

500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LUTHERAN REFORMATION



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Foreword

LSQ Vol. 57, Nos. 2 & 3 (June & September 2017)

THE YEAR 2017 MARKS THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF the Lutheran Reformation. The events of 1517 and the resulting Lutheran Reformation are of vital importance to confessional Lutheranism. Here God through His servant Martin Luther restored true biblical doctrine which had long been a hidden treasure. The central article of this biblical truth is justification by faith alone. We are declared righteous by nothing we do or accomplish, but alone on the basis of Christ's redemptive work which is counted as ours through faith in the Savior. He accomplished salvation for all on the cross and announced it to all by His resurrection declaring the whole world righteous. This treasure is brought to us personally through the means of grace and is received by faith alone in the Savior which is worked through those very means of grace.

The biblical doctrine of justification alone can give the poor, lost sinner comfort now and at the hour of our death. On our own we are hopelessly lost. We sin daily and can do nothing to save ourselves. The doctrine of justification, however, shows us that our gracious God has done all for our salvation and that this salvation is offered to us as a free gift. We are declared righteous freely for Christ's sake through faith in Him as our Savior. This alone can give us peace and purpose in this life and the confident hope for the life to come.

For Lutherans, Martin Luther is a reformer in a class by himself. He is not merely the most important reformer, he stands head and

shoulders above his colleagues and associates. He was the creative genius of the Reformation. When Luther died he was considered to be a Second Elijah concerning whom Elisha cried out, “My father, my father. The chariot of Israel and its horsemen” (2 Kings 2:12).¹ He was seen as the angel flying through the heavens with the everlasting Gospel (Revelation 14:6–7).²

During this 500th anniversary of the Reformation there will be many books and articles written about Luther and his writings. This is definitely appropriate. He has had a pervading influence on the entire Christian world. However, the purpose of this issue of the *Quarterly* is to show that continuum between Luther and seventeenth-century Lutheranism, which is usually referred to as the age of Lutheran Orthodoxy or the period of confessionalization. The *Quarterly* follows the logic of this Post-Reformation dictum: It has been said that Johann Gerhard was third (Martin Luther, Martin Chemnitz, and Johann Gerhard) in the series of Lutheranism’s most preeminent theologians and after him there was no fourth.³ If one were to speak of a fourth, it would be Abraham Calov or Johann Quenstedt. These Lutherans considered their writings to be a continuum of the teachings of Luther. The purpose of their massive doctrinal dissertations was merely to systematize the biblical teaching of Luther and to defend it.

One can see a dialectical pattern in Lutheran and Roman polemics during this period of which Luther, Chemnitz, and Gerhard were a part. Luther began the Reformation aided by Philipp Melancthon, Johannes Bugenhagen, and others. Luther spoke against the abuses of the medieval church. The Council of Trent (1545–1563) rejected Luther’s Reformation and especially the central article of the faith. To this Chemnitz responded in his *Examination of the Council of Trent*. Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621), one of the main exponents of the tridentine doctrine, reacted against the writings of Chemnitz defending the teachings of Trent. Finally, Gerhard points out the fallacies of the Bellarmine and post-tridentine doctrine. In this defense, Chemnitz and Gerhard maintained the continuum with Luther’s teachings.

¹ Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: The Preservation of the Church*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 378–379; Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, and Lubomir Batka, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther’s Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 529–230.

² Brecht, 379; Franz Posset, *The Real Luther* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011), 35.

³ Erdmann Rudolph Fischer, *The Life of John Gerhard*, trans. Richard J. Dinda and Elmer Hohle (Malone, Texas: Repristination Press, 2001), 98–99.

This continuum is of vital importance to confessional orthodox Lutherans today. When our forefathers came to America, they wanted to do no more than re-pristiniate the theology of the seventeenth-century dogmaticians, which they considered to be the doctrine of Luther and the Confessions. To use a picture from the ancient fathers, we are merely pygmies standing on the shoulders of the giants before us, Luther and the seventeenth-century dogmaticians.

This *Quarterly* is intended to portray how the gospel inheritance restored by God through Luther was handed down to us during the seventeenth century. It was passed down through men like Chemnitz, Gerhard, Calov, and Quenstedt, and Walther, Koren, and Hoenecke. Now we have the privilege and responsibility to carry it on to the next generation.

The first essay discusses Luther and his relationship to dogmatics or systematic theology. It has been said that Luther was no dogmatician. He would best be remembered as an Old Testament expositor. The essayist points out that Luther was a biblical theologian, not restricted to a single theological discipline, and maintains the close connection between Luther and the Lutheran dogmaticians. This essay, entitled “Luther, Dogma, and the Dogmaticians,” was written by Prof. Em. Erling Teigen of Bethany Lutheran College.

Martin Chemnitz was the leading light in Lutheranism after Luther, so much so that the seventeenth century had this saying: “If the second Martin (Chemnitz) had not come, the first Martin (Luther) would scarcely have stood” (*Si Martinus non fuisset, Martinus vix stetisset*). The essay, “The Second Martin of the Lutheran Church,” presents a brief biography of Chemnitz and summarizes a number of important theological points in his writings.

The most important theologian of the seventeenth century was Johann Gerhard (1582–1637). After Luther and Chemnitz he is the foremost theologian of the Lutheran church. The essay, “Johann Gerhard—Arch-Theologian and *Seelsorger*,” is an introduction to the life and work of this great seventeenth-century dogmatician. The original form of this essay was presented in September 2003 in Leipzig, Germany, at the fiftieth anniversary of the *Lutherisches Theologisches Seminar*, the seminary of our sister church the Evangelisch-Lutherische Freikirche.

As noted above, it has been said that Gerhard was third 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 Abraham

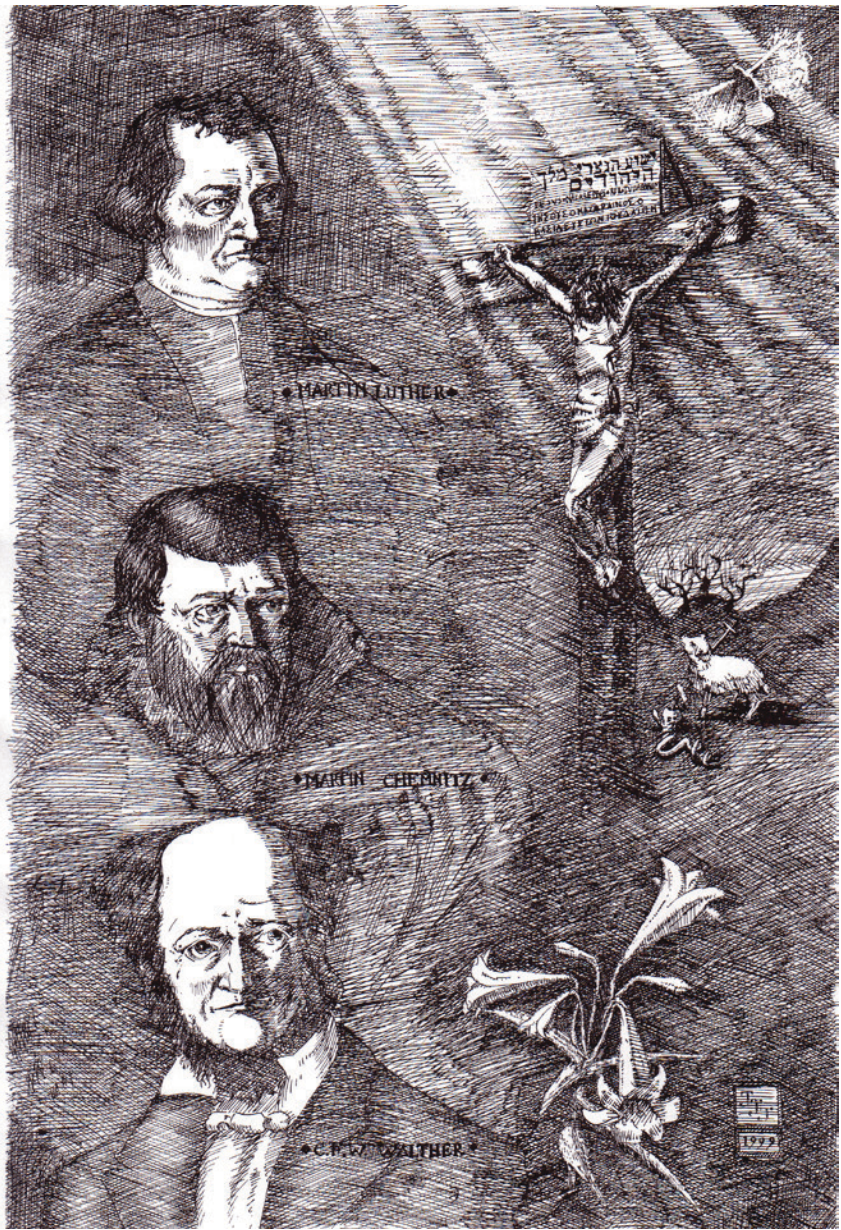
Calov (1612–1686) or Johann Quenstedt (1617–1688). The essayist, Dr. Timothy Schmeling, defends the viewpoint that Abraham Calov deserves the position of fourth. This he explains in his essay, “Strenuus Christi Athleta Abraham Calov.”

In this landmark anniversary year, undoubtedly our pastors are planning how they might observe the Reformation in their parishes. Dr. Michael K. Smith has prepared a sermon study of Romans 3:19–28 for preachers to consider as they seek how best to proclaim the truths of Scripture brought back to the fore by Martin Luther and the Reformers.

Also included in this *Quarterly* are several book reviews.

– GRS

On the following page is a replica of the painting in Bethany Seminary by Jason Jaspersen. The painting depicts Martin Luther (top), through whom God restored the Gospel in the Reformation; Martin Chemnitz (middle), the leading light in Lutheranism after Luther—so much so that there was the saying, “If the second Martin [Chemnitz] had not come, the first Martin [Luther] would scarcely have stood” (*Si Martinus non fuisset, Martinus vix stetisset*); and C.F.W. Walther (bottom), the principle founder of confessional Lutheranism in this country. Their confession centers in the sacrificial death of the Lamb of God on the cross and His glorious resurrection, by which the whole world was declared righteous in Christ.





Luther, Dogma, and the Dogmaticians

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[W]ith monotonous regularity, has been the gratuitous explanation, “But, of course, Luther was not a systematic theologian.” This explanation proceeded on the assumption that the speaker knew exactly what a systematic theologian was, and that by this definition Luther simply would not qualify.¹

THUS, JAROSLAV PELIKAN DISMISSES ATTEMPTS to assign Luther to one of the four main departments of theology. Pelikan does not attempt to prove Martin Luther to be a systematician/dogmatician at the expense of being an exegete, but while the book title is *Luther the Expositor*, the term that Pelikan warms toward is that Luther is a biblical theologian, by which he does not exclude systematic and dogmatic theology.

In his prolegomena, Adolf Hoenecke comments on the same without offering a specific reference: “Luther was no dogmatician’ is a judgment frequently heard.” Hoenecke goes on to comment that Luther is in fact a dogmatician in his treatment of various topics in controversy and that “there is no lack of systematics in his writing.”²

¹ Jaroslav Pelikan, *Luther the Expositor* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 1959). A companion volume to the American edition of *Luther’s Works*, 42. Source of the quotation is identified in footnote 30 as Karl Holl.

² Adolph Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics, Vol 1*, trans. James Langebartels and Heinrich Vogel (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2009), 1:296.

Still another example can be found in the introduction to Timothy Lull's anthology of Luther's writings: "Luther is an occasional theologian, not a systematic theologian! He wrote no single summary of his own teaching that can stand next to the greatest compends of Christian doctrine."³

The primary aim of this paper is to show the relationship between Luther's theological output to those who came after him, who are often referred to as "the dogmaticians." This paper will discuss the use of the terms used for the main branches of theology, but it does not aim to determine when dogmatic/systematic theology, exegetical theology, historical theology, or practical theology first came into being. It will rather question the practice of attempting to assign one of those terms to Martin Luther to the exclusion of others.

Luther and the branches of theology

In order to determine Luther's relationship to the Lutheran theologians who came after him, it will not do to use a structure not in use until well after Luther's time. The anachronistic application of terms like exegete, dogmatician, or systematician as disciplines of theology does not appear to have been used in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Rather, one will have to analyze examples of Luther's writings in order to ascertain whether any of these theological terms can be used to characterize Luther as a theologian of one kind or another.

It would seem that the terminology of the theological disciplines in use today really isn't helpful in attempting to define Luther's relationship to the theologians immediately following him: Melancthon, Chemnitz, and those of the seventeenth century.

A sampling of contemporary definitions of "systematic theology":

Wikipedia: Systematic theology is a discipline of Christian theology that formulates an orderly, rational, and coherent account of the doctrines of the Christian faith. Subdisciplines are dogmatics, ethics and philosophy of religion.⁴

Merriam-Webster: a branch of theology concerned with summarizing the doctrinal traditions of a religion (as Christianity) especially with a view to relating the traditions convincingly to the religion's present-day setting.

³ Timothy Lull, *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 1.

⁴ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Systematic_theology>; <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/systematic%20theology>>.

Dogmatics and dogmatic theology:

Merriam-Webster: a branch of theology that seeks to interpret the dogmas of a religious faith.

Wikipedia: that part of theology dealing with the theoretical truths of faith concerning God and God's works, especially the official theology recognized by an organized Church body.

New Advent: Dogmatic theology, then, may be defined as the scientific exposition of the entire theoretical doctrine concerning God Himself and His external activity, based on the dogmas of the Church.⁵

None of these would be found acceptable by any of the Lutheran dogmaticians writing in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. One can easily enough understand these definitions and what they intend to say. But they are of little help for a review of what Lutherans have understood the words to mean at least in the last two centuries. Whatever else can be said about the terms “dogmatic theology” and “systematic theology,” they probably say more about the definers than they do about theology.

Pelikan cites Heinrich Bornkamm's remark that if Luther were in a modern theological faculty, he would not be found in the systematic, dogmatics, or New Testament faculty but in the Old Testament faculty.⁶ Bornkamm's remark likewise commits the fallacy of interpreting history in the light of the present—those categories are irrelevant to Luther who considered his calling to be a biblical theologian (*Doctor in Biblia*). In the end, trying to apply them to Luther casts him into forms and concepts that are simply foreign to him, and omit the reasonable step of investigating whether the terms are even relevant to the time they are being applied.

On the other hand, it may be fruitful to investigate the nature of Luther's specific theological outlook and his relationship to the seventeenth-century Lutheran theologians, who are usually called “dogmaticians.” Their period is denominated “Seventeenth-century orthodoxy,” and we know those theologians as “the seventeenth-century dogmaticians.” There might be plenty of grounds to argue with the categories, especially since they are often used disparagingly.

⁵ <www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dogmatics>; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dogmatic_theology>; <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14580a.htm>>.

⁶ Pelikan, 45f. In a footnote, Pelikan cites Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther und Das Alte Testament* (Tübingen: n.p., 1948), 6.

Franz Pieper and Adolf Hoenecke, the two late-nineteenth-/early-twentieth-century dogmaticians associated with the Synodical Conference, can at least point us in a certain direction in analyzing Luther's relationship to the Lutheran dogmaticians who followed him. Pieper, while he does not refer to any assertions that Luther was not a systematic theologian, does defend dogmatics from nineteenth-century liberalism's plea for an "undogmatic Christianity." Pieper equates *dogma* with *divina doctrina*, doctrine, theology, scriptural teaching, so that what Scripture teaches about God, trinity, Christ, salvation etc. is dogma, and to treat any one of these or a collection of them is dogmatics.

In that context that Pieper makes a statement that some find alarming: "only dogmatics is edifying" [*Nur die Dogmatik ist erbaulich*] and "In the Christian Church, doctrine [*Lehre*] is the all-important thing."⁷ To understand Pieper to be using the term "dogmatics" in the sense of our previous examples of definitions would lead one to attribute to him something highly incoherent and foolish. But in the terms that Pieper has already used to speak of dogma and dogmatics as simply the teaching of Scripture, his claim is very clear. Thus, if one paraphrases Pieper to say "only the teaching of Scripture is edifying," it makes perfect sense to anyone who takes Scripture seriously.

Hoenecke does not define dogmatics as precisely as Pieper does. However in his prolegomena section on "The Concept and Essence of Dogmatics," he writes:

It is a part of the task of dogmatics to set forth the theological doctrines in a definite, well-organized order. That is why it is called systematic theology; for a system of doctrine is a unit that is composed of definite members and is ordered around a central point, so that everything that is set forth is brought into relationship with that central point. The solid central point of dogmatics is the statement that we are justified and saved through faith in Christ's atoning death.⁸

Building systems is not the purpose of systematic theology, but the systematic structure of dogmatics is only to serve the purpose of correctly presenting the doctrines which are given

⁷ Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, trans. H.W. Romoser and others (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 1:101f.

⁸ Hoenecke, 1:293.

in Scripture and in Scripture alone. Whatever systematizing in dogmatics exceeds that purpose is evil.⁹

While Pieper's and Hoenecke's treatments of dogma/dogmatics overlap to a certain extent, they do not cover the same ground; Hoenecke actually uses the terminology in a way that might be more consistent with some of the early modern theologians. And yet, what he describes is a systematic study of Scripture that is not judged by external evidence, and where the system is not the objective but a servant.

Pelikan's "biblical theologian" provides a way to return to the un-compartmentalized view of theology that more fittingly describes Luther's training and development. *Doctor in Biblia* was the degree conferred on Luther in 1512, and that was not nearly so restrictive as is the term "exegesis" in current theological vocabulary. On the face of it, the distinctive terms "exegesis," "dogmatics," and "systematic theology" all belong to the task of "biblical theology." If one feels compelled to ask which of the three Luther was, the only answer can be "all of them," and in fact, the same is true of those theologians we know as "the dogmaticians."

Pieper demonstrates that he has in fact taken this step when he writes:

[T]he dogma is the unifying core of the various theological disciplines. The dogma, the Scriptural doctrine, is the essential element in every discipline, which integrates all branches of sacred theology. The dogmatician must also be an exegete, historian, and practical theologian; and likewise the exegete, the historian, and the practical theologian must also be a good dogmatician [*zugleich gute Dogmatiker*].¹⁰

Hoenecke, in connection with our previous citation, lays out his view of Luther's theology:

Indeed, he has not left us a complete dogmatics, but he has treated many individual doctrines (*loci*), for example, *The Bondage of the Will*... and his *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper*. Luther is a dogmatician as an author of special treatises. There is no lack of systematics in his writings. He emphasizes the relationship of the articles of faith to one another,

⁹ Ibid., 1:294.

¹⁰ Pieper, 1:101.

for example justification and sanctification. Above all, Luther has hewn the stones for the structure of dogmatics from the quarry of Scripture. There is no article that he has not treated, as Melanchthon says of him.¹¹

Hoenecke also shows that he has thought of Luther as the model for the later dogmaticians:

Thus Luther is actually the man on whom Lutheran dogmatics has fed to this day in spite of the fact that he never wrote a specific work on dogmatics. This accounts for the fact that all the modern dogmaticians like to quote Luther as their authority. It was Luther and not Melanchthon who gave Lutheran dogmatics its content, although the latter really begins the long row of Lutheran dogmaticians with his *Loci communes*.¹²

Hoenecke has correctly perceived the relationship between Luther and the theologians following him in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. What Pieper has contributed is a way of viewing dogma such that it is narrowly restricted to biblical teaching handled exegetically, historically, and practically, and that there really can be no Christian theologian who is not simultaneously all of these, though some of them may be more specialized in an area, without excluding the others. To say that Luther was an exegete and not a dogmatician or systematic theologian is meaningless. There simply cannot be a true Christian theologian who does not grasp the teaching, the dogma, of the Bible, with which he has wrestled by studying the holy writings in their original languages.

Even though it is an anachronism to place Luther into one or another of the present-day branches or departments of theological study, it is not out of place to view theological activities described by the terms “exegesis,” “dogmatics,” “systematics,” or “historical theology” and to ask in what way Luther practiced them or was skilled in them. It is likewise appropriate to ask in what ways Luther paved the way for the dogmaticians who followed him, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In making judgments on Luther’s approach to Scripture and its teaching, his relation to Philipp Melanchthon is important. One can easily perceive the points of contact and even influences of Luther’s theology on Melanchthon, especially in the earlier editions of the *Loci*

¹¹ Hoenecke, 1:296.

¹² *Ibid.*, 1:298.

Communes and the Apology of the Augsburg Confession. Simply examining the list of topics Melanchthon follows in *Loci Communes*, and comparing it to the various Catechisms and confessions of 1528–30, it is certainly clear that Luther and Melanchthon are living in the same world of thought and the same biblical orientation. Neither is it difficult to see the connection between Melanchthon and Chemnitz, since in his *Loci Theologici* Chemnitz makes it very clear what is Melanchthon's material and what is his own. The J.A.O. Preus translation follows the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century printings of the Chemnitz *Loci* in setting Melanchthon's text for each *loci* in italics. This is the case at least for the Polycarp Leyser editions.¹³

If one excludes Luther from the class “dogmatic/systematic theologian” because he did not write a compendium of Christian theology, he is clearly in error. The catechisms are certainly compendia, and so are the confessional documents Luther had a hand in producing. If it is necessary that a compendium must be long, then Luther fails—but maybe not. Above, we saw Hoenecke citing Melanchthon saying of Luther, “There is no article that he has not treated.” While we would not recommend it, one could, using Melanchthon's or Gerhard's list of *loci*, select writings and paragraphs (even from sermons) from Luther's writings and assemble a reasonably complete compendium of Christian theology. It probably wouldn't read very well, but it would nevertheless cover the doctrines of Scripture. Furthermore, there are certainly no dogmatic compendia that are not selective in the topics they treat.

But leaving that possibility aside, it is a mistake to exclude Luther from the line of Christian teachers who have simultaneously excelled in exegetical commentary, dogmatic compendia, history of dogma, and practical (pastoral) theology.

Luther the Exegetical-Systematic-Dogmatic Biblical Theologian

Examination of some select Luther writings provides a view of Luther's exegetical, systematic, and dogmatic approach to theology. On the one hand, some may be classified as compendia, that is, they are concise summaries of a larger work—Scripture. In this category, Luther's Catechisms, the Smalcald Articles, and the Marburg and Schwabach

¹³ Compare Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici*, trans. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2008) and Martin Chemnitz, *Loci Theologici* (Francoforti ad Moenum: excudebat Joannes Spies, 1591), located in the Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary rare book collection housed in the Memorial Library special collections. Preus reports in his preface, “As was done in the original, the excerpts from Melanchthon's *Loci Communes* are in italics” (1:xvi). See also Addendum.

articles should be considered. On the other hand, there are several works which treat a single topic, but do so analytically, are fully supported by Scripture, tend to have polemical elements, but yet clearly explicate one or more specific teachings of Scripture. Those works would include *On Councils and the Church*, *Great Confession*, and *Bondage of the Will*, to mention just three. These are dogmatic treatises, systematic in the sense that they show relationships to the core of Luther's theology: justification through faith, divine monergism, as well as other doctrines. Other writings where one sees Luther drawing out the doctrines of Scripture are in the "exegetical works." For example, the Galatians commentary of 1535, especially in the commentary on chapters two through four, becomes a sharp treatise on the distinction between law and gospel. It is difficult to read Luther's exegetical works, especially Genesis and Psalms, without noticing that he repeatedly launches into discourses on issues of dogma, hardly ever shying away from polemical discourse.

An early view of Luther's theological approach can be found in the disputations, both the academic ones and the more programmatic ones like the *Ninety-five Theses* or *The Heidelberg Disputation*. The disputations are not incoherent, haphazard collections of statements to form the basis for debate and discussion. They are consciously worked out sentences which move a discussion systematically to a particular understanding of biblical teaching. *The Disputation against Scholastic Theology* is an outline of the doctrine of grace. The most familiar, if not much misunderstood, *Ninety-five Theses* is certainly focused on indulgences but is also aimed at the basis of biblical theology. *The Heidelberg Disputation* is focused on divine monergism but makes clear a fundamental point in Luther's repudiation of medieval theology. The heart of theology is the theology of the cross, which places God's revelation at the center, and not human reason or dependence on "visible things." While one can always see behind them Luther's careful examination of the biblical text, these writings are essentially exercises in setting forth dogma, that is, the teaching found in the Scripture.¹⁴

Luther's 1521 debate with Emser in "Concerning the Letter and the Spirit" shows Luther's skill at using the close reading of the text—his exegesis of 2 Corinthians 3:4–11—to show dogmatically the relationship between law and gospel. One can see essentially the same close reading of the text in Luther's later commentary on Galatians, which is much more than a take-it-or-leave-it account of the text, but carefully interweaves the reading of the text with the dogmatical statement of

¹⁴ The disputations mentioned are all found in *Luther's Works*, volume 31.

salvation by grace alone through faith and justification apart from the works of the law.

Luther's way of thinking about theology in systematic and dogmatic terms is also apparent in the catechisms. There are three distinct points to be seen in the catechisms. First, in Luther's own conception, the catechisms are a compendium of biblical teaching: the catechism "is a brief digest and summary of the entire Holy Scriptures."¹⁵ That would seem to make it "dogmatic theology." Both the Small Catechism and the Large Catechism are compendia, each with a different aim but the same outline.

Second, in the Large Catechism treatments of Baptism and the Supper, Luther analyzes the biblical texts of both by using the systematic formula: (a) essence (what it is) (b) its purpose (benefits, gifts, effects); and (c) its use (what to do with it). In spite of Luther's great antipathy against certain aspects of Aristotle's philosophy, he was not beyond using useful paradigms and rhetorical devices. The same approach is used in the Small Catechism, but is not labeled as such. In approaching the biblical material in that way, Luther systematizes and analyzes the biblical text, not reading into the text extraneous material but formulating and summarizing the teaching of Scripture.

Third, Luther shows his intention to formulate dogma by using a particular systematic approach, the one that grows out of the Agricola-Melanchthon dispute in the early 1520s. Luther did not invent the catechism—there were catechisms that contained at least the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Commandments, in that order, in the Middle Ages. In 1525, with or without Luther's own involvement, *A Booklet for Laity and Children* was published with the contents being Commandments, Creed, Lord's Prayer, Baptism, and Sacrament of the Altar, followed by some instruction on each part, which was a departure from the medieval order. Luther's name does not appear on that document, but it is difficult to believe that he had no hand in it, given the order and mode of expression found in it.¹⁶

In 1527, Johann Agricola published his *One Hundred Thirty Common Questions for the Young Children in the German Girl's School in Eisleben*.¹⁷ The arrangement of the questions was Gospel and Faith, Baptism, Repentance, the Creed, the Cross, Prayer and Lord's Prayer, and, finally, the Ten Commandments. This arrangement showed

¹⁵ Large Catechism, first Preface ¶18, K-W 382.

¹⁶ A translation appears in *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord*, ed. Robert Kolb and James Nestingen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 1.

¹⁷ K-N, 13.

Agricola's antinomianism (that true sorrow from sin arose not from the law but from the gospel), but also the medieval doctrine of faith and works, or "new Pelagianism," which would later be treated extensively in Article IV of the Apology.

The controversy directly involved Agricola and Melancthon, with Luther a not-very-visible participant. But Luther's point had already been made, and was even more strongly reiterated in the 1529 catechisms. Thereby, Luther also indicates that there are some aspects of system and order which are dogmatically necessary in order to reject antinomianism and work righteousness. In this case, it made a theological difference: which comes first, the gospel of the creeds and sacraments or the law?

Luther was a biblical theologian who did not know the artificial boundaries between exegesis, dogmatics, systematics, and historical theology because they are the whole fabric of biblical theology. For Luther the close reading of the text, grasping the internal relationship between the teaching of Scripture and the history of those teachings all point to a statement of what the Bible is—Christian teaching, dogma, and doctrine. The close reading of the text is necessary to speak clearly about what Scripture clearly teaches, and leads to careful formulation of that teaching. It is systematic because the unity of Scripture dictates that all biblical texts speaking to a particular teaching must be observed, though not harmonized on the basis of human reason. The polemical response that inevitably enters into such formulations is not a separate task, but a task integral to the explication of biblical teaching.

Luther's theological method can be seen at work in a number of other places. On the one hand, it can be seen in some of the polemical writings such as *Bondage of the Will* (1525), *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* (1528), and others, but it becomes especially clear in the doctrinal statements of 1528 and 1529 which were used in formulating the Confession at Augsburg.

The four sets of articles which were used in preparing the Augsburg Confession were Luther's *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* Part III and the Schwabach, Marburg, and Torgau articles. Except for the confession of 1528, the articles were all developed by the Wittenberg theologians for specific occasions, none of which were completely successful in accomplishing their stated purpose. However, in varying degrees, Luther has to be regarded as a primary drafter. The *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* was obviously Luther's work alone; he was the penman of the Marburg Articles; and he worked with Melancthon

and the others on the Schwabach and Torgau articles, both of which bear Luther's imprint.¹⁸

Luther's 1528 *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* was written as a final answer to the Sacramentarians. Luther added a third part to the treatise, which was a detailed confession of faith in three articles. The first article confesses the doctrine of God, the three-in-one, and rejects all of the heresies in that regard, which have also been rejected by the Roman Church. The second article deals with the incarnation and the work of Christ and rejects the errors which are contrary to the grace of Jesus Christ: glorification of free will, "both the new and old Pelagians," monasteries, etc. It also affirms the offices established by God—ministry, family, and civil estates—and the order of Christian love. The third article deals with the work of the Holy Spirit and everything in the third article of the Creed: church, sacraments, and resurrection of the body.

For Luther, as we shall see further, nearly everything is ordered or systematized under the doctrine of the triune God. Eugene Klug remarks that "every article in the Augsburg Confession can in this way be traced to statements in the Great Confession."¹⁹

In addition to that, there are three other doctrinal statements that Luther either drafted or participated in developing. From other documents, one can gather that Luther produced a first draft, Melanchthon refined, and then the other Wittenberg theologians had their turn.

The Schwabach articles were drafted in the summer of 1529 for a meeting aimed at a defensive alliance of the protestants. Since it was to be a religious alliance, Luther and Melanchthon insisted that the alliance had to be on the basis of agreement in biblical doctrine. The statement follows the previous pattern: 1. Trinity; 2 & 3. The incarnation and deity of Christ, and his work; 4. Sin; 5. Justification; 6. Faith and divine monergism; 7. "the preaching office or spoken word"; 8–11 The sacraments, including private confession; 12. The Holy Christian Church; 14. Final judgment and redemption; 15–17. Rejections of laws forcing

¹⁸ The Schwabach, Marburg, and Torgau articles are included, with historical introductions, in Kolb-Nestingen. All three, as well as the articles of *Luther's Confession Concerning Christ's Supper*, are included in footnotes in *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979). Translations of the articles, by H. E. Jacobs and others, including Luther's 1528 confession, are found in J. M. Reu, *The Augsburg Confession: A Collection of Sources With Historical Introduction* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005); [original publication: Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1930].

¹⁹ Eugene F. Klug, "Luther's Contribution to the Augsburg Confession," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 44, no. 2–3 (1980): 169.

celibacy, the monastic system, the sacrifice of the Mass, and ceremonies contrary to God's Word.

The Marburg Articles, composed by Luther, follow much the same pattern. Notable is the article entitled "the external word": "the Holy Spirit ... gives this faith or his gift to no one apart from preceding²⁰ preaching, or the spoken Word, or the gospel of Christ." Also added is an article on good works. However it was the final article "On the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood" where the greatest division between the Wittenbergers and the Zwingli-leaning protestants surfaced and they parted company.

Finally, the Torgau Articles were composed when the Lutherans were summoned to the Diet of Augsburg. There is no finely-tuned draft of these articles, but the drafts available show that the articles were in fulfillment of the invitation to the Lutherans to give an account of the changes they had made in the church life in their territories.²¹ Thus the articles are: 1. On Human Doctrine and Human Ordinances; 2. Marriage of Priests; 3. Both Kinds; 4. The Mass; 5. Confession; 6. Jurisdiction; 7. Ordination; 8. The Vow; 9. Invocation of Saints; and 10. Singing in German. As one can see, these articles form the basis for Augustana 22–28.

Shortly after the Lutherans arrived in Augsburg, they were met with a pamphlet by John Eck entitled "Four Hundred Four Articles..."²² in which, among other things, Eck lumped the Lutherans, Sacramentarians, and Enthusiasts together, misattributed some statements of others to Luther, and distorted some things Luther had indeed said. Therefore, Melanchthon was assigned to redraft the articles, and he made use of Luther's 1528 Confession and the other three.

By reconstructing their document in this way, the confession presented at Augsburg was crafted to show that the Lutherans were indeed faithful to the pure, catholic teaching of Scripture and the church fathers (Articles 1–21), and then gave an account of the changes that they had originally set out in the Torgau Articles.

Eugene Klug, in the article already cited, observes that because of the voluminous correspondence between Melanchthon at Augsburg and Luther at Coburg, and the use that was clearly being made of the

²⁰ See K-N 90n8: "A play upon the medieval scholastic concept of 'preceding' works or merit."

²¹ K-N, 93 ff.

²² *Ibid.*, 31 ff.

documents Luther had a hand in preparing, “much of the wording if not the style, was as much his [Luther’s] as Melanchthon’s.”²³

Aside from the points made by Klug, the documents that we have referred to above show that Luther was most certainly more than an “occasional” theologian, or primarily an exegete, or an unbalanced polemicist. While the gulf between Luther and Thomas Aquinas and the later scholastic theologians was great, Luther is not lacking the ability to approach the doctrines of Scripture systematically, or to formulate and summarize doctrine clearly, and in that, cannot be consigned to live only in the narrow halls of the Old Testament department. Lutheran theology may follow the later tradition of theological disciplines: exegesis, dogmatics, symbolics, etc. But what cannot escape one’s reading of Luther is that all of his work is aimed at confessing the dogma of Scripture in a systematic way, which went hand-in-hand with the close, exegetical reading of the biblical text.

The final exhibit of Luther’s systematic, dogmatic theology we would point to is the Smalcald Articles. These 1537 articles were prepared for the possible council to be held in Mantua, in which neither the Elector nor the Wittenberg theologians wanted to participate. But articles were prepared and, in the Elector’s mind, were to be as much a last will and testament of Luther as anything else. Of course, the council was not held in Mantua, but in Tridentinum, and the Lutherans were not invited, which does not seem to have hurt their feelings much.

Furthermore, though Luther reports that the articles were adopted at Schmalkald, this is not completely true. The article on the Lord’s Supper (Part III, Article 6) could not be accepted by some of the participants, and so, instead, the Augsburg Confession was reaffirmed and Melanchthon was commissioned to write an addendum to the Augustana(!) concerning the papacy as antichrist, which was a decisive part of Luther’s articles and which the league decided was necessary as a unifying factor in the stand that the league would take.

In spite of the failure of the Schmalkaldic League to adopt the articles, they were signed by those already known to be friendly to the Wittenberg theology, and in the years following the Articles were supported and finally included in the Formula of Concord’s “Binding Summary.”²⁴

With that in the background, the Smalcald Articles stand as a prime exhibit of Luther’s biblical theology, as a systematic compendium of

²³ Klug, 164.

²⁴ K-W, 528.

Scripture, clearly based on the biblical text, a presentation of Lutheran dogma, and a fierce polemic against the Roman corruptions of the gospel.

Luther's system is simple: I. Triune God and Incarnation; II. The Office and Work of Christ, including the repudiation of the corruptions of the mass, the monastic systems, and the papacy; III. The doctrines of sin, law, repentance, the sacraments, ecclesiastical issues. Part III is essentially the articles of Augustana Part I, but with some more precise statements (for example, compare AC VII and SA III, Article 6 on the Lord's Supper).

The outline Luther follows in the catechisms and the Smalcald Articles organizes the doctrine of Scripture according to the Trinity, so that first God and his revelation are discussed, then the office and work of Christ, and then the teaching of the Holy Spirit, which includes all of the doctrines having to do with God's revelation of himself through the work of Holy Spirit: the church, the means of grace, and the promise of eternal life. That remained the basic structure of doctrinal theology for the next generations.

Conclusion

To dismiss Luther as "not a dogmatician" or "not a systematic theologian" is at least a confused anachronism; more seriously, such dismissal fails to recognize Luther's theological breadth and depth. The skills Luther had as a theologian included what dogmaticians do. All of Luther's biblical theology was aimed at dogma, that is, the teachings of Scripture. He had, much of the time, a firm grasp of the history of theology, and his work was not at all without system and methodology. The estimation of Hoenecke that Luther was the one "on whom Lutheran dogmatics has fed to this day" is justified, and likewise, that it was Luther "who gave Lutheran dogmatics its content." We have also shown that the claim that Luther never authored any compendia of theology is wrong-headed. In spite of the harshness one might find in Luther's polemics also in the Smalcald Articles, they are a compendium of biblical doctrine, and the same must be said of the Catechisms.

A closer examination of the various dogmatic works of other Lutheran theologians, starting with Melancthon and Chemnitz and extending into the twentieth century to confessional, orthodox Lutheran theologians such as Hoenecke and Pieper, shows the continued influence of Luther in content and the basic methodology of theology. That is not to say that there have not been lapses; Luther was not perfect,

either in his dogmatic theology or in his exegesis, and neither have been those who continued the tradition of dogmatic compendia, thoroughly anchored in the close reading of Scripture.

At the very least, we would hope that Luther would be recognized as the model of the biblical theologian who is not caught up in the restricted focus of a single theological discipline. Rather, he should be the model of one as much at home in drawing the dogmatic content from Scripture as in the exegetical study of Scripture, or the history of theology, or practical theology. [LSQ](#)

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,
and is profitable
for doctrine,
for reproof,
for correction,
for instruction in righteousness.
2 Timothy 3:16*

Melanchthon 1521 <i>Loci Theologici</i>	Martin Chemnitz <i>Loci Theologici</i>	Johannes Gerhard <i>Loci Theologici</i>
I. The powers of man II. Sin III. Power and fruit of sin IV. Law V. Divine Law VI. Counsels VII. Monkish Vows VIII. Judicial and Ceremonial Laws IX. Human Laws X. Gospel XI. Meaning of the Gospel XII. Power of the Law XIII. Power of the Gospel XIV. Grace XV. Justification and faith XVI. Efficacy of faith XVII. Love and Hope XVIII. Summation of Law, Gospel, Faith XIX. The Old and the New Man XX. Mortal and Daily Sin XXI. Signs[Sacraments] XXII. Baptism XXIII. Penitence XXIV. Private Confession XXV. Participation in the Table of the Lord XXVI. Love XXVII. Magistrates XXVIII. Offense	I. God II. The Son of God III. The Holy Spirit IV. Creation V. The Cause of sin VI. Human nature, Freedom of the Will VII. Sin VIII. Divine Law IX. The difference between precepts and counsels X. Revenge XI. Poverty XII. Chastity XIII. Justification XIV. Good Works XV. Old and New Convents XVI. Mortal and Venial Sin XVII. The Church XVIII. The Sacrament in general XIX. Baptism XX. The Lord's Supper XXI. Marriage	I. Scripture II. The Nature of God III. The Trinity IV. The Person and Office of Christ V. Creation and Angels VI. Providence VII. Election and Reprobation VIII. The Image of God in man before the fall IX. Original sin X. Actual sin XI. Freedom of the will XII. The Law of God XIII. Ceremonial and civil law XIV. The Gospel XV. Penitence XVI. Justification through Faith XVII. Good works XVIII. The Sacraments XIX. Circumcision of the paschal lamb XX. Baptism XXI. The Holy Supper XXII. The Church XXIII. The Church's ministry XXIV. The civil realm XXV. Marriage and celibacy XXVI. Death XXVII. The Resurrection of the dead XXVIII. The final judgment XXIX. The end of the world XXX. Hell or eternal death XXXI. Eternal life
<i>From translation of Loci Communes by Charles Leander Hill, Boston: Meador Publishing, 1944</i>	<i>Contains Melanchthon's Loci, 1555 (? at least post-1535). Articles mostly follow M's 1555 order. J.A.O.Preus Translation, CPH, 1989, 2008. See also Manschreck 1965 translation of 1555 LC.</i>	



The Second Martin of the Lutheran Church

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THE LIFE OF MARTIN CHEMNITZ (1522–1586)

The Early Life of Martin Chemnitz

The name Martin Chemnitz is one largely buried in antiquity. With the exception of a few Lutherans who remember him in connection with the composition of the *Formula of Concord* (1577), Chemnitz is one of history's forgotten men. Yet, he was the leading light in Lutheranism after Luther, so much so that the seventeenth century had this saying: "If the second Martin (Chemnitz) had not come, the first Martin (Luther) would scarcely have stood" (*Si Martinus non fuisset, Martinus vix stetisset*). This is not to say that he was the only figure of any importance in the generation following Luther. But, of the sixteenth-century Lutheran theologians (Jakob Andreae [1528–1590], Nikolaus Selnecker [1528–1592], David Chytraeus [1531–1600], and others) who transmitted the treasures of the Lutheran Reformation to succeeding generations, Chemnitz was the greatest. He, more than any other, was the bridge and link between Luther and third-generation Lutherans, the dogmaticians of the seventeenth century. Chemnitz was not a creative spirit, but he put the theological inheritance which he received from Luther and Melancthon into a logical and systematic form for future generations. In this Reformation anniversary year, it is important to see the continuum between Luther and Chemnitz.

