luther was whether or not the sacraments, as means of grace, and whether the Sacrament of the Altar, as the sacrament of the true body and blood of Christ, were rooted in the Gospel and therefore essential for the Church. He could not but answer this question in the affirmative.”¹²³

Luther, Melancthon, and company confessed the Real Presence in the Lord’s Supper and baptismal regeneration and understood the sacraments as objective means of grace. At Marburg, Luther stated, “Christ gives Himself to us in many ways: first, in the preaching of the Word; secondly in baptism; thirdly, in brotherly consolation; fourthly, in the sacrament as often as the body of Christ is eaten, because He himself commands us to do so.”¹²⁴ For Luther the sacraments are acts of God, more than signs, instruments by which God confers forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. To Luther, to deny the character of the sacraments as means of grace is to destroy the sacraments. Either the Sacrament of the Altar is a means of grace or it is no sacrament at all. Since the Sacrament of the Altar is a means of grace, “the understanding of the words of institution in their simple, literal sense,” is “an essential article of the Christian faith.”¹²⁵

Despite his battles against the Anabaptists in Zurich, Zwingli was regarded by Luther as an “enthusiast.” Luther lumped the radical Reformers and Zwingli together, since both regarded the sacraments not as means of grace but mere signs of divine grace that may be and is received even without them. Zwingli liked to stress the old meaning of the Latin *sacramentum* as the soldier’s oath of allegiance. Thus he arrived at an understanding of the sacrament in which the last remnants of divine activity disappeared. “The sacrament, curiously enough, again became what it had become when the idea of the sacrifice of the mass had made it something that man performs.”¹²⁶ The sacrament represented *not* what God’s grace does in the soul, but rather what man does as a member of the church. The sacraments give nothing that the Christian cannot and does not receive outside and before baptism, outside and before the Lord’s Supper. In his *Fidei Ratio*, Article VII, Zwingli confessed, “I believe, indeed I know, that all the sacraments are so far from conferring

¹²³ Ibid., 285.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 236–237; cf. Smalcald Articles, Part III, Article 4.

¹²⁵ Sasse, 283.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 129.

grace that they do not even convey or distribute it.”¹²⁷ For Luther the content of the Word is bound up with the letter. The Holy Spirit comes to us in the external Word. In Zwingli’s opinion, the external Word in itself, the letter, has no power over the soul. “Not the content of the Word as such overpowers the soul by virtue of the Spirit that dwells in the Word, but the Spirit contacts the soul directly and thus enables the soul to understand the real meaning of the Word.”¹²⁸

What was behind Zwingli’s view of the Word and Sacraments? The fanatics misconstrued the distinction between “spirit” and “flesh” as presented in the Bible, referring it only to the distinction between physical and spiritual things, rather than the sinful flesh or old Adam and the new man. By contrast, Luther writes,

Thus, all our body does outwardly and physically, if God’s Word is added to it and it is done through faith, is in reality and in name done spiritually. Nothing can be so material, fleshly, or outward, but it becomes spiritual when it is done in the Word and in faith. “Spiritual” is nothing else than what is done in us and by us through the Spirit and faith, whether the object with which we are dealing is physical or spiritual. Thus, Spirit consists in the use, not in the object, be it seeing, hearing, speaking, touching, begetting, bearing, eating, drinking, or anything else.¹²⁹

In his treatise, “That These Words of Christ, ‘This is My Body,’ etc., Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics,” Luther turned the Sacramentarian argument on its head, on the basis of this understanding of spirit and flesh: “God inverts this order, however, and sets before us no word or commandment without including with it something material and outward, and proffering it to us.”¹³⁰ “Our fanatics, however, are full of fraud and humbug. They think nothing spiritual can be present where there is anything material and physical, and assert that flesh is of no avail. Actually the opposite is true. *The Spirit cannot be with us except in material and physical things such as the Word, water, and Christ’s body* and in

¹²⁷ Ibid., 282. Sasse opines, “Zwingli through his spiritual understanding of the Gospel, assisted more than anyone in the destruction of the sacrament in the Protestant world” (130).

¹²⁸ Reinhold Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der dogmengeschichte* IV, 1 (1933), 437, quoted in Sasse, 145.

¹²⁹ Edwards, 97; LW 37:92.

¹³⁰ Edwards, 97; LW 37:135.

his saints on earth.”¹³¹ Zwingli and Oecolampadius’ false understanding of flesh and spirit links them with the *spirit* that motivated Karlstadt and Müntzer: “For any spirit that does away with Christ’s flesh is not of God, says St. John [1 John 4:2-3].... Now this spirit certainly does away with Christ’s flesh, because he makes of it a useless, perishable and altogether common flesh.... Therefore he cannot be honest. I warn, I counsel: Beware, watch out, Satan has come among the children of God!”¹³²

Both sides agreed there was a spiritual eating in the Sacrament. Luther stated, “We do not deny the spiritual eating; on the contrary, we teach and believe it to be necessary. But from this it does not follow that the bodily eating is either useless or unnecessary.”¹³³ This led Zwingli to say to Luther at Marburg, “In fact you yourself recognize that the spiritual eating gives comfort. Since we are unanimous in this main point, for the sake of Christ’s love I beg not to accuse anyone of heresy on account of this dissension.”¹³⁴ But Luther insisted that spiritual eating did not exclude bodily eating. The Swiss insisted it did. Zwingli rebutted, “Even if we do not have a passage that says, ‘This is the figure of my body,’ we do have a passage in which Christ leads us away from bodily eating.”¹³⁵ To this, Luther responded, “Whenever God speaks to us, faith is required, and such faith means ‘eating.’ If, however, He adds bodily eating to that, we are bound to obey. In faith we eat this body which is given for us. While the mouth receives the body of Christ, the soul believes the words when eating the body. Furthermore, if you say that God does not purpose to us anything incomprehensible, I would not admit that. Consider the virginity of Mary, the remission of sins

¹³¹ LW 37:95. According to Edwards, it was from this premise that Luther refuted all other arguments advanced to deny Christ’s presence in the Supper (97).

¹³² LW 37:150.

¹³³ Sasse, 236.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 238. Zwingli erroneously added, “*The ancient Fathers, even when in disagreement, did not condemn one another in such a way.*”

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 237–238. For Zwingli this passage was John 6:63, “The spirit alone gives life; the flesh is of no avail.” This passage proved to Zwingli’s satisfaction that Christ’s physical presence would be of no avail even if it were there. “Accordingly, if there were any special nourishment for the soul in the Lord’s Supper (a view Zwingli adopted only late in the debate), the only possible source it could derive from was Christ’s spiritual presence. Christ’s body, a physical thing, could in no way nourish the soul” (Edwards, 85). See also “A Real But Useless Presence?” in *The Lord’s Supper* by John R. Stephenson, *Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics Vol. XII* (St. Louis: Luther Academy, 2003), 179–189.

and many similar matters. In the same way, 'This is My body,' is also incomprehensible."¹³⁶

Luther's theology of the cross comes out as he says, "Give due honor to the cross. God often acts in a miraculous way, employing lowly things."¹³⁷ "However carnal they may seem to you, they are nevertheless, as no one can deny, *the words and deeds of the highest majesty and therefore by no means carnal and inferior, since forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and the kingdom of heaven are, by the Word of God, attached to these low and, as it would seem, carnal things.*"¹³⁸

Do the Words of Institution affect the Real Presence?

A related question to the Word and Sacraments as means of grace is that of the power of the Words of Institution to bring about the presence of Christ's body and blood in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper. For Luther and the Lutheran Church the Words of Institution have also been the words of consecration, while Zwingli and all the Reformed churches reject the idea that the elements are consecrated by reciting the words of Christ.¹³⁹ Zwingli argued at Marburg, "We say it is impossible to understand the words of the Lord's Supper literally because God has forbidden us to eat His flesh bodily. Otherwise we make the Word of God ambiguous. Luther thinks that the Word, when uttered, adds something to the bread and wine. Melancthon agrees with me that spoken words have only a significative character. It is the core of the word which carries something with it."¹⁴⁰ "As to your words: Where the Word of God is, there is the eating, my answer is that Pope has that word likewise. That eating takes place, *not* where the words are spoken, but where they are *believed.*"¹⁴¹ Luther argued that our faith does not affect Christ's presence in the sacrament. "If men refuse to believe and to eat spiritually, what does that matter? The real body is present by virtue of the word of Christ."¹⁴²

Zwingli was disturbed by the idea that the Words of Institution even spoken by an unworthy person (e.g., a papist) could cause the body of Christ to be present in the sacrament. Luther met this argument with

¹³⁶ Sasse, 239. He went so far as to say, "If He ordered me to eat dung, I would do it" (234).

¹³⁷ Ibid., 236.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 234.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 164.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 240.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 241.

¹⁴² Ibid., 243.

the assertion that it was God through the Word that caused Christ to be present, not the priest or the celebrant, since the worthiness of the minister in no way affected the efficacy of the sacraments.

Even though I should pronounce over all bread the words, “This is Christ’s body,” nothing, would, of course, result therefrom; but when we say in the Supper, according to His institution and command, “This is My body,” it is His body, not on account of our speaking or because of a word uttered, but because of His command.... It is He who has commanded us thus to speak and to do and has united His command and act with our speaking.¹⁴³

For Luther it is the word of Christ and nothing but this word which is the cause of the Real Presence of the body and blood in the Lord’s Supper. There is no secondary cause. The minister to whom the consecration is reserved is the minister of the Word and Sacraments, the appointed administrator of the means of grace, who is not, however, a priest in any other sense than that which regards all believers as priests because they are members of the priestly people of God.¹⁴⁴

To Zwingli, the words, “This is My Body” are narrative only, an historical statement that Christ’s body has been given, His blood has been shed for us on Calvary. Therefore, these words cannot “make the body of Christ. There is no such thing as a consecration that causes the body of Christ to be present.”¹⁴⁵ Luther rejects this distinction between narrative and imperative as artificial and not doing justice to the text. Jesus not only wanted His church to eat the bread and drink the wine, but He also wanted it to repeat the whole action, which includes the blessing of the elements by speaking over them the same words as Jesus spoke.¹⁴⁶ If these words were powerful (*Machwort*) at the first celebration

¹⁴³ LW 37:184, quoted in FC SD VII, 78 (Trigl. 1001; K/W 607). The Formula of Concord adds another Luther quote from 1533: “This command and institution of Christ have this power and effect when we administer and receive not mere bread and wine, but his body and blood, as His words declare...so that it is not our work or our speaking, but the command and ordination of Christ that make the bread the body and the wine the blood, from the beginning of the very first Supper even to the end of the world, and that through our service and office they are daily distributed.” “Von der Winkelmesse und Pfaffenweihe” LW 38:199 in SD VII, 77 (Trigl. 999; K/W 607).

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 171.

¹⁴⁵ Sasse, 166.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

they remain powerful. All Christians bound by the institution and command of Christ to speak these words: "I think even the enthusiasts would not dare to omit them with good conscience. If, then, they must be spoken, then they are words of command, and it is impossible to separate them from the (preceding) words of command."¹⁴⁷ Zwingli finds the "blessing" in the prayer of thanksgiving which Jesus spoke before He broke the bread, the wording of which is not mentioned in the New Testament. Following Zwingli's understanding of the Words of Institution, "The Reformed liturgies and confessions make it clear that the words are not consecratory."¹⁴⁸ On the contrary, Lutheran liturgies presuppose that these words are really words of consecration.¹⁴⁹

Close of the Colloquy, Marburg Articles

Following the fourth session of negotiations on Sunday afternoon October 3, Luther thanked Oecolampadius for having made plain his views in a friendly manner and Zwingli as well although he had spoken more bitterly. Luther asked that any bitter words of his own be forgiven. Zwingli in turn asked Luther to pardon his bitterness and tearfully confessed that it had always been and still was his eager wish to have Luther as his friend. Luther replied that Zwingli should ask God for enlightenment. Oecolampadius countered that Luther needed enlightenment no less.¹⁵⁰

Jacob Sturm, Strassburg city secretary, reminded the participants that Luther raised questions about other doctrinal issues on the first day. Sturm requested that Bucer be allowed to outline their beliefs so that Luther's suspicions could be removed, especially any suspicion of Arianism. Bucer did so and asked Luther to tell them whether their doctrine was orthodox. Luther refused to do so, saying he was neither their lord nor their judge: "Since you do not want to accept me or my doctrine I cannot allow you to be my disciples. Indeed, we have previously noticed that you desire to spread your teaching in our name."¹⁵¹ I hear

¹⁴⁷ Luther, *Vom Abendmahl Christi*, footnote 70 in Sasse, 167; LW 37:182.

¹⁴⁸ Sasse, 166. An example of a Zwinglian liturgy is the "Action or Use of the Lord's Supper, Easter 1525" in Bard Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 149-156. Sasse describes this order in *This is My Body*, 130-133.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Edwards, 109.

¹⁵¹ A reference to Bucer's publication of works of Luther and Bugenhagen in which he added his own introduction and glosses to present his own interpretation of the Lord's Supper as being shared by the Wittenbergers. These amendments led Luther to regard Bucer's edition of his works as a forgery.

what you say now, but I don't know whether or not you also teach the same way at home, etc. That is why I shall not testify on your behalf."¹⁵²

Then Bucer asked if Luther would recognize him as a brother: "Will you recognize me as a brother, or will you show me my errors that I may overcome them?"¹⁵³ Luther's reply was decisive: "I am neither your Lord, nor your judge, nor your teacher. Your spirit and our spirit cannot go together. Indeed, it is quite obvious that we do not have the same spirit."¹⁵⁴ "Our spirit is different from yours; it is clear that we do not possess the same spirit, for it cannot be the same spirit when in one place the words of Christ are simply believed and in another place the same faith in censured, resisted, regarded as false and attacked with all kinds of malicious and blasphemous words."¹⁵⁵ Luther once more commended them to the judgment of God: "Therefore, as I have told you, we commend you to the judgment of God. Teach as you think you can defend it in the sight of God."¹⁵⁶

Later that night, very important private negations were held regarding a formula for union suggested by Luther after the colloquy had come to a close. "Despite the obvious failure of the discussions," Luther "made a last-minute attempt to redeem the situation by proposing a formula which, though expressing the doctrine of the Real Presence, avoided everything that could offend the other side."¹⁵⁷ Luther suggested this compromise wording on the Supper: "We confess that by virtue of the words, 'This is my body, this is my blood' the body and blood are truly—*hoc est: substantive et essentialiter, non autem quantitative vel qualitative vel localiter*—present and distributed in the Lord's Supper."¹⁵⁸ This formula maintains the Luther doctrine of the Real

¹⁵² Edwards, 109; Sasse, 265. Edwards comments, "Luther's fear that his name might be misused to promote heresy was again evident" (109).

¹⁵³ Sasse, 265.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Edwards, 110. Sasse notes, "It is noteworthy that this famous word was addressed to Bucer, not to Zwingli" (265). Years later, in 1536, when the Wittenberg Concord was agreed upon, Bucer and Capito wept for joy. Edwards notes, however, that there was a different interpretation by each party of the same formula (154).

¹⁵⁶ Sasse, 265.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 217.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 266. The meaning of "that the real body and real blood are present" "substantively and essentially" may be understood by the hymn "O Lord We Praise Thee" (ELH 327), the first verse of which Luther took over from the Middle Ages as a document of the pure doctrine still preserved in the Medieval church: "May Thy body, Lord, born of Mary, That our sins and sorrows did carry, And thy blood for us plead In all trial, fear, and need" (Sasse, 266–267, fn 108).

presence without mentioning the question of the *manducatio impiorum*, to which the Swiss, even the Strassburgers, objected.

This effort failed, since Zwingli rejected this wording. But Landgrave Philip, who wanted some action taken, requested new private discussions be held on Monday morning for the purpose of reaching at least a “practical compromise.”¹⁵⁹ The Landgrave asked Luther to draft articles on the doctrines on which agreement had been reached. Luther drafted fifteen articles based on his previously formulated Schwabach Articles, known as the “Marburg Articles.”

On Monday, October 4, after brief discussion, the Marburg Articles were adopted and signed by the Lutheran delegates and by those from Switzerland and Strassburg.¹⁶⁰ Much to Luther’s surprise, his opponents accepted fourteen out of fifteen with only minor modifications. The only point of disagreement was the article on the Lord’s Supper, and even here the two positions were noticeably closer than before. All parties, including Zwingli, now agreed that there was a spiritual partaking of the true body and blood of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament. But the disagreement remained on the question of whether or not the true body and blood of Christ are bodily present in the bread and wine.