Martin Chemnitz was born November 9, 1522 in Treuenbrietzen, Germany,¹ a small town located fifteen miles northeast of Wittenberg. His father, Paul, was a wool merchant who died when Martin was eleven years old. The local schoolmaster, Laurentius Barthold, recognized him as a lad with superior gifts and persuaded his mother to send him to Latin school in Wittenberg. Because of financial difficulties, he had to discontinue his education for a time, but later with the help of two prominent citizens of Magdeburg, he continued his studies in the same city from 1539 to 1542. After some additional studies at the University of Frankfurt an der Oder, Chemnitz returned to Wittenberg in 1545. There he studied at the feet of Melanchthon (1497–1560) and established a longtime friendship with him. He considered Melanchthon to be one of his mentors. He rejected Melanchthon's later doctrinal errors, but he always strived to see him in the best possible light. As a bonus Chemnitz heard Luther lecture and preach in Wittenberg, but by his own admission he "did not hear him with due attention then."² It was later that he came to treasure the seminal writings of Martin Luther.

Chemnitz the Librarian at Königsberg

When the Smalcald War temporarily disrupted the University of Wittenberg, in 1547 Chemnitz sought the more peaceful atmosphere far to the north at Königsberg in East Prussia. As the rector of the city's Kneiphof school, he received his master's degree in 1548 at the newly established University of Königsberg. Later he attained the position of librarian at the ducal library of Königsberg. Here he had the opportunity to do a considerable amount of study which prepared him for his future as one of the greatest theologians of the age. Chemnitz was very much a self-taught doctor of the church.³

With the outbreak of the Osiandrian controversy in Königsberg, Chemnitz found himself at odds with Duke Albert of Prussia. Andrew Osiander (1498–1552), the Duke's favorite, advocated a doctrine of justification which stated that the sinner is justified not by imputed but by essential righteousness of Christ. God does not declare the sinner just, but makes him just; he does not impute Christ's obedience and righteousness to the sinner, but has Christ Himself dwell in the sinner

¹ J.A.O. Preus, *The Second Martin: The Life and Theology of Martin Chemnitz* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1994), 88. This is probably the most complete biography of Martin Chemnitz in the English language.

² August L. Graebner, "An Autobiography of Martin Chemnitz," *Theological Quarterly* Vol. III, no. 4 (October 1899), 479.

³ Preus, 91–95.

for his justification. This view was sharply resisted by Chemnitz and his friend Joachim Mörlin.⁴ The Duke did not dismiss Chemnitz because he needed his expertise as an astrologer. Chemnitz, however, decided himself not to remain in the hostile atmosphere of Prussia, especially since his friend Mörlin had been banished by the Duke.

Chemnitz the Superintendent

After Mörlin's flight from East Prussia he was called as superintendent at Braunschweig. At his urging, Chemnitz accepted the duties of preacher and coadjutor in Braunschweig. On November 25, 1554, John Bugenhagen, the original developer of the Reformation in Braunschweig, ordained Chemnitz into the holy ministry.⁵ In 1555, he married Anna Jaeger, the daughter of a licensed jurist, and to this union ten children were born.

In 1561, Chemnitz became involved in the Hardenberg case. Hardenberg was a preacher at the cathedral in Bremen, where he held to views concerning the Lord's Supper that were considered to be Reformed. At a meeting held in Braunschweig, Hardenberg was declared to be a despiser of the *Augsburg Confession* and a Sacramentarian. That same year Chemnitz' first theological publication appeared, a lengthy treatise on the Lord's Supper in reaction to Hardenberg.⁶ What Chemnitz found particularly disturbing was the dishonesty in the word-games played by the Crypto-Calvinists. Rather

⁴ Joachim Mörlin (1514–1571) was born in Wittenberg when Luther was still a monk in the Augustinian cloister and later attended the university there, becoming an avid follower of Luther. He was one of the hardliners in the opposition against the imperial edict of the Augsburg Interim and the Leipzig Interim. He was also among the fiercest critics of Andreas Osiander and his doctrine of justification. Remember Osiander emphasized that the divine nature of Christ dwelling within us is salvific in contradistinction to the work of Christ outside of us. According to Scripture, the righteousness that avails before God for mankind is the righteousness accomplished through the active and passive obedience of the God-Man. We are not saved by the essential righteousness of the divine Christ dwelling in us through the mystical union. Therefore, Mörlin rejected such statements of Osiander: "For 1500 years the blood of Christ has been gone and for us it is good for nothing. It dried up in the garment of Christ (*Das Blut Christi sei seit 1500 Jahren dahin und sei uns nichts nütze, es sei in Christi Rock vertrocknet*)" (Jürgen Diestelmann, *Joachim Mörlin* [Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 2003], 133). This controversy caused him to leave Königsberg and become superintendent in Braunschweig in 1553 where Chemnitz later joined him. In 1567, he was installed as bishop of Samland at Königsberg. He was one of the important mentors of Chemnitz.

⁵ Preus, 99.

⁶ Diestelmann, 245–276.

than being straightforward as the Zwinglians had been, the Crypto-Calvinists were concealing their error with deceptive words. Chemnitz emphasized the interpretation of the Words of Institution and the importance of distinguishing between questions having to do with the substance and essence of the Supper and those dealing only with its power and effect. The Calvinists were more interested in the latter, and this he found to be the great weakness in their approach.⁷

In 1567 and 1568 Chemnitz reaped the fruits of his long years of self-preparation, for in 1567 he was appointed superintendent of Braunschweig when Mörlin became bishop of Königsberg, and the following year he received his doctorate in theology at the University of Rostock. He faithfully served the church in Braunschweig as superintendent. An important vehicle in developing the confessional consciousness of both the laity and the clergy was the publication in 1569 of his *Enchiridion* which was used in the preparation of the clergy for examinations by the superintendent and for the examination of candidates for ordination.⁸

Chemnitz the Theologian and Concordist

A short writing by Chemnitz against the new Jesuit order brought him into conflict first with Johannes Alber of Cologne, and then with a more formidable foe, Jacob Payva de Andrada. In answer to Andrada and his defense of the Council of Trent, Chemnitz analyzed the Council in four books, demonstrating with exhaustive evidence from Scripture and from the ancient teachers of the church where the Council of Trent had departed from the teaching of Scripture. In his *Examen*, Chemnitz, following Luther, helped the church to see the difference between justification itself and the fruits of justification. He distinguished clearly between the righteousness which is ours by imputation unto faith, i.e., forensic righteousness, and the righteousness that is worked in us gradually as a result of faith, that is, that which belongs to sanctification. Werner Elert writes, "As Martin Chemnitz showed in his critique of the Trent dogma, this concept made it impossible to bridge the opposition."⁹ There was an irreconcilable difference between

⁷ Theodore Jungkuntz, *Formulators of the Formula of Concord* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1977), 54.

⁸ For an English translation of his *enchiridion* see Martin Chemnitz, *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments: An Enchiridion*, trans. Luther Poellot (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981).

⁹ Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism*, Vol. I (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 73.

the Lutherans and Rome concerning the central article of the faith. The first volume of the *Examen* which appeared in 1565 covered the chief articles of the Christian faith. In the remaining three volumes he treated the Sacraments and the abuses in the Roman Church which the Council of Trent sought to defend.

Chemnitz is known predominantly for the role which he played during the dissension that arose after Luther's death. After Luther's death, Melanchthon was looked upon as the leading theologian in the Lutheran Church, but he was unable to give strong direction. Melanchthon did not have leadership qualities. He tended to vacillate on important doctrinal issues. As a result of this, opposing parties like the Gnesio-Lutherans, who believed they were upholding Luther's doctrine, and the Philippists, who read Luther through the sieve of Melanchthon, arose in the Lutheran Church. It was Chemnitz, more than anyone else, who was the guiding force behind the *Formula of Concord* which settled these doctrinal controversies. He was instrumental in putting together this document which was signed by three electors, twenty dukes and princes, many lesser nobles, thirty-five imperial cities, and about 8,000 pastors and teachers. Chemnitz was irenic, yet firm. He did not engage in name calling but focused on the issues, and as a result brought concord out of dissension.

Chemnitz was a prolific writer. Besides the *Formula*, the *Examen*, and the *Enchiridion*, Chemnitz wrote the *De Duabus Naturis*, a learned study of the two natures in Christ; the *Loci Theologici*, lectures on the *Loci Communes of Melanchthon*; the *De Coena Domini*, his main work on the Lord's Supper; the *Kirchenordnung or Church Order of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel*, together with Jacob Andreae;¹⁰ the *Harmonia Evangelica*, a harmony of the four Gospels,¹¹ which he produced together with Leyser

¹⁰ The *Church Order for Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel* is significant because its authors were Martin Chemnitz and Jacob Andreae, who also helped prepare the *Formula of Concord*. The Church Order, in effect, is the Lutheran doctrinal confession put into practice. It contains a summary of basic Christian doctrine, an agenda for the divine service, directions for Christian schools, and a guide for many points of pastoral theology. Seeing how the authors of the *Formula of Concord* put it into practice is instructive for us today. Martin Chemnitz and Jacob Andreae, *Church Order for Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel: How Doctrine, Ceremonies, and Other Church-Related Matters Shall (by God's Grace) Be Conducted Henceforth*, trans. Jacob Corzine, Matthew C. Harrison, et al. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2015).

¹¹ 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

and Gerhard;¹² the *Postilla*, his sermons; and the *Apologia*, a defense of the *Formula of Concord* which he authored together with Kirchner and Selnecker.¹³

Throughout his life Chemnitz enjoyed excellent health which allowed him to do an amazing amount of scholarly work. But by 1582, though only sixty years old, he suffered from what we would today call “burnout.” In 1584 he resigned from his office as superintendent. On April 6, 1586 he died, a faithful confessor of the church.

Theological Points in the Writings of Martin Chemnitz

Chemnitz and Scripture

The doctrine of the inspiration and authority of Scripture was not in question at Chemnitz’ time, nor during the lifetime of Luther. It was generally assumed by all parties involved in the controversies of the time that the Scripture was errorless and authoritative. In his writings, Chemnitz continues the high view of Scripture that is found in Luther. The Holy Scriptures are the very Word of God and they are a powerful and creative thing. They are the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). The Scripture is the life-giving Word of the Lord:

What we have thus far adduced from the very words of Scripture are the firmest of firm testimonies on which a pious heart can safely rest. For they set before us the judgment of the Holy Spirit Himself concerning the Scripture. For as the

Gerhard in 1626–1627 (chapters 141–180). This massive harmony of the Gospels was published in completion at Frankfurt and Hamburg in 1652.

¹² See also Gaylin R. Schmeling, “Polykarp Leyser (1552–1610): A Theological Bridge Between Chemnitz and Gerhard,” *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 50, no. 2 & 3 (June–September 2010): 187–207.

¹³ When Lutheranism returned to the Palatinate in 1576 with the reign of Ludwig VI, Calvinists like Zacharias Ursinus (1534–1583), one of the authors of the Heidelberg Catechism, left the University of Heidelberg and established an anti-school at Neustadt an der Hardt. Here a critique of the *Book of Concord* was prepared in 1581. This critique, mainly authored by Ursinus, was entitled *Christian Admonition on the Book of Concord (Neostadiensium Admonitio)*. The critique was intended to refute mainly the Lutheran doctrines of Christology, the Lord’s Supper, and election.

The Lutherans gathered at Erfurt to draw up a defense of the *Book of Concord*. Martin Chemnitz was there at the request of the elector of Brandenburg, Nikolaus Selnecker represented Saxony, and Timotheus Kirchner the government of Ludwig of the Palatinate. The Lutherans responded to the Neustadt Admonition with the *Apology of the Book of Concord (Apologia oder Verantwortung des Christlichen ConcordienBuchs, 1583)*. It is also referred to as the Erfurt Book. This apology was a detailed defense of the Lutheran doctrine of Christology, the Lord’s Supper, and election.

ancients say that concerning God nothing should be believed except on the basis of His own revelation and testimony, so also we should believe about the Scripture what the Scripture says about itself, or rather, what its author, the Holy Spirit Himself, concludes and declares about His work. But we shall also add the consensus of the ancient church concerning the authority, perfection, and sufficiency of the Scripture. For we love and venerate the testimonies of the ancient and purer church, by whose agreement we are both aided and confirmed; but our faith must rest on the word of God, not on human authority. Therefore we do not set the testimonies of the fathers over the Scripture, but subordinate them to it.¹⁴

At one time God revealed His Word by various ways and means. For sometimes, appearing Himself to the holy fathers, He spoke in their presence, sometimes through prophets inspired and moved by His Spirit; finally He spoke to mankind through His Son and the apostles. Heb 1:1–2; 2:3; 2 Ptr 1:21; 2 Ti 3:16; Lk 1:70. But He gave us neither command nor promise to expect that kind of inspirations or revelations. Yet for the sake of posterity He saw to it that this Word of His, first revealed by preaching and confirmed by subsequent miracles, was later put into writing by faithful witnesses. And to that very same Word, comprehended in the prophetic and apostolic writings, He bound His church, so that whenever we want to know or show that a teaching is God's Word, this should be our axiom: Thus it is written; thus Scripture speaks and testifies.¹⁵

Chemnitz, following Eusebius of Caesarea,¹⁶ the church historian, and the early church fathers, makes a distinction in the canon between *homologoumena* (commonly confessed) books and *antilegomena* (those spoken against by some) books.¹⁷ Luther makes the same distinction.¹⁸ The *homologoumena* books are those books recognized by all as verbally inspired by God. The *antilegomena* books are those books whose

¹⁴ Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, trans. Fred Kramer, 4 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971–1986), 1:150.

¹⁵ Chemnitz, *Enchiridion*, 40–41.

¹⁶ Paul L. Maier, *Eusebius: The Church History* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999), 115 (Eusebius III, para. 25).

¹⁷ Chemnitz, *Examination*, 1:180–189.

¹⁸ LW 35:394–400.

integrity was questioned by some. These books in the New Testament are Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and the Revelation. While some had reservations about these books, believers in general recognized the voice of the Lord in them and they remained a part of the canon. Yet because the *antilegomena* books were questioned in the past, the church does not base any teaching on these writings unless that teaching is also found in the *homologoumena* books. Some would say, "Doesn't the debate over the *antilegomena* books prove that the church has authority over the canon, that the church established the canon?" Actually it proves the very opposite. It shows that it was not church councils or scholars that decided which books were part of the Scripture. Rather, the books showed themselves to be God's very Word and were recognized as such by the church which was created through these instruments of God. For that reason even those who had questions could not change the status of a certain book but had to bow to the workings of God. No church council or scholar can declare *antilegomena* to be *homologoumena* or vice versa.

In the Luther Bible between the Old and New Testaments there is a collection of books called the Apocrypha concerning which Luther says, "These books are not held equal to the Holy Scripture but are useful and good to read."¹⁹ Chemnitz continues this distinction.²⁰ The term "Apocrypha" means "hidden" in the sense that these books were of an obscure and doubtful character and not considered canonical by Old Testament believers. The Roman Catholic Church at the Council of Trent (1545–1563) decreed that these books were equal to the canonical books of the Bible. The Reformed churches went to the opposite extreme and rejected these writings as having no value whatsoever. As a consequence, very few editions of the English Bible contain the Apocrypha. The Lutheran church, following the lead of Luther, has taken the proper middle course. Although we admit that these writings are not of equal authority with the canonical books of the Holy Scripture, we say with Luther that they are good and useful reading. Here we have a witness to the faith of the believers who lived in the Intertestamental Period. Because the Lutheran church has this view of the Apocrypha, passages from the Apocrypha have at times been used

¹⁹ LW 35:337n. *Apokrypha, das sind Bucher, welche der heiligen Schrift nicht gleich gehalten, aber doch nützlich und gut zu lesen sind* (WA DB 2, 547).

²⁰ Chemnitz, *Examination*, 1:180–189.

as sermon texts and as lections in public worship. For example Walther based one of his wedding sermons on a text from the book of Tobit.²¹

Chemnitz and Christology

In the Reformation there were major conflicts concerning the person of Christ. Contrary to the Nestorian tendencies of the Reformed, Luther maintained the true biblical doctrine of the person of Christ, following in the tradition of Cyril of Alexandria and John of Damascus. Christ is both true God and true man in one person. The Savior had to be God in the flesh so that He could conquer the power of sin, death, and the devil. He had to be true man to live a perfect life in our place and so that He could suffer and die in our stead. He had to be true God so that His holy life and death would have infinite value for all people.

Chemnitz confessed this same Cyrillian Christology. He maintained a true personal union or hypostatic union. In the personal union, the incarnate, divine Logos assumed a perfect human nature, which never subsisted in itself, into His divine person so that the natures are so intimately united as to form one undivided, indivisible person in Christ. Thus we confess that God pushed forth from the Virgin's womb and that she is the Mother of God (*Theotokos*). We confess that one of the Trinity died on the cross, as we sing in the hymn "O grosse Not! Gott selbst ist tot."²²

Already in John of Damascus there are allusions to the three genera of the communication of attributes.²³ Chemnitz follows this logic in explaining the personal union. Concerning the first genus, the *genus idiomaticum*, he teaches that because the divine and human natures of Christ constitute one Person, the attributes, belonging essentially to only one nature are always ascribed to the whole Person, but the divine attributes according to the divine nature, and the human attributes according to the human nature.²⁴

The second genus, the *genus maiestaticum*, which is the third genus for Chemnitz, is explained in this way: concerning the second genus

²¹ C.F.W. Walther, *Predigtenwürfe* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1903), 383.

²² O sorrow dread! Our God is dead (ELH 332:2).

²³ Gaylin R. Schmeling, "Book Review: St. John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology," *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (March 2009): 84–93.

²⁴ Martin Chemnitz, *The Two Natures in Christ*, trans. J.A.O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House 1971), 6, 83; Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), II, 143; FC SD VIII, 36f, *Triglotta* 1027.

Lutherans teach in the hypostatic union, while nothing is added to or taken away from the divine nature in itself, yet, because of the hypostatic union with the deity, countless supernatural qualities and qualities which are even contrary to the common condition of human nature, are given and communicated to Christ's human nature.²⁵

The third genus, the *genus apotelesmaticum*, which is the second genus for Chemnitz, consists in this, that all official acts which Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King has performed and still performs for the salvation of men, He performs according to both natures, by each doing what is proper to it, not by itself and apart from the other nature, but in constant communion with the other, in one undivided theanthropic action.²⁶

The doctrine of the personal union in Christ is not the bone-dry speculation of theologians with no value for the Christian in the here and now. The personal union gives great comfort each day of our lives. From this scriptural doctrine we know that God is our Savior, not a mere man in whom the deity dwelt in a greater degree than others. Only a divine Savior could conquer sin, hell, and the devil. Only a divine Savior could enter death, tearing it apart and ripping it to pieces, so that now death for the Christian is not the terrible end of everything but rather a new and great beginning in joy.

This divine Savior is with believers in every need. According to the *genus maiestaticum*, He is not only present in the fiery deity before whom none dare to stand but also as our human brother. He is everywhere at all times. Luther states that he desires to know no god except God in the flesh. To meet God outside of the flesh will utterly destroy us. There is no comfort in Christ's presence for us if He is present only in the burning, consuming deity. Luther writes, "Therefore, a Christian should know that he is to seek and find God nowhere else but on the Virgin's lap and on the cross, or however and wherever Christ reveals Himself in the Word."²⁷ Yet there is great comfort in knowing that He is God, our human brother. He knows our conflicts and sorrows for He endured them. He already gave His life for us on the cross. Therefore, we have the certainty that He, our human brother who knows our needs, will be

²⁵ Chemnitz, *Two Natures*, 6, 83, 244; Pieper, *Dogmatics*, II, 220; FC SD VIII, 50–52, *Triglotta* 1031.

²⁶ Chemnitz, *Two Natures*, 83; Pieper, *Dogmatics*, II, 247; FC SD VII, 46, 47, *Triglotta* 1031.

²⁷ LW 69:67 (WA 28:136). See also LW 16:55 (WA 25:107), LW 26:29.

with us in all the problems of life, working all for our good, even turning evil into good in our lives.²⁸

Chemnitz and Baptism

Chemnitz summarizes the essential parts of Baptism thus:

- I. The element of water (Jn 3:5; Eph 5:25–26; Acts 10:47).
- II. The Word of God (Eph 5:26; Cleansing with the washing of water by the Word—namely the command of Christ regarding the conferring of Baptism, Mt 28:19, and the very promise of grace, Mk 16:16). For that word of the command and promise of God is a true consecration or sanctification by which Baptism becomes a clean water (Eze 36:25), in fact a water of life (Eze 47:9; Zch 14:8) and a washing of regeneration (Tts 3:5).²⁹

In the Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel Church Order of 1569, Chemnitz points out that the entire Trinity is active in Baptism:

But if Baptism is administered on the basis of and according to this command and promise along with the words, then it enjoys the presence of God the Father, who saves us through the washing of rebirth (Titus 3 [:5]); of God the Son, who purifies His Church through the washing of water in the Word (Ephesians 5 [:26]); and of the Holy Spirit, who gives us rebirth and renewal through this washing of water in the Word (John 3 [:5]; Titus 3 [:5]). And from this, Baptism derives its identity as a blessed washing which cleanses us from sin.³⁰

For Chemnitz, infant Baptism is biblical and it is essential for children. Christ declared that children are part of the kingdom of heaven or kingdom of God (Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:14). No one can be part of the kingdom of heaven unless he is reborn, having faith worked in his heart. This washing of rebirth occurs through Baptism (John 3:5; Titus 3:5). Therefore infants should be baptized. Second, Christ wants infants to be saved for it is not the will of the Father that any of these little ones should perish (Matthew 18:14). The way that they are

²⁸ Chemnitz, *Two Natures*, 147ff.

²⁹ Chemnitz, *Enchiridion*, 112.

³⁰ Chemnitz and Andreae, *Church Order*, 54.

saved from destruction is through Baptism. Third, infants are born dead in trespasses and sins and are by nature children of wrath (Psalm 51:5; Ephesians 2:3). Baptism is the divine means which brings them the forgiveness of Christ and washes away sin (Acts 2:38, 22:16). Fourth, Christ commanded and desires little children to be brought to Him that He might bless them (Mark 10:14, 16). How can they be brought to Him? They are brought to Him in Baptism. The Scriptures declare that those who are baptized put on Christ (Galatians 3:27). They are baptized into His death and resurrection (Romans 6:3; 1 Peter 3:21). Christ cleanses and sanctifies the church through the washing of water by the Word (Ephesians 5:26). Fifth, Baptism in the New Testament is compared to circumcision in the Old Testament (Colossians 2:11–12). Therefore as circumcision in the Old Testament was not only for adults but also for children, the same is true concerning Baptism in the New Testament. Sixth, in the Old Testament it is prophesied that in the New Testament not only adults but also children would become part of the church (Isaiah 49:22). In the New Testament Peter tells us that the promise of Baptism is for both adults and children (Acts 2:39).³¹ Thus, infants should be baptized.

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism gives great and magnificent blessings. Baptism works rebirth so that one is born again through faith in Jesus as the Savior (John 3:5; Titus 3:5; 1 John 5:1). Here new and wonderful life begins that will culminate in the resurrection on the last day. Baptism washes away sin and gives full forgiveness (Acts 2:38, 22:16). In Baptism one puts on Christ (Galatians 3:27) and is intimately united with Him. The Holy Spirit comes upon him in all his fullness (Acts 2:38) and the entire Trinity dwells within him (John 14:23). The one baptized receives adoption and becomes a son of God (Galatians 4:5), partaking in the divine (2 Peter 1:4). In Baptism, he is united with Christ's death and resurrection (Romans 6; 1 Peter 3:21). The old sinful flesh is buried with Christ in the tomb, and as Christ rose triumphant Easter morning, so the new man comes forth and arises. This dying and rising again continues daily in the Christian's life through true repentance and faith in the Savior, climaxing in the resurrection on the last day.³²

The question often arises: what happens to infants that die before birth or to newborn babies whose parents do not have the opportunity to baptize them? Chemnitz reminds Christians that the Lord has bound

³¹ Chemnitz, *Enchiridion*, 116–117.

³² *Ibid.*, 113, 115–116.

them to means, therefore they will take every opportunity to baptize their children. However, God has not bound Himself to such means.

[W]hen today infants die before they are born—in such cases the grace of God is not bound to the Sacraments, but those infants are to be brought and commended to Christ in prayers. And one should not doubt that those prayers are heard, for they are made in the name of Christ. Jn 16:23; Gn 17:7; Mt 19:14. Since, then, we cannot bring infants as yet unborn to Christ through Baptism, therefore, we should do it through pious prayers. Parents are to be put in mind of this, and if perhaps such a case occur, they are to be encouraged with this comfort.³³

Chemnitz and the Lord's Supper

Chemnitz' doctrine of the Lord's Supper has its foundation in the Words of Institution. Just as all dogmas of the church have their foundation in definite passages of Scripture where they are clearly treated and explained (*sedes doctrinae*), so the proper foundation for the doctrine of the Supper is to be found in the *Verba* as they are recorded in Matthew 26:26–28, Mark 14:22–24, Luke 22:19–20, and 1 Corinthians 11:23–25. Chemnitz chides all those who want to find a basis for the Sacrament outside the Words of Institution or who refuse to make the *Verba* normative in the study of the Supper. He agrees with Cyprian who says concerning the Sacrament, “We ought not to give heed to what someone before us thought should be done, but to what He, who is before all, did first.”³⁴

The Essence of the Sacrament

Following the Ancient Church beginning with Irenaeus,³⁵ Chemnitz speaks of the Sacrament as consisting of both the earthly and heavenly elements. The earthly elements are bread from grain and wine from grapes. The heavenly elements are body and blood of Christ born of Mary, crucified and raised again.³⁶

³³ Ibid., 119–120. See also Chemnitz and Andreae, *Church Order*, 58; *Comfort for Women Who Have Had a Miscarriage*, LW 43:245–250 (WA 53:205–208).

³⁴ Martin Chemnitz, *Examination*, 2:312.

³⁵ Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* IV, 18, 5.

³⁶ Martin Chemnitz, *The Lord's Supper*, trans. J.A.O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 46.

We grant, with Irenaeus, that after the blessing in the Eucharist the bread is no longer common bread but the Eucharist of the body of Christ, which now consists of two things—the earthly, that is, bread and wine, and the heavenly, that is, the body and blood of Christ. This is certainly a great, miraculous, and truly divine change, since before it was simply only ordinary bread and common wine. What now, after the blessing, is truly and substantially present, offered, and received is truly and substantially the body and blood of Christ. Therefore we grant that a certain change takes place, so that it can truly be said of the bread that it is the body of Christ. But we deny that it follows from this that we must therefore assert the kind of transubstantiation which the papalists teach.³⁷

The Efficient Cause of the Sacrament

The Holy Sacrament bestows upon us all the blessings of salvation. Because it is such a treasure, Christians will want to be certain that they have the Supper in their midst. How does one know that he has the true Supper? What causes Christ's body and blood to be present in the Sacrament or what effects the presence? It is not any power or work of man, but alone the Word and institution of Christ, as Chemnitz declares.³⁸ It is that all-powerful Word which God spoke at the creation and it was done (Psalm 33:9). Because the presence is not effected by any human words or actions, Chemnitz does not make the eucharistic prayer or the canon of the Mass a prerequisite for the Supper. In this regard Chemnitz asserts:

[H]e acts wickedly who takes away the consecration of the Eucharist from the words of divine institution and transfers it to the prayers of the canon, which have been patched together by men out of unsound and sound, or rather, mostly out of unsound materials.³⁹

Chemnitz teaches that the Words of Institution spoken by the minister are the effectual cause of the presence. At the same time, he binds the consecration into an intimate relationship with Christ's original institution and command as is done in the *Formula of Concord*:

³⁷ Chemnitz, *Examination*, 2:257–258.

³⁸ Chemnitz, *Lord's Supper*, 139.

³⁹ Chemnitz, *Examination*, 2:226.

For where His institution is observed and His words are spoken over the bread and cup (wine), and the consecrated bread and cup (wine) are distributed, Christ Himself, through the spoken words, is still efficacious by virtue of the first institution, through His word, which He wishes to be there repeated.⁴⁰

Thus the Words of Institution are efficacious by virtue of the original institution. The Words of Institution repeated by the minister in a proper celebration of the Sacrament (consecration, distribution, reception), by virtue of Christ's original command and institution, effect the presence of Christ's body and blood in the Supper.

The Last Will and Testament of Christ

The Sacrament is the last will and testament of Christ for Jesus says that this "is the New Testament in my blood." It is a gift or inheritance for God's people and not a human work or something we offer to God. According to Luther the sacrament contains all the elements of a last will and testament.

Since God in the Scriptures again and again calls his promise a testament he means to announce thereby that he will die; and again, in calling it a promise he means to announce that he will live. And thus, by that one word he wanted to make us understand that he would become man, die; and yet live eternally. . . . A testament is nothing but the last will of one who is dying, telling how his heirs are to live with and dispose of his properties after his death. . . . Four things are necessary in a complete and proper testament: the testator, the oral or written promise, the inheritance, and the heirs; and all of these are clearly visible to us in this testament. The **testator** is Christ, who is about to die. The **promise** is contained in the words with which the bread and wine are consecrated. The **inheritance** which Christ has bequeathed to us in his testament is the forgiveness of sins. The **heirs** are all the believers in Christ, namely, the holy elect children of God—wherefore Paul in Titus 1[:1] calls the Christian faith the faith of the elect.⁴¹

Before a man dies he often prepares his will in which he bequeaths his property to whomever he desires. Those remembered in his will may

⁴⁰ FC SD VII, 75, *Triglotta* 999.

⁴¹ LW 36:179–180.

be totally unworthy, but he has the right to do as he pleases with what is his. Then, through his death, the will is made effective. Likewise, Jesus is the testator who prepared for his death and established his will, his gift. The Holy Supper is Christ's last will and testament which is to be distributed to believers for all time. This testament he ratified and made effective through his death on the cross. We, his heirs, do nothing to obtain the inheritance nor are we worthy to receive it. The Holy Supper is totally and completely a testament or a gift from God. It is the greatest inheritance that we can ever imagine. It is more valuable than all the wealth of this world. Here is bequeathed to us the greatest treasure of all times, all the blessings of the cross.

The fact that the *Verba* are Christ's last will and testament is of extreme importance to Chemnitz because this indicates that these words must be interpreted literally.

[W]hen the last will and testament of a man has been executed, we are required under the law to observe the words with special care so that nothing be done which is either beside or contrary to the final will of the testator. . . . Now, because the Son of God in His last will and testament has not permitted His heirs the liberty of believing or doing whatever seems good to them, but has willed that we believe what He has spoken in His words of institution and do what He has commanded, therefore we should give very careful thought that we do not thrust anything upon these words of the last will and testament of the Son of God, lest we deprive ourselves of the benefit of eternal happiness conveyed to us by His will or our inheritance itself be taken from us as being unworthy because we have departed from the will of the Testator as it has been given to us in the words of His last testament.⁴²

If the words of a human will cannot be changed or modified but must be taken literally, how much more shouldn't the last will and testament of God's Son be followed carefully and understood literally?

The fact that Christ's last will and testament is to be taken literally is used by Chemnitz as he contends with his adversaries on both sides of the issue of the Lord's Supper. He opposes the Sacramentarians who refuse to take the *Verba* literally saying that the bread only represents the Lord's body. He takes the same position over against the Roman Church when it argues that Christ's body and blood are present apart

⁴² Chemnitz, *Lord's Supper*, 27.

from the divinely instituted use or action. Also, because the Sacrament is the last will and testament of Christ, it is a gift or inheritance for God's people and not a sacrifice of Christ's body and blood offered to the Father in the Supper.

The Supper and Sacrifice

The atonement sacrifice for all sin was finished and completed at the cross when the Savior cried out, "It is finished" (John 19:30; see also 1 Peter 3:18, Hebrews 7:26–27, 9:12). Since the sacrifice of Christ is complete, the Roman Catholic Church perverts the priestly office of Christ when it speaks of each repetition of the Lord's Supper as an unbloody sacrifice—the same sacrifice as the sacrifice of the cross, only in an unbloody manner: "The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist *are one single sacrifice*. ... 'In this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, the same Christ who offered himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner.'"⁴³

To say that the Supper is the same sacrifice as the sacrifice of the cross, namely, that in the sacrament Christ's body and blood are again offered up to appease God's just anger over sin, impairs the oneness of the once and for all sacrifice on the cross (Hebrews 7:26–27, 9:12). The sacrifice of the cross cannot be all-sufficient, offered once, and still need to be continually offered in the Mass. The only way that the sacrament may be spoken of as a sacrifice is that the very body and blood which were once offered for the redemption of all are now present in the Supper conveying the blessings of that redemption to the individual. Chemnitz writes in his *Examen*:

The fathers call the body and blood of the Lord which are present in the Supper a saving sacrifice, a pure host, our ransom, the purchase price of our redemption, the ransom for the sins of the world, a propitiatory sacrifice and a propitiation, **not because the body and blood of Christ are offered in the Mass by the action of the priest in order that they may become the ransom and propitiation for the sins of the whole world, but because that sacrifice which was once offered on the cross for our redemption and for the sins of the whole world—the body and blood of the Lord—is present, is dispensed, offered,**

⁴³ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1994), 344, para. 1367.

and taken in the Lord's Supper, so that the power and efficacy of this offering, once made on the cross, is applied and sealed individually to all who receive it in faith. Thus Cyprian says of the Lord's Supper: "This life-giving bread and the cup of blessing, hallowed by the solemn benediction, benefits the life of the total man, being at the same time a medicine and an offering, to heal our infirmities and to purge our iniquities."⁴⁴

The Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions are extremely emphatic in their rejection of any form of propitiatory sacrifice in the Supper which militates against the once and for all sacrifice of the cross or makes the Sacrament a human work or sacrifice.

The Supper and John 6

Another section of Scripture often referred to in the study of the Lord's Supper is John 6. The Sacramentarians of Chemnitz' day held that the Words of Institution must be interpreted in the light of John 6. Since the eating of John 6 refers to spiritual eating by faith and John 6:63 indicates that "the flesh profits nothing," the Sacramentarians maintained that the only eating of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper was a spiritual eating and not a sacramental eating with the mouth.

In response to this argument, Chemnitz agrees that John 6 refers to spiritual eating, but as a result of this he holds that it does not specifically speak to the Lord's Supper. The eating and drinking in John 6 refer to the eating and drinking which a believer does by faith through the means of grace, receiving all the blessings of Christ's body and blood offered up for salvation.⁴⁵ John 6 does not specifically apply to the Lord's Supper because here the eating and drinking are figurative, while in the Words of Institution the eating and drinking are literal. If John 6 is to interpret the *Verba* implying that the eating and drinking of Christ's body and blood is figurative, then the eating and drinking of the bread and wine can also be figurative and the whole Dominical directive is abrogated.⁴⁶ The second reason that Chemnitz rejects this argument of the Sacramentarians is that the sermon recorded in John 6 occurred a year before the institution of the Supper. Therefore, the sermon in John 6 cannot apply to the dogma of the Sacrament.⁴⁷ The third and most important reason Chemnitz rejects this argument is because the

⁴⁴ Chemnitz, *Examination*, 2:491.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 2:326.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 2:410; *Lord's Supper*, 238.

⁴⁷ Chemnitz, *Lord's Supper*, 236.

eating in John 6 always results in salvation (John 6:51), while in the Lord's Supper many eat judgment to themselves.⁴⁸

At the same time, Chemnitz maintains that there is a definite connection between the Words of Institution and John 6. John 6 speaks of the spiritual eating that is necessary for worthy participation in the Holy Supper. All communicants, both the worthy and unworthy, eat sacramentally with the mouth the very body and blood of Christ born of the Virgin, but only those who eat spiritually through true repentance and faith receive all the wonderful blessings offered through that body and blood. Thus, John 6 applies to worthy participation in the Sacrament, and in this sense speaks to the Supper.⁴⁹ In summary, Chemnitz confesses with the other writers of the *Formula* concerning these two kinds of eating and the connection between John 6 and the Words of Institution:

There is therefore a twofold eating of the flesh of Christ. The one is spiritual, of which Christ speaks chiefly in John 6:48–58. This occurs, in no other way than with the spirit and faith, in the preaching and contemplation of the Gospel as well as in the Lord's Supper. It is intrinsically useful, salutary, and necessary to salvation for all Christians at all times. Without this spiritual participation, even the sacramental or oral eating in the Supper is not only not salutary but actually pernicious and damning.⁵⁰

The Blessings of the Sacrament

The Words of Institution summarize the blessing of the Supper in the words, "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins." Forgiveness of sins is the chief blessing of the Sacrament from which flows all the other benefits of the Supper. The Holy Sacrament assures each individual personally of the Gospel declaration of forgiveness. It is a real means of grace which gives us everything which Christ won on the cross in our stead. Christ accomplished salvation on the cross, but He has not distributed or given it on the cross. He distributes it to us through the Lord's Supper and the other means of grace. In the *Examen* Chemnitz discusses the wonderful comfort derived from the various means of grace.

⁴⁸ Chemnitz, *Examination*, 2:326–327; *Lord's Supper*, 238.

⁴⁹ Chemnitz, *Examination*, 2:326–327; 2:410; *Lord's Supper*, 239.

⁵⁰ FC SD VII, 61, Tappert, 580–581.

Moreover, in temptations the mind is troubled chiefly about this question, whether, in view of the fact that the promise is spoken in general, I also, who believe, have forgiveness of sins; whether I have it truly, surely, and firmly. Also, a pious mind is concerned lest it be snatched away or wrested from it. For this use therefore God, who is rich in mercy, which He pours out abundantly on the believers, instituted beside the Word also the use of the Sacraments. However, we leave and ascribe both to the Word and to each Sacrament what belongs to each in particular. Through Baptism we are reborn in Christ; having been reborn, we are nourished with the Word and the Eucharist; if we have fallen, we return through repentance and faith to the promise of grace, and by faith in the promise we are again reconciled to God through the Mediator. Nevertheless the Eucharist, which contains the basis for the remission of sins, namely the body and blood of Christ, is not excluded from also this use. For the Son of God testifies in the Eucharist by a most extraordinary and sure pledge, namely by exhibiting His body and blood, that He surely communicates, applies, and seals to each and everyone who uses this Sacrament in faith, forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and all the other benefits which He obtained for the church by the offering up of His body and the shedding of His blood that they might be offered in the Word and Sacraments and be accepted by faith. And so faith has in the use of the Eucharist a firm anchor of consolation, trust, and certainty concerning the forgiveness of sins. It also has an effectual remedy for raising up and supporting a feeble faith in the midst of sorrow and trials, against want of confidence, doubt, faintheartedness, and despair.⁵¹

The forgiveness of sin is offered in the Supper because this Sacrament is the ransom money for sin. In our weaknesses and failures we can often begin to wonder whether we are really forgiven. How can God forgive a wretch like me? Are my sins just too great to be pardoned? In this Supper the Lord Jesus removes our every doubt. As we come to the Lord's Table we are in spirit at Golgotha kneeling before the cross embracing His dying body and drinking from His five bloody wounds. As a kidnapped child is bought back by its parents with money, so Jesus bought us back not with gold or silver, but with His

⁵¹ Chemnitz, *Examination*, 2:239.

holy precious blood and His innocent suffering and death. His body and blood are the ransom for sin. In the Supper we receive the very thing which paid for sins, the very thing which freed us from hell's destruction. Then no matter how great and terrible our sins may be, no matter how heavily they burden our conscience, receiving this Sacrament we need never wonder whether our sins are forgiven, for within us we have the very ransom money which paid for our sins, namely, His true body and blood.⁵²

The Holy Supper confers life. This is not temporal life which we received through natural birth, but it is that new spiritual life which has been regenerated in us through the new birth in Holy Baptism. Since this life is still weak and imperfect, and constant growth is necessary, the Lord Jesus has instituted this Sacrament as a true spiritual nourishment. It is the strengthening and food for our faith-life as Chemnitz writes, "It becomes a heavenly and spiritual nourishment for both body and soul of believers unto eternal life."⁵³

Chemnitz cites the fathers of the Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431) as saying:

The flesh of Christ on account of the union with the divine nature, which is life itself, is made life-giving or a life-giver and it thus has the authority or power to give life, and this authority it exercises in the action of the Lord's Supper in the believers.⁵⁴

The body and blood of our Lord in the Supper are life-giving. They are never unfruitful, impotent, and useless. Here we receive the body and blood of the living God into this body made of dust. What can be more beneficial? What can be more powerful? This is the greatest treasure in the life of a Christian. It is the greatest benefit for body and soul.

This life-giving bread and cup of blessing, hallowed by the solemn benediction, benefits the life of the total man, being at the same time a medicine and an offering, to heal our infirmities and to purge our iniquities.⁵⁵

As the Christian travels in this life, he faces problems and troubles all the way. There is bitterness in the home, conflict with friends, sickness, and even the death of those most near and dear. Yet, in every

⁵² Chemnitz, *Lord's Supper*, 189.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁵⁴ Chemnitz, *Two Natures*, 474.

⁵⁵ Chemnitz, *Examination*, 2:491.

difficulty and problem of life the Lord Jesus says, "Come to My Table all you that labor and are heavy laden, I will give you rest." Through the Sacrament of His body and blood He gives Christians the strength to face all the problems and troubles of life and the power to do all things through Him, the power to overcome and obtain the victory. Here the Lord offers His life-giving nourishment to resist all the attacks of the devil, the world and our flesh, and the ability to lead a more Christ-like life.

When we consider the greatness of the mystery and our own unworthiness, we pray that we may not by unworthy eating become guilty of profaning the body and blood of Christ but that, ingrafted by this eating into the body and blood of Christ, we may draw life from it as branches from the vine and that this eating may benefit us for strengthening of faith, increase in love, mortification of the flesh, etc.⁵⁶

The Supper is indeed "a heavenly and spiritual nourishment for both the body and soul of the believers unto eternal life."⁵⁷

The Holy Supper confers salvation. Where there is forgiveness of sins there is also eternal salvation. In the Supper the believer receives the very ransom money that paid for his sins and freed him from destruction. This is what has thrown open the doors of heaven and broken every barrier down. As we receive His body and blood in the Supper we know that heaven is ours.⁵⁸

As Christ walked among men, people were healed and raised from the dead by His very touch. His flesh and blood are life-giving. Then as we receive His glorified and risen body and blood into this dying body, we are assured that, even though it returns to the dust from which it was formed, on the last day it will break forth from the grave glorified like Christ's glorified body and so we will ever be with the Lord. Because of this the Early Church fathers have often spoken of the Supper as the *viaticum*, "the medicine of immortality," which is a food preparing

⁵⁶ Ibid., 2:283; see also *Lord's Supper*, 191. In illustrating this communion and union with Christ in the Sacrament, many of the Lutheran fathers used the example of the vine and the branches in John 15. By receiving His body and blood we are engrafted into Him, drawing life from Him as branches from the vine. We are so united with Him that we can say, "It is not I that live, but Christ lives in me." When we remain in Him and He in us through a regular use of Word and Sacrament we will bear abundant fruit, for without Him we can do nothing.

⁵⁷ Chemnitz, *Lord's Supper*, 61.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 188.

us for eternal life. This is a concept closely related to the *theosis* theme. Chemnitz, likewise, espouses this position that the Sacrament is the medicine of immortality, that we should not die but live in God.

Because in the Eucharist we receive that body of Christ which has been given for us, and blood of the New Testament which has been shed for the remission of sins, who will deny that believers there receive the whole treasury of the benefits of Christ? For they receive that through which sins are remitted, by which death is abolished, by which life is communicated to us, by which Christ unites us to Himself as members, so that He is in us and we are in Him. Hilary says beautifully: "When these things have been taken and drunk, they bring about both that Christ is in us and that we are in Him." Cyril says: "When in the mystical benediction we eat the flesh of Christ in faith, we have from it life in ourselves, being joined to that flesh which has been made life, so that not only does the soul ascend through the Holy Spirit into a blessed life, but also this earthly body is restored by this food to immortality, to be resurrected on the last day." Therefore we receive in the Eucharist the most certain and most excellent pledge of our reconciliation with God, of the forgiveness of sins, of immortality and future glorification. ... Beautiful is that statement of Ignatius, which is found in his Epistle to the Ephesians, where he calls the Eucharist *pharmakon athanasias, antidoton tou mee apothanein, alla zeen en theoo dia Ieesou Christou, katharteerion alexikakon*, that is, "a medicine of immortality, an antidote, that we may not die but live in God through Jesus Christ, a cleansing remedy through warding off and driving out evils."⁵⁹

St. Paul says, "As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:26). Not only does the Supper point us back to the sacrifice of the cross, but at the same time it points forward to the final consummation of our redemption on the last day. Each time we celebrate the Sacrament we do it eagerly awaiting the second coming as the whole ancient Church cried *Maranatha*, "Lord, come quickly." The Father then gives us His Son under the form of bread and wine as a foretaste of the great wedding feast of the Lamb which will be ours at His second coming. In the Supper we for a moment step out of our mundane workaday

⁵⁹ Chemnitz, *Examination*, 2:233–234.

existence where we carry one after another to the grave, and we have a foretaste of heaven, where the Lamb once slain Himself descends and angels prostrate fall. Here is heaven on earth as the fathers prayed, “Your Supper be my heaven on earth, till I enter heaven” (*Dass dein Abendmahl mein Himmel auf Erden werde*). Then as we eat at His Table here, we have the certainty that we will be at His Table there where we will eat of the heavenly manna and drink of the river of His pleasure forevermore.⁶⁰ LSQ

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⁶⁰ Chemnitz, *Lord’s Supper*, 157.

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Aus der Kunst-Anstalt v. Alar. Albohn, Leipzig

D^r Johann Gerhard.

geb. d. 17. Octb. 1582, gest. d. 17. Aug. 1637

Johann Gerhard: Arch-Theologian and Seelsorger

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THE LIFE OF GERHARD

T *Gerhard: The Early Years*

Johann Gerhard (1582–1637) was one of the important seventeenth-century dogmaticians. In fact he was the greatest of the dogmaticians, the arch-theologian of the Lutheran church. 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. Even in his lifetime he was considered to be one of the three greats of Lutheranism. Michael Walther wrote in a letter dated 1635 to Gerhard's successor, Salomon Glassius:

That heavenly David, Christ Jesus, has, from the beginning of the time of a very necessary Reformation, seen and nourished more theologians of this sort in the orthodox Church, truly courageous and very learned. Three of them, however, have without any doubt taken first place ahead of all the rest. There is no one who can reach easily their singular gifts and activities, namely, our countrymen [*Megaländer*] Luther, Chemnitz and Gerhard.¹

¹ E. R. Fischer, *The Life of John Gerhard*, trans. Richard J. Dinda and Elmer Hohle (Malone, Texas: Repristination Press, 2000), 98–99.

Gerhard was born October 17, 1582, in Quedlinburg, Germany, about 75 miles west of Wittenberg, just north of the Harz Mountains. Four days after he was born on October 21 he was baptized into the Christian faith, becoming a child and heir of eternal life through faith in the Savior. By birth he was of noble rank. His father, Bartholomew Gerhard, was the city treasurer and his grandfather Andreas Gerhard had been the court counselor (*Hofrath*) of the abbess of Quedlinburg who controlled both the civil and ecclesiastical affairs of the city. His mother was Margareta Bernd who also came from an important Quedlinburg family and was known for her work among the poor and needy. Gerhard was one of seven children. One of his sisters, Dorothea, married Ludolph Quenstedt and their son Johann² was a great dogmatist in the generation after Gerhard.

At the age of fifteen Gerhard became very sick and vowed to enter the public ministry if he recovered. During this time Gerhard, as Luther before him, experienced deep pangs of conscience and desired the assurance of the forgiveness of sins and fellowship with God in Christ. In this affliction he found comfort and counsel in his pastor Johann Arndt,³ the author of the widely read devotional writing *True Christianity* (*Von wahren Christentum*). Arndt exerted a deep and lasting influence on him and the two remained life-long friends. This is seen in Gerhard's excellent devotional material, much of which has again been made available in English. These writings touch the heart and are filled with pastoral concern. His most important devotional work is *Sacred Meditations* (*Meditationes Sacrae*). His *Postille* written between 1613 and 1616 is a treasury of sermons which show a true pastor's heart.⁴

² Timothy Schmeling, "Johann Andreas Quenstedt (1617–88): The Consensus Builder," in *Lives & Writings of the Great Fathers of the Lutheran Church*, ed. Timothy Schmeling (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2016), 263–280.

³ Johann Arndt (1555–1621) was the most influential devotional author that Lutheranism produced. He was called as pastor in Baderborn, Anhalt in 1583. In 1590, when Anhalt faced the Second Reformation, he was deposed for insisting on the unaltered Augsburg Confession and the right to use the baptismal exorcism. After this he served as pastor in Quedlinburg, where he influenced Johann Gerhard; in Braunschweig, the city of Chemnitz; and in Eisleben. His final position was superintendent in Celle. While his *Postille* and his sermons on the Psalms and the catechism were well received, his most important work was *True Christianity* (*Sechs Bücher vom wahren Christentum*). It was one of the early German Lutheran devotional books for the common people. Next to the *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis it is the most widely circulated devotional book in Christendom. When Lutherans came to America, they brought the Bible, the catechism, the hymnbook, and *True Christianity*.

⁴ Carl Meusel, *Kirchliches Handlexicon*, vol. 2, *Combesis—Glockensagen* (Leipzig: Justus Naumann Verlag, 1889), 740–742.

Gerhard the Student

In 1599, Gerhard entered the University of Wittenberg, where he attended the lectures of Leonhard Hutter⁵ on sacrifice and repentance. In spite of his original intention of entering the pastoral ministry, he spent two years studying medicine as Arndt had done.⁶ As result of this, even when he was superintendent in Heldburg he dispensed both pastoral and medical advice to many of his people. In addition he was fond of the use of medical pictures in the presentation of the Gospel. An example of this is found in *Sacred Meditations*: “Great indeed were thy wounds of sin, which could be healed only by the wounds of the living and life-giving flesh of the Son of God; desperate indeed was that disease which could be cured only by the death of the Physician Himself.”⁷

He resumed his study of theology at Jena in 1603. Here he spent a considerable amount of time in the private study of the Holy Scriptures and the church fathers. In December of 1603 he became extremely ill and he believed that he had come to his end. He prepared his final testament which included a detailed confession of faith much as Luther had done in his *Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper of 1528*. This testament in many ways anticipated both his *Loci* and his devotional writings.⁸

After he received his master’s degree he moved to Marburg in 1604. Here he attended the lectures of Balthasar Mentzer (1565–1627) on the person of Christ and justification and was influenced by him. Gerhard chose him as his principal guide in theology at the time.

⁵ Leonhard Hutter (1563–1616), the chief representative of the older generation of this period of orthodoxy, was a professor at Wittenberg and the teacher of Gerhard. His resemblance of Luther in vigor, energy, and firmness of faith gave him the title of *Lutherus redivivus*. 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. 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.

⁶ Fischer, 27.

⁷ Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, trans. C.W. Heisler (Decatur, Illinois: Repristination Press, 1998), 2:17.

⁸ Johann Steiger, “Das Testament and das Glaubensbekenntnis des todkranken 21 jährigen Johann Gerhard (1603): Kritische Edition und Kommentar,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 87 (1996): 201–254. see also Johann Steiger, *Johann Gerhard*, pp. 160–227.

Mentzer is remembered as the patriarch of true Lutheranism in Hesse.⁹ One of his popular productions was his *Handbüchlein*, a handbook of Lutheran theology.

When Landgrave Maurice of Hesse-Cassel accepted the Reformed faith in the Second Reformation of the province, Gerhard left Marburg and went back to Jena. During this time Arndt wanted him to be called as deacon at Halberstadt and Mentzer desired him to become a professor at the new university which he helped organize in Giessen as a result of the Calvinizing of Marburg. Gerhard however remained at Jena and continued to study theology and homiletics. Also at this time he accompanied Mentzer on an educational tour of southwest Germany (Stuttgart, Tübingen, Strassburg, and Speyer) a portion of the country that had been virtually unknown to him before this.

On December 13, 1605, the second Sunday in Advent, he delivered his first sermon in the small village of Kunitz not far from Jena. His sermon was based on 2 Peter 3:10 encouraging the congregation to be prepared for the Lord's coming on the last day.¹⁰ He probably wouldn't have preached his first sermon even at this time had it not been for the encouragement of his teacher and friend, Johann Major. Gerhard believed that one must be thoroughly trained in theology in order to produce a good sermon. He lectured at Jena and received his doctorate in sacred theology in 1606. This was also the year that *Sacred Meditations* was published.

Gerhard the Superintendent

Gerhard spent a number of years in administrative ecclesiastical work. He was ordained in Coburg on August 24, 1606 by the general superintendent Melchior Bischoff (1547–1614), and on September 6 of the same year, he was installed as superintendent in Heldberg. While functioning as superintendent, Gerhard also did a certain amount of teaching at the *Gymnasium Casimirianum* in Coburg. Here he presented a four-year-long series of monthly lectures in which he covered the entire spectrum of theology as he would later do in his *Loci Theologici*. At the same time his work as superintendent was not neglected. He oversaw a visitation¹¹ of the parishes for which he was responsible.

⁹ Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. 2 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), 126.

¹⁰ This sermon is probably similar to the sermon on the same text in the appendix or fourth part of his *Postille*.

¹¹ J.A. Steiger, "Kirchenordnung, Visitation und Alltag: Johann Gerhard (1582–1637) als Visitator und kirchenordnender Theologe," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und*

He also regularly visited the sick and infirm, and as noted above, even dispensed medical advice based upon his previous academic training. He was a true Seelsorger and physician of the souls in his care. In 1615 his prince, Duke Johann Casimir of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (a grandson of John Frederick), over Gerhard's objections, promoted him to general superintendent of the entire duchy. In this capacity he wrote a new church order for Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. This order which outlined faith and life for his church was printed in 1616.

Gerhard the Professor at Jena

He continued to receive numerous calls to teach. Jena offered him a full professorship in 1610 but he did not feel qualified to take the position. In addition to this his prince, Duke Johann Casimir, did not want to release him from Heldburg. During this time he often accompanied his prince on diplomatic trips. For example, he was present for the election and coronation of Emperor Matthias at Frankfurt am Main on May 24, 1612.¹²

Finally in 1616 at the urging of Elector Johann Georg I of Saxony he became a professor at the University of Jena, where he continued as professor until his death. Here, together with Johann Major (1564–1644) and Johann Himmel (1581–1642), he became part of the so-called Johannine Triad of Lutheran orthodoxy at Jena. Concerning this Fischer wrote, "At that time, there were three outstanding men who were teaching theology at the academy of Jena, and all three were named John: John Mayor, John Gerhard and John Himmel. And they were men worthy of that name, for sincere harmony always flourished among this trio of Johns, and as long as Gerhard was alive, no quarrels ever interrupted that."¹³

While there were many who excelled at one theological discipline or another, Gerhard was unparalleled in the entire spectrum of theological study. He lectured on a wide variety of subjects during his years at Jena, but there were two major points that he desired to instill in his students. The first was a deep desire to study the Holy Scriptures. To engender this love for the Word he taught classes on nearly every book of the Bible. He was a true exegete at heart. He had a great love for the Word and was especially fond of the Book of the Psalms. The Psalter became the model for his devotional writings.

Geistesgeschichte 55, no. 3 (September 2003): 227–252.

¹² Fischer, 59.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 131.

The second major point he desired to instill in his students was the importance of organizing the truths of the inspired, inerrant Scripture in systematic form. It is very difficult to teach the wonderful truths of the Bible and pass them on to the next generation unless they are organized in a teachable form. For this reason, dogmatic or systematic theology was of vital importance to Gerhard.

The library of Gerhard was one of the finest of the time in Europe. This library was a great benefit to Gerhard as a professor and to his students. He owned many of the writings of the church fathers and his massive research in the fathers is evident throughout his works. After his death his library was brought to Gotha.¹⁴

During his years as a professor it was necessary for Gerhard to defend the faith from attacks that came from a number of directions. A powerful adversary was found in an older contemporary of Gerhard, the influential Jesuit theologian Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621). He was the main systematizer of Roman arguments against Protestant claims and is seen as one of the best exponents of post-Tridentine doctrine. Bellarmine and the Jesuits were a major force in the counter or Catholic reformation that threatened Protestantism in Germany. Remember how often he is referred to in Pieper's *Dogmatics*. In his dogmatic writings Gerhard exerted a considerable amount of energy to expose the errors of Bellarmine and the Jesuits.

The Roman danger was not the only force facing the embattled Lutheran Church in Germany. This was the period of Calvinization or the Second Reformation when Reformed theology was infiltrating Lutheran Germany. Calvinism was not a legal religion under imperial law until 1648. The only way it could be spread was under the guise of "reformed" Lutheranism. On Christmas Day 1613 Johann Sigismund had the Supper celebrated in the Reformed manner in the Berlin Dom, thus marking the beginning of the Second Reformation in Brandenburg-Prussia which has had major ramifications for Lutheranism. With such events occurring, Gerhard battled also the Reformed error in his writings. The Palatinate had already succumbed to the Second Reformation and there had been a failed attempt in

¹⁴ "Despite efforts to keep the library in Jena, the Gerhard heirs sold the collection in 1678 to Duke Friedrich I of Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg (1646–1691). The collection was integrated into the library of his predecessor Duke Ernst the Pious (1601–1675). Most of the Gerhard volumes have remained (also through the period in which Red Army units checked out the collection and took it home for a while) in what is now the Forschungsbibliothek Gotha" (Robert Kolb, "The Gerhards and their Orthodox Library," *Lutheran Quarterly* XVIII, No. 1 [Spring 2004]: 93).

Electoral Saxony (1586–1592). As H \ddot{o} e von H \ddot{o} enegg and Polykarp Leyser, Gerhard thought that “of the two [Calvinists and Romanists] the Calvinists were particularly lethal since the Devil was using them to challenge the Lutherans’ sacramental teachings.”¹⁵

At a relatively young age Gerhard came to be regarded as the greatest living theologian in Protestant Germany. He was the chief representative of the period of high orthodoxy (1610–1648) in contradistinction to the golden age of Lutheran orthodoxy (1580–1610) and to the silver age of Lutheran orthodoxy ([1648–1675]; see Addendum I). He was called by virtually every university in Germany but he remained at Jena. Gerhard was a prolific writer. With the theological faculty at Jena, he issued countless theological *Gutachten* on diverse matters.¹⁶ His voluminous exegetical, polemical, dogmatic, and practical writings deal with virtually every theological topic. His writings are a true heritage for our generation.

Beginning in 1618 the Thirty Years’ War raged in Europe, bringing terrible devastation to much of Germany.¹⁷ During most of the period that Gerhard was a professor in Jena the war was being fought around him. Still he remained at his post and calmly produced some of the greatest religious literature of the Lutheran Church. Gerhard was frequently asked to advise the dukes in matters concerning the Thirty Years’ War. With his associate, Johann Major, he met Tilly at the city

¹⁵ Bodo Nischan, *Lutherans and Calvinists in the Age of Confessionalism* (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1999), VII: 15.

¹⁶ Much of the *Gutachten* material of Gerhard and other important Lutheran theologians of the times was collected and edited in the *Treasury of Counsels and Decisions* (*Thesaurus consiliorum et decisionum*) by Georg Dedekenn (1564–1628), Johann Ernst Gerhard (1621–1668, the oldest son of Johann Gerhard), and Christian Gr \ddot{u} bel (1642–1715). See Benjamin T.G. Mayes, *Counsel and Conscience: Lutheran Casuistry and Moral Reasoning After the Reformation* (G \ddot{o} ttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011).

¹⁷ The *Book of Concord* brought spiritual peace within the Lutheran Church but it did not end the political hostilities that grew from the conflicting religious confessions in Europe. In 1618, the Peace of Augsburg of 1555 unraveled and war broke out. The Thirty Years’ War which resulted can be divided into four main phases: Bohemian (1618–1625), Danish (1625–1629), Swedish (1630–1635), and French (1635–1648). The effect of the Thirty Years’ War on Germany was devastating. Northern Germany lay in ruin. The land was ravaged by the plundering armies. Armies at that time had no supply lines or support groups. They survived by living off the land, pillaging and looting wherever they went. A friendly army was just as devastating as an enemy army. First the land had to support the imperial armies, and later the Swedish army needed to be supported. The population was reduced to about one-third of what had been before the war. Trade had almost ceased. The war left Germany so exhausted it took a century to recover. The intellectual, moral, and spiritual life was at low ebb. The war was a horrible tragedy and fought in the name of religion.

gate of Jena in 1631 and so impressed the general who was about to plunder the city that the general left the city with only a token plunder. Thus he was credited with saving the city.¹⁸ The imperial forces were not the only danger in the war. At the beginning of 1636 Gerhard was captured by the Swedes but was released through the intercession of General Johann Baner. In November of the same year the Swedes attacked and plundered Gerhard's estate, leaving it in ashes. The livestock was stolen and buildings destroyed. In his diary he wrote that during those very hours he was "busy with a revision of the entire Bible (probably the Weimar edition) and, in fact, with the last chapter of Job which lists the very rich blessing of God upon Job after he had endured his cross."¹⁹

Gerhard, together with Aegidius Hunnius, is remembered for using the terminology "in view of faith" (*intuitu fidei*) in the doctrine of election. This was the terminology that caused such havoc for the Norwegian Synod in the Election Controversy of the nineteenth century. However, it should be noted, as Professor Aaberg indicates, that Gerhard did not by this terminology teach that faith was the cause of one's election, nor did he ascribe to natural man any responsibility for coming to faith, thus steering clear of synergism.²⁰ Gerhard used this terminology in contradistinction to the bare decrees of election found in Calvinism. One is not to look to a bare decree but rather the comfort of election is found in the fact that God chose us from all eternity as His own. He sent His Son to redeem all people with His blood. He sent His Spirit to work faith in that redemption in our hearts through the means of grace and preserves us in the faith unto our end. Thus our salvation, which is completely the work of God, is entirely certain.

At the time of Gerhard there was a renewed interest in Aristotelian philosophy as a result of the Neo-Aristotelian movement. Gerhard is remembered for bringing Aristotelian terminology and distinctions to the aid of Lutheran dogmatics. He makes use of Aristotelian causation (*causa efficiens, causa formalis, causa materialis, and causa finalis*) in his systematic theology.²¹

¹⁸ Robert P. Scharlemann, *Thomas Aquinas and John Gerhard* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964), 42; Fischer, 94–95.

¹⁹ Fischer, 146–147.

²⁰ Johann Gerhard, *Loci Theologici* (Berlin: Gust. Schlawitz, 1863), Locus 7, Para. 161. See also Theodore Aaberg, *A City Set on a Hill* (Mankato: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1968), 17.

²¹ See Addendum II.

Gerhard's Family and Final Years

In Genesis the Lord said, "It is not good that man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18). Gerhard certainly found this to be true. A God-given helper was provided for him in Barbara Neumeyer. As they were about to be married Gerhard wrote this prayer, "Lord Jesus you who instituted marriage in paradise, who was present at the wedding at Cana and who through the bond of chaste love still binds the hearts of spouses today, bless this my intention and give me a peaceful, blessed, and stable marriage."²² On September 19, 1608, they were married, but Barbara died on May 30, 1611, some time after the death of their only child Johann Georg. During this difficult time, Arndt comforted his young friend with sympathy and consoling letters.

After a period of mourning he married Maria Mattenberg on July 13, 1614. Her father was a physician and consul in Gotha. She was to be his wife for the next twenty-three years, living until March 30, 1660. Ten children were born to this union,²³ six of whom outlived their father. His son Johann Ernst Gerhard (1621–1668), following in his father's footsteps, became a professor at Jena. He collected and edited many of his father's works and was known for his own works in theology and oriental studies.

In May of 1637 Gerhard fell victim to a high fever. At this time he was lecturing on the book of Hebrews. Here he reminded his students of the wonderful comfort that we have in the heavenly fatherland above from such passages as Hebrews 4:9: "There remains therefore a rest for the people of God," and Hebrews 12:22: "But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels."²⁴ Although he recovered at the time, in August the fever returned. As his end drew near, Gerhard's piety was as evident as it had been throughout his life.

He then bade his colleagues farewell, and on the same day he confessed his sins before God and his pastor, Master Adrian Beyer, archdeacon of Jena. He also took care to equip himself with his final very sacred viaticum. In the burning godliness of his heart he feasted upon the body and blood of His Savior, and with a loud voice immediately began to sing the eucharistic

²² C.J. Böttcher, *Das Leben Dr. Johann Gerhards* (Leipzig and Dresden: Verlag von Justus Naumann, 1858), 65.

²³ George Sigismund, Margaret, Elisabeth, John Ernest, John, Mary, Polycarp, John Frederick, John Andrew, and Anna Christina (Fischer, 221–222).

²⁴ Böttcher, *Leben Dr. Johann Gerhards*, 142.

hymn which our blessed Luther composed (or rather corrected) for the use of communicants: “Let us praise and bless Thee, God, etc.”²⁵

He fell asleep on August 17, 1637, two months before his fifty-fifth birthday, trusting in the Savior in whose blood he had been washed through Holy Baptism and assured of the resurrection. Gerhard’s funeral service took place on August 20 at St. Michael’s Church in Jena, where Johann Major delivered the funeral sermon based on St. Paul’s words in 2 Corinthians 12:9, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.²⁶

The Writings of Gerhard

The Dogmatic and Exegetical Writings of Gerhard

The Jena Divine, the light of Thuringen, is best known in church history as a dogmatician. In fact, he was the greatest of the dogmaticians. His most significant dogmatic work was his *Loci Theologici* (1610–1625), whose vast nine volumes—a later edition published in twenty-three volumes (Cotta Edition)—became the great systematic theology of Lutheran orthodoxy. Here he made use of the synthetic method in his material, proceeding from cause to effect or from principles to conclusions. The articles of faith are dealt with according to this order: God, man, sin, redemption, etc. His *Loci* are a comprehensive treatment of the evangelical doctrinal position based on a particularly wide range of material. They are more thorough than any other work of classical Lutheran theology. They contain a treasury of scriptural truth and church history. The *Loci* are filled with quotes from the church fathers, both the famous and those less well known. They are a window into the life and thought of Lutheran orthodoxy in the seventeenth century. In this dogmatics, Gerhard’s purpose is always to apply these teachings to preaching and personal pastoral care. His purpose is pastoral and devotional.

²⁵ Fischer, 289.

²⁶ See Cotta’s *Vita* of Gerhard in the Preuss Edition of Gerhard’s *Loci*. The full text of this sermon may be found included in Johann Gerhard, *Sämtliche Leichenpredigten*, ed. Johann Steiger, et al. (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog Verlag), 251–315.

He completed the *Loci* divided into nine volumes, and they came out, first, in Jena in quarto in this way:

Volume 1, in 1610, containing chapters [or *loci*] on Holy Scripture, on the legitimate interpretation of Holy Writ, on the nature of God, on the mystery of the Holy Trinity, on God the Father and His eternal Son, on the Holy Spirit, and on the person and office of Christ. He added to this volume the inaugural speech which he delivered on that question as to whether all, or some, or any of the divine attributes were communicated to the human nature of Christ.

Volume 2, in 1611, containing the *loci* on creation and the angels, on providence, on election and rejection, on the image of God in man before the fall, on original sin, on actual sins, and on free will.

Volume 3, in 1613, containing the *loci* on the moral law, on ceremonial and forensic laws, on the Gospel, on repentance, and on justification by faith.

Volume 4, in 1614, containing the *loci* on good works, on the Sacraments, on circumcision, on the Passover lamb, and on Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Volume 5, in 1619, containing the *loci* on the ministry of the Church and on the political magistracy.

Volume 7, in 1620, containing the *locus* on marriage, celibacy and related matters.

Volume 8, in 1621, containing the *loci* on death and on the resurrection of the dead.

Volume 9, in 1622, containing the *loci* on the final judgment, on the end of the age, on hell and on eternal life.²⁷

An English translation of the *Loci Theologici* is now being produced by Concordia Publishing House, entitled *Theological Commonplaces*.²⁸ At present, there are ten volumes: *On the Nature of Theology and on Scripture* (I), *On the Nature of God and on the Trinity* (II–III), *On Christ* (IV), *On Creation and Predestination* (VIII–XI), *On Sin and Free Choice* (XII–XIV), *On the Law* (XV–XVI), *On the Gospel and Repentance* (XVII–XVIII), *On the Church* (XXV), *On the Ministry: Part One* (XXVI/1), *On the Ministry: Part Two* (XXVI/2). Until now, no full translation of

²⁷ Fischer, 319–320.

²⁸ Johann Gerhard, *Theological Commonplaces*, 10 vols., ed. Benjamin T.G. Mayes and Heath R. Curtis, trans. Richard J. Dinda (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009–).

Gerhard's *Loci Theologici* has been attempted in any language—not even in German, the native language of Gerhard. This is probably due to the size of the *Loci* and the difficulty of its content.

Gerhard's four-volume *Confessio Catholica* appeared in 1633–1637. In it he sought to refute the objections of contemporary Roman Catholic theology with quotations taken from the Church of Rome's own traditions. The work is similar to the *Catalogus Testium Veritatis* of Flacius and appears to be based on it. The *Confessio Catholica* inspired a number of similar writings by other authors such as Johann Georg Dorsch. Dorsch wrote a book in which he tried to show that Thomas Aquinas could be made to support Lutheran doctrine more than that of Rome.²⁹

All the Lutheran fathers were deeply engaged in patristic studies. Gerhard was probably the first Lutheran to write a book on the subject in which he coined the word “patrology” as a synonym for patristics.³⁰ Here he points out that the doctrine of the confessional Lutheran Church is in agreement with true fathers of the church. His *Patrologia* was published posthumously in 1653 by his son Johann Ernst.

The *Harmony of the Gospels* (*Harmoniae evangelicae Chemnitio-Lyserianae continuatio* [1626–1627]) was the Jena Theologian's major exegetical production. Here he completed a commentary on the Gospels begun by Martin Chemnitz (1522–1586) and continued by Polycarp Leyser (1552–1610), who edited a number of the writings of Chemnitz. 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 the Gospels was published in completion at Frankfurt and Hamburg in 1652. Concerning the production of the *Harmonia*, Gerhard wrote in a letter to Høe von Høeneegg:

Once I finish the *Loci*, I shall gird myself for the continuation of the *Harmonia*. I indeed confess and I have confessed publicly

²⁹ See also Bengt Häggglund, “Polemics and Dialogue in John Gerhard's *Confessio Catholica*,” *Lutheran Quarterly* XIV, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 159–172.

³⁰ Benjamin T.G. Mayes, “Lumina, non Numina: Die Autorität der Kirchenväter nach dem lutherischen Erz-Theologen Johann Gerhard,” *Lutherische Theologie und Kirche* 37, no. 1 (2013), 3–20.

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.³¹

The Harmony of the Gospels was so popular among confessional Lutherans that as the Latin language became less accessible to the parish pastor, the Missouri Synod translated portions of it into German 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 of the Gospels* has served Lutheran pastors as a vital exegetical and homiletic tool or resource for generations. The Center for the Study of Lutheran Orthodoxy in Malone, Texas, is to be commended for publishing the English translation of the *Harmony* by Dr. Richard Dinda. The present English translation is using as its source a 1703 Latin edition published at Hamburg.

At the request of Ernst the Pious,³² Gerhard edited and contributed to the *Weimar Bibel*. It became the Lutheran study Bible of the time. The commentary in this Bible is saturated with Gerhard's devotional spirit.³³ It remained one of the main Lutheran study Bibles until the nineteenth century.

³¹ Fischer, 434.

³² Ernst the Pious (1601–1675 [Ernst der Fromme]) was born on Christmas night 1601. In the Thirty Years' War he served under Gustav Adolf defending Lutheranism. He was an exemplary Lutheran ruler of the time. He improved the schools in Saxe-Gotha (Sachsen-Gotha) and was concerned about the general welfare of his people. His personal piety was known to all. He made considerable use of Arndt's *Wabres Christenthum* and he was often called *Bet-Ernst*, that is, the praying Ernst. Ernst was interested in religious and secular education in his land. Schools were established, and he saw to it that at least one Bible was found in each community (Lowell C. Green, "Duke Ernest the Pious of Saxe-Gotha and his Relationship to Pietism" in *Der Pietismus in Gestalten und Wirkungen* [Bielefeld: Luther Verlag, 1975]: 184). To this end, at his request Gerhard edited and contributed to the *Weimar Bibel* that became the Lutheran study Bible of the time. Christian missions were of a special interest to him. In 1634 he sent Peter Heiling as missionary to Ethiopia. Also he sought to assist the German Lutheran immigrants to Russia and developed a relationship with the Russian czar.

³³ Fischer, 358–360.

The Devotional (Erbauungsliteratur) and Homiletical Writings of Gerhard

Gerhard is viewed by many today as a hairsplitting, bone-dry seventeenth-century dogmatican. This is the case especially among those who do not appreciate the intricacies of the theological thought in his *Loci*. His dogmatic orthodoxy is said to have taken all the life out of the Lutheran Reformation. However, in this evaluation Gerhard the practical theologian is forgotten. His activity as a pastor and author of devotional literature is overlooked.³⁴ Even in his dogmatic works one always finds a pastoral or practical use. The devotional writings (*Erbauungsliteratur*) of Gerhard touch the heart of the reader with the saving Gospel of Christ. The Christian needs an intimate relation with the Savior through the means of grace. Here Gerhard offers spiritual nourishment for the faith-life of the believer that warms the heart with the Gospel of Christ's forgiveness. This literature was intended to strengthen and edify believers, encouraging repentance and spiritual renewal. One of his predominant themes is **union and communion with God through the life-giving Word and the blessed Sacraments**, as can be seen in his writings.

Into His assumed human nature, Christ at the same time placed the fullness of divine grace and truth. If it is to benefit us, then we must partake of the self-same fullness; that takes place through faith (John 1:16). The Lord Christ became man in order that we men might become partakers of the divine nature; if that is to occur, then we must believe, as it is once more stated in Joh. 1:12: **He did give power to become God's children to such as who believe on His Name...** And, the human nature of Christ thus becomes a door to deity for us, just as faith is a door to Christ's humanity for us.³⁵

To me You were given—shall not also all things be given to me? My nature is glorified greater in You than it was disgraced in Adam through sin. Because You assumed into the unity of

³⁴ See also Johann Anselm Steiger, "Pastoral Care according to John Gerhard," *Lutheran Quarterly* X, no. 3 (1996): 319–339.

³⁵ Johann Gerhard, *Postilla: An Explanation of the Sunday and Most Important Festival Gospels of the Whole Year*, vol. 1, *Sermons for the Church Year from Advent through Pentecost*, trans. Elmer Hohle (Malone, TX: The Center for the Study of Lutheran Orthodoxy, 2001), 61–62.

Your person [Christ has two natures, human and divine, in one person] that which was only accidentally weakened by Satan, You truly are flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone [Eph 5:30]. You are my brother. What can You deny to me, to whom You are most intimately joined by the same essence of the flesh and by feelings of fraternal love? You are the Bridegroom [Mt. 22:2], who according to the good pleasure of the Heavenly Father, bound the human nature to Yourself as a bride by means of a personal covenant. With a thankful soul I proclaim and acknowledge that I too am invited to the celebration of this marriage.³⁶

Some would see the devotional writings of Martin Moller, Philipp Nicolai, Johann Arndt, and Johann Gerhard as the beginnings of pietism. This can hardly be the case when Gerhard's *Loci* was the standard of Lutheran orthodoxy for generations. Rather, in these devotional writings Gerhard strives to touch the hearts and lives of believers with the objective truths of orthodoxy. As Luther and Arndt before him, he combines theological orthodoxy with what is good in Christian mysticism. In this literature Gerhard makes considerable use of the Lutheran doctrine of the mystical union of the believer with Christ.

Gerhard's most popular devotional work is *Sacred Meditations* (*Meditationes Sacrae*), which he wrote as a student and published in 1606. It is designed to arouse true piety and promote inner spiritual growth. In style and content *Sacred Meditations* is similar to *True Christianity*. In the preface to the first edition Gerhard criticizes those who do not relate doctrine to the Christian life. Also he acknowledges that after Holy Scripture he is influenced by the writings of Augustine, Bernard, Anselm, Tauler and other fathers³⁷ that Arndt had encouraged him to read during his student days. It consists of fifty-one devotional meditations and has passed through innumerable editions in many languages. It is an excellent volume for personal devotions.

Sacred Meditations presents the teaching of Scripture in a devotional and edifying manner. For example Gerhard speaks of the Holy Spirit as

³⁶ Johann Gerhard, *The Daily Exercise of Piety*, trans. M.C. Harrison (Fort Wayne, Indiana: Repristination Press, 1994) [2:4] 41–42. See also Johann Gerhard, *Meditations on Divine Mercy*, trans. Matthew C. Harrison (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2003), 65–66; Johann Gerhard, *Exercitium Pietatis Quotidianum Quadripartitum*, ed. Johann Anselm Steiger, *Doctrina et Pietas* Abteilung 1, 12 (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog Verlag, 2008), 97.

³⁷ Johann Gerhard, *Meditationes Sacrae* (1606/7), ed. Johann Anselm Steiger, *Doctrina et Pietas* Abteilung 1, 3,2 (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog Verlag, 2000), 356.

the bond of love between the persons of the Trinity as Augustine did and at the same time reminds us that the Spirit is the bond that unites our hearts to God.

The Holy Spirit, moreover, descended upon the apostles while they were continuing with one accord in prayer (Acts 1:14); for the Spirit of prayer is prevailed upon by prayer, and He it is who leads us to pray. And wherefore? Because He is the bond that unites our hearts to God, just as He unites the Son with the Father, and the Father with the Son; for He is the mutual essential love between the Father and the Son. This spiritual union between God and our souls follows upon faith; but faith, the gift of the Spirit, is obtained by prayer, and true prayer is prompted by the Holy Spirit.³⁸

The *Manual of Comfort* (*Enchiridion consolatorium morti ac tentationibus in agone mortis opponendum; Tröstliches Handbüchlein Johann Gerhards wider den Tod und die Anfechtungen beim Todeskampfe*) was written by Gerhard in 1611. This was a very difficult year for him because he lost his wife, his infant child, and finally his own health. He suffered the burdens of Job. In the *Manual* he provides comfort for himself and for everyone that faces sickness, death, and the other burdens of life. The devotions begin with the fears or concerns of the afflicted person, and then comfort is provided.

Tempted. Faith is altogether required for the salutary use of the Lord's Supper and enjoyment of the promises of the Gospel. It is not sufficient for the sharing of alms to have only the hand of the giver but you must also have the hand of the receiver. But truly my faith, which is to receive these gifts, is weak. The tiny ship of my heart wavers greatly as it is tossed violently by the different storms of temptations and the firmness of my faith is overthrown.

Comforter. Weak faith is still faith. Faith does not apprehend Christ and in Christ the grace of God, the forgiveness of sins, and eternal life, because it is strong but because it is faith. Yes, strong faith clings firmly to Christ. You must not

³⁸ Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, trans. C.W. Heisler (Decatur, Illinois: Repristination Press, 1998), 22:119–120. See also Johann Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, trans. Wade R. Johnson (Saginaw: Magdeburg Press, 2008), 95; Gerhard, *Meditationes Sacrae*, 447–448; Johann Gerhard, *Postille* (Berlin: Herausgegeben und verlegt von Gustav Schlawitz, 1870), I:485.

think, however, that a weak faith is rejected by Christ, for it too clings beneficially to Him. The faithful servant of God, Christ your savior, *breaks not the bruised reed nor quenches the burning wick* (Isa 42:3), but receives the weak in faith most cheerfully (Rom 14:3). ... As a mother comforts her children, so God comforts us (Isa 66:13). Now a mother treats an infant far more tenderly and offers greater care to it than she does to those who have matured in age. Similarly, God does not turn away from the one who is weak in faith but devotes Himself to heal and strengthen the one languishing.³⁹

Another of Gerhard's devotional writings is *The Daily Exercise of Piety* (*Exercitium Pietatis; Tägliche Uebung der Gottseligkeit*) written in 1612. It is divided into the four parts of daily meditation: 1. Confession of sins; 2. Thanksgiving for the benefits of the Lord; 3. Meditation on our personal needs; 4. Meditation on the needs of our neighbor. Here he connects Song of Solomon 2:14 with the wounded side of the Lord, as did much of the Ancient Church. The dove in the cleft of the rock is the believer who finds refuge in the bloody wounds of the Savior. This connection is quite appropriate when one realizes that the Song of Solomon speaks of the relationship between Christ and His bride the church.

A refuge has been prepared for me in the satisfaction You [Christ] made for my sins. I have a refuge in Your intercession for me at the right hand of the Father. Take flight, O my soul, to the morning light, and as a dove, hide in the clefts of the rock (Sg. Sol. 2:14), that is, take refuge in the wounds of Christ your Savior! Hide in this rock until the wrath of the Lord passes by. And you will find rest in this refuge. You will find protection. You will find acquittal, Amen.⁴⁰

Gerhard's longer and later devotional book *Schola Pietatis* (1622–1623) was published as an alternative to Arndt's *True Christianity*. Arndt had been criticized for employing material from individuals such

³⁹ Johann Gerhard, *Handbook of Consolations: for the Fears and Trials That Oppress Us in the Struggle with Death*, trans. Carl Beckwith (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 36–37. See also Johann Gerhard, *Enchiridion Consolatorium*, ed. Matthias Richter, *Doctrina et Pietas* Abteilung 1, 5,2 (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog Verlag, 2002), 195–196.