Before parting, all parties agreed to refrain from further public controversy or at least to write in more friendly way with regard to controversial questions. On Tuesday, October 5, negotiations were concluded in a hurry, followed by the hasty departure of the participants. The Landgrave left in the morning, Luther and his party in the afternoon, the Swiss and Strassburgers later the same day. This was most likely due to a very dangerous epidemic, known as “*sudor Anglicus*,” which had suddenly broken out in Marburg.

Conclusion

What was accomplished by the Marburg Colloquy? “The lack of a real result was at first hidden by the Marburg Articles, which were understood by each side in a different way.”¹⁶¹ If one compares the

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 217.

¹⁶⁰ The Marburg Articles are included as an appendix to this paper. They are recorded in Sasse, *This is My Body*, 269–272, and LW 38:85–89. A new translation was prepared by William Russell and is included in Robert Kolb and James Nestingen, eds., *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 88–92. Russell’s translation is found online at <<http://books.google.com/books?id=PS3nYNLtdLMC&pg=PA92&dpq=PA88&ots=imPQZNkFW3&dq=Marburg+Articles&ie=ISO-8859-1&output=html>>.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 275. This weakness is characteristic of the so-called agreements of the modern ecumenical movement, such as the JDDJ, the Lünenberg Agreement, and

Marburg Articles to the Augsburg Confession of the following year, one will find several similarities, but what is missing in the Marburg Articles? Condemnatory statements are missing, which are needed to truly define the boundaries of what is to be taught and not to be taught.

To Luther and Lutherans, the Marburg Articles were the beginning of a real union. Signing a theological document proved Zwingli was able to yield in important matters. The Lutherans felt justified in hoping he would eventually accept the last point on which agreement not reached. To Zwingli and his friends, this document was as far as they could concede, though a success in so far as it would no longer possible for the papists to claim Luther as their ally.¹⁶² From the point of view of the Swiss, the articles could serve as a sufficient basis for common political action and eventual fellowship of all Protestants. With Luther and Zwingli agreeing on fourteen out of fifteen points and even expressing agreement on the Lord's Supper on five out of six points, not only the participants, even Luther himself and his contemporaries on either side could cherish the hope that full union was not very far off.

For Landgrave Philip, the Marburg Articles were a highly important political and ecclesiastical document, “a monument to the diplomatic skill of this great church politician.”¹⁶³ “It was a masterpiece of diplomacy to persuade Luther, after the colloquy had failed, to draft this set of theses, and to persuade Zwingli to accept them. Only a political genius could change an obvious failure into a seeming success.”¹⁶⁴ “For more than four centuries the clever diplomacy of Philip of Hesse and the wishful thinking of all friends of a Protestant union were able to deceive Christendom as to the real outcome of the days of Marburg.”¹⁶⁵

Luther's evaluation of the colloquy was expressed clearly in letter to Gerbel in Strassburg. In this letter he also states what the conditions for a real union would be:

We defended ourselves strongly and they conceded much, but as they were firm in this one article on the sacrament of the altar we dismissed them in peace, fearing that further argument

Lutheran-Episcopalian Concordat. The danger of equivocation, of the statements being understood in more than one way or even allowing for contradictory interpretations is a danger that even confessional Lutherans need to be aware of as we draft doctrinal statements.

¹⁶² This was a chief accusation of Zwingli against Luther prior to the Marburg colloquy, that his teaching of the Real Presence was a return to Romanism.

¹⁶³ Sasse, 275.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 276

would draw blood. We ought to have charity and peace even with our foes, and so we plainly told them that unless they grow wiser on this point they may indeed have our charity, but cannot by us be considered as brothers and members of Christ. You will judge how much fruit has come of this conference; it seems to me that no small scandal has been removed, since there will be no further occasion for disputation, which is more than we had hoped for. Would that the little difference still remaining might be taken away by Christ.¹⁶⁶

In his first sermon at Wittenberg after returning from the conference Luther expressed this view: “Things look rather hopeful. I do not say that we have attained to brotherly unity, but a kindly and friendly concord, so that they seek from us in a friendly way what they are lacking, and we, on the other hand, assist them. If you will pray diligently, the concord may become a brotherly one.”¹⁶⁷ Luther’s judgment that the sacramentarians yielded to the Lutherans on all issues but the Supper only further confirmed his belief in the correctness of his own position. In an October 12 letter to John Agricola, Luther described the sacramentarians as “clumsy and inexperienced in argument” and supposed they had refused to yield on the Supper “from fear and shame rather than from malice.”¹⁶⁸ The “opponents had humbled themselves beyond measure, asking for peace, and they were unfit for a disputation.”¹⁶⁹ Their humility and pleas to be considered brethren confirmed the judgment of Luther and the other Lutherans that they lacked assurance about their position.

Melanchthon wrote, “When it was all over Zwingli and Oecolampadius earnestly desired that we should acknowledge them as brethren. This we were not willing to grant by any means. They have attacked us so severely that we wonder with what kind of a conscience they would hold us as brethren if they thought we were in error. How could they permit our view to be taught and held and preached alongside their own?”¹⁷⁰ Melanchthon and Luther did not understand how the Swiss and Upper Germans could sincerely believe that this disagreement did not of necessity separate the true church from the false.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁶ Edwards, 110; cf. Sasse, 274; LW 49:236-237.

¹⁶⁷ Sasse, 274.

¹⁶⁸ Edwards, 110; cf. Sasse, 274.

¹⁶⁹ Sasse, 274.

¹⁷⁰ Edwards, 111.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

The Swiss and Upper Germans did not agree with Luther's evaluations and felt, in fact, it was their position that carried the day. They resented any hint of their having yielded. Zwingli appears to be first to speak of "victory" and "defeat": "We are certain that our actions were right in the sight of God. Posterity will testify to that. Truth has prevailed so manifestly that, if ever a person has been defeated, it is the impudent (*impudens*) and stubborn (*contumax*) Luther."¹⁷² After Luther found out about these utterances and the situation had changed in the summer of 1530, he too spoke of his opponents having been defeated. Sasse observes, "This difference of opinion concerning the result at Marburg shows already now little actually had been achieved."¹⁷³

In 1530 Zwingli presented his "Fidei Ratio" before the emperor. Because of what Zwingli confessed at Augsburg, in Sasse's opinion, Zwingli "could not possibly with a good conscience accept the [Marburg] articles on the Word and on Baptism."¹⁷⁴ Marburg Article IX states that baptism "is not a mere empty sign or symbol among Christians, but a sign and work of God." Article XIV says that in baptism children "are received into God's grace and into Christendom." However, in his "Fidei Ratio" Article 7, Zwingli points out that the sacraments do not convey grace or even contribute to the reception of grace and "by baptism the Church publicly receives him who previously has been received by grace."¹⁷⁵ "How could he reconcile the doctrine that the Holy Ghost gives faith and His gifts through the oral word (Marburg Article VIII) with the view, expressed in 'Fidei Ratio' (Article VII) that the Holy Ghost does not need any vehicle, as the wind bloweth where it listeth?"¹⁷⁶ For Zwingli "the Spirit is not bound to the Word."¹⁷⁷ Zwingli also held that those who never have heard the word of God can be saved.¹⁷⁸

Luther explains these glaring differences in Zwingli's public confession from less than a year before by assuming that Zwingli either has broken the agreement at Marburg or never believed what he then had confessed: "Since now in this booklet Zwingli has not only broken

¹⁷² Sasse, 274.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 275.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 276.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 277.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, fn 130.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.* In his "Exposition of the Christian Faith" describing the bliss of heaven to the King of France, Zwingli lists among the saints: Hercules, Theseus, Socrates, Aristides, Antigonus, Numa, Camillus, the Catos, and the Scipios.

our agreement at Marburg, indeed has not taken it seriously...it is certain that in every respect he acted insincerely with us at Marburg.”¹⁷⁹

The failure of the Marburg Articles is that “There is hardly one among the 14 articles of agreement which was understood by either in the same way.”¹⁸⁰ For Luther they were “articles of faith, which had to be taken quite seriously” while Zwingli regarded them as welcome political means to an end, the end being the union of all Protestants.¹⁸¹ Zwingli thought this was possible in spite of unresolved doctrinal differences. Sasse wonders aloud how Luther “could ever accept such an ambiguous statement as that of Marburg Article XI: ‘Eleventh, that confession or the seeking of counsel from one’s pastor or neighbor should indeed be without constraint and free. Nevertheless, it is very helpful to consciences that are afflicted, troubled, or burdened with sins, or have fallen into error, most especially on account of the absolution or consolation afforded by the gospel, which is the true absolution.’”¹⁸² Luther’s acceptance perhaps could be partially understood but not excused by the haste in which the articles were drafted. “He ought to have known or at least found out that Zwingli rejected private confession and abhorred the idea that a pastor could forgive sins in the name of God. Zwingli and all his adherents interpreted this article as speaking of spiritual counsel and proclamation of the gospel, while Luther and the Lutherans found therein their doctrine of the office of the keys.”¹⁸³

In Sasse’s opinion, “The Marburg Articles are not and never have been the confession of the doctrines that are common to Protestants with the exception of the doctrine on the Lord’s Supper.”¹⁸⁴ Even Article XV, which tries to state the points of agreement and the one point of disagreement concerning the sacrament, is useless on account of its ambiguity. “For the alleged agreement ‘that the Sacrament of the Altar is a sacrament of the true body and blood of Jesus Christ’ was understood differently on either side.”¹⁸⁵ Evidence of this is seen in the note that Zwingli added to his edition of the Articles: “The sacrament

¹⁷⁹ LW 38:289.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid., 279

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Nearly the opposite point of view is suggested by the title of a paper by Concordia – Ft. Wayne Professor Cameron Mackenzie, “Defining the Boundaries of Evangelicalism in the 16th Century: Luther and Zwingli at Marburg (1529),” online at www.ctsfw.edu/library/files/pb/371.

¹⁸⁵ Sasse, 280.

is the sign of the true body, etc., consequently is not the true body.”¹⁸⁶ Sasse notes, “Thus here, too, the disagreement is already concealed in what was proclaimed as a statement of agreement.”¹⁸⁷

By the Diet of Augsburg the following June, the Marburg Articles were already “practically forgotten.” There the Lutherans handed to the emperor the Augsburg Confession, Zwingli his “Fidei Ratio,” and four cities of southwest Germany their “Confessio Tetrapolitiana” written by Bucer. “Nothing shows more clearly the futility of the attempt made in the Marburg Articles to find a common basis for a pan-Protestant alliance against Rome.”¹⁸⁸

What may be learned from Marburg? Sasse sees the “spirit” that reared its head at Marburg as a forewarning of today’s ecumenical age. “It seems that in this, as perhaps in all of the Marburg Articles, there was an anticipation of the great art of modern ecumenical theologians of formulating theses of agreement and disagreement which everyone is free to interpret according to his pleasure. This theological inadequacy of the Marburg Articles the reason why they have not played any part in attempts to formulate an evangelical confession.”¹⁸⁹ On the other hand, the Marburg Articles have “been praised by all later advocates of union between the Lutheran and Reformed churches and Luther blamed for not having adhered to them.”¹⁹⁰

While on the surface it may appear that at Marburg there was agreement found on all but one of fifteen articles of faith, in truth, this one article, the Real Presence affects the whole body of doctrine. Luther and the Swiss Reformers’ different doctrines of the Lord’s Supper impacted or touched upon their respective views of church fellowship, method of biblical interpretation, Christology, and the Means of Grace. This results in a different understanding of Christianity and of God Himself and His dealings with mankind, which illustrates the accuracy of Luther’s evaluation that his Reformed counterparts possess a “different spirit.”

Does Luther’s evaluation of Reformed doctrine and practice still stand today? Today this “different spirit” manifests itself not only in Reformed circles but even among those who claim to be Luther’s spiritual and doctrinal heirs. This “different spirit” is seen when church fellowship is practiced on the basis of personal, saving faith rather

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 280.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 279.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

than the faith that is confessed, e.g., communing all who believe in Jesus as their Savior. A “different spirit” displays itself when worship forms downplay or deny God serving us in Word and Sacrament and place the primary emphasis on our reaching God by our praise. In such worship forms “emotions,” a religious feeling or music styles that help us “feel religious,” become new “means of grace.” A “different spirit,” even a different Christology emerges when those who claim to stand in the stead of Christ are those whom God in the New Testament has prohibited from holding the pastoral office. “A different spirit” is seen in every effort to place human reason above Scripture and every rejection of God’s revealed Word in favor of moral standards of this age.

In the New Testament, we are exhorted to “preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3 [NASB]). At the same time we are to “test the spirits, whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1).

God grant us strength of faith and the gift of discernment to do both. LSQ

Appendix: The Marburg Articles¹⁹¹

The undersigned have agreed to the articles given below at Marburg on October 3, 1529.

First, that we on both sides unanimously believe and hold that there is only one true, natural God, Maker of all creatures, and that this same God is one in essence and nature and triune as to persons, namely, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, exactly as was decided in the Council of Nicaea and as is sung and read in the Nicene Creed by the entire Christian church throughout the world.

Second, we believe that neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit, but the Son of God the Father, true and natural God himself, became man through the working of the Holy Spirit without the agency of male seed, was born of the pure Virgin Mary, was altogether human with body and soul, like another man, but without sin.

Third, that this same Son of God and of Mary, undivided in person, Jesus Christ, was crucified for us, died and was buried, rose from the

¹⁹¹ LW 38:85.

dead, ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of God, Lord over all creatures, and will come to judge the living and the dead, etc.

Fourth, we believe that original sin is innate and inherited by us from Adam and is the kind of sin which condemns all men. And if Jesus Christ had not come to our aid by his death and life, we would have had to die eternally as a result of it and could not have received God's kingdom and salvation.

Fifth, we believe that we are saved from such sin and all other sins as well as from eternal death, if we believe in the same Son of God, Jesus Christ, who died for us, etc., and that apart from such faith we cannot free ourselves of any sin through any kind of works, station in life, or [religious] order, etc.

Sixth, that such faith is a gift of God which we cannot earn with any works or merit that precede, nor can we achieve it by our own strength, but the Holy Spirit gives and creates this faith in our hearts as it pleases him, when we hear the gospel or the word of Christ.

Seventh, that such faith is our righteousness before God, for the sake of which God reckons and regards us as righteous, godly, and holy apart from all works and merit, and through which he delivers us from sin, death, and hell, receives us by grace and saves us, for the sake of his Son, in whom we thus believe, and thereby we enjoy and partake of his Son's righteousness, life, and all blessings. [Therefore,¹⁹² all monastic life and vows, when regarded as an aid to salvation, are altogether condemned.]

Concerning the External Word¹⁹³

Eighth, that the Holy Spirit, ordinarily, gives such faith or his gift to no one without preaching or the oral word or the gospel of Christ preceding, but that through and by means of such oral word he effects and creates faith where and in whom it pleases him (Romans 10 [:14 ff.]).

Concerning Baptism

Ninth, that holy baptism is a sacrament which has been instituted by God as an aid to such a faith, and because God's command, "Go, baptize" [cf. Matt. 28:19], and God's promise, "He who believes" [Mark 16:16], are connected with it, it is therefore not merely an empty sign or watchword among Christians but, rather, a sign and work of

¹⁹² This last sentence of the seventh article is found only in the Zurich manuscript. See WA 30^{III}, 164.

¹⁹³ Headings for the articles appear here for the first time. There are no headings for the thirteenth and fourteenth articles.

God by which our faith grows¹⁹⁴ and through which we are regenerated to [eternal] life.

Concerning Good Works

Tenth, that such faith, through the working of the Holy Spirit, and by which we are reckoned and have become righteous and holy, performs good works through us, namely, love toward the neighbor, prayer to God, and the suffering of persecution of every kind.

Concerning Confession

Eleventh, that confession or the seeking of counsel from one's pastor or neighbor should indeed be without constraint and free. Nevertheless, it is very helpful to consciences that are afflicted, troubled, or burdened with sins, or have fallen into error, most especially on account of the absolution or consolation afforded by the gospel, which is the true absolution.

Concerning Governing Authorities

Twelfth, that all governing authorities and secular laws, courts, and ordinances, wherever they exist, are a truly good estate and are not forbidden, as some papists and Anabaptists teach and hold. On the contrary, [we believe] that a Christian, called or born thereto, can indeed be saved through faith in Christ, just as in the estate of father or mother, husband or wife, etc.