⁴⁰ Gerhard, *Daily Exercise of Piety*, [1:7] 31. See also Gerhard, *Exercitium Pietatis*, 65–67.

as Paracelsus and Weigel who made use of improper non-Christian elements in their mysticism. Arndt did not fall into this error, but his use of material from these individuals made his work suspect for some. In the *Schola Pietatis* Gerhard used the Bible as his main source of examples and concentrated on the means of grace as the source of the mystical union. He showed why Christians should seek piety and what constitutes new obedience. The first book is an admonition to holiness and contains incentives for piety. The second book teaches the procedure and methods of cultivating holiness. The third book describes the procedure for cultivating holiness on the basis of the first table of the Law. The fourth book discusses Christian virtues in connection with the fourth, fifth, and sixth commandments. The fifth book is an appendix to the explanation of the sixth commandment and the virtues of the remaining commandments. *Schola Pietatis* was reprinted several times during the seventeenth century but never became as popular as *Sacred Meditations* or *True Christianity*.⁴¹

Themes in the Theology of Gerhard

Gerhard maintained the preeminence of the **formal and material principles** of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as do all confessional Lutherans. Our formal principle is the inspired, inerrant Holy Scriptures, the only source of faith, doctrine, and life. There had been no need for a complete statement on inspiration in the Confessions. There was agreement concerning this important truth at the time of the Reformation. But by his time Gerhard found a need for treating the subject systematically. This he did in his *Locus de Scriptura, 1610*.⁴² This inspired Word of God was for Gerhard not only the source and norm of doctrine but also the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). The Word of God in all its forms, written, oral, and visible, is a powerful means of grace. Christ is the heart and center of this divine Word. “The swaddling clothes of Christ are the Holy Scriptures which are the paper swaddling clothes in which He has wrapped Himself. For the entire Scripture advances Christ. He is the kernel of the Scripture [*Denn die ganze Schrift gehet auf Christum, derselbige ist der Kern der Schrift*].”⁴³

⁴¹ Recently, the first three books of the *Schola Pietatis* have been translated into English, and the translation project continues. See Johann Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, trans. Elmer Hohle, 3 vols. (Malone, TX: Repristination Press, 2006–).

⁴² Gerhard, *Loci*, Locus 1, Para. 305, 367. See also Johann Gerhard, *On the Legitimate Interpretation of Holy Scripture*, trans. Richard J. Dinda (Malone: Repristination Press, 2015), 22, para. 25.

⁴³ Gerhard, *Postille* I:67.

The material principle of the Evangelical Lutheran Church is justification by faith alone without the deeds of the law. A person is justified or declared righteous not by anything he does or accomplishes but alone through the imputed righteousness of Christ that is ours by faith. On the basis of Christ's sacrifice and His perfect keeping of the law in our place (Galatians 3:13; Romans 5:18–19) God does not impute (count or reckon) sin but declares the whole world righteous or innocent. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them" (2 Corinthians 5:19; Romans 4:5; Romans 5:18; Romans 3:23–24). This verdict of not guilty the Holy Ghost brings to the individual through the means of grace and is obtained by faith (Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 12:3). The doctrine of justification, the central article of the faith, is the clear teaching of Gerhard in his *Loci Theologici*.⁴⁴

Gerhard maintained the biblical doctrine of the person of Christ, following in the tradition of Cyril of Alexandria, John of Damascus, Luther, and Chemnitz. Christ is both true God and true man in one person. He maintained a true personal union or hypostatic union. In the personal union, the incarnate, divine Logos assumed a perfect human nature, which never subsisted in itself, into His divine person so that the natures are so intimately united as to form one undivided, indivisible person in Christ. According to Gerhard, from the personal union arises the communication of natures.

The communication of natures in the person of Christ is the utterly close and intimate communion and coupling of the divine nature of the Word and His assumed human nature. Through this, the Word assumes the human nature personally; unites to Himself what He has assumed; permeates, perfects, and dwells therein with an intimate and utterly profound interpenetration; and appropriates it for Himself, so that from each, communicating with the other, He becomes one incommunicable thing—namely, one person—and so that predications result, through which the concrete of one nature is truly and really said about the concrete of the other nature.⁴⁵

Concerning the three genera of the communication of attributes (*genus idiomaticum*, *genus maiestaticum*, *genus apotelesmaticum*), Gerhard explains,

⁴⁴ Gerhard, *Loci*, Locus 16, Para. 199, 202, 203.

⁴⁵ Gerhard, *Commonplaces*, IV:145 (Locus 4, para. 149).

The communication of properties is either of the nature to the person or of the nature to the nature. In the communication of one nature to the person, the property fitting one nature is attributed to the person in the concrete. This constitutes the *first genus of the communication of properties*, as it is commonly called. In the communication of the divine nature to the human nature, the divine nature of the Word communicates its proper glory and excellence while it remains without the sufferings of the flesh. This constitutes the *second genus*. The communication of workings is the working of each nature in the person of the Word, by which each nature in Christ works with the communication of the other that which is proper to each. This constitutes the *third genus*.⁴⁶

This is merely a short summary of these important doctrines. However the purpose of this presentation is not to expound these doctrines but rather to address a number of less familiar themes in Gerhard.

Gerhard and the Care of Souls

For Gerhard, dogmatics and all theology had as its primary purpose the care of souls. Every doctrine has a practical application for salvation (*Theologia est Habitus Practicus*). In the *Loci Theologici* each locus ends with a discussion of the pastoral or practical use (*Usus Practicus*) of the particular doctrine presented. The basis for the care of souls is the incarnation and the redemptive work of Christ for our salvation. All pastoral care finds its source in the **joyful exchange** (*der fröhliche Wechsel*) as Gerhard indicates:

Christ could have assumed a human nature in a different manner, or at the very least could have been born with greater glory; however, it pleased Him so to humble Himself that He could exalt us, for by His poverty we became rich. [2 Corinthians 8:9]⁴⁷

Wonderful, indeed, is the exchange Thou dost make; our sins Thou takest upon Thyself, and Thy righteousness Thou dost impute to us; the death due us for our transgressions Thou

⁴⁶ Gerhard, *Commonplaces*, IV:170 (Locus 4, para. 174).

⁴⁷ Gerhard, *Postille*, I:57; see also *Postille*, I:101, 111.

dost Thyself suffer, and in turn dost bestow eternal life upon us. [*Mirabilis omnino commutatio: transfers in te peccata nostra, et donas tuam justitiam; mortem nobis debitam tibi irrogas, et donas nobis vitam.*]⁴⁸

In the holy incarnation the divine Logos assumed human nature which never subsisted alone into His divine person so that the two natures are so intimately united as to form one undivided and indivisible person. He is both God and man in one person. He became poor and lowly assuming our flesh to raise us to His divine glory and eternal life in heaven. He took upon Himself our sin, our suffering, and death so that we might be as He is, sharing in His righteousness, divine life, and salvation. Gerhard writes, “The Son of God came down from heaven, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Galatians 4:5). God became man, that man might become a partaker of divine grace and of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).”⁴⁹ This wonderful treasure accomplished for all on the cross and announced to all by His glorious resurrection is brought to us personally through the means of grace and is received by faith or trust alone in the Savior which is worked, strengthened, and preserved through those same means of grace.

This salvific work that is the heart of pastoral care, as Gerhard notes in his *Testament* of 1603, is always to be seen in a Trinitarian context. God the Father who created us when we were not and still preserves us, in love sent His Son as our Redeemer. The second person, Jesus Christ, redeemed us from sin, death, and destruction through His rose-colored blood. The Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, brought the benefits of the cross to us in the means of grace and works faith and new life in us to receive that benefit.⁵⁰

Gerhard and the Mystical Union

When faith in the Savior is worked in the heart by the Spirit, an individual is totally forgiven on the basis of Christ’s atoning sacrifice and he stands justified before God. At the same time new spiritual life is worked, our new man and the entire Trinity makes its dwelling in us (John 14:22–24). This indwelling of the Holy Trinity is referred to as the mystical union (*unio mystica*). The mystical union is the union between God and justified man wherein the Holy Trinity dwells in the

⁴⁸ Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 10:55; see also 8:47; Gerhard, *Meditationes Sacrae*, 397.

⁴⁹ Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 14:76; Gerhard, *Meditationes Sacrae*, 413–414.

⁵⁰ Böttcher, 23.

believer substantially and operates in the same by His gracious presence. Thus the believer has union and communion with God, partaking in the divine (2 Peter 1:4). This union is effected by God Himself through the means of grace, Word and Sacrament.

The doctrine of the mystical union as employed by Gerhard, the devotional writers, and the dogmaticans is seen by some as a perversion of Lutheran doctrine and the advent of pietism but nothing could be further from the truth. Our Lutheran Confessions speak of gracious indwelling of the Trinity by faith in the elect who have been justified through the imputation of Christ's righteousness.⁵¹ Philipp Nicolai (1556–1608), the great Lutheran hymn writer and preacher, made considerable use of this doctrine in providing comfort for Christians:

Above all this, the fact that God out of great love dwells and rests in His elect and again that they rest tenderly and sweetly in Him and eternally rejoice, this indwelling of God in His elect produces great benefits and much heavenly fruit as Christ says: He who remains in me and I in him the same brings forth much fruit. [*Ueber dies alles, dass Gott aus grosser Liebe in seinen Auserwählten wohnt and ruht, und sie hinwiederum sanft und lieblich in ihm ruhen und sich ewiglich erfreuen, schafft diese Einwohnung Gottes in seinen Heiligen auch grossen Nutzen and viel himmlische Früchte, wie Christus sagt: Wer in mir bleibt, und ich in ihm, der bringt viel Früchte.*]⁵²

Therefore we see that the mystical union was not an innovation of Arndt though definitely taught by him,⁵³ but rather it is a scriptural doctrine embraced by all the Lutheran fathers.

The biblical doctrine of the mystical union as taught by Gerhard is not to be confused with the false mysticism of the enthusiasts and the pagan world. In the mystical union the distinction between the divine and human is not confused. The soul of man is not absorbed into the divine. Rather Gerhard explicates the mystical union using the analogy of the personal union in Christ. As the human and the divine in Christ are united into one person and yet the natures remain distinct so in the

⁵¹ See FC SD III.54 in *Triglotta* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 933–935; Luther, WA 28:25–32, 39–41.

⁵² Philipp Nicolai, *Freudenspiegel des ewigen Lebens*, (Elberfeld: Verlag des Lutherischen Büchervereins, 1909), 67.

⁵³ Johann Arndt, *True Christianity*, trans. Peter Erb (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 6.

mystical union the Trinity makes its dwelling in man but God and man remain distinct. There is no essential or substantial union.

As the personal communication of attributes arises out of the personal union of the divine nature and the human nature in Christ so out of the spiritual union of Christ and the church, of God the Lord and a believing soul, arises a spiritual communion not only in the kingdom of glory and in eternal life but also in the kingdom of grace and in this life. Therefore Saint Peter says concerning the true believers that they have become partakers in the divine nature. [*Wie aus der persönlichen Vereinigung der göttlichen und menschlichen Natur in Christo entsteht die persönliche Mittheilung der Eigenschaften / also entsteht aus der geistlichen Vereinigung Christi und der Kirchen / Gottes des Herrn und einer gläubigen Seele / eine geistliche Gemeinschaft / nicht allein im Reich der Herrlichkeit und im ewigen Leben / sondern auch im Reich der Gnaden und in diesem Leben / Dannenhero S. Petrus 2. Epistel 1. v. 4. von den wahren Gläubigen spricht / dass sie der Göttlichen Natur sind theilhaftig worden.*]⁵⁴

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

Motifs of the Mystical Union

The mystical union is often expressed by the devotional writers and the dogmaticans with the **nuptial motif**. This is based on the second chapter of Hosea, where the Lord speaks to His Old Testament church, “I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy; I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord” (Hosea 2:21–22).

⁵⁴ Johann Gerhard, *Postilla Salomonaea*, qtd. in Johann Steiger, *Johann Gerhard* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog Verlag, 1997), 97.

As husband and wife become one flesh, so Christ unites Himself to His bride the church and to each believing soul, giving her all His divine gifts and taking upon Himself her burden of sin. The bride by nature was naked and bare but He clothed her with the garments of salvation and covered her with his robe of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10). He washed her stains away in Baptism, the holy laver of regeneration (Ephesians 5:26) and He continues to feed her with His own body and blood unto eternal life.⁵⁵ “The Holy Spirit is called the pledge which God has given us (2 Corinthians 1:22) or as it actually says: a dowry. As a bridegroom unites himself with his dear bride in marriage through a wedding ring, so God the Lord when He becomes engaged to us through faith (Hosea 2:20) gives us this pledge, the dowry of the Holy Spirit.”⁵⁶

In his pastoral care Gerhard makes considerable use of the picture of the **wounded side of the Lord**. This picture was used already by Augustine and it was used throughout church history.⁵⁷ On that first Good Friday when the Roman soldiers came to break the legs of those crucified to hasten their death, they found that Jesus was already dead. Therefore they did not break his bones. “Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water” (John 19:34). Gerhard sees this occurrence at the cross fulfilling the words of Zechariah, the Prophet, “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son (Zechariah 12:10). . . . On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity” (Zechariah 13:1). The God-man, Jesus Christ, the Almighty Himself, was pierced on the cross for our salvation. The blood and water from His wounded side has provided that wonderful cleansing fountain for sin and uncleanness of which Zechariah speaks. It can wash away each stain and mark, each spot and wrinkle. His holy precious blood is the source of redemption for the whole world (1 John 1:7; 2:2).

That fountain of salvation, opened just moments after His death, where full redemption was accomplished, continues to flow for us today

⁵⁵ Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 13:71–75; Gerhard, *Meditationes Sacrae*, 409–413.

⁵⁶ Gerhard, *Postille*, I:486. See also Gerhard, *Postilla*, trans. Hohle, 1:454.

⁵⁷ Augustine, *Tractate on John* 120,2 in Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 7, *Augustin: Homilies on the Gospel of John, Homilies on the First Epistle of John, Soliloquies* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 434–435.

in the blood and the water: in the water of Baptism, the blood of the Lord's Supper, and in His Word which is spirit and life. Here the Lord comes to us with all His blessings as St. John indicates, "This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth" (1 John 5:6). The blood and water flowing from the Savior's side points to the two Sacraments and indicates that the blessings of the Sacraments have their source in the cross. Baptism and the other means of grace indeed flow from the cross of Christ and make present for us all the benefits of Christ's redemptive sacrifice.⁵⁸

The means of grace indeed flow from the wounded side of the Lord and are the true medicine for the cure of souls. At the same time Gerhard views the wounded side as the hiding place where the burdened sinner can find shelter and be united with the loving Savior. As St. Paul he connects the rock smitten in the wilderness with Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4). Jesus is the Rock of Ages from whose side flows the double cure. Gerhard then adds to this picture the cleft in the rock of Song of Solomon 2:14 where one is to fly as a dove for shelter. Here our soul can fly as a dove and hide in the cleft of the rock, that is, take refuge in His wounded side until all the stormy blasts of life are over.⁵⁹ Gerhard writes, "I hear a voice in Canticles (2:14), which bids me, hide in the clefts of the rock. Thou art the immovable rock (1 Corinthians 10:4), and Thy wounds its clefts; in them I will hide me against the accusations of the whole world."⁶⁰

Finally Gerhard draws together the wounded side of the Lord and the nuptial motif. "You have a type of how the Lord Christ was to have His side opened up by a spear in Adam, who had his side opened by God, and from the rib which was taken from him was crafted a woman. Thus, as Christ fell into death's sleep on the cross, from His opened side flowed blood and water—the two Holy Sacraments—from which the Church, Christ's Bride, was built up."⁶¹ As Adam's bride was taken out of his side while he slept (Genesis 2:21), so the second Adam's bride, the bride of Christ, is cleansed and formed through the waters of Baptism,

⁵⁸ Johann Gerhard, *Ausführliche Schriftmässige Erklärung der beiden Artikel von der heiligen Taufe und dem heiligen Abendmahl* (Berlin: Verlag von Gustav Schlawitz, 1868), 6,10. See also Johann Gerhard, *A Comprehensive Explanation of Holy Baptism and Lord's Supper*, trans. Elmer Hohle (Malone, Texas: Repristination Press, 2000), 13, 18–19.

⁵⁹ Gerhard, *Daily Exercise of Piety*, [1:7] 31; see page 191 above.

⁶⁰ Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 1:15.

⁶¹ Johann Gerhard, *An Explanation of the History of the Suffering and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ*, trans. Elmer Hohle (Malone, Texas: Repristination Press, 1999), 30.

the blood of the Lord's Supper, and His Word which is spirit and life. This corresponds to what issued from the Savior's wounded side during His three day's sleep in death (John 19:34). Therefore, Jesus can say of His bride, the church, as Adam said of Eve the mother of our race: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Genesis 2:23). The church is so intimately united with Christ through the means of grace that she is one flesh with Him (Ephesians 5:32).

The Benefits of the Mystical Union

The mystical union of Christ with the believer is an important component in Gerhard's pastoral care. At times Gerhard uses the mystical union as a warning in connection with his application of the Law. The believer should not banish the Holy Spirit from his heart and destroy the blessed union with God by unholy living:

But as the Holy Spirit united the divine and human natures in Christ by His own overshadowing power (Luke 1:35), so also by the outpouring of His gracious gifts upon us He unites us to God and God to us. As long as the Holy Spirit abides in a man, filling him with His gracious gifts, so long does that man abide in a holy union with God. And just as soon as a man through sin falls away from faith and love, and banishes the Holy Spirit from his heart, he is alienated from God, and the blessed union between God and his soul is destroyed.⁶²

Gerhard reminds the Christian that every soul is either a bride of Christ or the devil's whore. There is no middle ground. Either the soul clings to Christ the heavenly bridegroom in Christian service and obedience or it lives in adultery. Using the same picture language in a slightly different manner he admonishes that the one who loves sin and willingly sins against the conscience is married to the daughter of the devil and receives the devil as his father.⁶³ This is a powerful warning not to turn our backs on Christ the heavenly bridegroom with whom we are united by faith.

While Gerhard at times uses the mystical union as a warning he also employs it to incite Christians to do good works. Out of thanks for all that Christ has done for us, saving us from hell's destruction, and making us the dwelling place of the blessed Trinity, we will strive to live

⁶² Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 22:121.

⁶³ Johann Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis* (Nürnberg: Gedruckt zu Jena Georg Sengwald, 1653), 1:129. See also Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, trans. Hohle, 1:172.

as those who are the divine children of God. We are the temple of the living God; therefore we will desire to live as those in whom the Spirit of God resides.⁶⁴

Therefore God's Son became man so that we might partake in the divine nature through Him (II Peter 1:4) and become the children of God (John 1:12). We were received as the sons of God, so it is only proper that we should live in divine child-like obedience. We have partaken of the divine nature so we also must lead divine lives according to the example of Enoch (Genesis 5:22). Therefore the divine nature was personally united with the assumed human nature of Christ, so that our souls would be again united with God spiritually. But where there is such a spiritual marriage and union there is found true holiness. For where sin separates us from God and one another there such spiritual union cannot take place (Isaiah 59:2).⁶⁵

Many seek rest for the soul in earthly riches, many seek rest for the soul in pleasure, and many seek rest in worldly honors. But each of these things is found wanting. Without Jesus, life has no meaning and purpose and our end is destruction. Without Him there will always be something missing in our life. There will be a craving within that will not be satisfied with wealth, power, and prestige. Only Jesus can the heartfelt longing still, as St. Augustine wrote, "Our hearts are never at rest until they are at rest in You" [*Et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te*].⁶⁶ Through union and communion with Him as our Savior we have peace and purpose in this life and the blessed hope of the life to come.

The end of a human soul is God Himself, since it is created indeed in His image. It can never then be at rest and peace, except as it attains the end of its being, that is God. As the life of the body is the soul, so the life of the soul is God; as therefore that soul truly lives in which God graciously dwells, so that soul is spiritually dead in which God dwells not. But how can

⁶⁴ Gerhard, *Explanation of the History*, 132–133.

⁶⁵ Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, 1:42. See Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, trans. Hohle, 1:59.

⁶⁶ Augustine, *Confessions*, 1:1 in Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, *The Confessions and Letters of Augustin, with a Sketch of his Life and Work* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 45.

there be rest to a dead soul? This first death in sin necessarily involves that second death unto eternal damnation (Rev. 20:6).⁶⁷

The primary purpose of the mystical union in all of Gerhard's writings is to comfort Christians in the burdens of this life and to assure them of the blessed hope of everlasting life. The Christian faces many conflicts and struggles in life but because Christ dwells in him he knows that God is for him, therefore nothing can be against him.

To me You were given—shall not also all things be given to me? My nature is glorified greater in You than it was disgraced in Adam through sin. Because You assumed into the unity of Your person [Christ has two natures, divine and human, in one person] that which was only accidentally weakened by Satan, You truly are flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone [Eph. 5:30]. You are my brother. What can You deny to me, to whom You are most intimately joined by the same essence of flesh and by the feeling of fraternal love? You are the Bridegroom [Mt. 22:2], who according to the good pleasure of the Heavenly Father, bound the human nature to Yourself as a bride by means of a personal covenant. With a thankful soul I proclaim and acknowledge that I too am invited to the celebration of this marriage.⁶⁸

Devotional Themes

In his devotional literature Gerhard is influenced by the Book of Psalms in Holy Scripture. Many of the psalms are written in the form of a conversation with the soul. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits who forgives all your iniquities..." (Psalm 103:1–2; see also Psalm 42:6; Psalm 116:7). Gerhard often writes his devotions as a conversation between Christ and the believer or between the believer and his soul. In this literature Christ or the believer speaks to the believer's soul concerning the comforting truths of Scripture. Here in a dialog with his soul he proclaims evangelical comfort to his wounded heart.

⁶⁷ Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 32:183.

⁶⁸ Gerhard, *Daily Exercise of Piety*, [2:4] 41–42.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou still doubting the mercy of God? Remember thy Creator. Who hath created thee without any concurrence of thine own will? ... Will not He who cared for thee before thou hadst any being care for thee now, after He hath formed thee in His own image? I am a creature of God; to my Creator then do I betake myself. What if my nature is corrupted by the devil; and pierced and wounded by my sins, as by murderous robbers (Luke 10:30), yet my Creator still lives. He who could create me at first can now restore me. He who created me without sin, can now remove from me all the sin which has entered into me and has permeated my whole being, either through the temptation of the devil, through Adam's fault, or through my own actual transgression.⁶⁹

An interesting aspect of Gerhard's devotional literature is his gathering of Scripture passages. At times he collects many sections of Scripture into a compact form as a special comfort for the Christian. The Scripture, to be sure, is filled with comfort but at times it is difficult for the burdened Christian to cull out the pertinent passages. Therefore, Gerhard combines consoling passages as a balm to soothe the burdened heart. In a funeral sermon he brings the mourners this special consolation:

If I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for You Lord are with me (Psalm 23:4). The Lord is my light and my salvation whom should I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life whom should I fear (Psalm 27:1)? On God I will hope and I will not fear what flesh can do to me (Psalm 56:4). Who sits under the protection of the Most High and remains under the shadow of the Almighty, he speaks to the Lord, "My confidence and my fortress, my God in whom I hope" (Psalm 91:1). Here also belongs another beautiful passage. Fear not I have redeemed you, I have called you by name, you are mine. Then when you go through the water I will be by you, so that the streams should not drown you. And when you go through the fire you should not be burned and the flames should not set you afire. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. All this St. Paul

⁶⁹ Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 8:45–46.

summarizes when he says “Is God for us, who may be against us?” (Romans 8:28)⁷⁰

The Christian is to diligently read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the life-giving Word as the ancient collect directs. He will meditate on and contemplate upon the Word; that does not mean one quick reading and then off to other things. No, he will contemplate the Word and inwardly digest it. Gerhard, in the *Schola Pietatis*, says that the Christian will ruminate on the Word or roll it over in his mind as a cow chews on its cud. You have seen a cow resting in the pasture quietly chewing away. Thus the Christian will take time to mediate and ruminate or chew on the Word. Gerhard reminds us that Isaac went into the fields in the evening of the day to pray and mediate on the truths of the Lord (Genesis 24:63). David said that when he lay on his bed he thought about the Lord and when he arose he spoke of Him (Psalm 63:6 [63:7 in German]). All these examples are to remind a Christian that he is to study and meditate upon the Word. Gerhard maintained the truth of *Oratio, Meditatio, et Tentatio*, just as Luther did.⁷¹

To assist one in the practice of Christian piety and sanctification Gerhard reminds the Christian that there are five means of help or support. These five are: 1) Hearing or reading the Word of God [*Verbi divine auditus sive lectio, die Anhörung oder Lesung dess Göttlichen Worts*], 2) Receiving the holy Lord’s Supper [*Eucharistiae usurpatio, die Niessung dess Heiligen Abendmals*], 3) Holy meditation [*Sancta meditatio, die heilige Betrachtung*], 4) Zealous, diligent, prayer, and godly appeal [*Seria oratio, eiveriges fleissiges Gebet und Göttliche Anruffung*], and 5) The subjugation and mastery of the body [*Corporis castigatio, dess Leibes Beteubung und Zehmung*].⁷²

Gerhard describes eight kinds of meditations in the *Schola Pietatis* that a Christian may use in his daily life. In each type of meditation he uses different organizational principles for the material. In the **first** type of meditation one is to consider the Creator and His creation. He created all things and still preserves them. He has created us, redeemed us, and sanctified us, making us His dwelling place. Out of thanks for all that our Creator has done for us we will strive to practice

⁷⁰ Gerhard, *Sämtliche Leichenpredigten*, 97.

⁷¹ Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, 2:291–292. See also Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, trans. Hohle, 2:59–61; Johann Gerhard, *Methodus Studii Theologici* (Jena: Tobias Steinmann, 1620).

⁷² Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, 2:272. See also Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, trans. Hohle, 2:30.

true godliness. In the **second** type of meditation one is to center his attention on the Lord, himself, and on his neighbor. When he thinks of God he remembers all the blessings that he has received from His fatherly hand. When he thinks of himself he remembers his many sins and great need. When he thinks of his neighbor he remembers his neighbor's many needs and the prayers that he should direct to the Lord for his neighbor's good. Gerhard's **third** type of meditation centers in the two books from which we learn the knowledge of God, nature and the Scripture. The book of nature shows us that God is great and powerful who has provided a wonderful creation. However this knowledge can never save us. Only the Bible points us to our only Savior from sin, Jesus Christ. The **fourth** type of meditation considers the days of creation and what God did on each day. For example, on the fourth day God created the heavenly bodies the sun, the moon, and the stars. This reminds us that Christ is the true light of the world who has enlightened our hearts with the rays of His Gospel. He is the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings (Malachi 4:2). In the **fifth** type Gerhard refers to a statement of one of the church fathers. He said that each day he read a book that had three pages, one red, one white, and one black. The red page points to the blood of Christ that covers our sin. The white page points to the eternal joy of the elect in heaven. The black page points to the sorrow of the damned in hell. In connection with this devotion Gerhard has one mediate on the passion and death of our Lord for our salvation. The **sixth** type of meditation may be entitled the three-things devotion. In meditation, one should contemplate three things: the past, the present, and the future, and in each one of these the Christian should contemplate on three things. For example in the present one should think about the brevity of his life, the difficulty of salvation facing the constant attacks of the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh (Philippians 2:12), and the small number of those that are saved (Matthew 7:13–14).⁷³ The **seventh** type of meditation reminds us to consider these things above us: the eye that sees all, the ear that hears all, and the book in which all is written. Then the Christian is to remember what is in us, what is around us, and what is below us.⁷⁴

The **eighth** type of meditation is Gerhard's spiritual clockwork. Here he recommends the association of some spiritual idea with each hour of the day so that the life-giving Word will always be in our minds

⁷³ A meditation of this kind is also found in Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 28:158.

⁷⁴ Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, 2:294–313. See also Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, trans. Hohle, 2:64–93.

and on our lips. At one o'clock, the Christian should think about the one mediator between God and man. At two, he should meditate on the Son and the Holy Ghost given by the Father, the chief doctrines of the Bible, the Law and the Gospel, the two commandments which summarize the Law (Matthew 22:37–38), and on the two Sacraments. Three o'clock should call to mind the three persons of the Trinity and four o'clock the four kinds of sin and four kinds of ground on which the seed of the Word falls. When the clock strikes five one should consider the five wounds of Christ, the five senses, and the five enemies of the Christian—the devil, sin, the world, death, and hell. At six o'clock one will consider the six days of creation, the six periods of life, and the six types of sacrifices in the Old Testament. At the seventh hour the seventh day comes to mind. This is the day of rest which reminds of our true rest in Jesus Christ. The eighth hour points one to the eighth day on which Christ was circumcised and named Jesus, which means Savior, so that we may obtain spiritual circumcision and eternal salvation. At nine o'clock we remember that Christ died for our salvation at the ninth hour. When the clock strikes ten the Christian is pointed to the Ten Commandments which show him his sin and which he strives to follow out of thanks for salvation. At eleven o'clock the Christian remembers the eleven disciples to whom the Office of the Keys was given in John 20:23. Finally at twelve o'clock we call to mind the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple who showed forth His divine wisdom among the teachers, the twelve Apostles, the twelve sons of Jacob, and the Tree of Life bearing twelve kinds of fruit (Revelation 22:2).⁷⁵

In each of these eight types of meditation earthly things are to lead the reader to spiritual truths. Earthly everyday occurrences should be continually pointing the Christian to the Scripture, the source of life and truth. Here earthly concrete realities are reminders that direct us to heavenly wisdom. In this manner these earthly things receive spiritual significance that assist in the upbuilding and nourishing of the inner man. As a wooden cross receives spiritual meaning through its association with Christ's passion that strengthens the believer, so in Gerhard's spiritual clockwork the hours of the day receive spiritual significance that strengthens us in our faith in the Savior. This is the purpose of each of these types of meditation.

⁷⁵ Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, 2:314–321. See also Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, trans. Hohle, 2:93–104.

Gerhard and Typology

The Lutheran Church maintains that only the literal sense of Scripture is valid for the establishment of doctrine. This statement is true and correct. One cannot base doctrine on a typological interpretation of Scripture. For example, the fact that nothing should remain of the Passover lamb (the Passover meal is a type of the Holy Supper [Exodus 12:10]) should not be used as a proof passage for the consumption of the *reliquiae* in the Holy Supper. At the same time, for Gerhard this does not preclude a homiletical or a devotional use of Scripture employing allegorical, tropological, and anagogical interpretations. These uses are different applications of the one Spirit-intended meaning of Scripture. Concerning this he writes:

There is only one proper and legitimate sense to each Scripture passage, a sense intended by the Holy Spirit and derived from the natural meaning of the words; and only from this one literal sense can any valid argumentation be brought forth. Allegorical, tropological, anagogical interpretations are not different meanings but different inferences drawn from the one meaning or different adaptations to the one meaning and sense that the writings express.⁷⁶

In his *Postille* Gerhard speaks of the mystical manner or method of teaching [*modum docendi mysticum*]. Here the teacher is to compare the history of the Old Testament with the New Testament so that one sees Christ and His teaching in the Old Testament and is drawn to Him. Many pictures or foreshadowings of Christ and His work are found when one reads the Old Testament in the light of the New. This is the spiritual or mystical sense of Scripture that builds up and strengthens the inner man.⁷⁷ As one finds many types in the Old Testament, he finds Christ and spiritual nourishment. This is the mystical meaning.

The Meaning of Typology

Types are Old Testament pointers which direct one to the New Testament concrete realities. God preordained certain persons, events, and institutions in the Old Testament to prefigure corresponding persons, events, and institutions in the New. These types point to and

⁷⁶ Gerhard, *Loci Theologici*, Locus 1, Para. 67, qtd. in Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), 1:326. See also Gerhard, *Interpretation*, 73, para. 133.

⁷⁷ Johann Gerhard, *Postille*, Vorrede ix.

anticipate their matching historical New Testament antitypes. The antitype is no mere repetition of the type, but is always greater than its prefiguration. This type-antitype relationship can be compared to an object reflected in a mirror. The type is the mirror image or picture of the New Testament reality. Typological exegesis then is based on the conviction that God the Father determined that certain persons and events in the history of Israel would prefigure what He would accomplish in the fullness of time in the person of His only begotten Son. On the other hand allegory gives new meaning to a particular thing in the Old or New Testament for the purpose of application and illustration. For example David's victory over Goliath typologically refers to Christ's victory over Satan while allegorically it is may be understood as the victory of the spirit over the flesh within us.⁷⁸

Typological Themes in Gerhard

The Exodus Theme: Gerhard compares Israel in Exodus with God's New Testament people as St. Paul does in 1 Corinthians 10:1–4. The people of Israel were enslaved by Pharaoh in Egypt. Like Israel in Egypt we, by nature, were hopelessly enslaved in sin. Satan, that cruel Pharaoh, so controlled us that we did his every bidding and even did it willingly. Yet Jesus, the Valiant One, came to our defense. In the battle of the ages on the cross, He suffered all that we deserved for sin so that He might crush the old evil foe, our cruel task master, and free us from his tyranny. Jesus is the true Passover Lamb who came to save all people from everlasting death with His blood. As Israel became God's people passing through the waters of the Red Sea, so we became a part of spiritual Israel, the Holy Christian Church, passing through the waters of Baptism. We are now in this present wilderness where we are tempted by the evil one as Israel of old. Yet, all the way through life's wandering, the Lord Jesus feeds us with the heavenly manna, the life-giving Word and the Holy Sacrament of His body and blood. Here He strengthens us to face all the difficulties of life until we cross the Jordan reaching the heavenly Canaan, the promised land with milk and honey blessed.⁷⁹

The Adam/Second Adam Theme: The Adam/Christ Typology permeates the New Testament, but the most comprehensive summary of this typology is found in I Corinthians 15 and Romans 5. In

⁷⁸ Gerhard, *Loci Theologici*, Locus 1, Para. 69; see also Johann Steiger, *Fünf Zentralthemen der Theologie Luthers und seiner Erben*, 194ff.; Hägglund, 229–241; Gerhard, *Interpretation*, 76, para. 138.

⁷⁹ Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, 9–10, 215–216.

Romans 5, St. Paul compares and contrasts Adam and Christ indicating that Christ is infinitely greater. The whole human race fell into sin in Adam's fall. But in the mystery of the incarnation, the second Adam came, who brought new life to man. He lived a perfect and harmonious life with God and man to restore us to the original righteousness and innocence of the creation. Then on the cross He gave His life as a ransom for all. All that the first Adam lost in the fall the Second Adam restored in Himself—and more, eternal life in heaven. After Gerhard compares the fall of Adam and the resurrection of the Lord he continues, "Through this it is sufficiently shown that Christ's resurrection is a certain witness that everything we lost in and through Adam has been restored through Him."⁸⁰

And as the first Adam was created from earth when the earth still had not been cursed, so Christ the heavenly Adam desired to assume a human nature out of such flesh and blood from which through the power of the Holy Ghost the poison of sin had been removed and which was subject no longer to the curse.⁸¹

The first Adam had lost the treasure of heavenly goods through eating of the fruits of the forbidden tree. Therefore the second and heavenly Adam has desired to ordain the eating and drinking His body and blood through which He again obtained the lost heavenly goods.⁸²

As he expounds the second Adam theme, Gerhard connects the creation, John 19:34, the Sacraments, and the bride of Christ, the church. As Adam's bride was taken out of his side while he slept (Genesis 2:21), so the second Adam's bride, the bride of Christ, was taken from His side as He slept in death.⁸³

The Greater David Theme: When the lives of David and Jesus are compared, we see many amazing similarities. They were both born in Bethlehem and originated from the stem of Jesse (Isaiah 11). As David shepherded the flocks of his father and fought for the defense of the sheep (1 Samuel 17:34–36) so Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The

⁸⁰ Gerhard, *Postille*, I:342. See also Gerhard, *Postilla*, trans. Hohle, 1:315.

⁸¹ Gerhard, *Postille*, I:55. See also Gerhard, *Postilla*, trans. Hohle, 1:52, 151.

⁸² Gerhard, *Postille*, I:326. See also Gerhard, *Postilla*, trans. Hohle, 1:301; Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, 373.

⁸³ See pages 199–200 above.

good shepherd gives His life for the sheep ... and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand" (John 10). David defeated the giant Goliath, freeing Israel from the bondage of the Philistines, but Jesus defeated a much greater giant, the Devil, freeing all people from the bondage of sin and death. David endured many years of humiliation treated like a common criminal by Saul, but was finally raised to the throne of all Israel. So Jesus after His Great Passion arose triumphant from the grave and was raised to the position of power and authority at the right hand of God.⁸⁴

In 2 Samuel 15, it is recorded that David, as he was fleeing from his son Absalom, left Jerusalem, crossed over the brook of Kidron and went up the Mount of Olives with weeping and sadness. This sad departure by David was a type of the departure which the Son of David, Jesus Christ, with similar sadness and trembling, would one day take across the brook of Kidron [and] up the Mount of Olives as the time of His suffering finally arrived, His spoiled children running from Him for their lives.⁸⁵

Other Types and Pictures: In his passion sermons, Gerhard, by his voluminous use of Old Testament prophecies and types, shows that the Old Testament is indeed the book of Christ.

Also appropriate to the historical contemplation of Christ's suffering is the diligent examination of the prophecies and types of the Old Testament which point, in general, to the history of the sufferings, or point especially to specific portions of it, and then compare them with the [passion] history. For since St. Paul testifies in 1 Cor. 15 that Christ died "according to the Scriptures," it undeniably follows that in the Scriptures of the Old Testament there had to have been a prior proclamation of the suffering and death of Christ. St. Peter even more clearly verifies this in the first chapter of his first epistle: the Spirit of Christ, which was in the prophets, had previously testified to the sufferings which Christ went through. Thus, in the first Gospel promise about the woman's Seed in Gen. 3, it is announced that the hellish snake would sting Him in the heel. This heel-prick is none other than the sufferings of

⁸⁴ Gerhard, *Postille*, II:32–33. See also Gerhard, *Postilla*, trans. Tangner, 2:38–39.

⁸⁵ Gerhard, *Suffering and Death of our Lord*, 45–46.

Christ. Psalm 16 says of the Messiah: I must suffer on behalf of you. This Psalm is applied to Christ. In Acts 2 and 13 [and] in Psa. 22 are described the abusive words which the Jews poured out against Christ. Judas' betrayal is prophesied in Psa. 41 and 55, and in Psa. 69 it is announced how Christ was given to drink of gall and vinegar in His great thirst. In Isa. 50 are prophesied the beating and insulting of Christ with which He was blasphemed. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah looks at the whole passion of Christ. In Zec. 11 are mentioned the 30 pieces of silver for which Christ was sold; in Zec. 12, the opening [piercing] of His side. There are similar glorious types of the suffering of Christ in the Old Testament, as, for example, in Joseph, who was sold by his own brothers (Gen. 37); in the fetters of Samson (Jdg. 16); in the offering up of Isaac, who himself carried the wood (Gen. 22); in the previous lifting up of the serpent (Num. 21); in the Levitical sacrifices; in Jonah, who was in the belly of the whale-fish for three days and three nights (Jonah 2); in the opening of Adam's side as he slept (Gen. 2); in the Passover lamb (Exo. 12)—even as the Scriptures of the New Testament refer to certain of these same prophecies and types with clear words, [cf.] Mat. 12, John 3 and 19, Heb. 9.⁸⁶

The Sermons of Gerhard

Many of the writers in the Reformation era and the Post-Reformation era produced sermon books or postils. The major writers of postils include such individuals as "Johann Arndt, Joachim von Beust, Andreas Celichius, Martin Chemnitz, Paul Eber, Paul von Eitzen, Simon Gedik, Johann Gerhard, Johann Habermann, Tileman Hesshusen, Matthias Hoë von Hoënegg, Josua Loner, Simon Meusel, Jerome Menzel, Martin Mirus, Simon Pauli, Moses Pflacher, Johannes Strack, Christoph Vischer, and Johannes Wigand."⁸⁷ Of these men, the *Postilla* of Arndt and Gerhard were the most widely disseminated. These sermon books went through many printings and are still easily accessible today.

The word *postil* is from the Latin phrase *post illa verba textus*, "after the words of the text," a reference to the exposition of a text of Scripture

⁸⁶ Ibid., 7–8.

⁸⁷ John M. Frymire, *The Primacy of the Postils: Catholics, Protestants, and the Dissemination of Ideas in Early Modern Germany* (Boston: Brill, 2010), 172–173.

just read, either the Gospel or Epistle lesson for the day. These books were intended as a guide and an example for pastors in their preaching. They were also read publicly by pastors who did not have the proper education and ability to write an adequate sermon. Gerhard's *Postille* is a rich treasury of evangelical preaching filled with illustrations, pictures, and types.

The *Postille* is divided into three parts with an appendix. The first part includes sermons on the historic Gospels for the Sundays of Advent through Pentecost, the second part has sermons for the Trinity season, and the third part for the minor festivals of the church year. The appendix contains twenty-nine sermons on free texts.⁸⁸ Gerhard's entire *Postille* has now been translated into English.

In the preface of Gerhard's *Postille* he give a review of homiletics for the reader. He lists eleven methods of teaching or preaching that the pastor may use in his presentation of the text.

The **first** method he names is the grammatical method of teaching, which involves especially plucking out the explanation of the words and the emphasis of the statements. The **second** is the logical method of teaching which concerns itself very much with the divisions and subdivisions of the text. The **third** is the rhetorical method of teaching, which is interested in the magnificent style and rhetorical figures. The **fourth** is the histrionic method of teaching, which is most interested in the action; that is, in the dialog and gestures. The **fifth** is the historical way of teaching, and this gathers histories [or episodes] of every kind. The **sixth** is the ecclesiastical method of teaching, and it provides explanations and statements of the fathers. The **seventh** is the catechetical method of teaching, and it instills, after a clear explanation of the text, useful and suitable doctrines into the audience. The **eighth** is the scholastic method of teaching, and it treats thoroughly and in detail a single doctrine according to the rules of the method. **Ninth** is the refutatory method of teaching, and it frees the text from the corruptions of the adversaries. The **tenth** method of teaching is the mystical method, which looks to the edification of the inner person and takes special pleasure in appropriate allegories. The **eleventh** is the heroic method of teaching, which mixes

⁸⁸ A translation of one of these sermons from the appendix based on Psalm 42:2-3 is found in the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (December 2002): 240-251.

doctrines into the explanation; and after a long digression, as it were, from the text, it returns appropriately to it in the custom of the blessed Luther in his Church and home *postilla*. After passing judgment on each of these modes of teaching, he shows that he has united the catechetical and mystical methods in these *postilla* as most suitable for edification.⁸⁹

The Christmas Sermons of Gerhard

These sermons are valuable resources for any pastor preaching in the Christmas season. They cut through the fluff and nostalgia of the holiday season and present the real reason for the season, the incarnate God who came for our salvation. An example of this is found in the following quote in which Gerhard explains why Jesus was born at night.

Relevant here also is [the point] that Christ was born in the winter time in the darkness of night. [The choice of time] indicates that the entire world was in total darkness and that the people were at the same time in darkness and in the shadow of death; but by this birth, a light arose for them from the Lord, as Isaiah testifies in 9:2: **The people who were wandering in darkness, see a great Light, and upon those who live in a dark land shines daylight.** John 1:5—**The Light shines in the darkness.** Before Christ becomes born within us in a spiritual manner, there is nothing but complete darkness in our reason and heart. Also, love is actually grown cold in the same [i.e., in us, our reason and heart]; but when Christ is born therein in a spiritual manner, a light goes on within [us], which simultaneously enlightens [us] to confess God and inflames [us] to love God—as is written in Eph. 5:14—**Wake up, you who sleep; thus Christ will enlighten you.**⁹⁰

In his Christmas sermons Gerhard explicates the wonders of the incarnation for our salvation which is the main theme of the Christmas season. In addition he connects the Christmas event to our lives as he does below in speaking of a three-fold birth of Christ. The Christian desires that Christ be born in his heart through faith so that the blessings of Christ's incarnation can be received.

⁸⁹ Fischer, 380–381; see also Johann Gerhard, *Postille*, Vorrede v–x; Robert Kolb, “Lutherische Homiletik um 1600,” *Lutherische Beiträge* 19, no. 3 (2014), 147–152.

⁹⁰ Gerhard, *Postilla*, trans. Hohle, 1:49.

To begin with, it needs to be made known that the holy Scriptures hold before us a **three-fold birth of Christ**. The first is His eternal, **divine birth** from the heavenly Father. The second is the **physical birth** by which He, in the fullness of time, was born of Mary as a true Man. The third is the **spiritual birth** by which He becomes born in the hearts of the believers. The first takes place from everlasting to everlasting, it has no beginning or ending. The second occurred in the fullness of time. The third happens daily.⁹¹

The Passion Sermons of Gerhard

The first collection of Gerhard's sermons was his Passion sermons in 1611 entitled *An Explanation of the History of the Suffering and Death of our Lord Jesus Christ (Erklärung der Historie des Leidens und Sterbens unsers Herrn Christi Jesu)*. These sermons were a running commentary on Bugenhagen's harmony of the Passion, published originally in Low German (*Plattdeutsch*) in 1526.⁹² Gerhard divides his passion sermons into five acts.⁹³ The Passion sermons of Gerhard point the Christian to the cross of Christ. When we look to the cross we first see the magnitude of our sin. Our sinful thoughts caused Him to wear the crown of thorns. Our sinful words caused the mockery and the spit in His face. Our sinful actions nailed Him to the accursed tree. We look to the cross and see the terribleness of our sins, but then we look again and see His great love that would not let us die. There He paid for all our sins in full washing them into the depths of the sea. In Him there is full forgiveness for all. In his Passion sermons Gerhard helps the believer ponder anew and meditate on all that Christ did for our salvation.⁹⁴ In the quotation below the Jena Theologian touches on the motif of which he is quite fond, union with Christ and participation in the divine. Christ is condemned for confessing to be God's Son so that we would be declared God's sons by faith, partaking in the divine.

⁹¹ Ibid., 1:104. For a sermon illustrating the three-fold birth of Christ, see Gaylin R. Schmeling, "Homily on the Three-fold Birth of Christ," *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (December 2007): 248–253.

⁹² Johann Steiger, "Die Postilla des lutherischen Barocktheologen Johann Gerhard (1582–1637)," *Lutherische Theologie und Kirche* 36, no. 4 (2012): 212–233.

⁹³ The five divisions are *Hortus, Pontifices, Praeses, Crux atque Sepulchrum* (Garden, Priests, Governor, Cross and also Sepulcher); see Gerhard, *Suffering and Death of our Lord*, 2.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 65–66.

Christ is here condemned by a unanimous decision of the ecclesiastical court for confessing that He is the Son of God. Our first parents wanted to be like God. If this wrong was to be atoned for, if we were once again made to share in the true divine nature, 2 Pet. 1, and if we were again to be given the power to become the children of God, John 1, then, for that reason, the true only-begotten Son of God had to allow Himself here to be publicly condemned for confessing to be God's Son. So also the Lord publicly confesses that He thus suffers as the Christ, that is, as the truly anointed King and High Priest, and that He takes His kingdom upon His shoulder, Isa. 9. And, as the true High Priest, He intended to offer Himself up to God as a sweet fragrance. For that reason—since Christ is God's Son [and] our King and eternal High Priest—His suffering and death has such a power that it serves as payment for our sin. Thus, to that end God disposes [so directs things] that in the midst of His passion Christ publicly confesses to be God's Son and our only King.⁹⁵

The Easter Sermons of Gerhard

The resurrection of our Lord is the high point of the Christian calendar and the church year. It declares to us that the Father has accepted His Son's sacrifice for sin and now there is complete forgiveness for the entire world. In the introduction to one of his Easter sermons Gerhard shows that the history of Jonah foreshadowed the death and resurrection of Christ.

Just as Jonah advised that one should toss him overboard into the sea in the midst of such violent tumult [so that] the sea would become calm ... so also Christ Himself suggested in the counsel of the Holy Trinity that He wanted to assume human nature to stand in place of the human race and become a curse and cleansing sacrifice on its behalf. He wanted to slash death's throat so that the huge thunderstorm and huge swells of God's wrath might be stilled—which then actually did occur. For the divine wrath which washed over all of us was stilled by the death of Christ. And thus, one Man died for all the people so that the entire world did not perish, John 11:50. Furthermore, as Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three

⁹⁵ Ibid., 133–134.

nights, so also Christ was stuck for three days and three nights in the mouth of death. For on Good Friday, even before the sun had set, He died and was buried; He rested in the grave the entire Sabbath; on the third day He arose early in the morning. But, just as Jonah did not remain in the belly of the fish, so also Christ did not remain in the grave. Rather, He ripped Himself loose from the power of death on the third day, **after it became impossible that He could be held captive by him** (death), as Peter says in Acts 2:24. Just as Jonah preached repentance to the people of Nineveh after he had been rescued from the belly of the fish, so also Christ let repentance and forgiveness of sins be preached by His Apostles to the entire world after His resurrection, as He Himself testifies in Luke 24:46.⁹⁶

Baptism in the Writings of Gerhard

In all of Gerhard's works one finds a high regard for the means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments. The means of grace bring the treasure of the cross to the individual living in the here and now and work and strengthen the faith to receive it and make it our own. They bring the individual the forgiveness of sins, assure him of heaven, and empower him to live the Christ-like life. The Jena Divine functions with the common definition of a Sacrament used by Lutherans. It is a sacred act instituted by God Himself in which certain visible elements are connected to the Word and through which He offers and gives the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. With this definition there are only two Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Gerhard speaks of Baptism as the Sacrament of Initiation and the Lord's Supper as the Sacrament of Confirmation. [*Derselben Sacrament sind im neuen Testament zwei von Christi unserm Heilande eingesetzt: Das erste ist das Sacrament der heiligen Tauffe / dasselbe ist Sacramentum initiationis. Das ander ist das Sacrament des heiligen Abendmals / dasselbige ist Sacramentum confirmationis.*]⁹⁷ Gerhard's book *A Comprehensive Explanation of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper* (1610) is an excellent overview of the scriptural and confessional doctrine of the Sacraments.

⁹⁶ Gerhard, *Postilla*, trans. Hohle, 1:305.

⁹⁷ Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, 1:60. See also Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, trans. Hohle, 1:83.

Types and Pictures of Baptism

Gerhard refers to many types and allusions to Baptism throughout the Scripture, such as: the creation, the flood, circumcision, and the pool of Bethesda.⁹⁸ In a number of places he makes use of the Exodus theme as a type of Baptism. 2 Corinthians 10 is the source of this biblical type.

For just as the Israelites were led out of the land of Egypt through the Red Sea, so also we were rescued from spiritual enslavement to the hellish “Pharaoh” through the salvation-giving water of Baptism. Conversely, just as Pharaoh and his whole horde were drowned in the Red Sea, so also the Old Adam with all his lusting and doings is drowned in holy Baptism. Subsequently, this leading out of the Red Sea is called a Baptism because the Israelites became bound to faith and obedience through this wondrous action by God and by His servant Moses. So also, in similar fashion, we became obligated to a life of service and obedience to Christ our Savior through holy Baptism.⁹⁹

The Baptismal Command

The Sacraments are not human ideas or a development of the church; rather they are commanded by God. Gerhard maintains the divine institution of Baptism. This truth he teaches on the basis of Matthew 28 and other sections of Scripture.

As with all Sacraments, this Sacrament of Baptism was instituted by God Himself. For since God’s grace and heavenly goods are offered and imparted through the Sacraments, no one but God the Lord can institute Sacraments, since He alone can give power and divine accomplishments to the Sacraments.¹⁰⁰

In a number of places the Jena Divine makes the connection between Christ’s Baptism and our Baptism.

Christ, with the touching of his most holy body in the water of holy Baptism, sanctified water for this Sacrament. He also came to Baptism as the Lamb of God on whom was laid the

⁹⁸ Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 17:93–97.

⁹⁹ Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord’s Supper*, 9–10.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 21.

sins of the entire world. As our stand-in, He let Himself be washed from sin and placed into the water of holy Baptism all of His merits and righteousness so that we might thereby become clothed as with a garment of salvation.¹⁰¹

The Nature of Baptism

The external element or the matter of Baptism is natural water. This truth is confirmed by St. Paul when he speaks of Baptism as the “the washing of water by the word.” (Ephesians 5:26) Gerhard assumes that God used water in Baptism because water was used in the Old Testament Levitical cleansings and because it is one of the most common elements in the world. The water of Baptism portrays the inner cleansing of the Spirit which He performs in, with and through Baptism. As water washes the dirt from our body, so in Baptism our sins are washed away (Acts 22:16).¹⁰² According to Gerhard water and only water is to be used in the Sacrament. Some have assumed that since any Christian may baptize in the case of an emergency one may also use a different element in the case of an emergency. Here Gerhard disagrees.

There is a vast difference between these two cases. For a servant who baptizes is not a vital part of Baptism; the efficient cause, especially the ministerial efficient cause, never enters the essence of that subject [*causa efficiens, praesertim ministerialis nunquam ingreditur rei essentiam*], but the water is matter and an essential part of holy Baptism. Therefore, someone other than an ordained servant of the Church may baptize in case of an emergency. However, there should not and may not be brought to Baptism a different external element than water, for one of the essential parts of Baptism would be altered in such a case.¹⁰³

The Lutheran Church has always maintained that one particular mode or manner of Baptism is not commanded in the Scripture in contradistinction to another. In Mark 7:4 the verb *baptizein* is used to speak of “the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches” showing that this verb simply means “to wash in any manner.” Immersion is not the only proper way to baptize. Pouring and sprinkling

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 43.

¹⁰² Ibid., 52–53.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 55.

may also be used. Gerhard makes this observation concerning John's Baptism.

John the Baptizer without a doubt also baptized that way, i.e., by pouring water over the heads of those he wanted to baptize. For since John openly baptized in the Jordan, it is not credible that he completely immersed his baptismal candidates into the water. Further, that they would be immersed in the Jordan with their clothes on seems unlikely. That the same huge horde of men and women, who without distinction came to John's Baptism, would strip down naked to be totally immersed in the Jordan is even more preposterous. It is most highly plausible, then, that they stood on the shore of the Jordan, or stepped in at the edge, and [that] John thus poured water over their heads.¹⁰⁴

The water in itself does not make Baptism. St. Paul calls Baptism "the washing of water by the *word*" (Ephesians 5:26). Baptism is not merely lowly water because it is formulated in God's Word and combined with the Word. According to Matthew 28:19, the Word which is connected to water, the baptismal formula is: "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." Gerhard explains the meaning of the baptismal formula in this way: "I testify herewith that through this Sacrament you [the person being baptized] are being received into God's covenant of grace; that God the Father takes you as His child; that the Son washes you from sins with His blood and clothes you with His righteousness; that the Holy Spirit regenerates and renews you to everlasting life."¹⁰⁵ This indicates the close relationship between Baptism and the Holy Trinity.

Infant Baptism

Gerhard faced a rejection of infant Baptism by the Anabaptists and a rejection of regenerative Baptism by all the Reformed. Remember the Reformed had made inroads in many Lutheran lands, striving for a Second Reformation as had occurred in the Palatinate. One of the signs of the Second Reformation was the removal of the exorcism in Baptism which was understood as a rejection of baptismal regeneration. Therefore the Jena Theologian is quite adamant in his defense of infant and regenerative Baptism. He promotes infant Baptism on the basis

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 67–68.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 57.

of the “all nations” of the baptismal command in Matthew 28. “[Christ] even adds the word ‘all’ to indicate that no distinction as to nationality, gender, or age is to be observed in offering Baptism. Rather, children may and should also be baptized if the parents believe. The apostles demonstrate this in that they baptized believers along with their entire household.”¹⁰⁶ He sees that children are included in the baptismal promise of the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit found in Acts 2:38–39 and he concludes that, as children were circumcised in the Old Testament, so children should be baptized in the New Testament (Genesis 17:7; Colossians 2:11–12).

Children are desperately in need of Baptism. Gerhard teaches that children by nature are dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1) and, conceived in original sin, dammed to destruction (Psalm 51:5). Then in connection with John 3:5–6 he explicates, “The children are flesh born from flesh; if they are to enter eternal life they must be born again. But there is no other means for rebirth than holy Baptism. The Word of God is also a means for rebirth, but God deals through it only with the adults, with the informed.”¹⁰⁷

Finally Gerhard points out that infants and little children can believe (Psalm 8:2–3; Matthew 18:6) and that Baptism is a means that the Holy Ghost uses to work faith in the Savior in the heart.

Among other apparent grounds for denying Baptism to little children, not the least of them is that holy Baptism does not benefit little children because they do not believe. We have already given answer to this above in chapter 19, point of contention 8—that, indeed, little children by nature do not have faith and do not bring faith to Baptism. Yet God the Lord wants to awaken the same in their hearts through the Sacrament of holy Baptism, since, along with other effects, God ignites faith in and through Baptism, as demonstrated in chapter 13, #1.¹⁰⁸

The Blessings of Baptism

In Baptism God offers and gives full forgiveness of sins. The baptismal waters wash away all sin and iniquity. (Acts 22:16) Baptism is a means or channel through which the forgiveness of sins is brought

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 127.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 128.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 159; see also 3,137.

from its source, the cross, to us living today. As all the Levitical cleansings were used for purification and the muddy bath of Naaman washed away his leprosy, so Baptism washes away the leprosy of sin. It is a wonderful cleansing that can wash away each stain and mark, each spot and wrinkle (Ephesians 5:26–27).¹⁰⁹ In Baptism we are indeed washed in the blood of the Lamb.

For just as common, natural water usually washes the body from all uncleanness, so also the water in holy Baptism—since it is encompassed in the Word of God and the entire holy Trinity wants to work through the same—is thus a powerful means through which we are washed of all uncleanness of sins and become snow-white. Pertinent here also is that Christ’s blood not be locked out [excluded] from holy Baptism. Rather, Christ is present [in Baptism] as God and Man. He actually and certainly sprinkles and washes us with His blood as we are sprinkled with the water.¹¹⁰

Baptism delivers from death and the devil and gives us new life as the sons of God. We were ransomed from the dominion of Satan through the blood of Christ and now we are the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus, partakers in the divine with an eternal destiny. Our Baptism assures us of eternal life in heaven.¹¹¹ “Those who are baptized into Christ put on Christ (Galatians 3:27), and thus the saints are said to have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:14). The perfect righteousness of Christ is the glorious robe of the saints; let not him therefore who is clothed in this robe fear the least spot of sin.”¹¹² Dressed in this glorious wedding garment we are prepared to stand forever in the wedding feast of the Lamb (Isaiah 61:10; Matthew 22:11).

As was stated above, Gerhard valiantly defended the truth that Baptism is regenerational in opposition to the Reformed. Baptism is regenerative or it gives rebirth because it works in our hearts trust in Jesus as the Savior. Discussing Titus 3:5, where Baptism is called the washing of regeneration, he makes this comment:

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 76.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 95.

¹¹¹ Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, 1:65–71. See Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, trans. Hohle, 1:89–97.

¹¹² Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 17:94.

For since Baptism is (as previously stated) a bath of regeneration and is (as will follow later) an effectual means for the forgiveness of sin, [that is] for sonship with God and for eternal life, so also must faith be ignited and awakened through holy Baptism (understand that this refers to the hearts of those who do not stubbornly resist the working of the Holy Spirit), since the entire Scripture testifies that no one can be regenerated or receive forgiveness of sins nor become a child of God or inherit eternal salvation without faith. On account of that, Baptism is not ordinary water, but the Word of God is also there, making it the means through which people are regenerated.¹¹³

Gerhard sees an interesting correlation between the creation and our regeneration. “As it was at the creation, so is it at our regeneration. For as at the creation of the world, the Spirit of the Lord moved upon the face of the waters (Genesis 1:2), and imparted to them a vital energy, so in the water of baptism the same Holy Spirit is present to render it efficacious for our regeneration.”¹¹⁴

The most common picture of Baptism among Lutherans is that of rebirth or regeneration. From this the Jena Divine does not deviate. However Gerhard does not neglect other major biblical picture of Baptism, which is dying and rising with Christ (Romans 6:3–11). In Baptism we were united with Christ’s great passion. Our sinful flesh was buried with Christ in the grave and we died to sin. Then as Christ arose the third day so we arose to new life in Baptism by the power of Christ’s resurrection (Colossians 2:12). This dying and rising continues throughout the believer’s life as he daily returns to his Baptism in true repentance and faith, drowning the old man and allowing the new man to come forth and arise. This daily dying and rising of Baptism will culminate in the resurrection of the body on the last day.¹¹⁵

The Lord’s Supper in the Writings of Gerhard

In Holy Baptism we were born again as the children of God through faith in Jesus as the Savior. Now through the Holy Supper we are nurtured and strengthened for eternal life in heaven. As we were

¹¹³ Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord’s Supper*, 76.

¹¹⁴ Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 17:93–94.

¹¹⁵ Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, 1:71–73. See Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, trans. Hohle, 1:97–99.

taken into God's covenant of grace through Baptism so through the Supper we are preserved in that covenant of grace unto our end.¹¹⁶

Types and Pictures of the Lord's Supper

Gerhard enumerates many Old Testament pictures of the Lord's Supper. Melchizedek's offering of bread and wine to Abraham, the father of believers, points to the meal of salvation of our great high priest Jesus Christ. Pictures of the Supper are seen in the tree of life in the Garden of Eden, the Passover lamb, the manna in the wilderness, in David's invitation to Mephibosheth to eat at his table (2 Samuel 9:13), in Elijah's food (1 Kings 19:6–8), in Ahasuerus's feast (Esther 1:3), and in Isaiah's burning coal (Isaiah 6). Allusions to the Supper are found in the poor that eat and are satisfied (Psalm 22:26), in the Good Shepherd who prepares His table in the wilderness (Psalm 23; John 10), and in Psalm 111 where the Lord's wonderful works are remembered, His convent of redemption stands forever, and He gives food to those who fear Him.¹¹⁷

The Command and Institution of the Lord's Supper

The institution of the Lord's Supper is recorded in Matthew 26:26–29, Mark 14:22–25, Luke 22:15–20, and 1 Corinthians 11:23–25. Our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and Man, the night before His great passion prepared this meal as His last will and testament for His followers of all times. In this Sacrament He gives us His true body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine wherein He bequeaths to His church in every age all the blessings of His redemptive sacrifice on the cross.¹¹⁸

As do all Lutherans, Gerhard confesses the real presence of Christ's body and blood in contradistinction to Rome and the Reformed. He does not teach the transubstantiation of Rome or the representation of the Reformed. Notice what Jesus said concerning the bread which He was offering His disciples: "*This is my body.*" Jesus did not say, "This is a picture of my body," nor did He say, "This only represents my body." Rather he said, "This is my body." It is the very body that was born of the Virgin and died on the cross and the very same blood that flowed from His wounded side.

¹¹⁶ Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, 209.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 212–218; *Loci Theologici*, Locus 21, Para. 11–12 (Preuss ed. 5:6–7).

¹¹⁸ Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, 219; see also *Schola Pietatis*, 1:73–74.

Even though we indeed receive bread and wine in the holy Lord's Supper, yet it is not ordinary bread and wine. Rather, the bread that we bless (received and eaten) is the fellowship of the body of Christ; the chalice which we consecrate in the holy Lord's Supper (received and drunk) is the fellowship of the blood of Christ, 1 Corinthians 10:16. Therefore, no less than the bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ are present in the holy Lord's Supper. ...¹¹⁹

In this quote Gerhard uses the interesting terminology that the blessed bread "is the fellowship of the body of Christ or a partaking in the body of Christ" (*ist die Gemeinschaft des Leibes Christi*) that he draws from 1 Corinthians 10:16. The use of this terminology is not intended to weaken the real essential presence of Christ's body and blood but it is used as a clear rejection of Rome's instantaneous change of one substance into another with only the accidents remaining.¹²⁰

Gerhard assumes that the earthly elements in the Supper will be bread and wine. The chalice is to contain the "fruit of the vine" (Matthew 26:29) which is the normal biblical term for wine made from grapes. The bread in the Supper may be any bread made from grain whether leavened or unleavened. The earthly elements are bread and wine and no substitute. He argues, for example, that one is not at liberty to use dried fish in Norway for the Sacrament because bread was not available. This is contrary to God's command and institution of the Supper.¹²¹

According to Gerhard the Words of Institution should not be omitted in the Lord's Supper celebration. It is through these words that the presence of Christ's body and blood is effected in the Supper.

Yet it is necessary in the administration of the holy Supper that the Words of Institution be repeated. ... Accordingly, when the preacher [pastor] who administers the holy Supper speaks the Words of Institution over the bread and wine in public assembly, it is not a mere historical recitation of what Christ did. Rather, he shows thereby ... that ... he therewith sets aside the bread and wine that is present for this holy Sacrament, so

¹¹⁹ Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, 258.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 308–309.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 229.

that it no longer shall be simple [plain] bread and wine, but the means through which Christ's body and blood are distributed.¹²²

Here Gerhard is in complete agreement with the Lutheran Confessions which declare that the Words of Institution, by virtue of Christ's original institution, cause the presence of Christ's body and blood. "For where His institution is observed and His words are spoken over the bread and cup (wine), and the consecrated bread and cup (wine) are distributed, Christ Himself through the spoken words, is still efficacious by virtue of the first institution, through His Word, which He wishes to be there repeated."¹²³

In Gerhard's presentation of the Supper both the Augustinian Rule and the *Nibil* Rule are upheld. According to the Augustinian Rule the Word comes to the element and it becomes a Sacrament (*Accedat verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum*). It is the Word that makes Baptism a gracious water of life and it is the Word that causes Christ's body and blood to be present in the Supper.¹²⁴ At the same time Gerhard agrees with the *Nibil* Rule of our Confessions: Nothing has the character of a Sacrament apart from the divinely instituted use or action. If there is no distribution and reception there is no Sacrament. If the consecrated elements are not distributed and received there is no Sacrament, that is, no real presence. The entire sacramental action (consecration, distribution, reception) must be carried out in order to have a valid Sacrament.¹²⁵ Because sacramental union exists only in the sacramental action, the remaining species (*reliquiae*) at the completion of the Lord's Supper celebration are outside the use and are simply bread and wine.

Gerhard has been understood as teaching that Christ's body and blood are present only at the eating not before. However, he writes, "If it is asked regarding the order of nature, we state that the presence is prior to the eating, for unless the body of Christ is present in the bread it is not able to be eaten sacramentally" [*Si de ordine naturae quaeritur, praesentiam priorem statuimus manducatione, quia nisi corpus Christi in pane praesens adesset, non posset a nobis sacramentaliter manducari*].¹²⁶ Like our Lutheran Confessions, Gerhard does not teach that one must believe

¹²² Ibid., 224–225; see also 258, 301, 450.

¹²³ FC SD VII.75 in *Triglotta*, 999.

¹²⁴ Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, 305.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 357.

¹²⁶ Gerhard, *Loci Theologici*, Locus 21, Para. 195. (Preuss ed. 5:187); see also Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, 348.

that the presence begins immediately after the Words of Institution are said or that one must believe that Christ's body and blood are present only for the reception. Rather he maintains that Christ's body and blood are present, distributed, and received in the Holy Supper.

The Lord's Supper and John 6

John 6 has been understood by some as speaking directly to the institution of the Lord's Supper. John 6 is to be St. John's institution narrative of the Sacrament. However, the eating and drinking in John 6 refer to the eating and drinking which a believer does by faith through the means of grace, receiving all the blessings of Christ's body and blood offered up for salvation. Therefore Gerhard teaches that John 6 does not specifically apply to the Lord's Supper because here the eating and drinking are figurative, while in the Words of Institution the eating and drinking are literal. The second reason that John 6 does not refer directly to the Supper is that the sermon recorded in John 6 occurred a year before the institution of the Supper. Therefore, the sermon in John 6 cannot apply to the dogma of the Sacrament. The third and most important reason Gerhard rejects this viewpoint is that the eating in John 6 always results in salvation (John 6:51), while in the Lord's Supper many eat judgment to themselves.¹²⁷

At the same time, Gerhard maintains that there is a definite connection between the Words of Institution and John 6. John 6 speaks of the spiritual eating that is necessary for worthy participation in the Holy Supper. All communicants, both the worthy and unworthy, eat sacramentally with the mouth the very body and blood of Christ born of the Virgin, but only those who eat spiritually through true repentance and faith receive all the wonderful blessings offered through that body and blood. Thus, John 6 applies to worthy participation in the Sacrament, and in this sense speaks to the Holy Supper as our Confessions state.¹²⁸

There is a great difference between natural food and this heavenly food. The other, namely, the natural food is in itself dead and receives life in men. But this food is alive and is the essence of life. Therefore it makes us alive, that is, partakers of the spiritual life that is from God: "I am the bread of life which

¹²⁷ Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, 340ff., 454.

¹²⁸ FC SD VII.61 in *Triglotta*, 995.

comes from heaven; whoever eats of this bread will live forever [John 6:51].”¹²⁹

The Israelites were fed with manna in the wilderness as with bread from heaven (Ex. 16:15); in this Holy Supper we have the true manna which came down from heaven to give life unto the world; here is that bread of heaven, that angels’ food, of which if any man eat he shall never hunger (John 6:35, 51).¹³⁰

The Proper Preparation for the Lord’s Supper

In order to receive the benefits of the Holy Supper, we are to be worthy and well prepared, as Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 11:27–29. To be worthy and well prepared means that we have a sincere sorrow over our sins. We will confess them, striving to do better, and earnestly long for the forgiveness of sins. At the same time this worthiness includes a confident faith in Jesus the Savior. He paid for the sins of the whole world on the cross with His body and blood, and He gives us that very body and blood in the Supper for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

Certainly then a worthy preparation is needful, that we may not, unworthily eating of it, find death instead of life, and receive judgment instead of mercy. . . . When Uzziah rashly and inconsiderately drew near to the Ark of the Covenant, the Lord immediately smote him with leprosy (2 Chronicles 26:16); what wonder that he who eateth of this bread and drinketh of this wine unworthily, should eat and drink to his condemnation? For here is the true ark of the covenant, of which the old was only a type. The apostle tells us in one word what constitutes true preparation; “Let a man examine himself,” he says, “and so let him eat of that bread” (1 Corinthians 11:28). But as every holy examination must be made according to the rule of Holy Scripture, so it is in the case of this which Paul requires. Let us consider then, first of all, our human weakness and imperfection. . . . Let us consider, in the second place, our unworthiness . . . man is unworthy in very many and more grievous ways, for by his sins he has offended his Creator. . . .

¹²⁹ Gerhard, *Postille*, I:326. See also Gerhard, *Postille*, trans. Hohle, 1:301.

¹³⁰ Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 19:104.

And in our preparation for this Holy Supper, let us not simply examine ourselves, but let us also consider this blessed bread, which is the communion of the body of Christ, and then will it appear to us as a true fountain of God's grace, and an inexhaustible spring of divine mercy. ... Thus this Holy Supper will transform our souls; this most divine sacrament will make us divine men, until finally we shall enter upon the fulness of the blessedness that is to come, filled with all the fulness of God, and wholly like Him.¹³¹

The Blessings of the Lord's Supper

Gerhard never tires of pointing out the great blessings of the Holy Supper. This makes his study of the Supper truly devotional and a benefit for all who read it. The Lord gave His Church this Holy Supper not as a point of controversy but as a wonderful comfort for His people of all times. As Luther before him, Gerhard emphasizes that the chief blessing of the Supper is the **forgiveness of sins**. He points this out in his explanation of the Words of Institution.

Accordingly, we say that by virtue of the institution, the holy Supper was established by Christ and was used by the believers chiefly to this end: that the promise of the gracious forgiveness of sins should be sealed and our faith should thus be strengthened. Then, too, we are incorporated in Christ and are thus sustained to eternal life; in addition, subsequently, other end results and benefits of the holy Supper come to pass. Yet, both of the fruits indicated above always remain the foremost. First of all we say: Christ instituted His holy Supper (also it is used by believers for this purpose) because the promise of the gracious forgiveness of sins is sealed to the believers and thereby their faith is strengthened.¹³²

Together with the forgiveness of sins in the Sacrament, we receive life and salvation. Our Lord's body and blood are **true spiritual nourishment** for our faith-life. As our physical life needs food, so our spiritual life born in Baptism needs the spiritual nourishment and strengthening of the blessed Supper.

¹³¹ Ibid., 20:108–111.

¹³² Gerhard, *Baptism and the Lord's Supper*, 369.

Christ's flesh is a life-producing flesh, which He has assumed into the unity of His Person through the personal union and [which He] has filled with the treasure of eternal heavenly blessings without measure. So that we, who are by nature dead in sins (Col. 2:13, Eph. 2:1), might now dip from this flowing Fountain of Life the legitimate spiritual life and be nurtured for eternal life, Christ desired to ordain His life-producing flesh to be eaten and His blood to be drunk for this very purpose in the holy Supper.¹³³

We tend to forget that **we receive the Holy Ghost in the Supper** together with the body and blood of Christ even though we know that the Spirit comes to us in all the means of grace. He comes in all His fullness with all His many gifts. Commenting on 1 Corinthians 12:13 where St. Paul speaks of being given one Spirit to drink, Gerhard writes, "We drink one and the same Sacrament so that we also receive one and the same Spirit; just as we receive one and the same Baptism, so that we be one body."¹³⁴ 1 Corinthians 12 has been understood in this manner by a number of other confessional Lutheran theologians.¹³⁵

Throughout his devotional literature Gerhard is encouraging Christians to live the Christ-like life. The Lord's Supper is a source and motivation for the **sanctified life**. Since the flesh and blood of Christ are life-giving they provide the strengthening that a believer needs to live a more sanctified life. Out of thanks for all that Christ has done for us we will desire to follow His example of love and kindness. Yet as we view our lives we see failures on every side. Therefore we come to this blessed meal to be strengthened through this life-giving food.¹³⁶

The Holy Supper was instituted by Christ our Lord to this end that not only should the evangelical promise of the gracious forgiveness of sins be sealed in us and our faith strengthened, but also that through it we are incorporated into Christ and are fed unto eternal life as He Himself speaks in John 6:56: "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him." This fruitful reception of His body and blood serves this

¹³³ Ibid., 374.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 375; see also Gerhard, *Schola Pietatas*, I:74.

¹³⁵ Martin Chemnitz, *The Lord's Supper*, trans. J.A.O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 193; C.M. Zorn, *Die Korintherbriefe* (Zwickau: Verlag des Schriftvereins [E. Klärner]), 106.

¹³⁶ Gerhard, *Schola Pietatas*, I:79–80. See also Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, trans. Hohle, 1:108–109.

purpose that He remains in us and we in Him and that we are made fruitful in all good works, as He says in John 15:5: "He who abides in Me and I in him bears much fruit."¹³⁷

It should be noted that as the other Lutheran fathers the Jena Divine makes considerable use of the vine and branches picture of John 15 in connection with the Supper. By receiving His body and blood we are ingrafted into Him, drawing life from Him as branches from the vine bearing abundant fruit. This picture language illustrates the union with Christ that is ours through the Sacrament and it points out that the Supper and the other means of grace are the power source of the sanctified life.

As a Christian travels in this life, he faces problems and troubles all the way. There are often difficulties in our work place, bitterness in our homes, loss of friends, sickness, and even the death of loved ones. Yet in every difficulty of life the Lord says, "Come to My table and I will give you rest."¹³⁸ Here He gives us **strength to face all the problems and troubles of life** and to do all things through Him.

What is so intimately joined to Him as His own body and blood? With this truly heavenly food He refreshes our souls, who are as miserable worms of the dust before Him, and makes us partakers of His own nature; why then shall we not enjoy His gracious favor? Who ever yet hated his own flesh (Eph. 5:29)? How then can the Lord hate us, to whom He giveth His body to eat and His blood to drink? How can He possibly forget those to whom He hath given the pledge of His own body? How can Satan gain the victory over us when we are strengthened and made meet for our spiritual conflicts with this bread of heaven?¹³⁹

The Early Church fathers often spoke of the Supper as the viaticum, the medicine of immortality, the food preparing us for eternal life. This designation for the Holy Meal goes all the way back to Ignatius of Antioch (Ephesians 20) as Chemnitz shows.

Beautiful is that statement of Ignatius, which is found in his Epistle to the Ephesians, where he calls the Eucharist

¹³⁷ Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, II:284. See also Gerhard, *Schola Pietatis*, trans. Hohle, 2:49–50.

¹³⁸ Gerhard, *Baptism and the Lord's Supper*, 471.

¹³⁹ Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 19:105.

pharmakon athanasias, antidoton tou mee apothanein, alla zeen en theoo dia Ieesou Christou, katharteerion alexikakon, that is, “a medicine of immortality, an antidote, that we may not die but live in God through Jesus Christ, a cleansing remedy through warding off and driving out evils.”¹⁴⁰

Gerhard is fond of medical pictures, as has already been stated.¹⁴¹ In this fondness he follows in the tradition of Augustine. Therefore it is only natural that he would speak of the Sacrament as the medicine of immortality. “This is the only sovereign remedy for all the diseases of our souls: here is the only efficacious remedy for mortality; for what sin is so heinous but the sacred flesh of God may expiate it? What sin is so great but it may be healed by the life-giving flesh of the Christ?”¹⁴²

Probably Gerhard’s most common way of expressing the blessings of the Lord’s Supper is **union and communion with Christ through His body and blood**.

From now on I cannot doubt concerning the indwelling of Christ, since it is sealed for me in the imparting of His body and blood. From now on I cannot doubt concerning the assistance of the Holy Spirit, since my weakness is strengthened by such a support. I do not fear the plots of Satan, since this angelic food strengthens me to do battle. I do not fear the allurements of the flesh, since this life-giving and spiritual food strengthens me by the power of the Spirit. I eat and drink this food so that Christ may dwell in me and I in Christ. That Good Shepherd will not allow the sheep, fed by His body and blood, to be devoured by the infernal wolf. He will not allow the strength of the Spirit to be overcome by the weakness of my flesh. Praise, honor, and thanksgiving to You, O kindest Savior, forever, Amen.¹⁴³

Together with union with Christ, Gerhard’s other favorite way of expressing the blessings of the Supper is to speak of it as **partaking in the divine**. This salvific theme is based on a number of passages from Scripture (2 Corinthians 3:18, 8:9; Galatians 3:26,4:7; John 17:23; 1 Corinthians 12:12–13; Romans 8:29; 1 John 3:2; Psalms 82:1–6;

¹⁴⁰ Martin Chemnitz, *The Examination of the Council of Trent*, trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978) 2,234.

¹⁴¹ See page 177 above.

¹⁴² Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 19:105–106; see also page 183 above.

¹⁴³ Gerhard, *Daily Exercise of Piety*, [2:13] 80.

Genesis 1:26), but first and foremost on 2 Peter 1:4, “By which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that by these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” This theme was common among the Early Church fathers and especially the Eastern fathers. Luther at times expresses the blessings of the Holy Supper in this way: “So, when we eat Christ’s flesh physically and spiritually, the food is so powerful that it transforms us into itself and out of fleshly, sinful, mortal men makes spiritual, holy, living men. This we are already, though in a hidden manner in faith and hope; the fact is not yet manifest, but we shall experience it on the Last Day.”¹⁴⁴ Chemnitz likewise uses this theosis theme:

Therefore, in order that we might be able to lay hold on Christ more intimately and retain Him more firmly, not only did He Himself assume our nature but He also restored it again for us by distributing His body and blood to us in the Supper, so that by this connection with His humanity, which has been assumed from us and is again communicated back to us, He might draw us into communion and union with the deity itself.¹⁴⁵

For Gerhard there is no more blessed event filled with comfort and assurance than to partake in the divine nature having union and communion with God.

There is no natural thing, speaks Tauler in his sermon on the Lord’s Supper, that comes so near and so inwardly to man as eating and drinking. For this reason He established this way that He unites Himself with us in the nearest and most inward manner. It is on account of us that (He) became man (so) that we through Him would become children of God (John 1:12) and partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). But His love was still not great enough. He also wanted to become our food. Nothing is more closely related to the Lord than His assumed human nature, His flesh and blood, which He personally united to Himself; likewise nothing can be nearer to us men than what we eat and drink because this same thing penetrates us in the most inward manner.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁴ LW 37:101; see also 37:132, 134.

¹⁴⁵ Chemnitz, *The Lord’s Supper*, 188.

¹⁴⁶ Gerhard, *Postille*, I:325. See also Gerhard, *Postille*, trans. Hohle, I:300–301.

Thus this Holy Supper will transform our souls; this most divine sacrament will make us divine men, until finally we shall enter upon the fulness of the blessedness that is to come, filled with all the fulness of God, and wholly like Him.¹⁴⁷

The Jena Divine continually points to the great blessings of the Sacrament for the Christian's life. With His body and blood the Savior gives and seals to us the full forgiveness of sins accomplished on the cross. Here is the Manna for the way that nourishes and strengthens us on the way through this wilderness all the way to the heavenly Canaan above. Here is union and communion with Christ a participation in the divine, a foretaste of heaven.

Conclusion

Johann Gerhard was the light of Thüringen in the shadow of the Thirty Years' War. He was the leading theologian of the age. What made him truly great was that he was not only the greatest dogmatician of the time but also he was one the greatest devotional writers of the era. His *Loci* has never been surpassed in Lutheran dogmatics. In addition he wrote comforting devotional literature which nourished and strengthened his readers in the devastation and disaster of the Thirty Years' War. This literature is still relevant and edifying today as we pass through this *Jammertal* striving to reach the homeland above. [LSQ](#)

Addendum I: The Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy

I. Lutheran Theology During the Seventeenth Century

- A. As the Thirty Years' War raged, Lutheranism, as well as the Reformed tradition and the Roman Catholic Church, went through a process of systematization and clarification of the doctrinal positions that each of these bodies had taken during the previous century. Therefore the seventeenth century is known as the period of confessional orthodoxy or as the period of confessionalization.

¹⁴⁷ Gerhard, *Sacred Meditations*, 20:111.

- B. Lutheran orthodoxy did not intend to add anything to the doctrine of Luther and the Confessions. Its purpose was to put the teaching of the Reformation into a logical, concise form and to defend this teaching in the face of Rome and Geneva. In this systematization of doctrine it was indebted to the *Loci Communes* of Melancthon and the *Loci Theologici* of Martin Chemnitz. The format and organization of these documents became the model of the massive dogmatics of the seventeenth-century dogmaticians. In their work they used Aristotelian philosophy, as did the scholastics of the Middle Ages, to bring order to their great doctrinal system.
- C. **Aquinas and the Seventeenth-Century Dogmaticians:** In 1656 John Dorsch, a Lutheran dogmatician, wrote a book in which he tried to show that Thomas Aquinas could be made to support Lutheran doctrine more than Roman Catholic doctrine.¹⁴⁸ Aquinas' *Summa* was the model for all future dogmatics. For example, there is a close connection between the structure and form of his *Summa* and Gerhard's *Loci Theologici*.¹⁴⁹

II. The Period of Orthodoxy 1580–1675

- A. The Golden Age of Orthodoxy 1580–1610
Martin Chemnitz, David Chytraeus, Nikolaus Selnecker
- B. High Orthodoxy 1610–1648
Johann Gerhard, Leonhard Hutter, Aegidius Hunnius¹⁵⁰
- C. The Silver Age of Orthodoxy 1648–1675
Abraham Calov, Johann Quenstedt, Johann Dannhauer
- D. **The Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy:** It is common to refer to the ages of Orthodoxy as the golden, high, and silver ages.¹⁵¹ Another way to outline Orthodoxy is to use the following framework: The first period is **Early Orthodoxy** (Frühorthodoxie) which begins at the Peace of Augsburg 1555 and continues to the time of Gerhard. Some would include him but I would not. The second period is **High Orthodoxy** (Hochorthodoxie) which begins with Gerhard and continues until the death of Abraham Calov in 1686. The third period is the **Late**

¹⁴⁸ Preus, 36.