Thirteenth, that what is called tradition or human ordinances in spiritual or ecclesiastical matters, provided they do not plainly contradict the word of God, may be freely kept or abolished in accordance with the needs of the people with whom we are dealing, in order to avoid unnecessary offense in every way and to serve the weak and the peace of all, etc.

[Also,¹⁹⁵ that the doctrine forbidding clerical marriage is a teaching of the devil.]

Fourteenth, that baptism of infants is right, and that they are thereby received into God's grace and into Christendom.

Concerning the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ

¹⁹⁴ The various manuscripts have both *gefordert* and *gefoddert*, which can mean either "to promote, grow" or "to demand." Zwingli understood the latter meaning. Luther used the word in both of its meanings. See the note to the ninth article in WA 30^{III}, 165f.; Cf. Sasse, 271.

¹⁹⁵ This sentence of the thirteenth article is found only in the Zurich manuscript. See WA 30^{III}, 168.

Fifteenth, we all believe and hold concerning the Supper of our dear Lord Jesus Christ that both kinds should be used according to the institution by Christ; [also¹⁹⁶ that the mass is not a work with which one can secure grace for someone else, whether he is dead or alive;] also that the Sacrament of the Altar is a sacrament of the true body and blood of Jesus Christ and that the spiritual partaking of the same body and blood is especially necessary for every Christian. Similarly, that the use of the sacrament, like the word, has been given and ordained by God Almighty in order that weak consciences may thereby be excited to faith by the Holy Spirit. And although at this time, we have not reached an agreement as to whether the true body and blood of Christ are bodily present in the bread and wine, nevertheless, each side should show Christian love to the other side insofar as conscience will permit, and both sides should diligently pray to Almighty God that through his Spirit he might confirm us in the right understanding. Amen.

Martin Luther
 Justus Jonas
 Philip Melanchthon
 Andreas Osiander
 Stephan Agricola
 John Brenz
 John Oecolampadius
 Huldrych Zwingli
 Martin Bucer
 Caspar Hedio¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ The Zurich manuscript contains this additional statement. See WA 30^{III}, 169.

¹⁹⁷ The Zurich manuscript lists the signatures in this order: John Oecolampadius, Huldrych Zwingli, Martin Bucer, Caspar Hedio, Martin Luther, Justus Jonas, Philip Melanchthon, Andreas Osiander, Stephan Agricola, John Brenz.

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Preaching the Text Before Us and Not Something Else: Necessary Processes of Text Study in Sermon Preparation

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AS HEIRS OF THE LUTHERAN Reformation, *sola scriptura* not only defines the basis for our theology, and the basis for the assurance of our salvation, but also the basis for the message that Lutheran pastors preach. We spend years learning Greek and Hebrew, the biblical languages, in preparation for our seminary studies. We spend three more years in seminary learning the hermeneutical process and putting it into practice in our classes in biblical exegesis. Some students, nonetheless, continue to be challenged and frustrated academically with languages. Then, after graduation, the new pastor begins his ministry, with all its demands on his time. And when time gets short, the study of the sermon text, especially in the biblical languages, gets short shrift. The next thing we know, we're looking for short cuts in text study and sermon preparation.

In one of my homiletics classes at seminary, our class went through a brainstorming session as a way to approach text study. The class picked out words that seemed important, words and comments were written on the chalkboard, other Bible passages were written on the board that might be used to elucidate the text. After a certain amount of this “free-association” thinking, we pulled together thoughts into a more-or-less coherent organization and developed a theme and parts and expanded an outline from all the points on the board. The expanded outline presented biblical doctrine and from it the class was able to develop a sermon that addressed God's people with truths from God's Word.

But, remembering another homiletics professor's statement that a text should not be a pretext, read and then forgotten, it seemed the approach we had just used came close to being a pretext. It did not seem we had really dealt with, much less wrestled with, the text.

Early in my ministry, text studies were a frustrating part of my weekly sermon preparation. My first sermons seemed to be cranked out by a formula. Yes, they taught law and gospel, and conformed to good Lutheran systematic theology. But I wrestled with really getting into a thorough study of the text and developing a sermon from the text. As I acquired and read books on sermon preparation and sermon writing, I came across two books that changed my approach to text study. One book was by Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. entitled *Toward an Exegetical Theology*;¹ the other was *Hermeneutics* by Henry A. Virkler.² Both books presented a multi-step approach to text study. (Although their approaches are similar, there are enough differences that the books complement one another quite well.)

After using the method in these books for a number of years, I found the approach to be extremely helpful to me in wrestling with the text on its own terms. Is this the only approach that can be used in text study? Obviously not. But it is one good approach, an approach that is thorough, and results in a solid understanding of the text in preparation for writing the week's sermon.

It should be noted that this paper is not about the entire sermon-writing process. It does not cover the use of illustrations, writing in spoken English instead of written English, writing introductions and conclusions, how to develop the application of the text to an individual congregation, and the like. It is about wrestling with the text (because that's what good text study involves.) It is about understanding what God was saying to his people at the time the text was written. It is about understanding the thoughts of the text and how they are developed by the inspired writer, then structuring an outline to reflect how the thoughts are presented and developed.

The multi-step approach to text study that is presented in the above-referenced books involves the following:

Contextual Analysis

Verbal Analysis

Syntactical Analysis (Structure of the Paragraph Syntax)

¹ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981).

² Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981).

Diachronic Theological Analysis Homiletical (Audience) Analysis

There are places where a Lutheran will diverge somewhat from the steps as presented by Kaiser and Virkler. They both come from an Evangelical background which, at times, reveals itself in their writings. The approach that follows is a summary of my adaptation of the above steps.

The Presupposition

The study of a text from God's Word, with the intent to preach the text to God's people, begins with some important presuppositions. The pastor needs to keep them in mind at all times. The text comes from a book, or epistle, or psalm, or history written by a human author. Each author had his own personality, his own style, his own words that were used in what he wrote. But each author was guided by the Holy Spirit who is the ultimate author of each book of the Bible.

The Holy Spirit did not give his Word as a finished product. It unfolded over a millennium and a half. It was not given as a topical dictionary or encyclopedia. It was given as a revelation, unfolding over time, as the world's history was marching through time. Each book was written with a purpose, each at a distinct time, each adding to what had gone before. When it was time for God to give a new revelation to his people, he raised up a new man of God and guided him to write a new book of the Bible. The pastor's ultimate task is to discern the Holy Spirit's message to God's people as that message unfolded over time in a specific context. He cannot do this task without the help of the very Spirit who inspired the human authors. All that follows assumes that the pastor is in constant prayer for the Spirit's help and guidance as he wrestles with God's Word.

Contextual Analysis

Very few books, articles, letters, etc. are written without a context. For nonfiction, it would seem that there is always a context for the writing. Even much fiction has a context. If written for pure entertainment, the fiction will often take its cue from what is entertaining to the current culture. Other fiction is written as a commentary on current social issues. For God's Word, dealing with a very real God, in a very real world, with very real people, there is a context that bears on everything written. It is the context where the text study begins.

This is where the pastor's isagogical studies come into play. He may consult his seminary notes, study Bibles, or other reference works to learn about the author, the approximate time when the book was written, and the background of the people to whom the particular book was written. What was happening in their world? What problems were they dealing with? What problem among God's people was God dealing with?

After reviewing his isagogical studies, the pastor should read the entire book of the Bible from which his text comes. For longer books, such as the major prophets, that's a heavy task. But it is important for making sure the text itself is understood in its context. While reading the entire book, the pastor should be looking for statements by the writer of his purpose for writing. The writer himself may discuss the situation, the difficulty, the challenge, or the temptation that God's people are facing. What are the author's main points? How is his book structured? Are there clear building blocks? An introduction to his book? A final conclusion? Not all these questions will be answered. Sometimes they will only be answered the fourth or fifth time, or the tenth time, that the pastor reads the book when suddenly something becomes clear that was missed on earlier occasions. I would recommend that the pastor write his own outline and notes so that the next time he preaches on that book, he can reread the book and update or amend his outline. If he is preaching on chapter 4, his notes for chapters 1–3 may be detailed, while his notes for chapters 5 and following may be less detailed. When he preaches on a later chapter, he can reread the book and expand his notes and outline for the later chapters. Eventually he will have a fairly complete outline from his own studies, and will reap the rewards of doing his own work.

After reading for understanding of the author's entire book, and seeing the structure that the author himself uses, the pastor is ready to place his text into its context. How does this text support and develop the author's theme? Is he drawing a conclusion based upon earlier arguments and thoughts? Is he giving an example to illustrate an important truth presented earlier? Is he presenting another building block in his argument that will culminate in a later part of the chapter or a later chapter of the book?

Verbal Analysis

Once the context of the text has been examined, it is time to break down the text into smaller components. This could be done by starting with the largest units, the paragraphs, then breaking them down further

into sentences, then looking at the individual words as components of the sentences. The other way is to begin with the smallest components, the words, looking at how they are built into sentences, and then examining the structure of the paragraphs that are composed of those sentences.

If we begin with the former approach, we assume that we know and have identified all the words, the declension of the nouns, the conjugation of the verbs, the grammatical structure of the phrases. But that is not likely to be the case.

The Components of Sentences

Thus, we take the latter approach and begin with the words. Nouns have to be identified. The case of Greek nouns determines what role they play in the sentence. Verbs are identified. Their conjugation indicates whether they are the main verb of the sentence, part of a subordinate clause, a participle functioning as an adjective or a noun, or functioning in some other sense. Objects of prepositions have to be identified, and depending on the case, the meaning of the preposition may be determined. This is no mere translation exercise. If that's all this were, the pastor could skip all this and begin his work with a translation. The purpose is to understand a text as the author constructed his sentences. Sometimes sentence diagramming is helpful to graphically portray how the sentence is put together.

Key Words

In going through this process, the pastor will come across certain words that stand out, usually because their definitions need further study. This is the time for referencing the lexicons and theological wordbooks.

The goal is *not* simply to define a word for translation purposes. It is to get an understanding of the word's various uses in Scripture. But not every use is an option for this text. The question must always be asked: How is the word used by this author in this verse? Are there clues in the verse, or surrounding verses? Does the author define the word elsewhere in his book? Is there parallelism of thought? Is a use obviously excluded, thereby narrowing the options? The basic rule is to look for the simplest and obvious definition and usage. Any other definition or usage should be chosen only with good evidence for departing from the simple and obvious usage.

Caveat: One of the dangers of theological wordbooks is that they cover just about every usage of a given word, as well as how the word

was used in nonbiblical writings. The pastor's task is not to be inventive and make an author's word say something the author did not intend. Every word has one intended meaning—the author's intended meaning. When he wrote it, when the Holy Spirit inspired him, the author had one intent. He may have intended a double-meaning, a double *entendre*, a meaning for the immediate context, and a meaning looking ahead to a fulfillment in a future context. So, if that is what the author meant to say, that is the one *intended* meaning. That is what we are looking for.

Figurative Language

At times, words will be used in a figurative sense. That is more likely where the text is a vision, a dream, poetry, or wisdom literature. A good resource that should, perhaps, be consulted in each text study is Bullinger's *Figures of Speech*.³ Again, the context will help determine whether an author intended a nonliteral meaning for the word he employs.

Syntactical Analysis

This step is one of the most important, and one of the most neglected, in the process of studying the text. Sentences make up paragraphs. They do not stand in isolation. A series of disconnected sentences is nothing but incoherent rambling. People do not communicate in that way—or if they do, they lose their hearers quickly. What happens when a pastor looks only at the sentences is that he ends up constructing his own paragraphs, rather than coming to grips with the author's paragraphs. It is as though he wrote out the sentences on index cards, rearranged them to his liking, and disregarded the author's paragraph structure, the author's line of reasoning or exposition. In so doing, he may end up disregarding precisely what the Spirit was communicating when he inspired the biblical writer to write what he did.

Instead, the pastor should wrestle with the author's paragraphs. People communicate in paragraphs, larger units of thought assembled from smaller units called sentences. A series of well-connected sentences forms a coherent paragraph. It may consist of a thesis statement followed by illustrations of the thesis. It may consist of a list of arguments followed by the logical conclusion. It may consist of a principle and its various applications to God's people in their various stations of life. It

³ E.W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible: Explained and Illustrated* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2003).

may consist of a principle to be taught, and the supporting arguments from earlier scriptures that God's people know.

A helpful tool in this analysis is the paragraph block diagram. Whereas grammatical sentence diagramming helps to see the building blocks comprising the individual thought, i.e., the sentence, the paragraph block diagram helps to see the building blocks comprising the developed thesis of the paragraph.

There are several ways to approach this paragraph block diagramming. (Examples are in Appendices B and C.) One way is the block diagram suggested by Kaiser. Each sentence is placed on a separate line. The sentence is indented depending upon its role in the paragraph. A thesis statement will stand furthest to the left for Greek or its English translation (or to the right for a Hebrew block diagram.) Subordinate sentences will be indented one or more times depending on the level of subordination. Sentences may be further divided by clauses if there is a subordinate relationship. For example, a $\acute{\upsilon}\nu\alpha$ purpose clause, or $\acute{\omicron}\tau\iota$ causal clause would be subordinated to its main clause. By indenting and looking at the structure of the paragraph, the proper development of the paragraph can be determined. Cause-and-effect paragraphs can be identified. Purpose-and-subsequent action paragraphs, and action-and-subsequent result paragraphs can be seen. This will help the pastor to understand what the author was arguing in the text he wrote.

This is not an easy exercise. It's a continual learning process. For example, is the emphasis on the action, in order to obtain the related purpose? Or is it on the purpose, as an explanation for why the corresponding actions took place? Only by going through the process of analyzing the paragraph structure can the pastor begin to think about the thought of the paragraph and how it is developed by the biblical author.

Once the paragraph has been diagrammed, then the various paragraphs need to be examined to see how the author put the paragraphs together to develop his proposition. After presenting cause and effect, or purpose and result, where does the author end up? Is it a warning for a straying people? A comfort for a discouraged people? A clarification or explanation to refute a false teaching in the midst of God's people?

A second approach to paragraph diagramming is that developed by William G. MacDonald.⁴ Each verb is considered the strong element in

⁴ William Graham MacDonald, *Greek Enchiridion: A Concise Handbook of Grammar for Translation and Exegesis* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1986).

a sentence (or clause) and is placed on a separate line. Successive lines are examined for two concepts: 1) subordination, and 2) parallelism. If a line is subordinate, the subordinate line is placed at the end of (and below, because it's on its own separate line) the line above to which it is subordinated. If a line is parallel, it is placed so that the parallel elements are in vertical alignment. A series of ἵνα or ὅτι clauses will become obvious. A series of cognate verbs, or a series of prepositions, will show up in vertical alignment. It may take several attempts to develop the diagram as new relationships become evident, or something that was missed is suddenly realized. Again, the structure of the paragraph and the development of the proposition become evident.

In both methods of diagramming, it is not always the diagram that is as important as the *process* of thinking through the text. It helps clarify the thinking about the text, what it is saying, how it is structured, what the main points are, and the subpoints.

Here is where the study of biblical languages comes into its own. English translations generally don't lend themselves to this diagramming process as well as the biblical languages. The nuances of Greek—and of Hebrew—especially the relationships developed in the Greek or Hebrew paragraph, just are not captured by the English translation. Allow me a personal note: It is this diagramming step that, for me, returned the joy of working with the biblical languages. It is fun (sometimes), always challenging, sometimes frustrating, never a waste of my time. It brings out the nature of exegesis. Exegesis is far more than mere translation. It is the process of understanding the words, the sentences, the thought, and the structure, within the Greek or Hebrew text.

Theological Analysis (Diachronic)

The fourth step in the text study is the analysis of the theology of the text.

Allow me a short digression. In the mid-1980s, at a missionary meeting in South America, a younger, somewhat new missionary (WELS) was speaking with a somewhat older, more experienced missionary (ELS) about seminary training of national pastors (if memory serves me correctly.) The discussion focused on the role of systematic theology in the training of national pastors versus the role of classes on the exegesis of various books of the Bible. The ELS missionary asked the WELS missionary, "Of Calvin and Luther, which wrote a

systematic theology? Which was more interested in writing exegetical commentaries? Where should our emphasis be?”⁵

Unfortunately, we have often used systematic theology as a grid that is impressed upon a text. Whatever pops through the grid, that’s the theology of the text. We look at the list of doctrines in our systematic theology, look for an intersection between the systematized doctrines and the text, and *voilà*, we have the theology of the text.