¹⁴⁹ See Scharlemann, *Thomas Aquinas and John Gerhard*.

¹⁵⁰ Some would place Hutter and Hunnius in the Golden Age of Orthodoxy because of their dates, but they seem to have more in common with the theologians of High Orthodoxy.

¹⁵¹ Preus, 45–47.

Orthodoxy (Spätorthodoxie) that begins in 1680 and continues at least until 1750.¹⁵²

- E. The Pomeranian divine David Hollaz (1648–1713) was the leading theologian of Late Orthodoxy. However three other individuals are also important in this era. They are Ernst Salomon Cyprian (1673–1745), Erdmann Neumeister (1671–1756), and Valentin Ernst Löscher (1673–1749).

Addendum II: The Theological Method of the Dogmaticians

Timothy Schmeling

Dogmatics was not yet a discipline of its own but was considered a part of exegesis. Its purpose was to gather the scriptural teachings concerning the main topics of Christian doctrine. This first method for dogmatics was designated the **commonplace or loci method** (*ordo locorum*) which Melancthon popularized. This method dominated Lutheran works throughout the 16th century. This method was based on Aristotle's *Topics*.

A change took place at the turn of the century with the works of Francisco Suarez (1548–1617) and the Italian Jacopo Zabarella (1532–1589) who believed that there were two ways to present a given proposition. The first was the compositive order and the other was the resolutive order. These ideas were drawn from the works of Galen the Physician, an Aristotelian commentator.

The compositive order (*ordo compositivus*) or the **synthetic method** proceeds from cause to effect or from principles to conclusions. This method could imply that theology was a theoretical science. However Lutheranism rejected the notion that theology was a theoretical science. Here the articles of faith are dealt with according to order: God, Man, Sin, Redemption, etc. **Gerhard** used a form of this method in the period of high orthodoxy.¹⁵³

The resolutive order (*ordo resolutivus*) or the **analytical method** begins with the goal in view and sets forth the ways to reach this goal. The analytical method seeks to treat theology inductively, proceeding from effect to cause, viewing theology in the light of its ultimate goal, man's blessedness and salvation. The analytic method was an attempt to present all theology as a unit and

¹⁵² Ernst Koch, *Ernst Salomon Cyprian (1673–1745)* (Gotha: Forschungs-und Landesbibliothek, 1996), 10.

¹⁵³ Kenneth G. Appold, *Abraham Calov's Doctrine of Vocatio in Its Systematic Context* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1998), 23.

to show the practical application of every doctrine for salvation (*Theologia est Habitus Practicus*). In the study of every doctrine one had to answer the question: "How does this doctrine effect my final salvation?" Therefore it was considered to be practical in contradistinction to theoretical.

This analytical method suited Lutheran theology better than Reformed theology, since Lutheranism had a soteriological emphasis which became the *finis* or end goal of Lutheran dogmatics as opposed to the theocentric viewpoint of the Reformed.¹⁵⁴ Balthazar Mentzer first used the analytical method among Lutherans but it did not come into vogue until Calov made use of it in his *Systema*. It was the predominate method in the silver age of orthodoxy.¹⁵⁵

In the synthetic method a doctrine was treated comprehensively. Justification included all of salvation. It became very wordy. In the analytical method the doctrines were divided more and repetition was cut down. However it could turn theology into an airtight system which was based more on logic than Scripture.

The *ordo salutis* or **order of salvation** was an attempt to lay out what occurred from the call to glorification. For example Abraham Calov's *ordo salutis* consists of call, illumination, regeneration, conversion, justification, penitence, mystical union, sanctification, and glorification.¹⁵⁶ While this particular order is not the only possible order, some parts of the order cannot precede others. For example regeneration must always precede justification. Justification must always be followed by sanctification. The *ordo salutis* first appears in the devotional works of Philipp Nicolai, Johann Arndt, and Nikolaus Hunnius' *Epitome Credendorum*. However it was popularized in Lutheran dogmatics by Abraham Calov using the analytical method.

C.F.W. Walther said he preferred the synthetic method.¹⁵⁷ Walther said this because Johann Gerhard had used this method and because he felt the analytical method had caused more problems. However it appears that Johann Gerhard favored the analytical method after he had completed his *Loci*

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 29.

¹⁵⁵ The analytical method is anthropocentric, in contrast to the theocentric approach of the synthetic method, in that the analytical method's subject (*subjectum*) is man. It is practical in that its goal (*finis*) is the ultimate salvation of man. The method itself may not look that different from the synthetic method, but the analytical becomes clear in the threefold division of an analytically arranged dogmatics text. The text will be divided into *Finis* (e.g., God, creation, providence, enjoyment of God/beatific vision); *Subjectum* (sin; will, post-lapse man); *Principia et causae salutis* (Christ and his work, *ordo salutis*, Word and Sacraments, church and ministry). In short, its end is the ultimate salvation of man, its subject is sinful man, and its causes of salvation are Christ's work distributed by his church via the means of grace. Cf. the three "pars" of Johann König's *Theologia Positiva Acroamatica* for an example of analytical arrangement (trans. Andreas Stegmann [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006], VIIIff).

¹⁵⁶ Abraham Calov, *Systema*, X.

¹⁵⁷ August Suelflow, *Servant of God: The Life and Ministry of C.F.W. Walther* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 106.

Theologici. In addition Adolph Hoenecke seem to be a proponent of the analytical method and Franz Pieper said either method could be legitimately used.¹⁵⁸

The Aristotelian Causation and Baptism

The Four Aristotelian Causes

***Causa Efficiens* or Effecting Cause:** The means by which it is brought—the Holy Trinity.

***Causa Formalis* or Formal Cause:** Its essence or what it is—baptismal formula.

***Causa Materialis* or Material Cause:** The material of which a thing is made—water.

***Causa Finalis* or Final Cause:** Its end or that for the sake of which it exists (Τέλος)—rebirth, new life, and eternal salvation.

Full Causation of Baptism according to Johann Baier

Causa Efficiens Principalis or the principle effecting cause is Christ, one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, i.e., the Holy Trinity.

Causa Efficiens Minus Principalis or the minor principle effecting cause is ordinarily the ministry of the church, extraordinarily performed in the case of necessity by the laity—even a woman.

Causa Impulsive Interna or the internal impelling cause is the divine goodness.

Causa Impulsive Externa or the external impelling cause is the merits of Christ.

Causa Materialis or material cause is water.

Causa Formalis or formal cause is the words of institution.

Subiectum or subject of baptism is a human, whether male or female, adult or infant.

Causa Finalis or the final cause is a drawing near of the baptized ones to regeneration and rebirth. Ultimately the final cause is eternal salvation.

Chemnitz and Causation

There are individuals today who attack Gerhard and the later dogmatists for using Aristotelian causation. However in Chemnitz' *De Duabus Naturis* we already see Aristotle's four causes clearly enunciated. Concerning the personal union in Christ he writes:

I believe we can formulate, if not an intricate definition, at least a simple and plain description or illustration of this union which will correctly and accurately include a brief explanation of: (1) the

¹⁵⁸ Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 2:422; Adolf Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, trans. James Langebartels, vol. 3 (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2003), 225–227.

efficient cause of the union; (2) the **material**, as it were, from which the union of the two natures is composed; (3) the subject, so to speak, in the person of the Son; (4) the **form** of the union itself, namely, there is no conversion, commingling, or abolition of the natures but an inseparable joining together to form the one person (ὑφιστάμενον) in Christ; (5) the purposes (*causae finales*) for which these two natures have been united into one person for the work of the redemption, kingship, and priesthood of Christ; (6) the communion between the natures, their attributes, and their activities which follow the hypostatic union, a communion and participation not of commingling or equating but consentient with and corresponding to the union; and finally, (7) the full and clear significance of the humiliation and exaltation which must be added to this definition. In this way I think the entire teaching concerning the hypostatic union can be comprehended and explained in a rather brief summary.¹⁵⁹

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¹⁵⁹ Martin Chemnitz, *The Two Natures in Christ*, trans. J.A.O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), 69–70.

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Strenuus Christi Athleta Abraham Calov (1612–1686): Sainted Doctor and Defender of the Church

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IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT JOHANN GERHARD (1582–1637) was third in the series of Lutheranism’s most preeminent theologians and after him there was no fourth.¹ First and second place naturally belong to Martin Luther (1483–1546) and Martin Chemnitz (1522–1586) respectively. If one were to speak of a fourth in this distinguished list, the position would no doubt have been assigned to Abraham Calov.

Abraham Calov ranks not only as one of the greatest theologians in Lutheranism, but also as one of the greatest teachers in Christendom. He was a man of exceptional learning and scholastic tendencies. At the same time, he was a man of deep piety and practicality. Very few were impartial in their assessment of Abraham Calov. He was a very polarizing individual. His opponents feared him, but his adherents loved him.

The legacy of Abraham Calov has been tarnished over time. Prior to the recent renaissance, sparked by the rediscovery of missing portions of the *Codex Epistolarum theologiarum* (his collected letters), Calov research had depicted him as the prototype of a controversialist and a preacher of an unattainable doctrinal orthodoxy. This questionable caricature can be explained by a number of factors. First of all there has been a strong bias against Lutheran Orthodoxy even within Lutheranism. Gotthold Lessing (1729–1781) writes, “Many people want to be Christians, but

¹ Erdmann Rudolph Fischer, *The Life of Johann Gerhard* (Malone, Texas: Repristination Press, 2000), 98–99.

certainly not Wittenberg Lutheran Christians; certainly not Christians of Calov's grace."² In his revisionist *History of Lutheranism*, Eric Gritsch denounces the doctrines of verbal inspiration and fellowship as taught by Calov and finally writes him off as ultraconservative.³ Second, the chief nineteenth-century biographer of Abraham Calov was a mediating theologian named August Tholuck (1799–1877). This Prussian Union historian had more in common with Calov's syncretistic arch-nemesis than with Calov. Third, there is very little primary source material available on Calov and much of it may not have survived the war or is possibly buried somewhere in the *Bibliotheca Gdanska PAN* (formerly *Stadtsbibliothek Danzig*). Finally Calov's research is a difficult task due to the linguistic, cultural, and intellectual barriers that divide us from this critical juncture in Lutheran history. In spite of these facts, it is the purpose of this paper to help familiarize Lutheranism with one of its lost teachers.

The Life of Abraham Calov

The Early Years

Abraham Calov(ius) was born on April 16, 1612 in Mohrungen, East Prussia—present day Morag, Poland. (Calovius is a latinization of his surname that was originally written Kalau). His father, Peter Calov, was the treasurer or steward of Electoral Brandenburg. His mother was Katharina nee Speiß, the daughter of the mayor of Mohrungen. Both Peter and Katharina were pious Lutherans who provided a Christian environment for their children. In his youth Abraham had a speech impediment that he overcame with great perseverance. Together with his older brother Fabian, he enrolled at the elementary school in Mohrungen and the Gymnasium in Thorn—modern day Torun, Poland—and Königsberg—present day Kaliningrad, Russia. Before long, war and plague forced him to leave and continue his education in Mohrungen under his father.⁴ He felt particularly indebted to the Rector of the School in Mohrungen, Daniel Ulrich from Chemnitz; Rector Graser in Thorn; and the Rector Petrus Mauritius in Königsberg for his early education.

² Gotthold Lessing, *Gesammelte Werke* (Berlin: Verlag v. Paul Rilla), 170.

³ Eric Gritsch, *A History of Lutheranism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 135.

⁴ Robert Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), 1:59; hereafter *TPRL*.

Master of the Arts

On February 10, 1626, at the age of fourteen, he matriculated at the University of Königsberg.⁵ Supported by a stipend, he would attend this university for six years. There he busied himself with philosophy, philology, mathematics, botany, and theology. His interest in mathematics is not surprising when one takes into consideration the fact that Copernicus along with a number of other great mathematicians came from Prussia. Abraham became interested in oriental languages and grew very proficient in them. At the age of only seventeen he was permitted to deliver his first sermon. Two of his more notable professors during this period were Johannes Behm (1578–1648) and Cölestin Myslenta (1588–1653), who were both known for their orthodoxy. Myslenta, who is remembered for his polemics against the Reformed, helped stimulate Calov's interest in oriental languages and philology.

In 1632, at the age of twenty, Abraham received his Master of Arts. He then joined the philosophical faculty at the University of Königsberg and continued his studies in theology. At this time he devoted himself to the study of Johann Gerhard's *Loci Theologici* and organized a number of disputations on this pivotal work. A controversy regarding the nature of the real presence came to his attention. Johann Bergius (1587–1658), the court preacher of the Elector of Brandenburg, Georg William (1595–1640), had anonymously begun writing against the Lutheran view of the sacrament in 1624. Around the time Abraham Calov joined the faculty, Bergius publicly renewed the debate concerning the sacrament with Professor Johann Himmel of the University of Jena. This provoked Calov to author his first theological work titled *Daß die Worte Christi noch feststehen* defending the Lutheran doctrine of the real presence. It was so well received that it was quickly translated into Latin and published under the title *Stereoma testamenti Christi*. This treatise gained Calov friends among the nobility who disliked their Calvinist Elector Georg William. These same nobles ultimately provided him with funding so that he could complete his doctoral studies at the University of Rostock.

Doctor of Theology

In 1634 he began his studies at the University of Rostock and earned his doctorate in 1637. While attending the university, he had stayed for three years at the house of Johann Quistorp, Sr. (1584–1648).

⁵ Gerhard Müller and Gerhard Krause, eds., *Theologische Realenzyklopedia*, vol. 2 (De Gruyter: Berlin, 1981), 563.

The two became very close friends and remained allies throughout their lives. While teaching at the University of Königsberg, Abraham began to produce and publish some of his philosophical *corpus*. The majority of these materials were written and published in Rostock. Eventually these philosophical works were collected and published in two volumes known as the *Scripta philosophica* (Rostock 1650–1). These writings dealt primarily with methodology, metaphysics, and epistemology.⁶ Some of his insights from these works would assure him a place in the annals of philosophy.

Professor of Theology at Königsberg

One of Abraham Calov's most earnest desires was to study at the University of Jena under the arch-theologian Johann Gerhard or even at the University of Wittenberg.⁷ This was not possible because of the Thirty Years' War. Therefore, he supplemented his study at Greifswald and Copenhagen before joining the theological faculty at Königsberg in 1637. There he taught dogmatics and polemics. After two years he was promoted. In 1638 the University of Rostock extended him a call, but he declined it.

His influence as a professor should not be underestimated. Students from Scandinavia, Northern Germany, the Siebenbürgen (Transylvania), Kurland, and Latvia attended his lectures. The rise in enrollment was due in part to the Thirty Years' War and in part to his growing prestige. Eventually the Elector of Brandenburg, a Calvinist, began to prohibit young men of Brandenburg from attending the University of Königsberg because of its strong Lutheran stance. In 1641, Abraham Calov became Königsberg's superintendent of schools and churches. He was appointed visitor of the Samland that same year.

Pastorate in Danzig and Rector of the Gymnasium

Abraham Calov received a call in 1643 to become the pastor at the *Trinitatiskirche* (Holy Trinity Church) and rector of the Gymnasium or *Academicum* in Danzig—modern day Gdansk, Poland. Since this Hanseatic city was bound to no confession, the task at hand would prove to be quite difficult. The Syncretists, Calvinists, Roman Catholics, and Socinians had overrun Danzig. The Gymnasium had a strong

⁶ Max Wundt, *Die deutsche Schulmetaphysik des 17. Jahrhundert* (Heidesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1992), 133–136, 257–260; hereafter *Schulmetaphysik*.

⁷ A. Tholuck, *Der Geist der lutherischen Theologen* (Hamburg und Gotha: Friedrich und Andreas Perthes, 1852), 186; hereafter *Geist*.

Reformed influence due to Bartholomaeus Keckermann (1571–1609), a very learned German Reformed theologian and philosopher. This was also the same Keckermann who supposedly taught double truth (reason can conflict with theology) and that the Holy Trinity can be discovered by reason alone. Abraham even had to share the *Trinitatiskirche* (the building, not divine services) with a Calvinist. It was a challenge, but one that he was ready to assume.

The Colloquy of Thorn

While serving as pastor in Danzig, he was invited to the *Colloquium charitativum*, i.e., Colloquy of Thorn (August 28–November 21, 1645) as representative of Danzig and as a member of the Lutheran delegation. Wittenberg Professor of Theology Johann Hülsemann (1602–1661) was the leader of the Lutheran delegation. This same Hülsemann later became superintendent and professor in Leipzig. He would remain a close associate of Abraham Calov throughout his life. The Colloquy in Thorn was called by King Wladislaus IV of Poland with the hope that a union between Catholics, Lutherans, and Reformed could be reached. Prussia and Brandenburg were also invited to take part in the colloquy. The elector sent his court preacher, Johann Bergius, whom Calov refuted in his *Stereoma testamenti Christi*. In addition, the elector asked the Duke of Braunschweig to send the infamous Helmstedt theologian, Georg Calixtus (1586–1656), to the colloquy.

The meeting was doomed from the beginning when Calixtus, a supposed Lutheran representative, took the side of the Reformed. This infuriated Calov and Hülsemann. Instead of improving relations, the colloquy only intensified the divisions between the churches. The one positive outcome of this incident was that the unit concept of fellowship taught in Scripture was confirmed by the practice of Calov and Hülsemann. They refused to pray with the other parties at the colloquy. This action demonstrates that the unit concept of fellowship is by no means a modern innovation.⁸

Georg Calixtus and Syncretism

One needs to become more acquainted with Georg Calixtus to gain a better picture of Abraham Calov. Calixtus was a professor at the University of Helmstedt and the leader of the Syncretistic movement

⁸ Cf. *Der Lutheraner* 64, no. 7 (1908), 111; Gaylin Schmelting, "The Theology of Church Fellowship," *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (1993): 44.

in Lutheranism.⁹ He sought to unite all Christians into one church by playing down or disregarding doctrinal divisions. The chief impetus of Syncretism, besides unionism, was the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). This war, waged in part because of religious divisions, so devastated Europe that many longed for the peace that a reunited church hopefully would restore. The end of the horrors of war, tolerance, and religious reunion were leitmotifs of Syncretism. In order to facilitate this agenda Georg Calixtus developed the concept of the *Consensus quinquesaecularis*. This was supposed to be the doctrinal consensus of Christendom based on the writings of the first five centuries. In other words only teachings evident in the first five centuries were to be doctrinally binding. This movement came to be known as Syncretism and was the original ecumenical movement.

Abraham Calov had no disdain for the theologians of the first five ecumenical councils. He cherished the writings of the early church fathers and was an accomplished patristic scholar himself. Calov opposed Syncretism because he knew it would sacrifice doctrinal agreement for the sake of a false harmony. Rather than pursuing a fabricated union, Calov taught that union could only occur where there was true doctrinal agreement. For this reason Calov was bound by Holy Scripture (Romans 16:17) to reject the unionism expressed at the Colloquy of Thorn and in the works of Georg Calixtus. As the modern church has been nearly consumed by the errors of unionism, so it was necessary for Abraham Calov to dedicate a great deal of time and energy to this critical issue in his day. It should not be a surprise that Syncretism would come to dominate much of his polemics. Nevertheless Hermann Sasse observes an important distinction that Calov makes in his *Historia Syncretistica* (1682). On the basis of the condemnation found in the preface to the *Book of Concord*,¹⁰ Calov proves St. Paul condemned only false apostles, but not their misguided congregations.¹¹ In other words, anathemas are made against only heretics who consciously teach contrary to Scripture—not their misguided followers.

To better understand Syncretism one needs to understand the pivotal role of the University of Helmstedt in Lutheran history. Many years earlier Martin Chemnitz had admonished Duke Julius of Braunschweig for having three of his sons ordained into Catholic orders

⁹ Cf. Ernst Henke, *Georg Calixt und seine Zeit* (Halle, 1853–1860), vols. 1–2.

¹⁰ *Die Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch Lutherischen Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1992), 11.

¹¹ Hermann Sasse, *Here We Stand* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1938), 177.

to acquire the bishopric of Halberstadt for Braunschweig. This caused the Duke to relinquish his support of the *Formula of Concord*.¹² The result of this was that the church of Braunschweig, which included the University of Helmstedt, never subscribed to the *Formula of Concord*. In fact when the Gnesio-Lutheran, Tilemann Heßhusius (1527–1588), needed a place to flee, Duke Julius had him called to the University of Helmstedt. In gratitude for this appointment, Heßhusius gave the duke some legitimacy by condemning the doctrine of ubiquity as taught by the *Formula of Concord*. Ironically Martin Chemnitz and David Chytraeus (1531–1600) were still permitted to appoint much of the faculty of the University of Helmstedt, particularly the philosophical faculty. Since the *Formula of Concord* was not binding upon the theologians of Braunschweig, Calixtus was able to accomplish much of his syncretistic agenda. His lack of regard for the *Formula of Concord* is evident in the following citation written against Jakob Weller (1602–1664), a professor at Wittenberg:

I was born and raised till my 16th year in a territory where the *Formula of Concord* was never accepted or loved. ... I willingly confess that from childhood on it was repugnant to me, and probably no one could have persuaded me to accept and approve it.¹³

Syncretism was not strictly a German movement. Hugo Grotius, the Dutch Covenant theologian whom Calov refuted in his *Biblia illustrata*, also tried to reunite the Arminians and Calvinists into one church. Grotius did not have as wide a vision as Calixtus. He was not willing to dialogue with the Roman Catholics. Georg Calixtus, on the other hand, worked with all European Christians. He even tried to draw the Greek Orthodox into this union during the time of Cyril Lucaris, via Metrophanes Critopoulos.¹⁴ Cyril Lucarius was the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople and a sympathizer of Calvinism.

The First Phase of the Syncretistic Controversy (1645–1656)

The Syncretistic Controversy officially began at the Colloquy of Thorn and can be divided into three phases: The first phase occurred

¹² Arnold Koelpin, *No Other Gospel* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1980), 52.

¹³ Qtd. in Koelpin, 53.

¹⁴ George A. Maloney, *A History of Orthodox Theology Since 1453* (Boston: Nordland Publishing Company, 1976), 138.

from 1645–1656. The second phase occurred from 1661–1669. The third phase occurred from 1675–1686. In addition to Georg Calixtus, Michael Behm (1612–1650), Christian Dreier (1610–1688), Johann Lautermann (1620–1682), and Friedrich Ulrich Calixtus (the son of Georg Calixtus) became advocates of Syncretism.

Immediately after the Colloquy of Thorn, Calov began to address this great calamity in the church. His industry is shown by his *Institutiones theologicae cum examine novae theologiae Calixtinae* (1649) that appeared the year after the Colloquy of Thorn. Calov would continue to write a number of tomes against Syncretism, but these were produced in Wittenberg. All the while Calov wrote, Calixtus never responded to him. He chose to duel with Jakob Weller, a more prestigious adversary from the University of Wittenberg. Friedrich Ulrich Calixtus, the son of Georg Calixtus, would raise his pen against Calov. This phase of the Syncretism lasted until the death of Georg Calixtus in 1656. It was followed by a short-lived truce.

Syncretism was strongly supported by Fredrich William the Great Elector of Brandenburg (1620–1688). He sought a united Protestant religious front against Roman Catholicism. He also had an ulterior motive. After the conversion of Johann Sigismund (1572–1619) to Calvinism a year after the birth of Abraham Calov, the Electors of Brandenburg had longed to spread the Reformed confession throughout their lands. But their subjects remained stubbornly Lutheran. In spite of the failure of the Thorn Colloquy, the Great Elector doubled his efforts to extend the Reformed confession in Prussia. In order to facilitate this agenda, he obtained the allegiance of the University of Helmstedt and called Johann Lauterman, a zealous student of Calixtus, to the Königsberg faculty. Calov was infuriated. His beloved home was being overrun by Calvinism. He felt it was his lifelong duty to protect Lutheran Prussia.

Calov did not spend all of his time brooding over the Syncretists. He dedicated himself to the service of his flock in Danzig and teaching at the Gymnasium. The pastoral works he authored in this period are an indication of his labor. One of the gems of his Danzig pastorate was the *Danziger Katechismus* printed under his direction in 1648. This catechism was a splendid manual of instruction and work of Christian piety. The following axiom printed on the catechism bears evidence of his concern for Christian education of all ages: *Was Prediger in der Kirche sind, das sollen Eltern und Hausväter bei ihren Hausgenossen und ihren Hauskirchen sein*, i.e., “As preachers are in the church so should

parents and fathers be for the members of their household and their house churches.”

Professor and Superintendent in Wittenberg

In 1650, Elector Johann Georg I of Saxony, prompted by his court preacher Jakob Weller, called Abraham Calov to the University of Wittenberg as theological professor. Following the death of Paul Röber (1587–1651), he was named second theological professor. Not long after this a call was extended to him to serve as pastor of the *Stadtkirche* (City Church or St. Mary’s Church). His reputation increased, he became a member of the consistorial court, and was appointed general superintendent by the elector in 1652. With the death of Johannes Scharf (1595–1660), he assumed Scharf’s position as *professor primarius*. Due to the attraction of Calov’s lectures, the university grew extensively. While the University of Jena decreased in prestige under Johann Musäus, the University of Wittenberg increased in prestige under Abraham Calov. Up to 500 students at one time attended his lectures. He was so highly respected that it was said that he taught from Luther’s chair (*cathedra Lutheri*). But the increase in students dropped off when the Reformed Great Elector of Brandenburg, Friedrich William, barred his subjects from attending Calov’s lectures on philosophy or theology. *Principia Caloviana* were too hostile to the Reformed.

Abraham busied himself with many different activities in Wittenberg. He held public and private lectures. Several times a week he led disputations. Every week he held catechism classes. He produced many edifying funeral sermons, led the consistorial business, presided over senate meetings and deans meetings, and almost weekly prepared faculty and private *Gutachten*.¹⁵ What was more, he was a faithful servant to Johann Georg II (1613–1680), the successor of Johann Georg I (1585–1656), who diligently read Calov’s *Biblischer Kalender*.¹⁶

In 1655 the one-hundredth anniversary of the Peace of Augsburg was celebrated in Saxony. For this occasion he ascended the pulpit of the *Pfarrkirche* on September 25 and preached on Psalm 125. The theme was, *Wie wir dieses Fest als ein Dank- und Bet-Fest, Gott zu lobe und uns zu Troste halten sollen*, i.e., “How we should regard this festival as

¹⁵ Friedrich Uhlhorn, *Geschichte der deutsch-lutherischen Kirche* (Leipzig: Verlag von Dörffling und Franke, 1911), 214.

¹⁶ Carl Meusel, *Kirchliches Handlexicon* (Leipzig: Verlag von Justus Naumann, 1887), 1:638.

a thanksgiving and prayer festival to praise God and to comfort us." It was printed in Wittenberg (1656) by Johann Borckardt.¹⁷

The Second Phase of the Syncretistic Controversy (1661–1669)

During his Wittenberg days, Calov had continued his critique of the Syncretists. The following tomes testify to his efforts: *Syncretismus Calxtinus* (1653) and *Harmonia Calixtino-haeretica* (1655). In 1656 Georg Calixtus, the archenemy of Abraham Calov, died. Syncretism did not expire with him. The theological faculties of Helmstedt and Wittenberg declared a peace that lasted for a couple of years. But the Conference of Kassel brought about the second phase of the Syncretistic Controversy (1661–1669). The Conference of Kassel occurred on July 1–9, 1661. The conference was called by William IV of Hessen, the brother-in-law of the Great Elector Friedrich William of Brandenburg. It was a meeting between the Reformed faculty of the University of Marburg and the Lutheran faculty of the University of Rinteln. Sebastian Curtius and Johannes Reinius were the spokesman for the Reformed. Johannes Heinichen and Peter Musäus (1620–1674), the brother of Johann Musäus, represented the Lutherans.¹⁸ Interestingly enough, Peter Musäus would join the faculty of Helmstedt two years later and was suspected of Syncretism. The topics under discussion were Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the person of Christ, and election. Both parties felt the meeting was productive. The Wittenberg Faculty sharply criticized this conference in a work titled *Epicrisis Theol. Fac. Witeberg. De colloquio Casselano Rintelino-Marpurgensium* (1662).

From September 8, 1662, to June 29, 1663, the Great Elector, Friedrich William of Brandenburg, called the Berlin Discussions of Religion in which Paul Gerhardt (1607–1676) of the *Nikolaikirche* took part. At the same time he banned his people from studying philosophy and theology at the University of Wittenberg because of its strict orthodoxy. Calov's response was a collection of various *Gutachten* or theological opinions from the orthodox faculty of Wittenberg dating as far back as Luther's time. These *Gutachten*, bound as the *Consilia theologica Witebergensia*, showed that the Wittenberg position was the biblical and historical viewpoint of Lutheranism. The *Consensus repetitus fidei verae Lutheranae* or Saxon Consensus was first published in this collection. In 1669 Friedrich William declared a refrain from religious polemics.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Cf. Heinrich Hermelink, *Die Universität Marburg von 1527–1645* (Marburg, 1927).

Many Lutheran pastors disobeyed this truce and were dismissed from office. Paul Gerhardt (1607–1676), the famous hymn writer, was one of those dismissed. It is somewhat ironic that both Gerhardt and Calov shared the same Lutheran conviction and piety, but are remembered quite differently in history. The elector's peace lasted until the death of Duke Ernst the Pious when Abraham Calov initiated the third phase of the Syncretistic Controversy (1675–1686). This final phase lasted until his death in 1686.

The Consensus repetitus fidei verae Lutheranae

Consensus repetitus fidei verae Lutheranae in illis doctrinae capitibus, quae...scriptis publicis hodieque impugnant D. Georgius Calixtus...ejusdemque complices, i.e., the *Saxon Consensus* (1655; first printed in 1664 in the *Consilia theologica Witebergensia*, a Latin–German edition was printed in 1666) was an abortive attempt to add to the *Formula of Concord*.¹⁹ It was originally published anonymously and was intended to be a confession against the errors of Georg Calixtus. In spite of support from Wittenberg and Leipzig, Helmstedt as well as Jena rejected it.

German Lutheranism was divided into at least three major camps at this point in time. The orthodox camp included the University of Wittenberg and the University of Leipzig. It was led by Abraham Calov and Johann Hülsemann. The moderates occupied the University of Jena, which had previously been the citadel of orthodoxy under Johann Gerhard. They were led by Johann Musäus (1613–1681), the future father-in-law of Johann William Baier (1647–1695).²⁰ The Syncretist-Lutherans were found at the University of Helmstedt and the University of Altdorf, both of which were not bound to the *Formula of Concord*.²¹ Georg Calixtus led this faction.

Helmstedt rejected the consensus because it was targeted against Georg Calixtus. The primary reason the moderates at Jena opposed the *Saxon Consensus* was to preserve the peace and keep German Lutheranism from splintering. The second reason was that they felt nothing should be added to the *Formula of Concord*. While certain Lutheran provinces had provincial confessions that were binding only in that particular province, there seemed to be an aversion to adding

¹⁹ Cf. Ernst Henke, *Inest theologorum Saxoniorum consensus repetitus fidei verae lutheranae* (Marburgi: Typis Elwertii Academicus, 1846).

²⁰ Cf. Karl Heussi, *Geschichte der theologischen Fakultät zu Jena* (Weimar, 1954).

²¹ Jörg Baur, *Die Vernunft zwischen Ontologie und Evangelium eine Untersuchung zur Theologie Johann Andreas Quenstedt* (Guetersloh: Gueterslohe Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1962), 18.

to the *Book of Concord*. Whether this aversion was merely to making an addendum to the *Formula of Concord* or to authoring a new universal Lutheran Confession is unclear. Still many provinces attached provincial confessions to their editions of the *Book of Concord*. Two examples of this would be the *Confessio Virtembergica* (1551) of Johannes Brenz (1499–1570) attached to Tübingen editions of the *Book of Concord* and *Christliche Visitationsartikel* (1592) of Aegidius Hunnius (1550–1603) attached in the *Triglotta* published by the Saxons of the Missouri Synod. Even though Helmstedt and Jena opposed the *Saxon Consensus*, the theological faculties of Leipzig and Wittenberg subscribed to it.²²

The content of the *Consensus* was interesting. It very sharply refuted the theology of Calixtus. In particular it rejected his teaching that knowledge of and belief in the teachings of the Apostolic Symbol are all that is necessary for a Christian. The *Saxon Consensus* condemned those who claimed the doctrine of the Trinity is not taught in the Old Testament. It further maintained that the Old Testament faithful had to believe in the Trinity to be saved. The *Consensus repetitus fidei verae Lutheranae* rejected the teaching that God was the indirect cause of the fall. It upheld the doctrine of verbal inspiration. It confirmed the biblical teachings of original sin, the image of God, the person of Christ, the church, the sacraments, repentance, government, and the last judgment. It corrected the abuses of the Roman Mass and the Roman cult of saints. Finally the *Saxon Consensus* condemned sixteen errors of Calixtus on the doctrine of justification and good works. A major objective of the *Saxon Consensus* was to make clear that a *quia* subscription to the Lutheran Confessions required acceptance of the doctrine of verbal inspiration.²³

The Third Phase of the Syncretistic Controversy (1675–1686)

The third phase of the Syncretistic Controversy was partially provoked by the capture of Ägidius Strauch, a Danzig preacher and faithful student of Calov, off the coast of Pommern as he was sailing toward Hamburg. The Great Elector had orchestrated this crass expression of Caesaropapism and held Strauch captive for three years. Johannes Musäus, professor at the University of Jena, and Johannes Meisner (1615–1684), a professor at the University of Wittenberg, were

²² Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1919), 1:352.

²³ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. 4, *Reformation of the Church and Dogma (1300–1700)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 347.

also responsible for this third phase of Syncretism. Following the rejection of the *Consensus repetitus fidei verae Lutheranae*, Johannes Musäus and Calov saw eye to eye on very little. Musäus had now claimed that God's work of redemption could be perceived in the creation and not exclusively by divine revelation in Sacred Scripture.²⁴ Along with this error in natural theology, Musäus had been accused of Syncretism. Even though Musäus had publicly disavowed any sympathy for Syncretism, Calov continued to consider him suspect.

Meisner, on the other hand, was Calov's colleague. He had been on the faculty of Wittenberg a year longer than Calov. Perhaps jealousy was part of the problem. Calov's career had advanced faster than that of Meisner. Moreover, he was not particularly fond of Calov's personality. In any case, Meisner became sympathetic to Calixtus' cause. Subsequently Meisner made an improper use of the distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrine that created a rift in the faculty. While Johann Quenstedt (1617–1688) and Johann Deutschmann (1625–1706) continued to remain loyal to Calov, Calov and Meisner were no longer on speaking terms after 1675. Regrettably this conflict became very personal.

Calov continued his protest against Syncretism under pseudonyms and by republishing the works of the Gnesio-Luthererans such as the *De Amnestia* of Johann Wigand (1523–1587). With great difficulty he was even able to get his *Historia syncretistica* (1682) published in Frankfurt am Main. The elector soon confiscated it. Thus a second edition (1685) was printed in Ratzeburg. The final phase of Syncretism concluded with the death of Calov in 1686.

Additional Polemics

The Syncretists were not the only ones to taste his polemics. Calov produced polemical materials in reaction to the Roman Catholics, Reformed, Socinians, Jean de Labadie, Jakob Böhme, etc. From 1655–58 Abraham wrote his chief work against the Reformed titled: *Discussio controversiarum hodierno tempore inter ecclesias orthodoxas et reformatos coetus agitatarum*. Following this, he wrote a critique of the Remonstrance in his *Consideratio Arminianismi*. Concerning the Papists, he wrote *Mataeologia papistica*. One of the goals of this work was to prove that Elector Johann the Constant had not passed away professing Roman doctrine. Even the Socinians felt Calov's polemical prowess with *Scripta antisociniana* (1684), a book filling two folio

²⁴ Gritsch, 119.

volumes. Still no other group received as much attention as Calixtus and the Syncretists. The purpose of all of his polemics was not to pick fights, but to protect the faithful and show the recipients of his critique the error of their ways so that they would be restored to the flock of God. His writings against the Syncretists and Socinians confirmed the fact that Abraham Calov was also the great champion of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in Lutheran Orthodoxy. This is why he was dubbed the Lutheran Athanasius.

Major Works

From 1655 to 1682 Abraham produced a proliferation of material on various subjects. Due to the sheer magnitude of his writings, some 500 titles in all, only his major works will be given attention. His chief systematic work, the *Systema Locorum theologicorum*, was written in two phases (Tomes. I–IV, 1655–1661; V–XII, 1677) and was published in 12 volumes. The purpose of the *Systema Locorum theologicorum* was to place the Bible into systematic form. The first tomes I–IV were prepared very thoroughly; however, the latter part, V–XII appears to be rushed.²⁵ This systematics was really the only one to rival Gerhard's *Loci Theologici* in all of Lutheranism. The *Theologia Didactico-Polemica sive Systema Theologiae* of Johann Quenstedt (1617–1688), the librarian of Wittenberg, was far more exhaustive. Nevertheless it did not reach the depth of Calov's *Systema Locorum theologicorum* (at least with respect to the first four tomes). Quenstedt's work appears to have been more popular, for many copies of it still exist. Copies of Calov's *Systema Locorum theologicorum* are extremely rare. He also authored two dogmatic *compendia*: *Theologia Positiva* (1682) which was printed by Calov and *Apodixis articulorum fidei* (1684) which was printed by his students. Both of these works were highly regarded.

His chief exegetical work and certainly his *magnum opus* was the *Biblia Illustrata*, a commentary on the entire Bible including the Apocrypha (1672–76). This work was printed in Frankfurt am Main in four large folio volumes to counter Hugo Grotius' *Biblia annotata*. It is a virtual gold mine of theology and attests to Calov's exegetical abilities. The *Biblia Illustrata* was so popular that it retained its prestige well into the nineteenth century, when most scholarly commentaries still made frequent reference to this classic work. The prominence of the doctrine of inerrancy saturates each page. Apart from the *Biblia Illustrata*, he compiled commentaries on Genesis, Romans, and Hebrews. It is worth

²⁵ Preus, *TPRL*, 61.

noting that he had a particularly high regard for the book of Hebrews. His chief isagogics book, *Criticus sacer biblicus*, was written in 1673 and still proves to be fruitful reading.

Calov as Shepherd

The name Calov customarily conjures up images of an exegete or systematician. However, devotional literature was never far from his heart. His pastoral heart is evident in his own works and in his high regard for other Lutheran devotional material. Even more than his hymnals, catechisms, and *Biblischer Kalender*, his *Die deutsche Bibel* or Calov Bible (1682) merits recognition as a superb contribution to the devotional genera. This Bible along with the *Systema* and *Biblia Illustrata* are Calov's greatest legacy. *Die deutsche Bibel* should not be confused with the *Biblia Illustrata*. *Die deutsche Bibel* or Calov Bible is Luther's translation of the Holy Scriptures with a running commentary selected from the writings of Martin Luther. Where Luther offered no comment, Calov provides a gloss of his own.²⁶ It was anything but dry and academic. It breathes a warm devotional spirit.²⁷ This Bible was highly treasured by the laity. Johann Sebastian Bach considered it one of his prized possessions. In fact J.S. Bach's own copy of the Calov Bible is well worn, including extensive notes and underlining by Bach himself. Bach's copy of the Calov Bible now rests at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri.

Abraham Calov recognized his few works would by no means satisfy the spiritual needs of the people. For this reason he directed them to Johann Arndt's *Wahres Christentum*.²⁸ He also had a high respect for the early work of Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705) particularly his *Pia Desideria*, which he publicly recommended. The following letter to Spener dated October 11, 1674 express his own pious desires:

Eure desideria, für deren Mitteilung ich bestens danke, sind auch die meinigen. Und da Eure Kirche von den Übungen der Frömmigkeit eine solche Frucht hat, wie der Ruf berichtet, so nehme ich keinen Anstand, solche examina pietatis auch andern zu empfehlen; wie ich denn noch kürzlich mit Anführung des Beispiels und Erfolgs Eurer Kirche im öffentlichen Gottesdienst die Patrone der Kirche

²⁶ Robin Leaver, *J.S. Bach and Scripture* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973), 23.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Julius Bodensieck, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1965) 1:353; hereafter *ELC*.

zu ihrer Nachahmung ermahnt habe, mit dem Wunsch, daß sie mit Nutzen fortgesetzt und die hier und da *per accidens* (zufälliger-, nicht notwendigerweise) sich anschließenden Mißbräuche abgestellt werden. (Your desires, for whose distribution I am most grateful, are also my desires. Since your church has [gleaned] such fruit from the exercises of piety as your communication reports, I do not hesitate to recommend such *examina pietatis* to others. I have rather recently advised the patrons of the church with quotations of the example and success of your church to imitate them in public worship with the desire that they will continue with their use and do away with the following misuses [that occur] here and there *per accidens* [accidentally, not necessarily].)²⁹

Why would Calov have such high regard for Philipp Spener, the father of Pietism? Many of Spener's concerns had always been the concerns of Lutheranism (e.g., Luther, Gerhard, Dannhauer, etc.). Spener longed to be a true servant to his flock, something Calov highly respected. Likewise Spener's early work was not as radical as his later writings. In the long run Spener appears to have lost control of his movement and to have begun to tolerate or accept the errors of his followers. Had Calov seen the result of pietism particularly under August Hermann Franke (1663–1727), he surely would have been more critical of the movement.