There’s only one problem. This would be a theology imposed on the text. There is a place for systematic theology; it has a very important role to play. But this is not the place to use it. We need another theology at this point, a “diachronic” theology, as Kaiser calls it.

Returning to an earlier discussion in this paper, the argument goes like this: God did not give his people a one-time finished revelation. His revelation took place over time, lots of time. The revelation is given in pieces, over time, “diachronically.” At all times the revelation is sufficiently complete for God’s people. It is all they need to know at that time. But it will continue to unfold, to grow, until the revelation is complete.

Kaiser gives this illustration. A house is not a house until it is complete. You can pour the foundation; it’s not yet a house. And the foundation is worthless by itself. You can frame in the walls, but it’s still not a house. It’s still unusable. You can put on a roof. You can add the exterior to the walls. You shingle the roof. You install the utilities. But it is really not habitable, and properly useful, until the house is complete.

But take an acorn. It’s complete. It has within itself all the makings of an oak tree. It is an oak tree, just not the mature oak tree. It grows into a sapling. It’s still an oak tree, just not fully mature. It continues to grow over time. It fills out, takes its shape, and becomes that massive, impressive, beautiful oak tree. And after enough years, we admire it for the mighty oak that it has become.

It is the acorn-become-oak-tree that is the proper understanding of the theology that must be analyzed in this step. In any given text, what did God’s people know, *at that time*, about God, his plan for his people, what he was going to do for them, what he was going to do to them, where he was currently in his plan? Although prior to a new revelation God’s people had all they needed to know to be saved, God sends to his people a new prophet, with a new revelation, at this particular time.

⁵ N.B. Just for the record, the Lutheran dogmaticians began writing within a short time of Luther. Furthermore, the Lutheran confessions are, after a fashion, a systematic exposition of the Scriptures, or at least certain scriptural doctrines that were in controversy at the time.

What new information, what new exhortation, what new comfort does this writer bring to God's people in this text that is being studied? That's what a "diachronic" (*dia*=through, *chronos*=time) theology entails. What do Adam and Eve know about God's plan? What do the Israelites know about God's plan while at the beginning of their 40-year journey in the wilderness? What do they know at the end of the 40 years? What new message does Isaiah bring? What shocking, or exciting, or comforting news does he bring to God's people as the captivity draws near? What does Malachi say to God's people that they have never heard before? What is Matthew's message? What new revelation? What does John tell the church in his Gospel, or in his Revelation, that God's people did not know? They knew much. But what does this text reveal to God's people?

When a text is approached with an imposed systematic theology, everything is flat. It's treated as though all God's people knew all of his plan at all times.

But that's not what happened. History unfolds; it grows from an acorn to a mighty oak. When a biblical writer wrote something under the inspiration of the Spirit, the Spirit was bringing a new revelation, perhaps reinforcing a previous revelation, perhaps preparing God's people for some new event in the world's history for which his people needed to be prepared. When God's people first heard what Isaiah said, or John said, what was it that God was revealing for the first time? It is that new, fresh revelation that a pastor wants to make known, to make new and fresh to his congregation.

What about the systematic theology? It is used *after* the diachronic theological analysis to be sure important details have not been left out, and to be sure no false ideas and false teaching have crept in. It assures that the whole plan of God is kept in view, that the fulfillment of prophecies is not overlooked. But the diachronic theological analysis takes place first, so that the pastor understands this text, on its terms, with its emphasis.

How is the diachronic theology determined? There are a number of clues to look for. Are there certain terms, technical terms, that are introduced for the first time? Is a previously known term or concept expanded upon? Is there an event which is given special significance? Is a prior event or ceremony given new emphasis? Are persons previously mentioned given new significance? Is a new name given to a place or person? Does that name carry significance to a new group of people?

(Consider Jacob becoming Israel, Hebrews becoming Israelites, and Israelites after the flesh versus Israelites after the faith of Jacob.)

What is the acorn, the seminal theology presented early in the history of God’s revelation? What is the oak, the mature, fully-developed theology that has unfolded over time as God concluded the canon? Here is where Kaiser, at least in earlier writings, reflects the Evangelical mis-emphasis on the physical Israel. He states that the “acorn/oak” is God’s unfolding plan to be something to Israel and do something for Israel. Most confessional Lutherans would be more comfortable describing it as God’s unfolding plan to send the King to redeem God’s people from their enemies: sin, Satan, and death; to build his Kingdom; to bring them through this life; and bring them safely home—or something similar.

So, in the diachronic theological analysis, what does this text say about that promise of God, that plan that unfolds? It is this theological heart of the message that the pastor needs to focus on in his sermon, to make it as fresh and striking for his hearers today as it was for the original hearers who heard it for the first time.

Homiletical Analysis

Finally, the last step in the text study: homiletical analysis. Up to this point, the pastor has been asking, “What was this biblical author—or better—what was the Holy Spirit saying to God’s people?” Now he switches to an equally challenging task. “What am I going to say about this text to God’s people? How am I going to convert this study to a message for God’s people today?”

It begins with a review. What did the original audience need at that time? What were they facing? Then, how is my current audience facing something similar?

What is the central subject of this entire text? How does the author emphasize his points? Does he use imperatives, exhortations, etc.? If so, shouldn’t my sermon use the same kind of emphases? If the author is using major and minor premises, what does he conclude? Can I structure my sermon using the same sort of syllogism?

If the author is presenting a historical narrative, why did he choose this event and why did he frame it this way? How does it contribute to his overall purpose? My sermon should reflect the same purpose and help my hearers to understand these important events in salvation history. What this event taught God’s people needs to be applied to God’s people today.

What are the author's main points? How can I shape my sermon to parallel these same main points? What are the subpoints that support, or follow from the main points? That's the way I should develop my thoughts for those same main points.

The purpose of the original author should be reflected in the purpose for my sermon. Write out a purpose statement and be sure the sermon is always supporting that purpose.

How did the original author conclude his message? What did he want his audience to understand? What action to take? What response to make? My sermon should reflect a similar conclusion.

The theme of the sermon should be carefully thought through to capture these thoughts. If possible (but it often is not), the theme should immediately suggest to an outside observer what the text is for that theme.

The parts of the sermon should reflect the two or three main ideas that the author used in developing his thesis.

This entire process of reviewing the text and formulating homiletical thoughts requires as much effort as the previous steps of raw exegesis. It is often difficult, and requires much thought, to apply this ancient text to today's children of God. In the earlier steps, there are books to read, reference materials to consult, notes to write. But this stage often requires the pastor to simply sit and think. This is not the time to take short cuts and look for a quick doctrine to throw in and preach on. You don't need a text for that. This is a time to think about the text and today's audience, what your people are dealing with, what you are dealing with as a child of God—and a shepherd of God's people.

Final Check

After the above steps have been done, there is one final step. This is the place to review our systematic theology. Here is the place to be sure we bring in the full revelation of God's Word so we can wrap up loose ends and bring God's people to where they are, namely, a people of God having his full revelation. This is the time to review the outline to be sure Law and Gospel have been properly distinguished. Then make any appropriate adjustments to the outline and to the sermon.

Although some may disagree, this is the time to consult the commentaries. After you have gone through all the above steps, you have thoroughly wrestled with the text, you have thought about how it applies, you have made the text your own. If there are still troublesome questions, a commentary may help to clarify it. At the same time, however, you

might also conclude that the commentator is mistaken. You will be so familiar with the text that you can recognize the commentator missed the point, or captured it precisely. You will realize that a commentator is also just another fellow Christian (or so we hope) who has thought about this text. His comments may be worthy of careful consideration, but they will not (and in fact, should not) do your thinking for you. Again, make appropriate adjustments to your outline and sermon.

Finally, it's time to write!

Conclusion

The five-step approach presented above (up to, but before performing, the final check) is not the only way to do text study; it is but one way. It does not automatically result in a theme and parts for the sermon. It does not automatically create a law-gospel sermon where the text does not have such a clear distinction. It is but the first step in sermon-writing, namely, delving into the text and dealing with the text on its own terms. After studying the text in this way, a pastor will understand the text better than his best-read laymen, better than many commentators, better than many pastors. There is no doubt that it is hard work. But it is rewarding. By taking the text on its terms and studying it thoroughly, a pastor will avoid sermons that are formulaic, predictable, boring, and easily tuned out. He will not only have a solid grasp on what the biblical writer intended; he will be able to present, not his own thoughts, but the thoughts and words of the Spirit who inspired the biblical writers. He will be able to proclaim what the true Author intended.

A seminary professor once told our class (more or less), “God’s Word is both milk and meat. It feeds the hungry soul. But God doesn’t expect you to simply pour the milk out before the people and throw them a raw hunk of meat. He expects you to serve a meal to them, carefully prepared, fully cooked, not half-baked. Gentlemen,” he said, “do your work.”

God’s Word, and God’s people, deserve nothing less! [LSQ](#)

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.
— 2 Timothy 2:15

Appendix A – Text Study on Hebrews 3:1–6

Sermon 587

Text: Hebrews 3:1-6

Sunday: ILCW-B Pentecost 21

1. Contextual Analysis

A. Historical situation when this book was written:

Jewish converts to Christianity were being persecuted as Christians and were considering returning to Old Testament Jewish worship rituals and not living as confessing Christians.

B. Purpose for writing this book:

To show the absolute supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus Christ as the revealer and mediator of God's grace; that there can be no turning back to the Old Testament Jewish sacrificial system.

C. Context surrounding this sermon text:

God's new revelation in Christ supersedes the previous revelation (1:1–4)

Christ is superior to the leaders under the old covenant (1:5–7:28)

Christ is superior to angels (1:5–2:18)

Christ is superior to Moses (3:1–4:13)

Jesus, the Son, surpasses Moses, the servant [**the text: 3:1–6**]

Your forefathers had Moses and did not listen to him; don't do the same by hardening your hearts against Jesus

Your forefathers lost the "rest" of the promised land; don't lose the true "rest", hear Jesus while it is "Today"

Hear God's powerful word

Christ is superior to Aaronic priests (4:17–7:28)

Christ's High Priestly sacrificial work is superior to that of old covenant (ch. 8–10)

A better covenant (ch. 8)

A better sanctuary (9:1–12)

A better sacrifice (9:13–10:18)

Exhortation (10:19–39)

Final plea for persevering in the faith (ch. 11–12)

Conclusion (ch. 13)

2. Verbal Analysis

A. Key words:

Ὅθεν (ὅς, θεν) Conjunction coord (infer), *therefore, where, from where*. Used here to draw a conclusion from the argument of preceding verses: Jesus came to help Abraham's children, i.e. you Jewish readers, and became a high priest to perfectly identify with you, so, therefore, think carefully about him

μέτοχοι (μέτοχος) Adjective masc plur voc, *partaker*. The writer addresses his readers as fellow believers who know the truth, but need encouragement not to forsake what they have

κατανοήσατε (κατανοέω) Verb 2nd plur aor act impera, *to understand, consider, think about carefully*. Object of this consideration is the faithfulness (πιστόν) of Jesus in completing his work

ἀπόστολον (ἀπόστολος) Noun masc sing acc, *apostle* (looking ahead to the comparison with Moses who was sent by God to Israel).

ἀρχιερέα (ἀρχιερεύς) Noun masc sing acc, *high priest*. (Looking ahead to comparison with Aaronic priests)

ὁμολογίας ἡμῶν writer addresses readers as fellow Christians, speaks of "our" confession (of Jesus)

θεράπων Noun masc sing nom, *servant, healer*. *Hapax legomenon* used only of Moses here, in other literature often used of one who gives devoted service, esp. as an attendant in a cultic setting

λαληθησομένων λαλέω (λάλος) Verb fut pass part neut plur gen, *to speak*. Moses is a witness of things to come, things that will be spoken of; therefore Moses cannot be the last witness to hold to; rather, he points ahead to another witness, namely, Jesus, the fulfillment of Israel's worship, the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel

υἱός *son, one who has a legal right to the inheritance of the householder*

καύχημα (καυχάομαι) Noun neut sing acc, *object of boasting, pride*. Here it does not refer to the negative, sinful boasting of prideful man, but a proper boasting based upon who God is and what he has done; not the boasting of the proud in what he has done, but the boasting of the humbled one, boasting in the great things another has done for him

ἐλπίδος (ἐλπίς) Noun fem sing gen, *hope*; not a wishful action, but a confidence based upon that in which one places his hope, i.e. the emphasis is on the object of hope, not the action of hoping

κατάσχωμεν (κατέχω) (κατά, ἔχω) Verb 1st plur 2nd aor act subj, *to hold*, here, with the emphatic κατά, meaning *to hold fast*, *to cling*, here, to Christ, not forsaking him for a return to Old Testament practices and religion

B. Figurative language: (see Bullinger's *Figures of Speech*)

v. 6 - *Eleutheria*; or, Candor: speaking or acting like a free man, frank. The figure is so called, because the speaker or writer, without intending offense, speaks with perfect freedom and boldness.

"With . . . confidence," Acts 28:31; Heb. 3:6; 10:35; 1 John 2:28; 3:21; 5:14.

v. 6 - Association; or, Inclusion: when the writer turns and includes himself in what he says for others

Heb. 3:6 - "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are **we**." [emphasis in the original].

3. Syntactical Analysis:

A. Paragraph block diagram:

see Appendices B (Kaiser diagram) and C (McDonald diagram)

B. Grammatical observations:

v. 6 (ἐάν [περ] + subjunctive in protasis, present indicative in apodosis = present general condition), thus the writer states a universal truth, i.e. that those who hold to Christ (as opposed to the Jewish believers who want to let go of this confession) are part of the household of which Christ is a son (υἱός) over the house and who is a legal heir to receive the inheritance from his Father

C. Questions raised by the text (unusual statements that might distract the hearers):

Jesus as an apostle? Here it refers to his being sent by the Father on a specific mission.

We Christians as a house? Here it likely refers to household, rather than house; the thought *may* be similar to our being a temple built of "living stones."

4. Theological Analysis:

A. Former concepts amplified by the text:

The Old Testament Jewish religion had various leaders who were expected to carry out their duties faithfully. Moses is mentioned by name; high priests are considered as a class of such individuals. All of them were to serve the people of God that God himself gathered. They were servants, not masters. But there is One who is the master, namely, the Son, Christ himself, who is over the household.

Moses' service was to testify to things that will be done and spoken about in the future. Thus, he himself is looking forward to another to come. Moses, his teachings, and the covenant of which he is spokesman cannot be the final revelation of God; God has something else, or someone else, that will be the final word on the matter. That final someone, greater than Moses, is Jesus.

B. New concepts introduced by the text:

Since Jesus is the Son, and not merely a servant, you cannot turn from honoring and glorifying him and return to honoring a servant, like Moses. Jesus is the one who must be honored. He is the Son. He is to be confessed. He is the One in whom we are to place our hope. He is the One to hold to. Carefully consider him.

In Christ, and in Christ alone, we become part of God's house / household.

5. Audience Analysis:

A. The original audience:

Needed encouragement not to return to Old Testament Jewish religion which had served its purpose and been superseded by the New Testament fulfillment in Christ. Encouragement to remain faithful, to persevere under persecution. Needed to be corrected concerning the purpose and efficacy of the old covenant religion.

B. The present audience:

Needs to be encouraged to remain faithful to Christ in the midst of trouble and persecution. Christ is the climax of

everything, nothing can and nothing will replace him because he has done it all.

6. Principles of the Text:

A. The subject of the text:

Being bold and proud of the One in whom we have been given hope.

B. The emphasis of the text:

The imperative to carefully consider Jesus, as opposed to other leaders of Israel.

The exhortation of the conditional sentence, namely, to hold on to Jesus, to be courageous in confessing him and to be proud of the hope which he alone gives.

C. The main points of the text:

To consider how the faithfulness of Jesus surpasses that of all other servants of God.

To hold on to him who gives us courage and hope.

D. The subpoints of the text:

Consider:

Jesus builds the household of his Father, by doing his Father's will and redeeming estranged sinners.

Jesus fulfilled all that Moses and others prophesied would happen.

Jesus is a Son in the household, and shares his inheritance (a servant cannot do that).

Hold on:

Be courageous in the face of those who may do you harm because you belong to Christ.

Be proud of him in whom you place your hope, for he has given you reason to be hope-filled.

We will be part of that household of the Son, and will share the inheritance, therefore do not shrink back from him.

E. The theology of the message:

In a world at enmity with God, Christians are tempted to find an easier way to be Christians, sometimes by hiding their confession and looking for alternative ways to be "religious." But Christ, and his redemptive work, are what God is all about, and what the Christian faith is all about. The Christian is

encouraged to be bold about his faith, about his Savior, and to be proud about what his Savior has done.

F. The author's conclusion of the message:

You are being faced with persecution. Don't run from it by returning to Old Testament Jewish practices. Be bold, and proud of your Savior. Don't lose your participation in Christ's household. Don't lose everything he has won for you.

G. The purpose of *this* sermon:

To encourage the congregation members to remember what their church is all about, and what their lives as Christians are all about, namely, to boldly and proudly proclaim Christ, to live their lives so as to identify themselves as his followers, and not to be intimidated by an unbelieving world.

H. Possible themes:

Hold on to Christ, the faithful Son.

To be courageous, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the faithful Son.
Consider him who is worthy of the highest honor and glory.

7. Basic Outlines:

Be courageous: fix your thoughts on Jesus, the faithful Son

1. Consider Jesus, the faithful Son
2. Hold firmly to the One we confess

8. Expanded Outline:

A. Title of sermon:

Be courageous: fix your thoughts on Jesus, the faithful Son

B. Statement of purpose:

To encourage the congregation to think about what their Savior has done, his faithfulness in light of our unfaithfulness, and then to be proud of their Savior, to boldly confess him who makes them part of God's household.

C. Introduction:

D. Development of theme (expansion of parts):

1. Consider Jesus, the faithful Son

He was sent by his Father to be a high priest to the people
He doesn't merely serve in God's household; he builds the household by making sacrifice for their sins

He fulfills what Moses and others said was going to happen

He is the Son, who shares his inheritance with those he redeems

2. Hold firmly to the One we confess

He has extended to us a heavenly calling to hear him and follow him

Be bold in confessing him

Be proud / boastful of the hope he has given us

Look forward to being part of his household, just as he promises us

E. Conclusion:

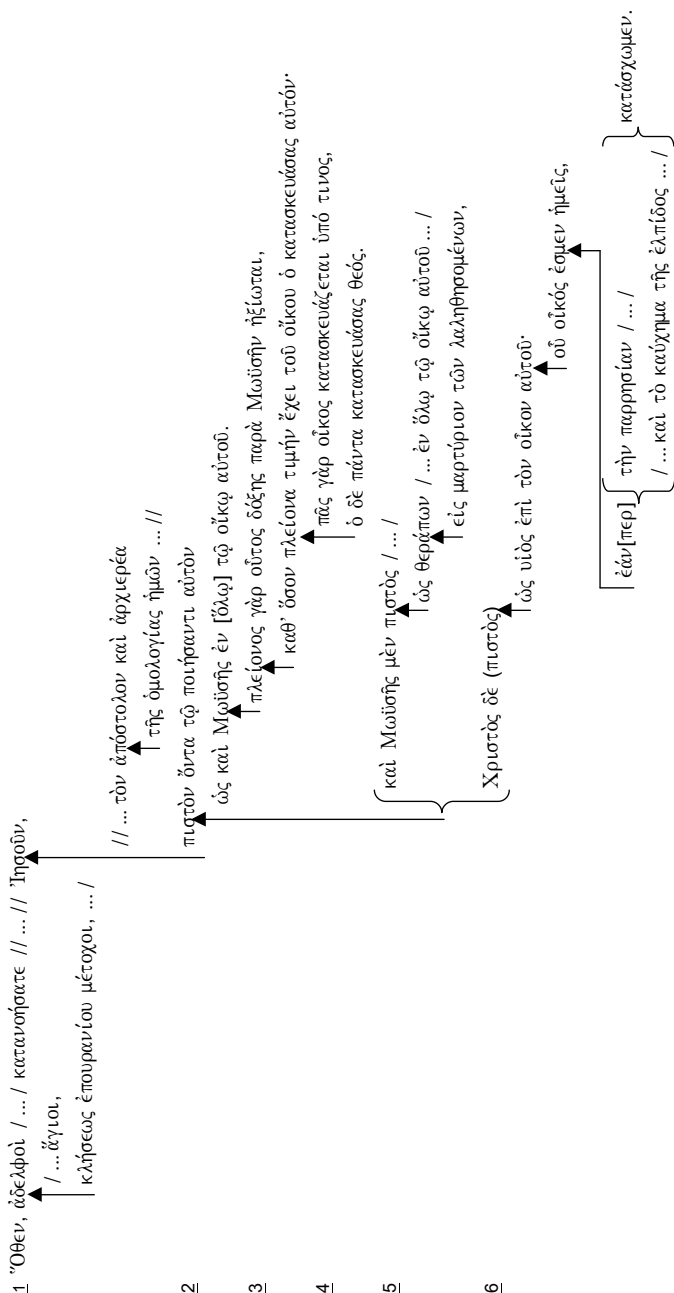
9. Final Check:

Do I need to modify anything to be consistent with the proper distinction between Law and Gospel?

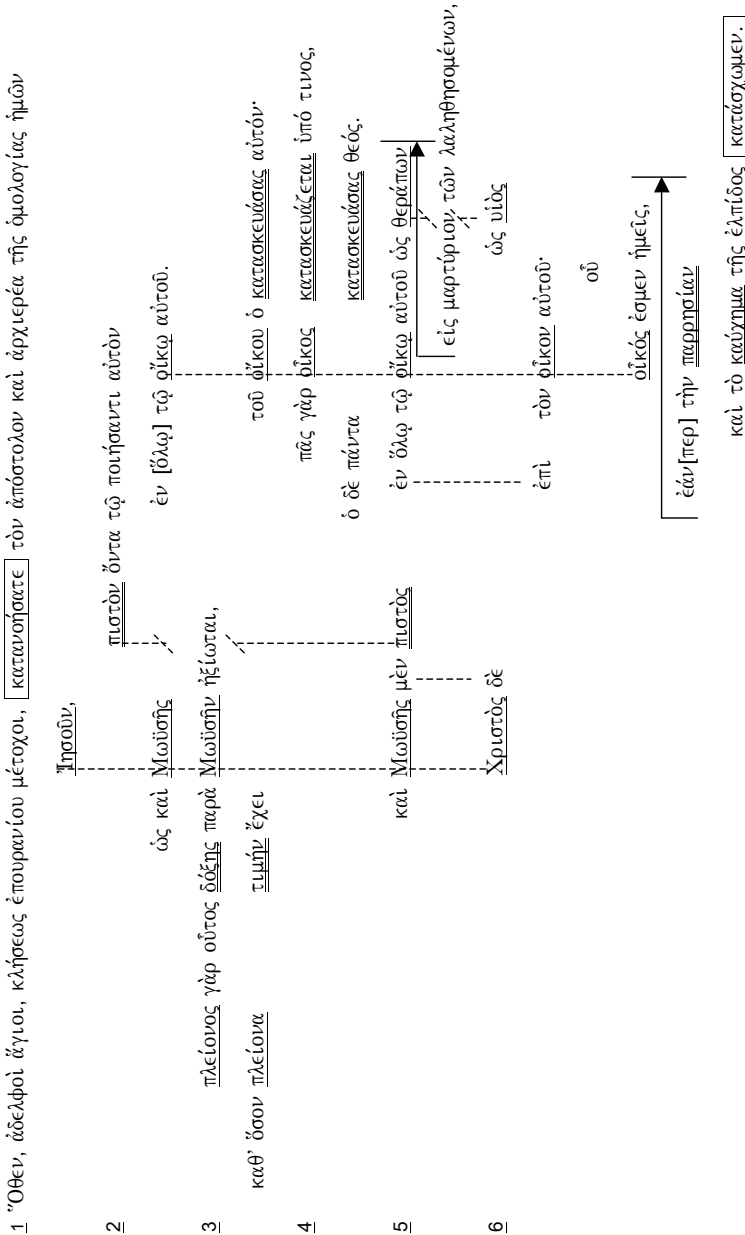
Do I need to modify anything so that I do not leave undiscussed an important point of doctrine explained in Lutheran systematic theology? (The point is not to turn this sermon into a thesis on a point of doctrine. It is to check whether a doctrine is introduced by the text that absolutely requires further elucidation from other portions of Scripture.)

Do I need to bring my hearers up-to-date? (I've discussed what the original audience learned from this text. Is there anything I need to add from scriptures that were written after this book of the Bible?)

Appendix B – Kaiser’s approach to Paragraph Block Diagramming (using Hebrews 3:1–6)



Appendix C – McDonald’s approach to Text Diagramming (using Hebrews 3:1–6)



Polykarp Leyser (1552–1610): A Theological Bridge Between Chemnitz and Gerhard

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THIS YEAR IS THE 400TH anniversary of the death of Polykarp Leyser (1552–1610). He spans the time between Chemnitz and Gerhard and was closely associated with both of them. It is said that Gerhard was third (Luther, Chemnitz, and Gerhard) in the series of Lutheran theologians and after him there was no fourth. If one were to speak of a fourth, the position would be assigned either to the Prussian theologian Abraham Calov or to Gerhard's nephew, Johann Quenstedt. Polykarp Leyser is a theological bridge between Chemnitz and Gerhard. He published a new edition of Chemnitz's *Loci Theologici* in 1592 and a number of his other works. In addition, he continued the harmony of the Gospels began by Chemnitz and finished by Gerhard, which is known as *Harmonia Evangelica*.

Education and Early Years

Chemnitz and Gerhard were Saxons like Martin Luther. Polykarp Leyser, on the other hand, was a Swabian as was the case with Johann Brenz (1499–1570), one of Luther's early associates in the Reformation. Leyser was born March 18, 1552, in Winnenden, Württemberg. His father Caspar Leyser (1527–1554), who was a native of Winnenden, was pastor and superintendent there at the time of Polykarp's birth. Shortly after the birth of Polykarp his father was called as superintendent at

Nördlingen where he died in 1554.¹ His mother Margarete nee Entringer was from Tübingen. She was the sister-in-law of Jakob Andreae, one of the writers of the *Formula of Concord*. After the early death of her husband she married Lukas Osiander, the son of the Nürnberg reformer Andreas Osiander.²

In 1566 when Polykarp was not quite 15 years old, he began to study theology at the University of Tübingen, where he was supported by a ducal stipend. Among his teachers were his uncle Jakob Andreae, Jakob Heerbrand, Theodor Schnepf, and Johann Brenz. While studying there he developed a close friendship with Aegidius Hunnius (1550-1603), who was born two years before him in Winnenden. These two together with Leonhard Hutter (1563-1616)³ were three major Swabian theologians that served as professors at the University of Wittenberg. These three graduates of Tübingen University are at times considered to be the founders of orthodoxy in Wittenberg.⁴ This, however, should

¹ Caspar Leyser, together with his brother-in-law Jakob Andreae, was incensed by the number of drunks and other reprobates who demanded admission to the Sacrament without showing any signs of genuine repentance. As a result, in a proposal to Duke Christopher of Württemberg they urged the introduction of church discipline modeled after Calvin's presbyteries, i.e., church courts for the correction of offenders. This model was more congregation-oriented in comparison to the centralized system imposed by Brenz. The duke received the proposal favorably, but Brenz and the secular counselors opposed it, and it was not carried into effect (James Martin Estes, *Christian Magistrate and State Church: The Reforming of Johannes Brenz* [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982], 97-98; see also Robert Kolb, *Andreae and the Formula of Concord: Six Sermons on the Way to Lutheran Unity* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1977], 12).

² Later Andreas Osiander fled to Königsberg in East Prussia during the time of the Interim. Here he was responsible for the Osiandrian Controversy.

³ Leonhard Hutter, 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 to 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-Vluy: 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.

⁴ Eric W. Gritsch, *A History of Lutheranism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 118.

not be emphasized to the point of denigrating the work of Saxons like Martin Chemnitz.

In 1573 he was ordained into the public ministry and called as pastor to Gellersdorf in Lower Austria.⁵ He was extremely gifted as a preacher. Since his parish was near Vienna, he frequently had the opportunity to preach in Vienna and soon became known to Emperor Maximilian II.⁶ While serving this parish he continued his study of theology and together with his friend Hunnius he received his doctorate at Tübingen in 1576.⁷ Shortly after this he was called to Graz in Steiermark but he declined this call.

Wittenberg Period of Leyser (1577-1587)

In the early 1570s Wittenberg was embroiled in the Crypto-Calvinistic Controversy. The controversy mainly concerned the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. The Philippists led by Caspar Peucer, Melancthon's son-in-law, were moving toward views similar to that of Calvin. Melancthon in the *Variata* (altered) form of the *Augsburg Confession* had so watered down the statement on the Supper that Calvin was able to sign it. This controversy also had to do with the doctrine of Christology. The Calvinists believed that after the ascension Christ's body is in one location in heaven and therefore He is with us only as God and not as man. He is not with us as our loving brother who knows our weaknesses but only in the blazing divinity before which none may dare to stand. Following this kind of logic the Calvinists readily rejected Christ's bodily presence in the Supper. This was a rejection of the clear teaching of Scripture that Christ's body and blood are truly present in the Supper under the form of bread and wine and are there distributed and received.

Meanwhile Elector August finally became convinced that many of his Wittenberg theologians were Crypto-Calvinists and in 1574 he purged Electoral Saxony. Soon the Philippists were banished with their chief leaders thrown into prison. Peucer himself was confined for twelve years (1574-1586). A thanksgiving service in all the churches celebrated the rooting out of Calvinism in 1574 and the final victory of restored

⁵ Wolfgang Sommer, *Die lutherischen Hofprediger in Dresden* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006), 115–116.

⁶ This is the Maximilian (1527–1576) who was open to Lutheranism.

⁷ August Tholuck, *Der Geist der lutherischen Theologen Wittenbergs im Verlaufe des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg: Frierich und Andreas Perthes, 1852), 5.

Lutheranism.⁸ In the aftermath of this purging of Electoral Saxony and Wittenberg, Polykarp Leyser was called as professor of theology and general superintendent of Wittenberg in 1577. His uncle, Jakob Andreae, certainly had something to do with this.

Once in Wittenberg, with the support of his uncle, he went about the task of bringing peace to church life in Electoral Saxony in the wake of the Crypto-Calvinistic Controversy. His modesty, kindness and preaching abilities soon won the respect of his congregation, the university, and the elector. His preaching was very popular among the students of the university, which at that time included Philipp Nicolai (1556–1608)⁹ and Johann Arndt (1555–1621).¹⁰ He was active in the final editing of the *Book of Concord* of 1580 and was part of a commission, together with Andreae and Selnecker, the purpose of which was to encourage support for subscription to the *Formula* in the various parts of Electoral Saxony. He was active in the reform of the university and in a revision of Luther's translation of the Bible. In 1582 he attended the colloquy at Quedlinburg with Chemnitz and others where a revision of the Latin text of the *Book of Concord* was made. The revised edition constitutes the Latin *textus receptus* of the *Book of Concord* published at Leipzig in 1584.

During this period, Leyser began to develop a catechism manual based on Luther's catechisms with expanded doctrinal elaborations.

⁸ Johann Kurtz, *Church History*, Vol. II, trans. John MacPherson (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1894), 355–356; Robert Preus and Wilbert Rosin, eds., *A Contemporary Look at the Formula of Concord* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), 50–51.

⁹ Nicolai was a Lutheran pastor, poet, and composer, best known as the author and composer of the King and Queen of chorales, "Wake, Awake" and "How Lovely Shines the Morning Star." To comfort his members he wrote the "Mirror of the Joy of Eternal Life" (*Freudenspiegel des ewigen Lebens*), which centers on the concept of the mystical union between Christ and the believer.

¹⁰ There are some who assume that a close friendship developed at this time between Arndt and Leyser, which would agree with their later correspondence concerning baptismal exorcism (Eric Lund, "Johann Arndt and the Development of a Lutheran Spiritual Tradition" [Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1979], 91). Johann Arndt was the most influential devotional author that Lutheranism produced. One of his predominant themes is *Union and Communion with God through the life-giving Word and the blessed Sacraments*. In theology he helped to fix the place of the doctrine of the mystical union of the believer with Christ in Lutheran dogmatics. He was pastor in Badeborn, Anhalt; in Quedlinburg, where he was Johann Gerhard's pastor; in Braunschweig, the city of Chemnitz; in Eisleben; and finally superintendent in Celle. His most important work was *True Christianity (Sechs Bücher vom wahren Christentum)*. It was the first German Lutheran devotional book for the common people. Next to the *Imitation of Christ* it was the most widely circulated of devotional books.