Personality, Family, and Death

Abraham Calov was a very healthy and an industrious individual. He possessed all the qualities of the churchmen of his time: an encyclopedic memory, an indeflatable industry, linguistic skills, effective administration, and an inflexible zeal for pure doctrine.³⁰ He was loved by his adherents who considered him to be a new Athanasius. He was hated by his enemies who regarded him to be a new Torquemada. Calov's uncompromising character did overstep the rules of legitimate polemics at times. Yet he never placed his doctrine in opposition to his piety. Setting his positive attributes and foibles aside, one must concede that Calov's quest for pure doctrine and piety was firmly grounded in Holy Scripture and the prize that awaited him in heaven. He was indeed the

²⁹ E.A. Krauß, *Lebensbilder aus der Geschichte der christlichen Kirche* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1911), 600.

³⁰ Gritsch, 120.

strenuus Christi athleta, i.e., vigorous athlete of Christ, which he dubbed himself.

Calov was a very family-oriented individual. He survived five wives and all thirteen of his children. At the age of seventy-two he took his sixth wife, Dorothea Quenstedt, the daughter of his younger colleague Johann Quenstedt. In addition to Quenstedt, Hülsemann and Heiland (the son-in-law of Polykarp Leyser) were some of his more famous fathers-in-law.³¹ When his third wife, the daughter of Hülsemann, neared death he was comforted by the fact that she lived to receive the Eucharist on her deathbed.³² When she received the *viaticum*, Calov rejoiced and sang loudly Philipp Nicolai's (1556–1608) chorale, *Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern*, particularly the last verse.³³

Wie bin ich doch so herzlich froh,
 Daß mein Schatz ist das A und O
 Der Anfang und das Ende:
 Er wird mich noch zu seinem Preis
 Aufnehmen in das Paradeis
 Des klopf ich in die Hände:
 Amen, Amen,
 Komm du schöne Freudenkrone,
 Bleib nicht langen,
 Deiner wart'ich will mit Verlangen

Oh, joy to know that Thou, my Friend
 Art Lord, Beginning without end,
 The First and Last, Eternal!
 And Thou at length—O glorious grace!
 Wilt take me to that holy place,
 The home of joys supernal.
 Amen. Amen!
 Come and meet me! Quickly greet me!
 With deep yearning,
 Lord, I look for Thy returning.

Not all of his children died young. Three of his daughters married, and his two sons, both named Abraham, died as young adults. The preface of his *Dreißig Leichenpredigten*, dedicated to his colleague

³¹ Tholuck, *Geist*, 192–193.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, 193.

Johann Deutschmann (1625–1706) and jurist Wilhelm Leyser, conveys his grief at this time of his life.³⁴ Moreover his final wife bore him no children. This was especially difficult for him because his children had been his major source of comfort.³⁵

On February 25, 1686, Abraham Calov was taken from this vale of tears to his eternal home. He died in complete control of all of his faculties. He was seventy-four. The funeral sermon was preached by Johann Fredrich Mayer (1615–1712). In this sermon he tried to soften the polemical caricature of Calov. In place of it, Mayer presents Calov as a theologian completely devoted to Holy Scripture. He particular praised his intensive biblical studies. Abraham Calov was succeeded at the University of Wittenberg by Balthasar Bebel from Straßburg. There has been some debate regarding the date of Calov's death. February 21, 25, and 27 are all listed as possibilities. The confusion lies in the various dates recorded for Calov's death in the funeral sermon given by Johann Fredrich Mayer (1615–1712). February 25 is generally accepted.

The Theology and Philosophy of Abraham Calov

Catholicity

Dr. Abraham Calov was dedicated to the concept of catholicity. This means that Lutheranism is not some innovation of the sixteenth century. Rather Lutheran theology is the continuum of the one holy catholic and apostolic church confessed by the ecumenical creeds in opposition to Rome that has departed from the true path. Catholicity has always played a prominent role in Lutheranism. It is quite strong in the theology of Luther, Chemnitz, Gerhard, and Calov, etc.³⁶ Calov did not adhere to an uncritical catholicity, but a catholicity grounded in sacred Scripture. This is clear from Martin Chemnitz' alteration of Vincent of Lerin's definition of catholicity, "Which has been received consistently from Scripture, always, everywhere, and by all believers."³⁷

In order to express this catholicity Abraham Calov frequently cited the early and even medieval church fathers to prove that Lutheranism was not practicing innovative exegesis. Rather it upheld the pure

³⁴ Meusel, 1:638.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Cf. Hägglund, *History of Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 303.

³⁷ Cf. Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), 3:466; and Werner Elert, *Structure of Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 288.

biblical theology of the church in every age. By doing this Calov made it clear that the fathers agreed far more with Lutheran doctrine than Roman or Reformed doctrine. Thus the fathers rightfully belonged to Lutheranism.

The catholicity of Abraham Calov's theology has often been overlooked. The main reason for this omission is attributed to Georg Calixtus. In ecumenical circles Calixtus is praised as the father of the modern ecumenical movement and the true advocate of catholicity. Calov is characterized as an intolerant bully and founder of a sectarian form of Lutheranism known as Confessional Lutheranism. In truth, the romantic notions of Calixtus are far from authentic catholicity. The church has always been evangelical and charitable, but it never sought catholicity through tolerance of error in doctrine or practice. The following example will illustrate the difference between these two men: Calixtus, as the present day ecumenical movement, saw the Holy Eucharist as a mean to achieving some quasi unity rather than as the expression of unity achieved by obedience to Christ. Calov revealed his catholicity by adhering to the practice of the church partaking of the Eucharist only with those who are in full agreement with the teachings of Christ.³⁸ In the theology of Calov the Eucharist is the expression of the unity or catholicity achieved by obedience to Christ, not an attempt to achieve tolerance by circumventing Christ.

Martin Luther

Throughout his life Abraham Calov considered himself a faithful disciple of Dr. Martin Luther. He ardently read his beloved teacher daily and meditated upon his writings. *Die Deutsche Bibel* is a clear witness to this fact. *Die Deutsche Bibel* was running commentary on each verse of Holy Scripture drawn from the writings of Martin Luther. Only where there were no remarks of Luther to be found would Calov submit his own gloss. Calov took no credit for this work. In fact he was very pleased to see that it was regarded as one of Luther's works and not his own.

Furthermore *Die Deutsche Bibel* should be recognized as one of the many attempts to systematize Martin Luther. Martin Luther was an existentialistic and practical theologian. He was certainly not an existentialist in the sense of Søren Kierkegaard or Martin Heidegger. Rather his theology was a living, vivid, and vibrant thing. It was concerned with soteriology, the issues at hand, and had little time for speculative

³⁸ Cf. Werner Elert, *Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966).

questions. While the *opera* of Luther were for the most part unsystematic, they were not confused and flawed. On the contrary, the systemization of Luther was meant to organize, summarize, and help one navigate his massive *corpus*. This systemization helped distinguish the mature Luther from the early Luther and limited the abuse of Luther's writings by non-Lutherans. Some of the most noteworthy systemizations of Luther are: *Loci Communes Lutheri* by Johannes Corvinus, *Thesaurus explicationem omnium articulorum* by Timotheus Kirchner, *Loci Communes Lutheri* by Theodosius Frabricius, and *Pastorale Lutheri* of Conrad Porta.³⁹ One edition of Luther's works even provided an index of his work based upon the *Loci Theologici* of Johann Gehard.

Lutheran Confessions

Some scholars have assumed that there was a rapid decline in the use of the Lutheran Confessions in Lutheran Orthodoxy after the time of Leonhard Hutter (1563–1616) and then an incline during the life of Abraham Calov and Johann Dannhauer (1603–1666). A strong argument for this position is the general lack of citations from the Lutheran Confessions in the *Loci Theologici* of Johann Gerhard. This perceived decline is not entirely accurate. First of all, Lutheran universities always required a knowledge and subscription to the Lutheran Confessions. Second, the Lutheran Confessions were typically cited in inter-Lutheran controversies and as a prerequisite for non-Lutherans seeking fellowship. Since internal Lutheran conflict at the time of Gerhard was less than that at the time of Calov, mass citations from the Confessions were not as necessary. Third, the great dogmatic works of Lutheranism were meant to prove the scriptural teaching and catholicity of Lutheranism particularly to those outside of Lutheranism. In contrast to the *compendia* that were printed as manuals of instruction for future pastors, the *Loci Theologici* of Johann Gerhard was generally treated as a reference work or theological encyclopedia. Finally the many works of Gerhard's period, including the *Loci Theologici*, contain citations from the confessions, albeit not as many as can be found in Calov's day. In any case Abraham Calov's use and advocacy of the Confessions is clear in the Syncretistic Controversy.

³⁹ Cf. Robert Kolb, *Martin Luther as Prophet, Teacher, and Hero* (Grand Rapids: Paternoster/Baker Books, 1999).

Theology

Abraham Calov defines theology with the following citation from the *Systema*:

*Theologia est Habitus Practicus cognitionis e revelatione divina haustae, de vere Religione qua homo post lapsum per fidem ad salutem aeternam perducendus.*⁴⁰ I.e., Theology is a practical habit of cognition drawn from divine revelation, concerning true religion, by which man after the fall is to be led, through faith, to eternal salvation.⁴¹

This citation is often abbreviated: *Theologia est habitus practicus* i.e., theology is practical aptitude. This famous axiom is the overarching theme of his theology. In contrast to certain scholastics, Calov taught theology was practical rather than theoretical and an aptitude or disposition rather than a science. It was not a science because its first principles transcend rational explanation. Practically this meant that theology is driven by soteriology. The focus of Scripture is salvation and the beatific vision.

While he emphasized soteriology, this does not mean that he denigrated the doctrine of the Trinity or the person of Christ. In reality he spent an extensive amount of time on these subjects because they are intimately linked to our salvation. Regrettably this axiom has often been misunderstood to mean that only what one subjectively deems practical or what itching ears desire is authentic theology. It is chiefly in the *Systema locorum theologorum* under the section titled *usus practicus* (practical use), where the *habitus practicus* principle is demonstrated. In these edifying sections similar to the ones found in the *Loci Theologici* of Johann Gerhard, Calov reveals the practical application of each and every dogma of the Christian faith. Thus doctrine, faith, and piety were inseparable.

Holy Scripture

Abraham Calov is primarily known as a dogmatician and philosopher. However, he was a far greater exegete and would be better envisioned as a biblical theologian. His entire theology was intended to be a summary of the Holy Scripture —nothing more, nothing less. His

⁴⁰ Abraham Calov, *Systema* (Wittenberg, 1655/77), 1:1.

⁴¹ Kenneth G. Appold, *Abraham Calov's Doctrine of Vocatio in Its Systematic Context* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1998), 46.

devotion to the Holy Scripture was unparalleled and few could challenge him on a point of exegesis. He is often remembered in history as the greatest advocate of verbal inspiration. He attempted to reiterate, clarify, and make binding the Lutheran Confession's existing position of verbal inspiration by appending the *Consensus repetitus fidei verae Lutheranae* to them.

In his *Systema locorum theologicorum* an entire chapter was devoted to the efficacy of Holy Scripture. This chapter was directed against Herrmann Rahtmann (1585–1628) who orchestrated the second major attack upon the Scriptures at the time of Lutheran Orthodoxy. Herrmann Rahtmann taught that Scripture was not a means of grace, but a dead letter. The Holy Spirit was not bound to the dead letter. In contradistinction, Lutheranism taught that the Scriptures could not be separated from the Holy Spirit. For this reason they said that Holy Scriptures were efficacious even outside the use. Calov reiterates this point with one of his favorite expressions, namely, *verbum efficax*. This emphasis on the effect or power of the Word was belittled by Karl Heim (1874–1958) as nothing more than a “word fetish.” At the same time, however, Heim's critique hints at the fact that Calov's concept of verbal inspiration was not some dead letter, but a living, vibrant, powerful, and active means of grace.

An oddity of this period, at least to the modern ear, was the controversy over the Hebrew vowel marks. Essentially, certain Lutherans from the time of Flacius had fought for the authenticity of the vowel marks, going as far as claiming they could be found in the *Urtext*. Already by the time of Elijah Levita (1468–1549), a famous Hebrew scholar and friend of Johann Reuchlin (1455–1522), it had been proved convincingly that the vowels were not Mosaic or even from the time of Ezra, but from the post-Talmudic period.⁴² Even Martin Luther held to this position. In spite of this fact, men like Calov insisted on this point. It has often been suggested the Calov pressed this matter to support a radical concept of verbal inspiration. The reality is far different. The first reason he held this view was the necessity of reacting to the Roman Catholics who were raising doubts about the reliability of the Masoretic text in order to exalt the Vulgate. The second reason was that the Jesuits' argument for a late introduction of vowel marks implied that Lutherans were every bit as dependent on tradition as Rome.⁴³

⁴² Preus, *TPRL*, 307–308.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 308.

The hermeneutics of Abraham Calov exhibits his complete loyalty to Scripture alone. He was a strong advocate of the historical-grammatical method and the study of the original languages. Contextual exegesis was of paramount importance, but when necessary he would employ the *regula fidei*, i.e., analogy of faith. Even when hermeneutics developed into a virtual science among the dogmaticians, Calov stressed Luther's spiritual aids in the interpretation of Scripture: *oratio*, *meditatio*, and *tentatio*.⁴⁴ Calov and the dogmaticians stressed the *sensus literalis* throughout their study of Holy Scripture. The *sensus literalis* did not necessarily mean the literal-grammatical sense of the modern day, but the original meaning intended by the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵

In contrast to a radical Antiochian interpretation of Scripture, Calov acknowledged a *sensus mysticus*, i.e., mystical sense. *Sensus mystica* was seen as an application of the text that did not destroy the one spirit-intended meaning of the text. In point of fact Johann Gerhard and his handpicked successor at Jena, Solomon Glassius, would speak of the *sensus duplexus* that is a literal and mystical sense.⁴⁶ This was in no way a denial of the one spirit-intended meaning (in contradistinction to the one literal sense), but a division of the one spirit-intended meaning into its applications or accommodations (*accommodationes*) and sub-applications.⁴⁷ For example Lutherans often divided the literal into the proper and the figurative or trope (metaphor). They divided the mystical sense into the allegorical, typological, and parabolic.⁴⁸ Conversely, Lutherans like the Pomeranian David Hollaz criticized the medieval fathers for merely dividing the mystical sense into the allegorical, the tropological, and analogical, since these were really uses of the allegorical sense according to Lutheran hermeneutics.⁴⁹

Some have suggested that Calov and the dogmaticians were ignorant of exegesis and that they dogmatized Scripture. This unsubstantiated view has begun to decline due to modern research. It is certainly true that there have been advances in biblical archeology, biblical

⁴⁴ Cf. Abraham Calov, *Paedia Theologica* (Wittenberg, 1652); and Jung Voelker, *Das Ganze der Heiligen Schrift. Hermeneutik und Schriftauslegung bei Abraham Calov* (Calwer, 1999), 12–14.

⁴⁵ Hägglund, 307.

⁴⁶ Salmon Glassius, *Philologia Sacra* (Lipsiae: Apud Jo. Frider, Gleditschium, 1785), 2.1.1.1.

⁴⁷ Johann Gerhard, *Disputatum Theologicarum* (Jena: Georgi Sengenwaldi, 1658), I:68ff.

⁴⁸ Glassius, *Philologia Sacra*, 2.1.2.2; Hollaz, *Examen* (Stargard, 1707), Proleg. 3:18.

⁴⁹ Hollaz, Proleg. 3:18.

history, biblical anthropology, lower textual criticism, etc., since the days of the dogmaticians. This should be expected. Their high regard for the perspicuity of Scripture may help explain some exegetical omission. Still the pioneering work of Flacius, Gerhard, Calov, Glassius, Dannhauer, Schmidt, and Pfeiffer cannot be overlooked. Modern exegesis would not be where it is today without their contributions.

Mystical Union

The *unio mystica* or mystical union is one subject where the name Calov appears again and again. Johann Arndt (1555–1621) is accused of innovating the concept of the *unio mystica* in Lutheranism and Calov is charged with its introduction to dogmatics. In reality this biblical doctrine is found in Martin Luther, Johannes Brenz, Martin Chemnitz, Johann Gerhard, etc. Some have credited Calov, and to a certain degree Hülsemann, with being the first to assign the mystical union its own locus in dogmatics.⁵⁰ The locus *Von der Vereinigung mit Christo* is already present in *Epitome Credendorum* of Nicholaus Hunnius (1585–1643). The reason the mystical union was not given its own *locus* until this time was a shift from the synthetic to the analytical method in dogmatic methodology. Furthermore Calov has been accused of pantheism and taking the *unio mystica* to limits that Luther would not have dreamed. This is based on the use of the terms *conjunctio* and περιχωρήσις i.e., perichoresis in his description of the union.

The form (of the mystical union) is a joining together (*conjunctio*) with God, not relatively, but truly; not purely extrinsic but intrinsic, not through a bare positioning but through an intimate emanation, not only the operation of grace but at the same time the approach of the divine substance to believers with the mystical περιχωρήσει; nevertheless short of a commixture or transforming of the essence of man.⁵¹

Calov certainly stresses the intimate nature of the mystical union with these terms. He considered the union to be an *unio substantiarum*. His rejection of μεταουσία, i.e., a *transsubstantiatio*: a union of two substances which changes the one into the other or συνουσία, i.e., a *consubstantiation*

⁵⁰ J.L. Neve, *A History of Christian Thought* (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1946), 325.

⁵¹ Calov, *Theologia Positiva* (Wittenberg, 1682), Cap. VIII. Thes. III. 503.

a union of two substances that results in a third new substance, clearly absolves him of any charge of pantheism.⁵²

Philosophy

To understand Calov the philosopher a bit of history is required. Luther's own philosophical persuasion is a complicated question. He was not as opposed to philosophy as some think and yet he was by no means a philosopher either. He borrowed from the *via antiqua*, nominalism (esp. William Ockham and Gregory of Rimini), and the various strands of renaissance humanism. At best, he is an eclectic that employed philosophy only to advance the Gospel. Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560) was far more of a humanist and a philosopher. He too was quite eclectic, but eclectic in the sense that the Renaissance Humanism was a sampling of the classical world. In early days of the Reformation both Martin and Phillip had nearly abandoned most of the disciplines of philosophy for the study of philology. Following the peasants' revolt, Melanchthon with Luther's blessing revived a number of the philosophical disciplines in Wittenberg. Metaphysics would not be revived until the period of Lutheran Orthodoxy because of Luther's discomfort with it. Melanchthon's purpose in reintroducing philosophy and education was to curb the Anabaptist barbarism found among the laity.⁵³ Thus Melanchthonian eclecticism with notable exceptions dominated Lutheran circles until the early Golden Age of Orthodoxy. One of the significant exceptions was the University of Tübingen where Jakob Schegk (1511–1587) professed a strict form of Aristotelianism and waged war on Ramism.⁵⁴

In the middle and toward the end of the 16th century other philosophical movements arose. The most significant were Neo-Aristotelianism, Ramism, Neo-Stoicism, and Cartesianism. Lutheran Orthodoxy and Reformed Orthodoxy would generally adhere to Neo-Aristotelianism. This was not a Medieval Aristotelianism. It was a hybrid that studied Aristotle in a humanistic fashion. Some Gnesio-Lutherans and the German Reformed at the University of Herborn became advocates of Ramism. It should also be noted that David Chytraeus and Martin

⁵² Cf. Calov, *Biblia Illustrata* (Dresden: Johann Christopher Zimmermann, 1719), NT 2:1536.

⁵³ Sachiko Kusukawa, *The Transformation of Natural Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁵⁴ Cf. *Philosophy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: Conversations with Aristotle*, Constance Blackwell and Sachiko Kusukawa, eds. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 169–187.

Chemnitz appear to have had some sympathies with Ramism. Ramism was founded by Peter Ramus (1515–1572), a Calvinist, who tried to simplify and streamline Aristotle.⁵⁵ The sole Lutheran Neo-Stoic was Justus Lipsius. He was a short-time convert to Lutheranism and the pioneer of Neo-Stoicism. Cartesianism was generally embraced only by Dutch Calvinists.

The origins of the revival of Aristotelianism particularly in Lutheran circles is a study in itself.⁵⁶ It seems to have a variety of origins. First of all Renaissance Humanism never really destroyed the study of Aristotle. The schools of the scholastics continued to study Aristotle with ever improving texts (esp. Thomas de Vio). In Italy, particularly Padua and Bologna (esp. Pietro Pomponazzi and Giacomo [Jacopo] Zabarella), a strict form of Aristotelianism influenced by the ancient commentators and Ibn Rushd (better known as Averroes) was thriving.⁵⁷ Dominicans and Jesuits (esp. Francisco Suarez) joined humanism and Aristotelianism to produce their synthesis. The centers of this study were the Spanish University of Salamanca and the Portuguese University of Coimbra. The University of Tübingen, the University of Altdorf, and the University of Helmstedt also played a significant role. Their influence requires further study. All of these traditions helped initiate the revival of Aristotelianism in Lutheranism.

As was stated earlier, the Aristotelianism of Lutheran Orthodoxy was not a lapse into the Middle Ages. Rather it was a philosophy aided by the knowledge and tools of the Renaissance. Lutheran philosophy would not rigidly adhere to Aristotle, but taught the subject of philosophy was *ad res ipsas*, i.e., to the things themselves. Conversely, just as certain elements of Thomism have some influence on the theology of Lutheran Orthodoxy, Thomism is also evident in its philosophy. Michael Wolf (1584–1623), a colleague of Johann Gerhard, used Thomas' *De ente et essentia* in his lectures on metaphysics. The true father of Lutheran Aristotelianism was Jakob Schegk. There are some other Lutherans that deserve to be mentioned. Philipp Scherb, founder and professor of the University of Altdorf in Nürnberg, acquired his knowledge of Aristotle in Italy. The Italian Julius Pacius had some impact. Owen Günther (1532–1615) taught at the University of Jena before teaching

⁵⁵ Cf. Walter Ong, *Ramus Method and the Decay of Dialogue* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).

⁵⁶ Cf. Robert Scharlemann, *Thomas Aquinas and John Gerhard* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 13–22.

⁵⁷ Cf. Dominick Iorio, *The Aristotelians of Renaissance Italy* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellon Press, 1991).

at Helmstedt. Finally there was Cornelius Martini (1568–1621) of the University of Helmstedt who was an acquaintance of David Chytraeus (1531–1600).⁵⁸

Before one begins the history of the revival of metaphysics in Lutheranism, metaphysics needs to be defined. Metaphysics is the study of *ens qua ens*, i.e., being insofar as being. It was considered the queen of the sciences and is a branch of philosophy. The revival of metaphysics in Lutheranism was more independent than the revival of Aristotelianism, albeit the *Metaphysicae disputationes* of Francisco Suaraz would have some impact after the revival. The revival of metaphysics begins with Daniel Cramer (1568–1637), professor at the Gymnasium and pastor of Stettin, Pommern. His lectures titled *Isagoge in Metaphysicam Aristotelis* were published in 1594. Cramer was also known for his uncompleted *Pommersche Kirchenchronik*. Zacharias Sommer of the University of Wittenberg published his *Questiones in primam Aristotelis philosophiam* in 1594. In contrast to Cramer he saw only the theological value of metaphysics. Solomon Gesner (1559–1605), a colleague of Sommer, used metaphysics exclusively to refute the Reformed. This would essentially be the approach of Jakob Martini (1570–1649) and Balthazar Meissner (1587–1626). At the University of Altdorf, Nikolaus Taurellus (1547–1606), Ernst Soner, and Michael Piccart continued the legacy of Scherb. The very independent minded Taurellus tried to develop a Christian philosophy as Piccart published his *Isagoge in lectionem Aristotlis* in 1605. In Strasburg, Johann Ludwig Hawenreuter, philosopher and physician, published his metaphysics in 1596. The text that set the standard for Lutheranism was the *Compendium metaphysicum* of Cornelius Martini (1568–1621) of the University of Helmstedt. After it was revised, Johann Gerhard used it in his lectures on metaphysics at the University of Jena.⁵⁹

The Hoffmann Controversy at the University of Helmstedt sealed the revival of metaphysics in Lutheran circles. At Helmstedt a Gnesio-Lutheran by the name of Daniel Hoffmann (1538–1611) had taught double truth, i.e., reason can contradict theology. This was the same Hoffmann that had opposed the *Formula of Concord* and attacked Martin Chemnitz. Hoffmann felt his position was that of Luther and the Scriptures. He also advocated Ramism which was now under attack. Cornelius Martini (1568–1621), who had helped revive metaphysics,

⁵⁸ Wundt, *Schulmetaphysik*, 49–50.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 51–68.

opposed him.⁶⁰ Martini taught that such things as the Holy Trinity are beyond reason, but that they cannot contradict reason. The “reason” of which Martini speaks is pre-fall or regenerate reason. His argument is the following: If pure reason contradicts theology, then God would be a liar and the origin of evil. Pre-fall or regenerate reason cannot contradict theology, because its origin is from God and He is unable to do evil. Still pre-fall or regenerate reason is not able to comprehend the Holy Trinity even in the beatific vision. Since man will never be omniscient, certain things will always be beyond reason, but they will not contradict reason. This was the position that won the day.

Aristotelianism and particularly metaphysics came to play a very important role in High Orthodoxy. For example, the *Loci Theologici* of Johann Gerhard employed Aristotelian methodology, logic, and metaphysics to advance the Gospel. The *Philosophia sobria* of Balthasar Meisner (1587–1626) made abundant use of metaphysics to demonstrate the superiority of Lutheranism to Calvinism. While there was little advancement among Lutherans in theory at this time, two different approaches to philosophy were beginning to take shape. One part of Lutheranism understood philosophy as an *ancilla*, i.e., a handmaiden to theology. The other part did philosophy for philosophy’s sake. Generally speaking, those who used philosophy for philosophy’s sake did not always maintain their orthodoxy.

The high point of Lutheran Aristotelianism was Abraham Calov. This is true because of his contribution to ontology, i.e., the study of being and his distinction between *gnostologia* and *noologia*. Calov produced his philosophical *corpus* in his younger years at the Universities of Königsberg and Rostock. The following are a list and description of these works.

Tractatus de methodo discendi et disputandi (1632) was a manual for disputations. *Gnostologia* (1633) was the study of *omne scibile qua tale*, i.e., all things cognizable as such. Calov further defines *cognoscibile*, i.e., cognizable with *intelligibile*, i.e., intelligible and states, “*intelligibile est omne, quod est*, i.e., intelligible is everything that exists.”⁶¹ *De directione... intellectus... disputatio* (1636) dealt with the intellect. *Metaphysica Divina* (1636) was a metaphysical text that presupposed both Scripture and reason as a basis for knowledge. *Noologia* (1650) dealt with intelligence or the *habitus primorum principiorum*, i.e., the habit or disposition of the first principles. Its object is the *affinitas rerum*, i.e., relation-

⁶⁰ Cf. Gottfried Thomasius, *De Controversia Hofmanniana* (Erlangen, 1844).

⁶¹ Wundt, *Schulmetaphysik*, 257.

ship of things compared with one another. Thus the first principles are derived from the observation of neither the complete dissimilarities or the complete similarities of these compared things.⁶² The philosophical works of Abraham Calov were collected and published in two volumes known as the *Scripta philosophica* (1650–1). A year later his *Encyclopedia disciplinarum realium ideae* was published. These works dealt primarily with methodology, metaphysics, and epistemology. Some of these works were intended to show that even sound philosophy demonstrated the validity of Lutheranism in contrast to the errors of the Reformed and Roman Catholics. In this manner Calov followed in the footsteps of Balthazar Meissner's (1587–1626) *Philosophia sobria*.

The contributions of Calov to epistemology and ontology are his real claim to fame. Drawing from the works of Wittenberg professors Georg Gutke (1589–1634) and Valentin Fromme (1601–1675), he anticipated some of the epistemological insights of Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) in his works on *Gnostologia* and *Noologia*.⁶³ Nevertheless he is fundamentally Aristotelian in his epistemology and did not advocate the transcendental idealism of Kant, i.e., the distinction between phenomena and noumena. Abraham Calov is also credited with coining the word “ontology,” i.e., the study of being. This is only partially true. Rudolf Goclenius had already introduced the term in his 1613 *Lexicon philosophicum*. Still Abraham Calov was the first to use the term “ontology” in its proper sense. This he did in his *Metaphysica Divina* (1636).

So often the work of the seventeenth-century Lutheran, Catholic, and Reformed philosophers has been overlooked. In fact, most histories of philosophy leap from the Middle Ages to Descartes and Kant. Had there not been a Neo-Aristotelian revival, there would never have been a Leibnitz, Wolff, or Kant. Just as St. Augustine should not be equated with Plotinus, so, too, Lutheran Neo-Aristotelianism should not be equated with the rationalism of Leibnitz, Wolff, or Kant. Lutheran Orthodoxy did not use reason magisterially as the theologians of the Enlightenment. Moreover, Lutheran Orthodoxy did not cause Rationalism. To imply this is no different than saying lower textual criticism leads to higher criticism. In any case, the contribution of Lutheran Orthodoxy should not be underestimated in the history of philosophy.

⁶² Ibid., 259.

⁶³ Ibid., 134, 259.

Approach to Dogmatics

One of the recognized characteristics of Lutheran Orthodoxy was the writing of dogmatics or systematics. Writing a systematic text was orthodoxy's claim to fame much like writing a sermon book on the historic pericopes was for the Synodical Conference theologians. In order to write a dogmatics book one had to begin with an outline or roadmap. This road map was typically determined by Aristotelian methodology. The first method for doing dogmatics was the *ordo locorum* or the *loci* method popularized by Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560) and the humanists. This method grew out of the *Topics* of Aristotle and the rhetoric of Cicero. The *loci* method makes use of the *habitus practicus* method, but was by no means a *summa* or a *corpus* of theology. For example, the *Loci Communes* (1521) of Melanchthon grew out of his commentary on Romans and only treated certain major points of doctrine.

When the *De natura logicae* of Giacomo (Iacopo) Zabarella (1533–1589), the celebrated logician from Padua, was studied, the *Loci* method was abandoned. This work was part of a collection of logical works known as *Opera Logica*. Out of this study grew two ways of approaching systematics. In reality, this distinction in methodology did not originate in Zabarella, but was derived from the writing of Galen the Physician, a famous Aristotelian commentator.⁶⁴ The first approach was the *ordo compositivus*, i.e., synthetic method, which proceeds from principles to conclusions. The second was the *ordo resolutivus*, i.e., analytical method, which begins with the goal in view and then sets forth ways to reach this goal. These two approaches became necessary to systemize the massive amount of dogmatic material accumulated by Luther, Melanchthon, Chemnitz, Hunnius, and others.

Johann Gerhard followed the *ordo locorum* or *loci* method of Melanchthon, but also made use of a loose adaptation of the *ordo compositivus*. This is exhibited by Gerhard's treatment of theology's principles, specifically the *principium cognoscendi*. In the same year Gerhard's *Loci Theologici* was printed, Balthazar Mentzer, Gerhard's teacher, adopted the second approach, the *ordo resolutivus*, in his *Synopsis theologiae analytico ordine comprehensa*. About the same time or earlier Bartholomaeus Keckermann, a Reformed theologian from Danzig, implemented the analytical method. The analytical method better suited Lutheran theology than Reformed theology. Lutheranism had a

⁶⁴ Cf. William F. Edwards, *The Logic of Iacopo Zabarella (1533–1589)* (Columbia University, Ph.D., 1960).

soteriological emphasis, which became the *finis* or end goal of Lutheran dogmatics, as opposed to the theocentric viewpoint of the Reformed.⁶⁵

The analytical method, particularly in the *Systema Locorum Theologicorum* of Calov, helped facilitate the *habitus practicus* principle. The purpose of this method was to systematize all theology under the single point of view: How will man reach his highest goal, eternal blessedness? It began with the belief that God is the eternal goal, and then proceeded to deal with the doctrine of man, the subject of theology, and finally with the means whereby man can attain eternal blessedness. Prior to Calov there was no uniformity in dogmatic method. There was also no theological purpose in choosing one methodology over another. After Calov made use of the analytical method specifically because of its soteriological aim, no noteworthy Lutheran would deviate from it. Thus the *Systema Locorum Theologicorum* set the precedence for all future Lutheran dogmatics even though it was not the first to employ the analytical method.

Order of Salvation

Early Lutheran dogmatic works did not treat the entire *ordo salutis* (order of salvation) in a systematic way. However, they did deal with most of the *ordo* under one or more *loci*. When the *ordo compositivus* (synthetic method) was popularized by Johann Gerhard, the *ordo salutis* was still in its early stages. Yet it should be noted that Johann Gerhard would later advocate the *ordo resolutivus* in his *prooemium* (par. 28) because it treated theology as a *habitus practicus* (as opposed to a theoretical science). Since he had finished his *Loci Theologici*, he could no longer restructure it.⁶⁶ Nicolaus Hunnius was one of the earliest to develop the *ordo salutis* in his *Epitome Credendorum* along with Balthazar Mentzer (1565–1627) (A sort of *ordo salutis* can also be found in the *Wabres Christentum* of Johann Arndt). But the *ordo salutis* would not take its final shape until after Calixtus, the arch-heretic from Helmstedt. Abraham Calov is said to be the true founder of the modern Lutheran *ordo salutis* even though he was not the first to develop it. A comprehensive study of the *ordo salutis* can be a tremendous aid to maintaining a proper distinction between justification and sanctification. Many errors have arisen as a result of a misunderstanding of the *ordo salutis*.

⁶⁵ Appold, 29.

⁶⁶ Martti Vaahoranta, *Restauratio Imaginis Divinae* (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft, 1998), 22.

Although there are minor differences among Lutheran theologians as to the exact structure of the *ordo salutis*, there is clearly agreement on its main components. Calov's *ordo salutis* consists of the following: vocation, illumination, regeneration, conversion, justification, penitence, mystical union, sanctification, and glorification.⁶⁷ This is the most common schema for constructing the *ordo*. The purpose of the *ordo salutis* is merely to systematize what takes place in a believer in a cause and effect relationship. The *ordo* dare not be turned into a temporal relationship or into something caused by man since this would be unbiblical. Furthermore the entire *ordo salutis* occurs simultaneously. The negative of developing such an *ordo salutis* via the analytical method, as C.F.W. Walther (1811–1887) once remarked, is that one could force Scripture into an airtight system whereby doctrine is not based upon *locus classicus*, but rather logical deductions.⁶⁸ Moreover the Reformed have often attacked the Lutheran *ordo salutis* claiming it was synergistic, since regeneration and faith precede justification. Biblically speaking, faith precedes subjective justification since man is justified by faith (Galatians 3:28, Romans 8:30). Moreover faith is also caused by the Holy Spirit and therefore is not a work of man (Romans 8:30). Clearly the Reformed charge is unwarranted and clouded by their misunderstanding of election.

Abraham Calov's Influence

Abraham Calov was a man of exceptional learning and pastoral concern. He was truly a *strenuus Christi athleta*, i.e., vigorous athlete of Christ. His supporters admired him as the Lutheran Athanasius, while his opponents abhorred him as the Lutheran Torquemada, the Hot-blooded Watchman of Zion, and the Grand Inquisitor.⁶⁹ His influence is evident in Hülsemann, Quenstedt, Scherzer, Kromayer, and later Lutheran Orthodoxy. At times his polemics went too far, still they were rather typical for the day. His zeal was primarily driven by a pastoral concern to protect the flock.

Abraham Calov had a profound influence on Johann Sebastian Bach. This is largely attributed to *Die deutsche Bibel*. J.S. Bach also acquired Calov's personal copy of the Altenberg edition of Luther's works—full of his personal underlining and notes. This was the edition

⁶⁷ Calov, *Systema*, 10.

⁶⁸ August Suelflow, *Servant of the Word* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 106.

⁶⁹ Tholuck, *Geist*, 202, 209, 229.

that Abraham Calov had used to produce *Die deutsche Bibel*. J.S. Bach obtained it via the auction of Andreas Winkler's library.⁷⁰ All of these books were treasured by him as can be seen from the following: although Bach consulted the Calov Bible extensively, its present condition indicates that he must have taken meticulous care of it. *Die deutsche Bibel* was catalogued first among the theological books that Bach owned in a list written in 1750, indicating its importance in Bach's library. The Altenberg edition of Luther's works and the Calov Bible were set in a place of prominence in J.S. Bach's library. When Bach died all his books were distributed among his family except for *Die deutsche Bibel* and the Altenberg edition of Luther's works, which were assigned to his widow, Anna Magdalena, because she knew how much her husband regarded these books.⁷¹ These books took precedence over Martin Chemnitz's *Examen* and Johannes Müller's *Lutherus Defensus*.

Abraham Calov left his mark on the Synodical Conference Lutheranism as well. C.F.W. Walther frequently quotes Calov in his writings and appears to have had a high regard for him. Adolph Hönecke (1835–1908) had a profound respect for Calov and probably used him more than any other American Lutheran.⁷² Robert Preus adds that Franz Pieper (1852–1931) more often cites Quenstedt while Hönecke uses Calov.⁷³ What is far more intriguing is that Calov's greatest Synodical Conference disciple, Adolph Hönecke, was converted by August Tholuck, the contentious Prussian union biographer of Calov. Even celebrated exegetes like Georg Stöckhardt (1842–1913) and Heinrich Meyer (1800–1873) frequently cite the *Biblia Illustrata* in their commentaries.

In conclusion, Abraham Calov was indeed one of the greatest theologians in Lutheranism and all of Christendom. Thus it is the hope of this author that he not be forgotten, but diligently read and studied. His theology is just as vital to the present as it was to his own time. May the advice of C.F.W. Walther be heeded!

Do not despise the writings of the old faithful church fathers, the writings of a Luther, Chemnitz, Quenstedt, Gerhard, H. Müller, etc. Otherwise you disobey the Holy Spirit, who

⁷⁰ Leaver, 25.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 24–25.

⁷² Preus, *TPRL*, 61.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 22.

commanded you: “Do not despise prophecy” [that is, exposition of Scripture; I Thess. 5:20].⁷⁴ LSQ

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⁷⁴ C.F.W. Walther, 1884 Synodical Conference convention essay.

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A Sermon Study for Reformation Sunday: Romans 3:19–28

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GRACE. SALVATION IS NOT BY WORKS. *SOLA FIDE*.
No works-righteousness! *Sola gratia*. Do not listen to anyone
but God for your spiritual information. *Sola Scriptura*.

What do all these have in common? These are typical thoughts or themes that may be running through our heads as we consider the general emphases of a celebration of the Reformation.

Since this year is a landmark anniversary of the Reformation, perhaps we feel the pressure to make such celebrations in our parishes “pop” a little more than usual. Perhaps you have already joined in on a community-wide screening of the new Luther movie. Maybe you plan on a presentation of the “Ninety-Five Theses for the Twenty-First Century” to be put out by the CELC. You may be gearing up for another push for the two-year anniversary offering of the synod.

One thing you are sure to include when you observe the special day is a sermon on a “Reformation” text. Thus the purpose of the sermon study that follows. The text to be considered, Romans 3:19–28, happens to be in (most of) the three-year series of lessons, not in the Historic series. However, for those who make use of the Historic series, this passage exemplifies the typical Reformation themes so well that it still could be considered for use, akin to one of the alternate preaching texts.

Paul’s letter to the Christians at Rome covers quite a bit of ground. He touches on a number of doctrines, but at the center is *justification*. Romans 1:16–17 expresses the theme of the letter: “For I am not

ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes, to the Jew first and to the Greek. For the righteousness of God is revealed in connection with it out of faith to faith, just as it is written, "The righteous by faith shall live."¹ The theme of justification is especially expounded in the portion of the letter in which the text under consideration is central.

After the introductory portion of the letter, Paul states the theme of the letter (1:16–17). He continues in chapter 1 with an explanation of how degraded man became in spite of natural knowledge of God. While this description can be applied to all, Paul especially focuses on the Gentiles at this juncture. Beginning in chapter 2, he details how the Jews, God's own people, had followed their own path of degradation, self-righteously claiming to be better than the Gentiles. But the Jews still held an advantage over the Gentiles: they had God's revelation, his Word. Paul then cites a number of passages from Scripture in the middle of chapter 3 (vss. 9–18) to show how Jews and Gentiles alike are guilty of breaking God's law. The section under consideration, 3:19–28, comes at the beginning of an explanation of how one is justified in God's courtroom.