He continually worked on this manual during his Braunschweig and Dresden periods. His manual included a bilingual production of the Small Catechism (Latin and German) and an explanation of it in homiletic form. Luther's full text was included, but it was enlarged considerably with various dogmatic supplements.

The introduction of his catechism listed three purposes for the teaching of the catechism: first, that children and simple folk who are not able to grasp the entire Scriptures will be able to have its summary and fundamentals of the entire divine teaching in the catechism; then that young people have a guiding principle for their belief so they can recognize and distinguish true doctrine from that which is false; finally, that through the faithful witness of the ancients and learned scholars who teach in accordance with the catechism they may remain steadfastly faithful to true doctrine.¹¹

Polykarp endeared himself to the people of Wittenberg and became close friends with a number of its leading citizens. In fact, in 1580 he was united in marriage with Elisabeth Cranach, the daughter of Lukas Cranach the younger, who was a major Lutheran painter as was his father, and a leading citizen of the city.¹²

The battle for orthodox Lutheranism in Electoral Saxony continued even though the confessional men had the support of Elector August. This is evident from a funeral that Leyser conducted in 1586: "His account of the deathbed conversion to Lutheranism of Mattheaus von Wesenbeck, a Calvinist theologian, ... earned him the furious contradictions by the family of the deceased, and a flurry of printed treatises backing or denying his version of the events."¹³ This indicates that there was still sympathy for Calvinistic ideas in the land.

The Calvinizing tendencies of the extreme Philippists again gained the upper hand in the electorate of Saxony under August's successor Christian I (1560–1591), who had come to this position in 1586. This became known as the Second Crypto-Calvinistic Controversy (1586–1592) and was an example of an attempt at a Second Reformation.¹⁴ The

¹¹ Robert Kolb, ed., *Lutheran Ecclesiastical Culture, 1550–1675* (Boston: Brill, 2008), 189.

¹² Sommer, *Die lutherischen Hofprediger in Dresden*, 116.

¹³ Cornelia Niekus Moore, *Patterned Lives: The Lutheran Funeral Biography in Early Modern Germany* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006), 183.

¹⁴ The term "Second Reformation" is used to describe the situation in which a state that was Lutheran in confession was slowly converted to Calvinism. It is also referred

chancellor of Christian I, Nicholas Krell, filled the offices of pastors and teachers with men of his own views, abolished exorcism at Baptism,¹⁵ and had even begun the publication of a Bible with a Calvinizing commentary when Christian died, in 1591. When Christian I came to power in Electoral Saxony, Leyser was slowly pushed out of the territory.

Braunschweig Period of Leyser (1587-1594)

Already in 1585, Polykarp Leyser was invited to succeed Martin Chemnitz, who was nearing the end of his tenure, as superintendent in Braunschweig. Leyser did not feel that his work was completed in Saxony at that time, and thus Johann Heydenreich was chosen as the immediate successor to Chemnitz. In the summer of 1587, with the problems facing Leyser in Wittenberg, he was offered the position of vice-superintendent in Braunschweig, which he accepted. Here he faced conflicts with Heydenreich, the superintendent who had Crypto-Calvinistic leanings. The controversy centered in the doctrine of the omnipresence of Christ's human nature by virtue of the communication of attributes as it is confessed in the *Formula of Concord*.¹⁶ The majority of the pastors and citizens of the city agreed with Leyser and the Confession. Heydenreich was deposed with the result that Leyser became superintendent in 1589.¹⁷

Leyser was considered to be the leader of the orthodox opposition to Crypto-Calvinism and the attempt at a Second Reformation in Electoral Saxony, Anhalt, and other states in Germany. When the baptismal exorcism was abolished in Anhalt, Johann Arndt looked to

to as Calvinization. The implication is that the Lutheran Reformation did not go far enough and therefore the Second Reformation was required.

¹⁵ 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 regenerational Baptism and the teaching that man was born dead in original sin. 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*).

¹⁶ Wolfgang Sommer, *Gottesfurcht und Fürstenherrschaft: Studien zum Obrigkeitsverständnis Johann Arndts und lutherischer Hoffprediger zur Zeit der altprotestantischen Orthodoxie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988), 113–114.

¹⁷ J.A.O. Preus, *The Second Martin: The Life and Theology of Martin Chemnitz* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1994), 161. See also Moore, 182–185.

Leyser for support and encouragement in his battle for the Lutheran doctrine of Baptism.¹⁸

The Hoffmann Controversy

Leyser's strong support for the *Book of Concord* brought him into conflict with the Helmstadt professor, Daniel Hoffmann. He also rejected the doctrine of the omnipresence of Christ's human nature, which was found in the Confessions. Closely associated with this is what became known as the Hoffmann Controversy (1598). He opposed the use of Aristotelian philosophy in the study of theology, which was becoming common among orthodox Lutherans. No one advocated a magisterial use of reason in theology, but Aristotelian categories and causes were considered useful in organizing dogma and defining doctrine.¹⁹

The Visitation Articles of 1592

All the attempts of Christian I at a Second Reformation came to naught when he died unexpectedly in 1591 in the prime of life. 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, and orthodox Lutherans were welcomed back into the land. A new anti-Calvinistic confession was produced, the Visitation Articles of 1592.²⁰ The chief author of this confession was Leyser's friend Aegidius Hunnius,²¹ who shortly before this had been called to Wittenberg.

The Huber Controversy

After the death of Christian I, Leyser's services were again desired in Wittenberg. At the same time, he received a request from the Nikolai Church in Leipzig. Contrary to the desire of the people of Braunschweig, he returned to Wittenberg for a short time. Here he became embroiled

¹⁸ Sommer, *Die lutherischen Hofprediger in Dresden*, 117.

¹⁹ Kurtz, Vol. II, 361.

²⁰ The Visitation Articles are to be found in *Triglotta*, 1150–1557. They contain four articles on the Lord's Supper, the person of Christ, Holy Baptism, and the election of grace, each in 4 to 6 terse statements in substantial agreement with the *Formula of Concord*.

²¹ Aegidius Hunnius (1550–1603), close friend and classmate of Leyser in Tübingen, was called as professor at Marburg. He unsuccessfully tried to win the university and the church in Hesse for the *Formula of Concord*. In 1592 he became a professor at Wittenberg. With professors like Hunnius and Hutter, Wittenberg became a bulwark of orthodoxy for over a century. Hunnius and Balduin were the greatest exegetes of this period of Lutheran Orthodoxy.

in what became known as the Huber Controversy (1588–1595). Samuel Huber was a Reformed pastor from the Bern area in Switzerland. He rejected the Reformed doctrine of election and entered the Lutheran Church. He became a pastor in Württemberg and later worked at Wittenberg. Here he accused his Wittenberg colleagues, Leyser and Hunnius, of Calvinism. He rejected the idea that it is only believers *alone* who are numbered among the elect for salvation. He believed that on the basis of universal atonement and universal justification all people were predestined to salvation and that man must make his universal election and calling sure by repentance and faith. According to Huber's opponents, his view had the taste of Pelagianism.²² The conflict continued until he was removed from Wittenberg in 1595.²³

Dresden Period of Leyser (1594–1610)

The position of court preacher (*Hofprediger*) for one of the electors in Germany had always been one of the most important positions in the Lutheran Church hierarchy. With the reign of Christian II, who began his rule as a minor, the position of court preacher became even more predominant. In fact, during the tenure of Leyser and especially during the time of his successor, Höe von Höeneegg (1580–1645),²⁴ the office of court preacher in Dresden became the most powerful and prestigious position in the Lutheran Church. Höe von Höeneegg even received the title *Oberhofprediger*.

First Court Preacher in Dresden (Hofprediger)

In 1594, Leyser was called as the first court preacher in Dresden. He received this call largely because of the influence of Electress Sophia, the mother of young Christian II. Here he faithfully served the family of Christian II until his death in 1610.

In 1601, Christian II, who was only eight years old when he became elector, reached maturity and began to govern in his own right. Before this his relative, Frederick Wilhelm of Saxony-Altenburg of the

²² Kurt E. Marquart, John R. Stephenson, and Bjarne W. Teigen, eds., *Lively Legacy: Essays in Honor of Robert Preus* (Fort Wayne, IN: Concordia Theological Seminary, 1985), 56–61. See also Robert Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method: From Martin Luther to the Formula of Concord* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 265–266.

²³ Kurtz, Vol. II, 361. See also Rune Söderlund, *Ex Praevisa Fide: Zum Verständnis der Prädestinationslehre in der lutherischen Orthodoxie* (Hannover: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1983), 59–64.

²⁴ Höe von Höeneegg was not Leyser's immediate successor. He did not become court preacher until 1613. In the interim Paul Jenisch held the position.

Ernestine line of the Wettins, had been regent together with his mother, Electress Sophia. In a sermon for the occasion, based upon Psalm 20, Leyser gave directives for Christian government and Christian rulers: 1) The Christian prince should begin his rule with prayer. 2) He should hold fast to God's Word that is the one true religion. 3) Not only should he be pious in his own person, but also provide God-fearing and qualified teachers in the churches and the schools of the land. 4) In his government, he should provide pious counselors and civil servants. This final point Leyser emphasizes in the negative. He reminds the young elector of the negative influence exerted by his father's chief counselor, Nicholas Krell.²⁵

During a state diet (*Landtag*) in 1605, Leyser gave a series of sermons that were to explain not only the duties of the Saxon ruler, but also how he viewed his responsibilities as court preacher. Leyser had been attacked by the nobility of Saxony for being too stringent in his position as court preacher and too rigid in the application of the Saxon church order. They accused him of being the Dresden pope.²⁶ These homilies were published with the title *Regentenspiegel* (Regent's Mirror).²⁷ As Luther²⁸ before him, he used Psalm 101 as the basis for the mirror. In *Regentenspiegel*, Leyser reminded the elector that he ruled alone by the grace of God and that he and his family were to be examples of a godly, Christian life. The young elector was to be concerned not only about the physical needs of his people, their food and clothing, but also about their spiritual needs, their souls' salvation. Leyser used many examples from the Bible and history to illustrate this. Then he explained that as court preacher he was the ultimate advisor in the land in areas of religion and morals. It was his responsibility to speak even when what he said was not that pleasant. These thoughts of the *Regentenspiegel* were summarized in one of the sermons that was preached by Paul Jenisch at Leyser's funeral.

A preacher who stays in the good graces of his audience and especially of his superiors must have forgotten his duties to admonish. One still finds, thank God, rulers who are willing

²⁵ Sommer, *Die lutherischen Hofprediger*, 120.

²⁶ *Ich weis es gar woll daß ich ein grossen teil des Adels auff dem land darmit erzürnet und mir abgünstig gemacht habe daß ich so steiff über der Ordnung halten wollen daß niemand zu seiner Kindstauff mehr als drey Gefattern erbitten soll da hat man mich tin Dreßnischen Papst gescholten...* (Sommer, *Gottesfurcht und Fürstenberrschaft*, 124). See also Tholuck, 12.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 122–134.

²⁸ WA 51:200–264.

to have themselves corrected, and remind their preachers if necessary of their duties not to abstain from giving their opinion, even when courtiers sometimes find this excessive and would love to turn a ruler against his teacher. . . . But in teaching, admonishing, and caring (from which the good doctor, even if he was quiet and gentle in nature, never abstained), one can still retain the grace of God and the love and good will of all.²⁹

During his time in office, Leyser established the parameters and responsibilities of the office of court preacher. Through his diligent and faithful service, he provided the office with the authority and prestige that would be the norm for succeeding generations in the position. During his tenure, he made the office what it would become, the most prestigious in the Lutheran church. In *Regentenspiegel* the guidelines for the position of *Oberhofprediger* are clearly evident. Leyser became the model and example of the court preacher.³⁰

Conflict with the Reformed and Leyser's Famous Dictum

During this period of time, the Lutherans continued to have conflict with the Roman Catholics because the Hapsburg emperor, with the help of the Jesuits, was trying to restore Catholicism in the empire. Still the greater threat came from the Reformed. The Reformed felt that the Lutheran Reformation had not gone far enough. Too many medieval customs and doctrines remained in the Lutheran Church. They wanted to "sweep the leftover papal dung completely out of the sheepfold of Christ."³¹

The Reformed obviously disagreed with the Lutheran doctrine on the Lord's Supper and Baptism. At the same time, there was a movement toward a new iconoclasm among the Reformed. They rejected the Lutheran use of the high altars, the *Flügelaltar*, crucifix, and so forth. The Calvinists said that the Bible spoke of none of these things and that they were idolatry. The Lutherans responded that such things were not forbidden in Scripture and that they were good teaching tools for the people. These things were the laymen's Bible in a time when literacy was

²⁹ Moore, 239.

³⁰ Wolfgang Sommer, *Politik, Theologie und Frömmigkeit im Luthertum der Frühen Neuzeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1999), 82–83.

³¹ Bodo Nischan, *Prince, People, and Confession: The Second Reformation in Brandenburg* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 117. "...die noch hinterbliebene Unsauberkeit deß Bapstums aus dem Schaffstall Christi vollend aufzufegen."

by no means universal. The altar pictures, the stained glass windows, and the crucifix portrayed the way of salvation.

Whenever the Calvinists gained control in a territory, they removed the beautiful altars and replaced them with communion tables. They threw out the altar pictures and crucifixes and whitewashed the sanctuary. They whitewashed the sanctuary as the Turks had whitewashed Hagia Sophia, so their sanctuaries looked more like a mosque than a church.

Polykarp Leyser complained that “wherever these Calvinists gain the upper hand, they remove all pictures, paintings, crucifixes from churches and altars ... as has already happened in France, the Low Countries, and other places where churches now look like horse stables.”³² The Reformed said that the altar paintings and crucifixes were nothing but papal idolatries, but how could they say that about the altars of Lucas Cranach and other evangelical painters?³³

If the Reformed rejected all images and signs as idolatry, how could they tolerate the money that they had in their pockets and offered in their churches which bore the images of the imperial leaders? “If our Calvinist friends really are such pure Christians with such tender consciences that they cannot tolerate any pictures in church, why do they not object to the images that are imprinted on the red gulden or silver thalers which they carry in their pockets? I have never seen them throw any of these away,” noted Leyser.³⁴

Because of this violent and faith-destroying conflict with the Reformed, Leyser would say that “Lutherans have far more in common with Romanists than with Calvinists.”³⁵ Later H \ddot{o} e von H \ddot{o} enegg would say the same. This famous dictum of Leyser was the common opinion of orthodox Lutherans during the lengthy conflict with the Reformed in the early seventeenth century.

³² Polycarp Leyser, *Calvinismus, Das ist: Ein Erclerung des Christlichen Catechismi Herrn Doctoris Martini Lutheri/In act Predigten* ... (Leipzig: Johann Beyer, 1596), 16.

³³ Karin Maag and John D. Witvliet, eds., *Worship in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 103.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 104.

³⁵ *Eine wichtige und in diesen gefahrlichen Zeiten sehr nutzliche Frage: Ob wie und warum man lieber mit den Papisten [den Gefolgsleuten des Papstes, den Katholiken] Gemeinschaft haben und gleichsam mehr Vertrauen zu ihnen tragen soll denn mit und zu den Calvinisten* (*Ibid.*, 111). See also Friedrich Wilhelm Kantzenbach, *Evangelische Enzyklopadie: Orthodoxie und Pietismus* (Germany: Gutersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, Gutersloh, 1966), 19.

Leyser's Family

Polykarp Leyser came from a family of clergymen, and a number of his sons entered the public ministry. Seeing their father's example, they wanted to serve the Lord in this capacity. His elder son, Polykarp Leyser II (1586–1633), was a professor in Wittenberg and Leipzig and later was entrusted with high ecclesiastical positions. He wrote commentaries on Galatians, the *Augsburg Confession*, and the *Formula of Concord*. Leyser's younger son, Wilhelm Leyser (1592–1649), was superintendent at Torgau and later professor at Wittenberg. He befriended Quenstedt, Gerhard's nephew, when he came to study at Wittenberg.

Leyser spent the remainder of his life as the first court preacher in Dresden. Throughout his life, he worked relentlessly to maintain and preserve the true orthodox Lutheran confession amid assaults from both the Reformed and Rome. Because of his service to the state and the empire and because of his Austrian descent, he was raised to the rank of nobility by Emperor Rudolf II in 1590. After a prolonged illness, he was taken to be with the Lord on February 22, 1610. His funeral occurred on March 1 at the Sophienkirche in Dresden.

Leyser's Successor at Dresden

Polykarp Leyser's most important successor in Dresden was Matthias H \ddot{o} e von H \ddot{o} enegg (1580–1645). He was born in Vienna and, like Leyser, was of Austrian descent. He studied at Wittenberg where he was confirmed in orthodox Lutheranism, a loyalty which continued throughout his life. In 1603, he was called to the position of superintendent in Plauen, and later he directed the Evangelical Church in Prague in 1611.

Under Johann Georg I of Saxony, the successor and brother of Christian II, he became the Saxon court preacher in Dresden in 1613. Later he received the prestigious title which was prepared specifically for him of *Oberhofprediger* in Dresden. Possibly because of his Austrian origins and anti-Calvinistic sentiment, he influenced Johann Georg I to be pro-Habsburg during the Thirty Years War even at the time of the Edict of Restitution in 1629.

In the Rathmann Controversy, H \ddot{o} e von H \ddot{o} enegg upheld the power and efficacy of the inspired Scriptures in contradistinction to Hermann Rathmann (1585–1628) who was a pastor at Danzig and had Calvinistic tendencies.³⁶ H \ddot{o} e von H \ddot{o} enegg was one of the leading

³⁶ Johannes Wallmann, *Theologie und Fr \ddot{o} mlichkeit im Zeitalter des Barock: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1995), 51.

theologians authoring the *Decisio Saxonica*, which moderated between the Giessen and Tübingen school in the Crypto-Kenotic Controversy in Christology. While he intended to avoid the extremes of both groups, he was seen as siding more with the Giessen school.³⁷ As a result of the bitter controversy with the Reformed, Höe von Höenegg is to have said as Leyser before him, “One should rather have fellowship with the Papists and likewise have more trust in them, than [have fellowship] with and [trust] in the Calvinists.”³⁸

Leyser’s Writings and Publications

Polykarp Leyser was a prolific writer and publisher. He wrote commentaries on Genesis, Daniel, the minor prophets, and other books of the Bible. He produced a large number of sermons, polemical treatises, and maintained a vast correspondence. His most provocative work was his polemic treatise against the Calvinists: *Ob, wie, und warum man lieber mit den Papisten Gemeinschaft haben ... soll denn mit und zu den Calvinisten*, originally an introduction to his *Christianismus, Papismus et Calvinismus, das ist drey unterschiedliche Auslegungen des Catechismi Lutheri*.³⁹

In addition to the publication of his own works, he published many of the works of Chemnitz, saving them for posterity. He is probably best known today for this preservation of the Second Martin’s writings.

Enchiridion

While Chemnitz was superintendent in Braunschweig, he organized the regular visitation of pastors. The result of this visitation was the publication of the *Enchiridion*, which was an outline of the essential Bible teaching that a Lutheran pastor needed in order to conduct the office of the public ministry. The book was practical instruction for the Lutheran pastor.

By 1593 Leyser, as Chemnitz’s successor at Braunschweig, republished the 1579 version of the *Enchiridion*. He dedicated the work to the clergy of both Braunschweig and Lüneburg and included in the publication a work by Urbanus Rhegius.

Leyser’s work came to fill more than 600 pages and included besides the basic *Enchiridion* also Rhegius’ *De Caute Loquendi*

³⁷ Ibid., 50.

³⁸ Gustav Niemetz, *Geschichte der Sachsen vom germanischen Stamm bis zum Freistaat* (Spitzkunnnersdorf: Oberlausitzer Verlag, 1999), 73.

³⁹ See note 35.

and Chemnitz' *Wolgegründter Bericht*, or *De Caute Sentiendi*. By the 1603 edition of this work, Chemnitz' treatise on the Jesuits had also been added. Leyser liked Chemnitz very much. Chemnitz (even back in 1569) shows his love for the use of theses and antitheses, and this practice is followed in the Formula of Concord in part at his insistence. The entire preface of Leyser is worth reading in the Poellot edition, *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments*.⁴⁰

Loci Theologici

In 1592 Leyser published a new edition of Martin Chemnitz's *Loci Theologici*. Chemnitz's *Loci* consisted mainly of his lectures on *Loci Communes of Melancthon*. It was probably the most complete doctrinal study in the Lutheran church at the time. Leyser's purpose for the new edition was to make this excellent teaching tool available to the new generation.

Leyser in his prefaces to the three volumes of the *Loci Theologici* makes it clear that his purpose in 1591, five years after Chemnitz's death, in publishing this great work of the most learned and prestigious Dr. Chemnitz was to use this great man's learning and literary output to stem the doctrinal deterioration which was continuing among the Lutheran churches even after the adoption of the Book of Concord in 1580, because of the constant inroads of a resurgent papacy, a virulent and deceptive Calvinism, and a strident and disruptive Enthusiasm. At this point we are less than 30 years from the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War.⁴¹

In his dedicatory letter to the *Loci*, Leyser began his remarks with a strong defense of the *loci* method of presenting Christian doctrine. He implied that the church of God from its very beginning had special articles of faith presented in summary fashion in a definite order and method. All other teachings were to be examined and tested by this norm. Such a summary of Christian doctrine was found in Genesis 3:15.

⁴⁰ Preus, 149.

⁴¹ Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici*, Vol. 1, trans. J.A.O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989), 15–16.

The Son of God Himself gave to our first parents in Paradise after the Fall this kind of carefully drawn up summary of the doctrine when He spoke the words of Gen. 3:15. This brief passage is a kind of fountain from which flow all the prophetic oracles, so that it is a summary of the whole of the Christian doctrine and of all the articles of our faith. Therefore, although our first parents and after them the rest of the patriarchs, in the church and in its public meetings, discussed at length the Creation, the sadness of the Fall, sin and the corruption of our entire nature, the malice, cleverness, and power of the devil, concerning Christ the Redeemer, faith in Him as the Mediator, concerning the practice of faith and repentance, the cross, death, resurrection, and similar articles of faith, yet always this brief passage was the canon and rule of faith. For whatever can be taught concerning these articles is summarized in perfect order in this brief passage. And a normally diligent person can easily observe in this statement the order, beginnings, progress, and goals of the heavenly teaching which to this day is proclaimed in our churches.⁴²

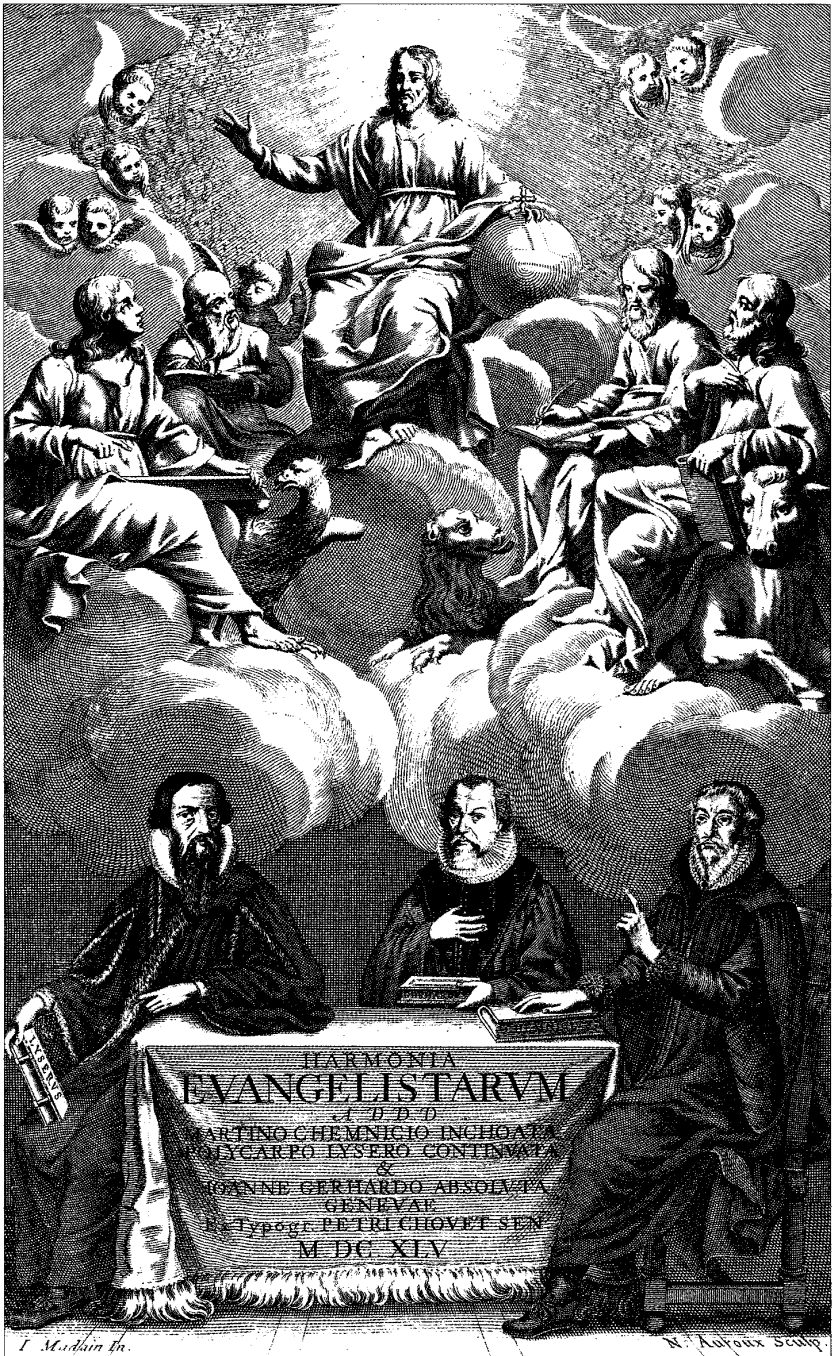
Harmonia Evangelica (1593)

One of the most intriguing works of Chemnitz that Polykarp edited was the *Harmonia Evangelica*. Not only did he edit this work, but he added to it considerably. The *Harmonia Evangelica* is a harmony of the New Testament Gospels. The translation of it into English has recently been undertaken by the Center for the Study of Lutheran Orthodoxy in Malone, Texas, with the title *The Harmony of the Four Evangelists which the very renowned theologian, Martin Chemnitz, began very auspiciously; which Dr. Polycarp Leyser continued and which Dr. John Gerhard completed most fruitfully, both of whom were theologians of no less renown.*⁴³

In 1573 Chemnitz began to edit his *Harmonia*, but he was so pressed by his many other duties that he never finished the work. He authored the first part of the *Harmonia* (chapters 1–51). It was later published after his death by Polykarp Leyser in 1593. Leyser carried on the work of Chemnitz and published an additional portion of it (chapters 52–140) in the years 1603–1610. The whole project was completed by Johann Gerhard in 1626–1627 (chapters 141–180). This massive harmony of

⁴² Ibid., 17.

⁴³ The first volume of the *Harmonia Evangelica* may be obtained at Bethany Bookstore at the cost of \$40.00.



*Polycarp Leyser, Johann Gerhard, Martin Chemnitz
authors of the Harmony of the Gospels*

the Gospels was published in completion at Frankfurt and Hamburg in 1652. The present English translation is using as its source a 1703 Latin edition published at Hamburg. Concerning the production of the *Harmonia*, Gerhard wrote in a letter to H \ddot{o} e von H \ddot{o} eneegg:

Once I finish the *Loci*, I shall gird myself for the continuation of the *Harmonia*. I indeed confess and I have confessed publicly in the preface that this labor of mine people should not even in the slightest compare with the divine labors of the blessed Chemnitz and the blessed Polycarp [Leyser] of sacred memory. Meanwhile, because I see that your distinguished reverence and other godly and erudite men are so willing for me to put together the rest, I shall not refuse whatever this part of the work imposes on me.⁴⁴

The *Harmonia Evangelica* was so popular among Synodical Conference Lutherans that pastors in the Missouri Synod translated portions of it in the nineteenth century. This work, entitled *Perikopen*, was published in seven volumes including the historic Gospels of the church year, the festival Gospels, and the Passion history.

The harmony is an excellent homiletical tool for Lutheran pastors. As a pastor studies the Gospels, he finds in the harmony a rich treasury of information concerning the life of Christ, the history of the New Testament, and the teaching of Scripture.

An example of the insights given by these three great Lutheran theologians is found in Matthew 2:15. Here the prophecy concerning our Lord, “Out of Egypt have I called My son,” is explicated.

You see, the explanation is forced and twisted of those who contend that in that statement: “Out of Egypt have I called My son” Hosea is simply and narrowly prophesying nothing else but about the Child Jesus, called as He was out of Egypt. ... So great is the union of Christ, the Head, and His members, that what is said about the members refers correctly to the Head and is said to be truly fulfilled in Him. That he might show the more clearly the conformity of the Head and members about which Paul speaks in Rom. 8:29, Matthew establishes the following comparison with this allegation of his. Israel was born in the land of Canaan and quickly was driven out into Egypt, there it

⁴⁴ Erdmann Rudolph Fischer, *The Life of John Gerhard*, trans. Richard J. Dinda and Elmer Hohle (Malone, Texas: Repristination Press, 2001), 434.

remained until God called it out of it and returned again. This was the time of the infancy or childhood of the people of Israel, as Hosea says: “When Israel was a little child,” and Moses says, Deu. 1:31: “The Lord has carried you as a man generally carried his little child.” The Child Jesus, however, was born in the land of Canaan and fled into Egypt during His infancy. There He spent some years of His infancy and He remained there until God called Him back again through an angel. Because it was necessary for the elect to be in conformity with the image of the Only-Begotten and truly First-Begotten, the Child Jesus, that which Hosea says—“Out of Egypt have I called My son”—we say correctly was fulfilled, first, in the people of Israel as the members; and, second, in the very Head, the Child Jesus.⁴⁵

Here Chemnitz, Leyser, and Gerhard refer to what today would be designated as indirectly messianic or typological prophecy. A typological messianic prophecy applies first to some Old Testament individual or event and then through it as an intervening type to Christ. In this particular situation, Hosea’s prophecy speaks first of all of Israel, God’s son, in the Old Testament and then points to God’s Son *par excellence*, the only begotten of the Father from all eternity, Jesus Christ.

In Luke 3:16, John the Baptist makes this interesting statement, “I indeed baptize you with water, but ... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” Some assume from this text that John is implying that his Baptism was inferior to Christ’s Baptism. Note the exegesis of this text in the *Harmonia*.

In that which follows (“I baptize with water”), he is not comparing his Baptism of water with the Baptism of water if Christ should give it. Christ, after all, baptized no one with water, John 4:2. John isn’t comparing his Baptism with the Baptism of the apostles, but is comparing his person and ministry with the person and office of Christ. This difference has a place also in all other ministries. He says: “I am providing only an external voice for the preaching of repentance and the remission of sins, and with my hand I minister water to sprinkle you for repentance....

⁴⁵ Martin Chemnitz, Polykarp Leyser, and Johann Gerhard, *The Harmony of the Four Evangelists which the very renowned theologian, Martin Chemnitz, began very auspiciously; which Dr. Polycarp Leyser continued and which Dr. John Gerhard completed most fruitfully, both of whom were theologians of no less renown*, Volume One, Book One, trans. Richard J. Dinda (Malone, Texas: The Center for the Study of Lutheran Orthodoxy, 2009), 229–230.

With those words, when he says: “He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire,” he is looking to this visible coming infusion of the Holy Spirit in the appearance of fire upon the apostles on Pentecost. That visible gift was the witness that Christ had received and had the gift of pouring out the Holy Spirit upon believers, Acts 2:33. ... Christ baptized with the Holy Spirit even in John’s Baptism, for Christ’s Baptism is the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, whom He pours out, as we have shown, in the hearing of faith and in Baptism.⁴⁶

John was merely a servant of Christ, using his mouth to preach and his hand to pour out water in Baptism. It was Christ who was working through John’s preaching and Baptism. John poured out water, and at the same time Christ poured out the Holy Spirit, giving the forgiveness of sins and working faith in His redemptive work. The power of the Spirit in water Baptism was publicly confirmed on Pentecost through the appearance of the fire on the heads of the apostles.

The *Harmonia Evangelica* has served Lutheran pastors as a vital exegetical and homiletic tool or resource for generations. As the Latin language became less accessible to parish pastors, a German translation of portions of the *Harmonia* was completed in the nineteenth century as noted above. The Center for the Study of Lutheran Orthodoxy is to be commended for publishing the English translation of the *Harmonia* by Dr. Richard Dinda. This is an indispensable harmony of the Gospels in the library of every orthodox Lutheran pastor.

In this anniversary year of the death of Polykarp Leyser, he is remembered as a great Lutheran churchman and theologian. Throughout his life he worked relentlessly to maintain and preserve the orthodox Lutheran confession of faith amid attacks from both the Reformed and Rome. In his Dresden period, he became the model of the Lutheran court preacher in the seventeenth century. He spans the time between Chemnitz and Gerhard and was closely associated with both of them. He continued the production of the *Harmonia Evangelica* began by Martin Chemnitz most auspiciously and completed by Johann Gerhard most fruitfully. He is a theological bridge between Chemnitz and Gerhard. His example as *Seelsorger* and theologian is one properly emulated by every orthodox Lutheran pastor. LSQ

⁴⁶ Ibid., 291.

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Note and Book Reviews

LSQ Vol. 50, Nos. 2–3 (June–September 2010)

New Volumes of the American Edition of Luther's Works

Editor's Note: *The author of this article, Nicholas Proksch, is one of the translators of the new volumes of the American Edition of Martin Luther's Works.*

The current 55 volumes of the American Edition of Martin Luther's works appear so sizeable on bookshelves one could easily be struck by his prolificacy without even realizing that they comprise but one-third of his corpus. Published from 1955 to 1986, these volumes were a joint endeavor of Concordia Publishing House and Fortress Press. In 2009, Concordia Publishing House released the first new volume to be added to the American Edition, and 20 new volumes are slated for publication. The expansion is not superfluous, but rather fills a void

inescapably present when only a portion of an author's extensive writings can be made available. The new volumes seek to broaden the American Edition to incorporate writings of underrepresented genres and portions of Luther's career, including earlier works, prefaces, disputations, polemical writings, and a broader range of sermons.

The development of Luther's theology, particularly his doctrine on justification, has been heavily debated in recent scholarship. Many insist the concept of forensic justification is foreign to Luther himself. The so-called "New Finnish Interpretation" asserts that the core of Luther's justification was a participation in Christ similar to Eastern Orthodox theosis. Also, the recent inclination to date Luther's *Turmerlebnis* earlier than was previously accepted makes his Gospel discovery appear more medieval. Two new volumes will focus specifically on his earlier works, which

will cast more light on the roots of his theological departure from medieval thought. Especially unique among these selections will be translations of his marginal notes in the works of various medieval and ancient theologians.

A more obscure facet of Luther's career is the bulk of prefaces he wrote by request. Thus distinctive among the new volumes will be one devoted entirely to prefaces (scheduled for 2011). This volume will give insight into Luther's reception of both contemporaneous as well as ancient theologians. He also wrote prefaces to apologetic and descriptive works relating to Islam as well as a translation of the Qur'an he had personally advocated to be permitted for publication (primarily to facilitate Christian polemics against it).

Luther was passionate about his beliefs and thorough in his argumentations, but also had a distinctive sense of humor. One volume of the new series will include theological and polemical works that are heated and often satirical. Included is the illustrated *Passion of the Christ and Antichrist*, where events from Christ's selfless passion are illustrated with captions next to satirical counterparts of the pope essentially doing the opposite. Also, several works show how Luther certainly did not balk at opportunities to censure opposition from abroad. Examples include his *Answer to the King of England's Slandrous Book* and *Against the Asses of Paris and Louvain*.

The first volume made available in 2009 comprises sermons on the Gospel of John (chapters 17–20)

preached as a Saturday series. Luther was fond of his John series and even once mentioned that his John 14–17 book should be considered his “most worthy and precious book” after his translation of Scripture (LW 69:8). The last part of the volume includes Luther's preaching for *Quasimodogeniti* (John 20:19–31) from 1522 to 1540, which was not included in his Saturday series. In these sermons, he emphasizes the preaching of the external Word as bringing the forgiveness of sins when received by faith alone as opposed to the medieval form involving works of satisfaction. He also expresses his understanding of the office of the keys and the doctrine of absolution, a fine Lutheran line between medieval sacerdotalism and *Schwärmer* fanaticism.

With the many sermons already published—both in the American Edition and in separate Church and House Postil editions—it may be hard to imagine that this genre is underrepresented among Luther's works translated into English. Yet with over 2000 sermons extant, only roughly a quarter has been translated. Thus volume 58, the second release for the new series this coming fall, is one of three volumes planned to contain sermons from 1521–1546. A highly anticipated sermon is *How Law and Gospel are to be Thoroughly Distinguished*, made famous among American Lutherans by C. F. W. Walther's evening lecture series, *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*. Another is *A Military Sermon against the Turks*, often cited by Dr. Adam Francisco during his recent

participation in the Reformation Lectures at Bethany Lutheran College.

Purchasing the new volumes is highly recommended for pastors, scholars, and congregational libraries alike. Each new volume may be purchased from Concordia Publishing House individually for \$49.99 (electronically for \$36.99), but it is also possible to subscribe to the whole new series for \$34.99 per volume. Those who do not yet own the whole original series can purchase it most cost-effectively in digital format. Luther's writings are particularly helpful for clergy because he continually stressed the practical nature of all true theology (LW 54:22). In his exegesis, he carefully analyzes the details of the text and their connection within theology as a whole, while in his polemics he adamantly and systematically presents the articles of faith. His preaching explains the Bible's teachings, presenting them simply, clearly, and vividly, while preaching Law and Gospel in his care for souls. The new volumes will also benefit scholars, since there is only one way to know Luther's precise ideas confidently: *ad fontes*. While Luther's writings are challenging and deep enough to keep the skilled theologian occupied, they are also straightforward and clear enough to edify as devotional and educational works for the laity. The more complete translation of his works will build up the Lutheran Church in general by pointing the believers of today to the Bible-based theology of Luther. The clear teachings of Scripture were the source

of Luther's strength, and they are the source of the Church's strength even today.

– Nicholas D. Proksch

LSQ

Book Review: *The Genius of Luther's Theology*

Robert Kolb and Charles P. Arand. *The Genius of Luther's Theology: A Wittenberg Way of Thinking for the Contemporary Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, Baker Publishing Group, 2008. 240 pages. \$21.99.

From the outset, this volume intends to survey the great reformer's approach in doing theology. The authors cull out "two vital elements that constituted the matrix within which Luther developed other topics from biblical revelation and the genius that channeled their unfolding" (12). These are listed as: 1) the anthropological presupposition that God shaped human life according to two dimensions (two kinds of righteousness), and 2) the theological presupposition that God works through his Word in its manifold forms.

Under the first presupposition, Luther's genius – enabled purely by God's gospel "breakthrough" – was driven by a deep conviction of the proper kind of righteousness (a passive) that avails for a sinner's salvation before God. "Luther's recovery of the gospel included the insight that the

only way to preserve the integrity of the passive righteousness of faith (and with it the active righteousness of works) is to keep it distinct from our righteousness in relationship to other creatures (*coram mundo*)” (77). That righteousness, acquired by Christ for us apart from human works and grasped by faith, is not a grace defined “as something like a booster shot or a form of spiritual steroids” for the Christian to do God’s will and therefore to attain righteousness before God (84). Righteousness *coram Deo* “means to do nothing, to hear nothing, and to know nothing about the Law or about works but to know and believe only this: that Christ has gone to the Father...” (100; Luther as cited in *LW* 26:8). Yet, this passive, saving righteousness does not mean the *active* righteousness (holy living exhibited by Christians in the eyes of the world) is of no value. It does not “eliminate the need for active involvement in the world; it does not call for retreat from the world, as Luther’s own life demonstrated.... [For] Luther the Christian life is distinctive in that Christians do not live for the purpose of glorifying themselves or justifying themselves.... Once we recover our core identity *coram Deo* (as children and heirs), we can embrace our roles and responsibilities *corum mundo* (as parents, citizens, neighbors) and carry out the tasks they entail” (103, 104).

Here is where the co-authors enumerate some practical insights on the way Luther elevated even “menial activities” in the numerous vocations of fellow Christians. “These included such as activities as the father washing

smelly diapers, the maid sweeping the floor, the mother cooking supper, and the baker making good bread.”

Marriage and family weighed in as especially noteworthy by the reformer. The authors observe (no doubt with slight amusement) that Luther, even at the time he was yet unmarried (1527), wrote, “When a father goes ahead and washes diapers or performs some other menial task for his child, and someone ridicules him as an effeminate fool... God with all his angels and creatures is smiling” (112; Luther as cited in *LW* 45:40).

How do Christians today live in a society so obviously different from those times when the Christian religion seemed to have a dominant influence?

Luther believed that Christians should not try to bring about theocratic visions of society in order to manifest the hidden reign of Christ prior to the last day.... [S]ome North American believers have promoted a Christian culture over against a world in moral chaos. The emergence of groups like the Moral Majority and the Christian Coalition reflects this Puritan tradition of establishing a “Christian culture.” These efforts often maintain that the best political values are those informed by faith in Christ, by faith in the gospel. And so they have treated the Bible as a book of regulations.... Luther and his colleagues believed that the gospel does not introduce new laws into the civil realm

[Ap XVI.3]; it sends Christ's people into the culture to recover the Creator's design and to recall the culture back to the Creator's intentions. (115, 116)

Co-authors Kolb and Arand contend that Luther's focus on the passive righteousness of faith actually enabled the reformer and his colleagues "to recover the law of creation (with its expression in the Decalogue)" resulting in affirming "an objective and universal moral order [natural law] over against the subjective whims of the church's [Rome's] hierarchy." Simply put: "Christian reception of natural law has prevented Christian ethics from absorbing itself totally within the realm of individual personal relationships or as having no relevance for the world. Christians again need to help society remember and discern natural moral orders in human affairs" (116, 117). Adherents of Luther know that society – especially in view of the prevailing decadence (attacks on marriage, rise of homosexuality and promiscuity, etc.) – needs to have the natural law brought "into bold relief by stating the obvious" (117).

In a footnote (117, fn41) Carl E. Braaten, who co-authored with Robert Jensen the ELCA's *Christian Dogmatics*, mentions the need for an ecumenical dialogue to provide a "counterattack against the wholesale deconstruction of the classical moral and legal principles on which Western culture is founded." Whether or not Kolb and Arand agree, this reviewer would suggest that hanging hopes on "ecumenism" as an aid for stemming the

tide of immorality is misplaced. One could easily argue that "ecumenical dialogue" actually has *contributed* to the moral malaise for our country. How? Liberal theologians of mainline denominations frequently have offered their innovative, interpretive underpinnings for what currently is served as the plate of "morals." In fairness to the co-authors of *Genius*, one later reads, "Genuine ecumenical conversation brings Christians together in the common search for the health of the body of biblical teaching" (209). There attention is given to Luther's metaphor of God's doctrine as a human body where each limb of teaching needs to be preserved for the vitality of the whole.

Part II of the book sets forth Luther's emphasis on God working dynamically in people's lives through his Word, including the Sacraments. "One of Luther's most significant contributions to biblical interpretation lies in his insight that God uses these selected components of his created world [e.g., sacramental elements] to effect his saving will" (176). In a 1528 sermon by the Doctor on Luke 18, we find this poignant remark: "You cannot give me a single example of a person made a Christian or received the Holy Spirit apart from something external. Where did these Christians get the information that Christ is their savior? . . . It did not drop down from heaven. It came from Scripture and the Word" (177).

For Luther, his "entire understanding of the use of the means of grace was integrated into his proper distinction of law and gospel," where "God introduced the rhythm

of dying under the accusation of the law and rising under the power of Christ's resurrection in baptism" (195, 196). But this re-creative aspect of the gospel in offering continually the necessary forgiveness from Christ is found not only in the sacrament of the font but also in that of the altar. So much is the power in the Supper, that "[e]ven though a scoundrel receives or administers the sacrament, it is the true sacrament (that is, Christ's body and blood), just as truly as when one uses it most worthily. For it is not founded on human holiness but on the Word of God" (201; citation from LC, 16).

Of interest to ELS readers in this volume is the co-authors' discussion of Luther on the keys and on ministry matters (179-188). Luther's five-fold description of the means of grace in the SA is mentioned, listing last the mutual consolation of the brethren. Kolb and Arand suggest Luther's interest in "mutual consolation" arose from the reformer's desire to "cultivate in his hearers in the Wittenberg congregation the practice of informally delivering the forgiveness of sins" (186). We are reminded of the note in our synod's "Public Ministry of the Word" (2005) where we have the expression "*private or unofficial* use of the keys." After citing Luther in a sermon on Matthew 9:1-8, the authors contend, "The Lord's commission of his people to speak his Word extended to all of them on the basis of their baptism" (186). Again: "Indeed, Luther insisted, each baptized Christian is called by God to confess the faith and to forgive sins in Jesus' name" (181).

One may wonder if the co-authors of *Genius*, without specifically so stating, are insistent that the *one* [public] ministry of the Word is comprehended *only* inside the pastoral office with its certain variations. "The fact that there is one ministry of the Word has never precluded Lutherans from appointing some pastors to supervisory offices, with titles ranging from the traditional 'bishop' to its translation as 'superintendent' or 'president'" (182). There is also this sentence: "Whatever else is needed in specific cultural situations, whether 'higher' leadership or practical servanthood, the church may well be categorized as a humanly devised institutional form." No doubt the sentence, in its context, was intended to read: "Whatever else is needed in specific cultural situations, whether 'higher' leadership or practical servanthood, *the church may well categorize as a humanly devised institutional form*" (italics mine). Our ELS statement on the public ministry notes that the pastoral office, while necessary for oversight, is not instituted *to the exclusion of* other teachers of the Word (Antithesis #9: "We reject the teaching that the Public Ministry is limited to any one divinely fixed form, that is, limited to the pastoral office to the exclusion of other teachers of the Word."). Kolb and Arand, to their credit, allude to other "ministries" that bring not just physical but *spiritual* help. They also refer to Luther's John 16 sermon of 1537 in support of the statement: "But God instituted the ministry of the Word for the purpose of returning

life to sinners, and that stands at the heart of the enterprise” (182).

The Genius of Luther's Theology is to be highly recommended. It is valuable for offering a glimpse into the mind of Luther, while providing practical material for pastors as they advise parishioners to interact in the world, both in daily vocations and in political spheres. If “engaging [Luther’s] way of thinking provides a measuring stick for our own way of thinking” (222), this volume yields not just inches but yards for comparison.

– John A. Moldstad

LSQ

Book Review: *Treasures Old and New*

John C. Jeske. *Treasures Old and New: Daily Readings From the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions*. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2009. 384 pages. \$24.99.

Pastors: How many times do you bemoan the gradual loss of your skills of working with the original languages of the Bible? Or how often have you searched for a decent book to use as the basis for your daily devotions? John C. Jeske, who served for many years as a professor of Old Testament at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, has compiled an excellent resource which fulfills both these needs and more.

In the editor’s preface of this volume, Dr. Glen Thompson provides some of the background leading to its publication. Throughout his years at the seminary Prof. Jeske had

encouraged students to use, as he did, Heinrich Bitzer’s *Light on the Path* and *More Light on the Path*, both of which included daily readings from the Hebrew Old Testament and from the Greek New Testament. But Jeske believed that the Hebrew readings Bitzer included were too difficult, that there was a lack of emphasis on the liturgical church year, and that the selections overall lacked an emphasis on the Gospel. He envisioned a similar work that would correct these deficiencies. The project began to come to fruition about twelve years ago. Dr. Thompson added to the daily selections of Scripture a brief reading from the Lutheran Confessions.

The format of Jeske’s book is pleasingly straightforward. For each day, listed according to the regular calendar, one to three verses from the Hebrew Old Testament are printed followed by vocabulary aids. Following is a short selection from the Greek New Testament, again followed by vocabulary aids. Finally, the day’s material ends with a reading from the Confessions. All of the included readings are conveniently indexed in the back of the book.

Perusing the book, emphasis on the seasons of the church year is evident. The readings for the months of February and March tend to emphasize repentance and Christ’s saving work. The readings in April shift to a focus on Christ’s resurrection. November’s and December’s readings include an emphasis on the end times, and Christmas comes into view in mid-December’s readings.

This book would serve as a useful tool for busy pastors. Not only would

the pastor be edified through the reading of and meditating on God's life-giving Word, he also would get a daily taste of biblical Hebrew and Greek. The inclusion of the readings from the Confessions is a welcome addition.

– Michael K. Smith

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with the theme of

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