A possible outline of the entire letter to the Romans is:

1:1–15	Introduction and greeting
1:16–17	The theme: Salvation for all is justification by faith
1:18–32	Gentiles need righteousness before God
2:1–3:8	Jews also need this righteousness before God
3:9–20	This is also the testimony of Scripture
3:21–5:11	Justification by faith expounded
5:12–21	Sin's origin and salvation's origin
6:1–7:6	The only true way to sanctification
7:7–8:39	Redemption in Christ gives us life and brings certainty of a coming glory, with which the present sufferings cannot compare
9:1–11:36	Whether Jew or Gentile, righteousness by faith is the only universal way to salvation; these are Abraham's true spiritual descendants
12:1–15:13	The admonitory and practical part of the epistle; an explanation of what the new life in Christ entails for everyday living

¹ Author's translation. All Scripture cited is the author's translation unless noted otherwise.

15:14–16:27 The conclusion and personal greetings

Middendorf lists the following as the primary sections of the letter:

- I. The righteousness of God (δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ; 1:18–4:25)
- II. Life in and through our Lord Jesus Christ (5:1–8:39)
- III. The righteousness of God and Israel (9:1–11:36)
- IV. Living in response to the mercies of God (12:1–16:27)²

The Text

Romans 3:19 – οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὅσα ὁ νόμος λέγει τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ λαλεῖ, ἵνα πᾶν στόμα φραγῆ καὶ ὑπόδικος γένηται πᾶς ὁ κόσμος τῷ θεῷ.

Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to the ones {within/in connection with} the law, in order that every mouth may be closed and the entire world may be(come) answerable to God;

*Lexical/Syntactical Notes*³

ὁ νόμος – art. + nom. m. sg.; *the law*; article makes this law specific
λέγει ... λαλεῖ – pres. act. ind. 3 sg. (twice); *says ... speaks*; whether there is a slight distinction to be made between these or Paul uses them for variation's sake is debatable.

τοῖς ἐν τῷ νόμῳ – art. dat. pl. + prep. + art. + dat.; *to those within/in connection with the law*; indirect object; τῷ is an article of previous reference

πᾶν στόμα – nom. neut. sg. adj. + nom. neut. sg.; *every mouth*; synecdoche for an entire person

φραγῆ – aor. pass. subj. 3 sg. from φράσσω; *may be stopped, closed* (so that the person must remain silent)

πᾶς ὁ κόσμος – nom. m. sg. adj. + nom. m. sg.; *the entire world*; note the parallel with πᾶν στόμα

² Michael P. Middendorf, *Romans 1–8*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2013), 29. See 29–31 for his complete outline.

³ All definitions, unless otherwise noted, are from Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick W. Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), BibleWorks, v.10.

ὑπόδικος – nom. m. sg. adj. (hapax); *answerable, accountable* (pertaining to being liable to judgment/punishment)

Text Notes

Paul's δέ continues what he began in v. 9: a section in which he quotes numerous verses from the Old Testament. These verses emphatically make evident the universal sinfulness of mankind. God's moral law, the law that applies to all people of all time, comprises ὁ νόμος in this verse. That this is true is also clear from the present tenses of λέγει and λαλεῖ (God is still speaking), the ἵνα clause that follows, and verse 20b. It is not just the mouths of Jews *or* Gentiles that need to be stopped; it is the mouths of all. In addition, πᾶς ὁ κόσμος is held accountable to God, not just the Jews *or* Gentiles.

Note the judicial tone with which Paul continues (see 3:4ff.) with his use of ὑπόδικος. Any of the words with a δικ- stem pertain to *righteousness* or *acquittal* of some sort. This hapax also carries the connotation of “a legal technical term, of one who has lost all possibility of disproving a charge against him and thus has already lost his case.”⁴ Standing before God the judge on our own, we can offer no words of defense because his (moral) law has so completely condemned us. On our own, we are doomed.

Romans 3:20 – διότι ἐξ ἔργων νόμου οὐ δικαιοθήσεται πᾶσα σὰρξ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ, διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας.

{because/for/consequently} from law-works all flesh will not be {declared righteous/justified} before him, for through law is knowledge of sin.

Lexical/Syntactical Notes

διότι – conj.; *because, or consequently* (a marker used to introduce an inference)

ἔργων νόμου – gen. neut. pl. + gen. m. sg.; *works of law* or *law-works*; νόμου is descriptive genitive (works characterized by law) or subjective genitive (the works the law demands)

πᾶσα σὰρξ – nom. f. sg. adj. + nom. f. sg.; *all flesh*

⁴ Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), BibleWorks, v.10, s.v. ὑπόδικος.

δικαιωθήσεται – fut. pass. ind. 3 sg. from δικαιώω; *will be acquitted*; agent of the passive is God; durative future (always [not] true); especially viewed eschatologically⁵

Text Notes

Based on what Paul stated in v. 19, he now concludes the line of thought about the relationship of the law to being declared righteous in God's eyes. To do so he begins with a restatement or "very loud echo"⁶ of Psalm 143:2b ("...for no one living is righteous before you" [ESV]). God does not acquit people of their sin based on their actions, even their actions of trying to abide by his law. The law cannot produce righteousness; it cannot put anyone into good standing with God. In God's courtroom, it only condemns.⁷

Note the universal nature of whom the law condemns. Πᾶσα σὰρξ could be rendered "every person," and thus "not even one person will be declared righteous" by trying to do what the law demands. This echoes what Paul stated in v. 19: the law condemns everyone. The use of σὰρξ to describe the individual condemned by the law stresses the sharp contrast between man and his God: man is fleshly and base while God is the one who judges (and is thus perfect and holy).

It must be maintained that δικαιώω is a forensic term relating to the courtroom. When the judge declares an accused person innocent, he does not *make* the person innocent. So also, when God declares a person righteous, he does not *make* the person righteous. Thus, "will be acquitted" would be a suitable understanding for δικαιωθήσεται in this verse.

Διὰ γὰρ νόμου ἐπίγνωσις ἁμαρτίας is a good summary of what Paul stated in v. 19. The "knowledge" Paul specifies here is experiential, not just theoretical. Anyone attempting to obey God's law soon realizes the impossibility of such a feat. The law, in its second use, reveals that we miss the mark in attempting to keep it.

⁵ Middendorf, 244.

⁶ Ibid., 256.

⁷ Middendorf (266) explains Paul's exclusion of "works of the law" from man's salvation:

He does so because some of his contemporaries assert that an action *from humanity toward God* serves as a component of a righteous status in God's sight. Paul counters that in reality, and as with Abraham (see 4:1–6), any righteousness that avails before God comes wholly and only *from him to us*. To insert our works into that realm is both flawed and fatal (3:10, 19–20; 9:31–32; 10:3).

Romans 3:21 – Νυνὶ δὲ χωρὶς νόμου δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ πεφανέρωται μαρτυρουμένη ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν,

But now apart from law the righteousness of God has been revealed by having witness borne (to it) by the law and the prophets,

Lexical/Syntactical Notes

χωρὶς – prep.; *without relation to, without connection to, independent of*
νόμου – gen. m. sg.; *law*; anarthrous emphasizes quality (definitely requires something)

δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ – nom. f. sg. + gen. m. sg.; *righteousness of God*
(cf. 1:17)

πεφανέρωται – pf. pass. ind. 3 sg. from φανερώω; *has been revealed*; the perfect tense emphasizes the continuing results (bolstered by νυνὶ)

μαρτυρουμένη – pres. pass. ptc. nom. f. sg. from μαρτυρέω; *having witness borne to*

τοῦ νόμου καὶ τῶν προφητῶν – art. + gen. m. sg. + conj. + art. + gen. m. pl.; *the law and the prophets*; agent of the passive μαρτυρουμένη; shorthand for *the Old Testament*

Text Notes

Having expounded heavily on the law since 1:18, Paul indicates he is ready to change topics with νυνὶ δέ. Melancthon states, “Above he [Paul] made an approach to the principal proposition. ... Now there follows the principal proposition which is the point at issue in the controversy. This must be diligently kept in mind also because of the greatness of the cause. For this proposition contains the real and chief statement of the Gospel about the benefit of Christ.”⁸ Thus Paul does not make a complete break with the foregoing, but switches from law to gospel. That justification by faith is the key thought of vs. 21–26 is evident from these verses being referenced in the Smalcald Articles (II I 1–3) as among those that present “the first and chief article” of the Christian faith.⁹

God’s declaration of “not guilty” (θεοῦ—subjective genitive) has nothing to do with the law. Note the emphatic position of χωρὶς νόμου.

⁸ Philip Melancthon, *Romans*, tr. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 98.

⁹ See Middendorf, 277.

Paul wants his readers to know this fact about God's acquittal very clearly. Indeed, that the righteousness of God and the law are poles apart has been made quite obvious by God (πεφανέρωται). Additional details of this revelation will be clarified in the coming verses; for now, it is enough to know that the Old Testament bore witness to (with μαρτυρουμένη keeping the legal tone) God's action of grace. That his righteousness is not attached to the law is not a new message.

Romans 3:22 – δικαιοσύνη δὲ θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας. οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν διαστολή,

a righteousness of God through faith {in/of} Jesus Christ to all [and over all (see variant)] the ones who believe. For there is no distinction,

Lexical/Syntactical Notes

διὰ πίστεως – prep. + gen. f. sg.; *through/by faith*; expresses the means through which righteousness comes

Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ – gen. m. sg. + gen. m. sg.; *in Jesus Christ*; objective genitive (object of faith). If this is a subjective genitive, the phrase describes the “faithfulness of Jesus Christ.”¹⁰ Kuske remarks that some “suggest that Jesus Christ was faithful in completing his saving work for us and that this is the means by which God's acquittal comes to us. While this does not teach anything that is contrary to Scripture, it is a meaning that ... is doubtful”¹¹

εἰς πάντας – prep. + acc. m. pl. adj.; *to all* (cf. 1:16)

[καὶ ἐπὶ πάντας] – This variant is supported by good manuscript evidence. Kuske: “God's acquittal comes not only to (εἰς) those who believe but also comes upon (ἐπὶ) them. In this instance it has a meaning [of] ... something coming upon a person/thing and having an important effect on him/it. To say it another way, the comfort of God's declaration of acquittal is not only received intellectually (εἰς) but it affects the whole person (ἐπὶ).”¹²

¹⁰ See Middendorf, 304–312, for a summary of the debate over the objective versus subjective genitive.

¹¹ David P. Kuske, *A Commentary on Romans 1–8* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2007), 171. Daniel P. Wallace's grammar devotes two pages to this discussion. Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 114–116.

¹² Kuske, 172.

διαστολή – nom. f. sg.; *difference, distinction*; used three times in NT (here, Ro 10:12, and 1 Co 14:7)

Text Notes

Rather than God's righteousness coming through the law (v. 21), Paul says it comes διὰ πίστεως. If Paul is indeed juxtaposing these two means of obtaining the verdict of "not guilty" from God (something *I* do versus something worked *in* me [cf. 1 Corinthians 12:3b]), this lends support to the idea that Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ should be taken as an objective and not subjective genitive (see above). Such reflects a common emphasis in Romans and Galatians¹³ and fits the context better here also. This understanding also corresponds to FC SD III 43: "Faith justifies solely for this reason and on this account, that as a means and instrument it embraces God's grace and the merit of Christ in the promise of the Gospel."¹⁴

Does εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας teach that God's declaration of acquittal is somehow limited? Yes and no. Only those who have been brought to faith in Jesus benefit from God's righteousness, but his righteousness is not only for them. The upcoming verses will demonstrate the limitless nature of God's forgiveness. In this verse, Paul is concentrating not so much on *who* receives God's righteousness as much as he is on *how* it is received—through faith.

In chapter 2 and in 3:9 Paul had made the point that Jews were no different from Gentiles concerning sin. He begins his reiteration of that point with οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν διαστολή. The present tense of ἐστὶν indicates that what Paul says is true at all times. He continues by explaining precisely how there is no distinction in the following verse.

Romans 3:23 – πάντες γὰρ ἥμαρτον καὶ ὑστεροῦνται τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ

for all have sinned and are lacking the glory of God

Lexical/Syntactical Notes

γὰρ – conj.; *for*; explains why v. 22b is true

πάντες – nom. m. pl. adj.; *all*; parallels πάντας in v. 22

¹³ Kuske, 171, maintains there are 38 such passages in Romans and Galatians.

¹⁴ Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 547. The reference just prior to this quotation is to Romans 3:28, focusing on "apart from works."

ἥμαρτον – 2 aor. act. ind. 3 pl. from ἀμαρτάνω; *sinned*. Aorist emphasizes the fact of everyone having sinned. There may also be eschatological overtones expressed with the aorist; “the eschatological verdict from the viewpoint of the Last Day.”¹⁵

ὕστεροῦνται – pres. pass. ind. 3 pl. from ὑστερέω; *are lacking, are without, come short of* (to experience a deficiency in something desirable or advantageous); takes genitive object

τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ – art. + gen. f. sg. + art. + gen. m. sg.; *the glory of God*; τοῦ θεοῦ is possessive genitive. “The sense of ‘lack’ ... recalls humanity’s, and particularly also Israel’s, exchange of God’s ‘glory’ (δόξα as a translation of the כְּבוֹד of Yahweh) depicted in 1:23 (ἤλλαξαν τὴν δόξαν τοῦ ἀφθάρτου θεοῦ).”¹⁶

Text Notes

No one is omitted: every person (πάντες) who has lived, does live, or will live is numbered with sinners.¹⁷ Paul had detailed this fact in chapter 1 regarding the Gentiles and in chapter 2 regarding the Jews. In this verse he appropriately generalizes the universal coverage of sin. That this universal sin is a fact is emphasized by the aorist tense of ἥμαρτον. No one escapes this “guilty” sentence, at least not on their own.

Paul adds a second fact about all people: they are all lacking something essential. The present tense of ὑστεροῦνται indicates that this lack is ongoing. Along with the fact of having sinned, this lack does not cease. Τοῦ θεοῦ is most likely a possessive genitive (see above), but a decent argument can also be made for taking it as a subjective genitive (thus, “the praise that God gives”). In the former case, the idea is that all people fall short of God’s glorious standard, his standard of perfection. In the latter, the idea is that ultimately (come judgment day) all people will need approval or praise from God. But with all people having sinned, no one receives such approval on their own.

Romans 3:24 – δικαιοῦμενοι δωρεὰν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι διὰ τῆς ἀπολύτρωσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ·

being {declared righteous/justified} {undeservedly/freely} by his grace through the redemption which is in connection with Christ Jesus;

¹⁵ Middendorf, 283.

¹⁶ Ibid., 283–284.

¹⁷ Kuske, 173.

Lexical/Syntactical Notes

δωρεάν – adv.; *as a gift, without payment, gratis* (pertaining to being freely given); modifies δικαιούμενοι

τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι – art. + gen. m. sg. + dat. f. sg.; *by his grace*; dative of means; emphatic placement of *his*; χάρις appears twenty-four times in Romans

ἀπολυτρώσεως – gen. f. sg.; *redemption, acquittal, state of being redeemed* (release from a captive condition)

Text Notes

It is vital to note the subject of this verse: πάντες from v. 23.¹⁸ This ensures that one does not slip into the false teaching of a limited atonement (ala Calvin). Rather, the Bible's teaching of objective justification¹⁹ is unmistakable in this verse.

The present tense of δικαιούμενοι corresponds to the present tense of ὑστεροῦνται in v. 23. That is, while at the same time all people lack God's glory (having sinned against him), all people are in a state of being declared not guilty. The passive voice of δικαιούμενοι reemphasizes God's action over against that of people's.

Δωρεάν adds an exclamation point to God's grace in carrying out his declaration of acquittal. That is, by definition χάρις means *favor, undeserved kindness, or gracious care/help*, something that is done or given without expectation of repayment or anything in return. So that no one misses the point that God acquits the world simply by his loving choice, Paul uses both *freely* and *by his grace*.

Paul then states precisely the means by which God acquitted the world: διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. There was a cost to God's declaration of righteousness, even though it is given by him without cost. The price paid (ἀπολυτρώσεως) to free all people from their slavery to sin is connected directly to Christ Jesus; note the article that connects the prepositional phrase to it. While in the next verse Paul will

¹⁸ The NIV makes this clear by stating, "and *all* are justified freely by his grace ..." (emphasis added).

¹⁹ Also referred to as *universal or general justification*. Some of our Reformed friends maintain that "all who believe" (v. 22) is the subject of v. 24. This, in their minds, guards against universalism (e.g., see Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998], 189). Moo contends that "all" in its connection with 'being justified' indicates not universality ('everybody') but lack of particularity ('anybody')." Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 227.

give more details about this *redemption*, to know it is the price paid by the work of Jesus is sufficient for now.

Romans 3:25 – ὃν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἁμαρτημάτων

whom God displayed publicly (as) a means of expiation through [the] faith in connection with his blood for a proof of his righteousness on account of the passing over of the sins which had been done before

Lexical/Syntactical Notes

προέθετο – aor. mid. ind. 3 sg. from προτίθημι; *displayed publicly, made available publicly* (set forth publicly); used three times in the New Testament

ἱλαστήριον – acc. n. sg.; *means of expiation*; the cover of the ark; thus Jesus is “the place where God’s justice and mercy meet.”²⁰ Moo prefers “sacrifice of atonement” as a meaning.²¹

διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως – prep. + [art.] + gen. f. sg.; *through/by faith*; indicates the means by which a person receives what Jesus did (cf. v. 22)

ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι – prep. + art. + gen. m. sg. + dat. n. sg.; *in his blood*; included because of ἱλαστήριον

εἰς ἔνδειξιν – prep. + acc. f. sg.; *for a proof, demonstration* (something that compels acceptance of something mentally or emotionally); *proof* as a meaning fits the judicial context best;²² εἰς with a verbal noun = intended result

πάρεσιν – acc. f. sg. (hapax); *passing over, letting go unpunished* (deliberate disregard)

τῶν προγεγονότων ἁμαρτημάτων – art. + pf. act. ptc. gen. n. pl. (from προγίνομαι) + gen. n. pl.; *of the sins which had happened before*; objective genitive; attributive participle stresses a key characteristic of the passing over

²⁰ Kuske, 179.

²¹ Moo, 236.

²² Middendorf, 274.

Text Notes

With a relative tie-on clause Paul draws close attention to some specific facts about Jesus.²³ The aorist tense of *προέθετο* emphasizes that God truly carried out this action of displaying Jesus publicly. The second accusative in this double accusative of object-complement construction²⁴ is *ἰλαστήριον*; thus the inclusion of “as” in the translation. The imagery of Old Testament worship is brought to the fore as Jesus is referred to as that which removed God’s anger. The annual blood sacrifice made on the Day of Atonement and the accompanying sprinkling of the blood on the mercy seat foreshadowed the one great sacrifice, the one great expiation for sin that the Messiah would accomplish.

In v. 22 Paul had stated that God’s righteousness is received “through faith.” Paul reiterates in this verse the necessity of faith as the receiving instrument. The object of faith is *τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι*, the very blood of the Lamb (note the emphatic placement of *αὐτοῦ*), brought to mind because of the mention of Jesus as the *ἰλαστήριον*.

Why did God display Jesus publicly as the expiation? In order to give proof (*εἰς ἔνδειξιν*) of his righteousness, just as God accepted the blood of lambs as a substitute for the blood of sinners, so also he accepted the blood of the Lamb for the blood of all sinners. His public display of Jesus as the final sacrifice necessary proved he was just; he had carried out the required punishment for sin. Up to that point, it appeared that God was not going to exact such punishment for sins that were committed (*διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἀμαρτημάτων*); thus the necessity of the proof. *Πάρεσιν* is a hapax and makes clear that up until the time of Christ’s sacrifice, God was more precisely “passing over” sins instead of actually forgiving them (sending them away).²⁵

²³ “This tie-on relative clause is a long one; it extends to the end of verse 26. ... It adds information about the person who paid the ransom and highlights two things about him: (1) It is through faith in him that Jew and Gentile lay hold on the acquittal God declared, and (2) he is the key to the paradox that God could be both a just God and also provide a cleared status for Jew and Gentile totally apart from their doing anything to earn it (cf. v20).” Kuske, 178.

²⁴ The object is *ἔν*; the complement is *ἰλαστήριον*. Wallace, 187.

²⁵ Middendorf, 290. This is not to say, of course, that sins committed prior to Christ’s sacrifice were being held over the sinner’s head. Rather, God was not punishing penitent sinners for their sins with a view toward when they would be punished in Christ’s blood sacrifice. Lenski says, “Paul’s ‘passing over’ is used for the sake of exactness in the present connection. What actually took away the sins of the Old Testament saints was Christ’s blood. Until that blood was actually shed, all *ἄφεσις* [‘forgiveness’] was, to be exact, a *πάρεσις*; all ‘remitting’ a ‘passing over.’” R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 261.

Romans 3:26 – ἐν τῇ ἀνοχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ, πρὸς τὴν ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον καὶ δικαιούντα τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ.

in connection with the forbearance of God, for the demonstration of his righteousness in the present time, {in order/with the result} that he might be {righteous/just} {and/even} the one {declaring righteous/justifying} the one of faith {in/of} Jesus.

Lexical/Syntactical Notes

ἀνοχῇ – dat. f. sg.; *forbearance, clemency, tolerance* (act of being forbearing); occurs here and Ro 2:4; ἐν τῇ ἀνοχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ modifies παρέσιν in v. 25 (thus making *clemency* or *tolerance* doubtful for the meaning²⁶)

εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν – prep. + art. + pres. act. inf. + acc. m. sg.; *in order that he might be* (purpose); could be *with the result that he is* (result)

δίκαιον καὶ δικαιούντα – acc. m. sg. + conj. + pres. act. ptc. acc. m. sg. from δικαίω; *just and the one acquitting*; the fact that God acquits/declares righteous is an ongoing characteristic (present tense)

τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ – art. + prep. + gen. f. sg. + gen. m. sg.; *the one of faith in Jesus*; note the singular, pointing to subjective justification (see above for discussion on “faith in Jesus” vs. “faithfulness of Jesus”)

Text Notes

Here Paul parallels his thoughts from the previous verse, reiterating God’s patient forbearance for the purpose of demonstrating his righteousness. He adds ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ to show that God had decided that the (then) present age was *the* time for his plan of salvation to come to fruition.

It is preferable to take εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν as a purpose clause since it is connected to πρὸς τὴν ἔνδειξιν. It is not questionable whether or not this purpose will be achieved, because the entirety of Scripture makes it clear that God is δίκαιος. In fact, his just character has been shown quite clearly in verses 24–25. Paul adds here that God is not only just, but that he also is the δικαιούντα.²⁷ Since Jesus’ blood sacrifice expiated for all

²⁶ Ibid., 274.

²⁷ Kuske (183) points out the parallel of Jesus as the expiation for sin to Old Testament times: “When Paul says that God is both δίκαιον and δικαιούντα, this gives us further insight into why Paul spoke of Christ as the ἱλαστήριον in verse 25. At the atonement cover in the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, God was shown to be δίκαιον and δικαιούντα. Blood was brought as a symbolic payment for the people’s sins. On the basis of that payment (which pictured the real payment Jesus would make), God

sins, God is continually (present tense) the one who declares people not guilty. Paul shifts, however, from speaking of universal justification as he did in v. 24 to that of the individual (τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ). Here again the receiving instrument of God's declaration is faith, faith in the one who has satisfied God's anger over sin.

Romans 3:27 – Ποῦ οὖν ἡ καύχῃσις; ἐξεκλείσθη. διὰ ποίου νόμου; τῶν ἔργων; οὐχί, ἀλλὰ διὰ νόμου πίστεως.

Therefore where is the boasting? It is shut out. {By/Through} what sort of {law/principle}? Of works? No indeed, rather {by/through} a {law/principle} of faith.

Lexical/Syntactical Notes

οὖν – conj.; *therefore*; conclusion drawn from vss. 21–26

καύχῃσις – nom. f. sg.; *boasting* (act of taking pride in something); “what a person has done to help earn God's acquittal”²⁸

ἐξεκλείσθη – aor. pass. ind. 3 sg. from ἐκκλείω; *it is excluded, shut out* (to make no room for); aorist emphasizes the fact of this happening; agent behind the passive is Jesus (his work)

ποίου νόμου – gen. m. sg. interr. adj. + gen. m. sg.; *what sort of law?* “Law” in the sense of “principle” is a better understanding.

τῶν ἔργων – gen. n. pl.; *of works*; descriptive genitive; cf. vss. 19–20

νόμου πίστεως – gen. m. sg. + gen. f. sg; *law of faith*; “law” in the sense of “principle”; “faith” as opposed to “works”

Text Notes

The conclusion (οὖν) at which Paul arrives is not a surprise but a good summation. Can anyone boast about accomplishing something so spectacular which will benefit them in God's eyes? Any effort on a person's part is completely excluded²⁹ because Jesus has done everything necessary (agent behind the passive of ἐξεκλείσθη) to give God a reason for pronouncing the world not guilty. That there is nothing anyone can do to deserve God's acquittal is further emphasized by Paul's second

acquitted the people.” Middendorf (291) refers to the latter part of this verse as “*the key theological affirmation of the letter.*”

²⁸ Kuske, 185.

²⁹ Note that Paul's exclusion of boasting ties to 2:17 (“Now if you call yourself (a) Jew and rely on law and boast in [connection with] God . . .”) and 2:23 (“You who boast in law, through the transgression of the law you dishonor God . . .”). Middendorf, 294.

and third questions: no works can produce the beneficial verdict. What works cannot accomplish faith can. This principle was stated in verses 22 and 25 but it is appropriate for Paul to juxtapose faith and works here as he concludes this particular train of thought.

Romans 3:28 – λογίζομεθα γὰρ δικαιόσθαι πίστει ἄνθρωπον χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου.

For we believe a man to be {declared righteous/justified} by faith apart from law-works.

Lexical/Syntactical Notes

λογίζομεθα – pres. m/p (dep.) ind. 1 pl. from λογίζομαι; *we think, believe, are of the opinion* (to hold a view about something); emphasis on having giving something thought and coming to a conclusion; “we” includes readers

δικαιοῦσθαι – pres. pass. inf. from δικαιώω; *to be acquitted, pronounced righteous*; agent behind passive is God; present tense makes this axiomatic; ACI construction with ἄνθρωπον

πίστει – dat. f. sg.; *by faith*; dative of means; cf. διὰ πίστεως (vss. 22, 25, 30) and ἐκ πίστεως (vss. 26, 30)

ἔργων νόμου – see notes in v. 20

Text Notes

Paul concludes his juxtaposition of faith and works with words well known to many Christians. He explains (γὰρ) what he stated in v. 27: that the matter of faith versus works has been considered quite carefully and an appropriate realization has been reached (λογίζομεθα). The realization is this: that no matter who the person is (anarthrous ἄνθρωπον), they have been declared not guilty by God. Here Paul uses the simple dative πίστει to indicate how this acquittal comes to the individual. To ensure that no one imagines anything else needs to be added to faith, he adds that the person’s justification comes χωρὶς ἔργων νόμου, reiterating what he stated in vss. 20–21. Faith and works, in the matter of being declared righteous by God, have nothing to do with each other.³⁰

It was in this verse, of course, that Luther “added” a word to the text in his translation: *allein*. “For we believe a man to be justified by faith

³⁰ See FC SD III 9–12 for an excellent summary of the essence of what Paul says in this verse.

alone apart from law-works.” While he was even in his day criticized for this addition, Luther maintained the integrity of his translation.

Here, in Romans 3[:28], I knew very well that the word *solum* is not in the Greek or Latin text; the papists did not have to teach me that. It is a fact that these four letters *s o l a* are not there. And these blockheads stare at them like cows at a new gate. At the same time they do not see that it conveys the sense of the text; it belongs there if the translation is to be clear and vigorous. I wanted to speak German, not Latin or Greek, since it was German I had undertaken to speak in the translation.³¹

While English does not require such an adverb when a juxtaposition is set forth, the German of Luther’s day did. Luther was simply making Paul’s point even clearer.

Homiletical Notes

Regardless of whether one follows the Historic or one of the ILCW/Three-Year pericopes, the theme of any Reformation celebration is brought out clearly in this section of Romans. Two of the three great *solas*—*sola gratia* and *sola fide*—are explicit in this passage. *Sola Scriptura*, while not explicit, is at least implicit because Paul’s words comprise part of Scripture and because Paul alludes to the Old Testament to make his point.

One must be careful, therefore, not to imply that Scripture takes a back seat for the celebration of the Reformation. That is, many times the temptation is to center the sermon on Luther and how God brought him to the realization of God’s righteousness not being something earned but freely given. Perhaps such a sermon would be a virtual summary of Luther’s life, giving the appearance that the celebration of Reformation is a celebration of Luther. Μὴ γένοιτο! While vignettes from Luther’s life can be beneficial in a Reformation sermon, God’s Word and only God’s Word should be the true focus of the sermon.

The other Scripture lessons for the day bear out the Reformation theme also. In Jeremiah 31:31–34 (Three-Year), God’s new covenant with his people is prophesied. Unlike his old covenant with his people, a covenant that centered on the law, the new covenant will focus on

³¹ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works, Vol. 35: Word and Sacrament I*, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999), 188–189. See also AC Ap IV 73 for an argument for understanding “alone” in this verse.

God's grace, grace which is especially demonstrated by his forgiveness of his people's sins. The message of the Reformation was one of grace, especially in contradistinction to the law-based religion of the Roman church.

2 Chronicles 29:12–19 (Historic) explains how King Hezekiah ordered the cleansing and consecration of the temple for the worship of the Lord, which orders the Levites carried out. This took place following the reign of King Ahaz, during whose reign the Lord's temple had been neglected and fallen into disuse and disrepair. The concept of restoring proper worship parallels the state of the church in Luther's day, that true worship had been neglected under the Roman system of works-righteousness. Luther and the Reformers, by emphasizing God's grace alone, restored true worship to the church.

In the Gospel lesson (Three-Year), John 8:31–36, Jesus explains in what true freedom consists. His followers are not to find comfort in their heritage, that they do not descend from slaves in a worldly sense, but that they have been freed from spiritual slavery by the work of Jesus as revealed in his Word. This gospel freedom is the freedom proclaimed by the Reformers as they shined the light of God's gospel for everyone to see.

Matthew 11:12–15 is the Historic Gospel for the day. In this brief passage Jesus points out that his kingdom is opposed on this earth, especially as shown in the life and ministry of John the Baptist. Even so, John came as a fulfillment of God's prophetic Word, showing that this Word will indeed prevail. As God's Word prevailed in Jesus' and John's day, so also during Luther's.

Romans 3:19–28 encapsulates key elements of theology that Lutherans hold dear. The law makes us aware of our sins, condemning us—no matter who we are—before our holy God (vss. 19–20). God's declaration of "not guilty" has to come another way since it does not come via our efforts to maintain his law. That way is Christ Jesus, the benefits of whose salvific work come to us by faith (vss. 21–22, 25, 27). His work involved offering himself as a blood sacrifice, fulfilling the sacrifices of the Old Testament times (vss. 24–25) and bringing to completion the time of waiting for God to punish sin (v. 25). Thus we have no reason to boast in anything we have done or can do to attain a favorable verdict from God, because through Jesus he has taken care of working out our salvation (vss. 27–28).

Sample Sermon Theme and Parts

In order to keep the forensic idea of “righteousness” in the fore, a possible theme and parts would be:

You’re on Trial in God’s Courtroom

I. You stand convicted of your sins

II. God declares you are “Not guilty!”

A possible means to emphasize the “not by works/by faith” juxtaposition of the text might be:

Do You Want to Get Into Good Standing With God?

I. Let go of your works

II. Cling to Jesus in faith

As a way to stress the juxtaposition of law and gospel while keeping in mind the emphasis that “there is no distinction” (v. 22), a possible theme and parts would be:

God Looks at You the Same Way He Looks at Everyone

I. According to his law, you are seen as a sinner

II. According to his grace, you are seen as forgiven LSQ

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Book Reviews

LSQ Vol. 57, Nos. 2 & 3 (June & September 2017)

Book Review: Reformation 500

Reformation 500: The Enduring Relevance of the Lutheran Reformation. Edited by Curtis A. Jahn. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2017. Hardcover. 262 pages. \$37.99.

The WELS Reformation 500 Committee commissioned ten essays for a *Festschrift* entitled *Reformation 500: The Enduring Relevance of the Lutheran Reformation*. This reviewer rescued his copy from a premature burial in a January snowbank. Obviously it was put there by a postal worker who lacked the right anniversary spirit.

Mark Schroeder writes in the preface, “The true significance of Luther and his Reformation lies in how Luther’s theology and message touches [*sic*] the individual sinner” (v–vi). Of course, the theology and message are not really “Luther’s”;

rather, “Luther proclaimed a timeless truth that spoke and still speaks to the individual sinner standing trembling and helpless before an almighty and righteous God, pointing that sinner to the cross of Christ, the grace of God, and a righteousness not *achieved* by the sinner but *received* by him as a free gift” (vi, emphasis original). Answering the question, “With what spirit should we celebrate the Reformation?” Mark Zarling reminds us, “The Reformation remains an ongoing reality worked in human hearts by the Spirit through the means of grace” (1). Luther was but one link in a continuous chain, stretching back long before October 31, 1517: “Since the first rebellion, the Lord God has continually raised up servants to confront sin and unbelief with the Word of life, servants who were instruments of the Spirit to work new life in dead hearts. And lives are reformed because the heart is vivified” (4). The timeless truth of the Gospel

will help us trust the *sufficiency* of Scripture as an effective balm for all woes and a sure defense against false doctrine, old and new.

Luther was tested by countless opportunities to provide “comfort and encouragement, admonition, and exhortation” (119). No matter what was brought to his attention, writes David Valleskey, Luther relied on the Holy Spirit, working through the Gospel, to supply what was needed. This reliance characterizes Luther’s letters of comfort and counsel, letters that were never *pro forma*, but always “redolent with Biblical atmosphere” (122).

“Patient” is an adjective that seldom comes to mind when we think of Luther. In his survey of fellowship practices throughout Lutheran history, John Brug argues that, while he was not afraid to take an ax to the “huge oak of deep-rooted false doctrine” (96), it was a *patient* Luther who tended sheep and fought wolves. The Lutheran fathers showed remarkable patience in those difficult days, but they did not hold the patent on it: “Here, as in many areas, the Reformation was not producing anything new but simply returning to scriptural doctrine and practice” (97).

Some may look askance at Luther’s statements on *antilegomena*. Joel Fredrich maintains that Luther’s views are not necessarily “a bucket of cold water to keep us from descending into hero worship as we celebrate the Reformation” (47). The restoration of the Gospel compelled Luther to revisit canonicity. Whatever preaches Christ, not decrees from the Vatican, establishes Scripture. Luther’s love for

the Gospel would not be taken away “by a pope or a church or an *antilegomenon*” (69).

Baptism would not be taken away by an Anabaptist, either. Charles Cortright discusses Luther’s defense—still “timely and pertinent” (74)—of infant baptism. Luther distinguished between faith that receives the blessings of baptism and the Word that validates the Sacrament. The *fides infantium* does not come by *fides aliena* or *fides futura*, but only by the Spirit, working in the water and the Word.

Luther’s students continued to trust in Scripture as a defense. Wade Johnston shows how Matthias Flacius fought the Interims after Luther’s death. Flacius believed that “contemporary challenges were to be understood not merely as new experience but as part of a historical cycle, a new chapter in an ancient and ongoing story that would reach its climax in the last days and culminate in Christ’s return” (190). To support his anti-adiaphoristic confession, Flacius turned to the Testaments first. Flacius not only teaches us that *nihil est adiaphoron in casu confessionis et scandali*, but that “Christians should follow the pattern of the one true church that has existed from the Old Testament, through the New Testament, and into the present day” (193). God’s unchanging Word meets and defeats every challenge.

The New Perspective on Paul undermines the central article of the faith by what Paul Wendland calls “kingdom reductionism” (212). In this reduced kingdom, justification pales in comparison to church

membership. Wendland stacks the New Perspectivists alongside the Judaizers of Paul's time and the Semi-Pelagians of Luther's. The three *solas* will continue to stand against those who despise the atonement of Christ.

Not all new perspectives undermine the Gospel. Paul Prange demonstrates how the Reformation improved education. At Wittenberg Luther developed a truly evangelical university, free from false doctrine, but also free from merely mercantile values. Melancthon put Luther's ideas into practice and spread those ideas throughout Germany. Through their work, a new and proper perspective on Christian vocation emerged.

John Brenner reminds us that the Lutheran Reformation is *conservative*—founded on Scripture alone—in its doctrine and practice. The battle over adiaphora continues. When we are tempted to eradicate every perceived vestige of Catholicism, we cannot “reform” ourselves so much that we become generic Protestants, divorced from the means of grace. Why would we abandon the enduring relevance of the Reformation?

Finally, Daniel Deutschlander portrays Luther as Odysseus, clinging to the mast of the Word, avoiding the “Siren song” of Enthusiasm, navigating between the Scylla of *Anfechtung* and the Charybdis of “Church *with* State,” steering away from those who fail to take God seriously and make salvation uncertain. By clinging to the Word, salvation through Jesus' wounds is made plain to us.

According to Deutschlander, taking God seriously and the

quest for certainty “marks all of the best products of confessional, orthodox Lutheranism” (256). Does *Reformation 500* qualify as one of the “best products”?

Schroeder and Zarling are both correct: our culture will misunderstand the Reformation in this anniversary year. However, anxiety about the misunderstanding—which, after all, will take place *outside the church*—will distract us from more relevant, more *dangerous* temptations within:

1. *Apostasy*: “It doesn't matter that I'm a Lutheran.”
2. *Lethargy*: “The only thing that matters is that I'm a Lutheran.”
3. *Hyperbole*: “We'd better change what it means to be Lutheran or we're all going to die!”

Our anniversary work must address these temptations. Here are a few examples of how *Reformation 500* addresses them.

Zarling warns us against the lethargy that takes the Word for granted; the temptation is great for “heirs of the Reformation” to think that Scripture is a “denominational heirloom” that will simply remain in our possession (6). It is by God's grace and promise that His Word remains with us.

Johnston's research on primary sources related to the Adiaphoristic Controversy is to be commended. His psychological portrait of Flacius also merits introspection: “It was for true Lutheranism, Luther's Lutheranism, that Flacius had left behind fatherland, friends, and inheritance, and so he internalized the controversies of Luther's life, especially the contest

with Agricola in which Melanchthon had sought to serve as a mediator and thus failed, in Flacius' view, to remain sufficiently steadfast" (184). This "internalization" served Flacius well (e.g., FC X); but not always (e.g., FC I). Those of us who feel compelled to take up the mantle of Flacius by internalizing current conflicts over adiaphora will find Brenner's work on the conservative quality of the Reformation sobering. Grounding our Christian freedom in Scripture, we avoid apostasy and hyperbole at the same time. Though Brenner's essay begins by referring to events in the nineteenth century, one hopes the irony of his statement, "The American Lutherans wanted to remove from Lutheranism everything that was distinctly Lutheran" (25), is not lost on us in 2017.

Deutschlander's vigorous style never fails to inspire his readers. His closing essay inspires us to avoid all three deadly temptations by staying tied to the Word, maintaining the primacy of the means of grace in the divine service, and remembering what matters most: the individual sinner's need for the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Debate within and between these ten essays suggests some possibilities for further exploration.

Deutschlander's Charybdis represents the temptation for the church to make an alliance with the state, thus providing backbone—and possibly a sword or two—to achieve its ends. In his highly informative essay on education, Prange states, "Perhaps the most significant contribution of Luther and Melanchthon was the

strong encouragement that primary education be compulsory and universally available" (160). To achieve this end, Luther believed the services of the state would be required, especially if parents were found wanting; see "To the Councilmen of All the Cities in Germany That They Should Establish and Maintain Christian Schools," written in 1524. Prange demonstrates how rulers like Philip of Hesse responded to Luther and Melanchthon's encouragement. Was this a salutary alliance, or was it sailing too close to danger? How do our schools navigate these waters today?

As opposed to the New Perspectivists on Paul, who make justification a "group thing," Wendland stresses that the central article of the faith is first an individual matter:

To define justification *per se* as simply an assertion that one "belongs" to the covenant people is an absurdity. The barrier that is being removed is the barrier between the sinner and his God, not the separating hedge between Jew and Gentile. That the latter is also true cannot be in dispute (see Ephesians 2:1ff). But it has happened because the former and far more critical barrier has been decisively removed. (234)

This "absurdity," however, does serve a purpose. It cautions us from excessive "national pride"—which is really spiritual lethargy—and also sharpens our understanding of "covenant" as

opposed to “testament.” Might we as pastors be guilty of presenting the Old Testament as more of an “Old Covenant” in our sermons and Bible classes; i.e., “God’s grace brought the Israelites in, but their obedience kept them there” (cf. Ap IV 316a, 319a)?

Reformation 500 does suffer from a lack of poetry, or, at least, a lack of *appreciation for* poetry. Werner Franzmann’s hymn, “In Trembling Hands, Lord God, We Hold” (CW 199), provides a worthy outline for Zarling’s essay on the spirit of celebrating the Reformation; nevertheless, taking the book as a whole, there is precious little regarding the *spirit of music* in the Reformation, a spirit found not only in the hymns of Luther, Gerhardt, *et al.*, but in the doctrinal works and Confessions themselves. Ten essays on ten topics can only cover so much, but it is disheartening to see such a void filled by the discussion of Luther’s remarks on the canonicity of Esther, James, and Revelation, to take one example.

This reviewer remains unconvinced that this issue merits a place in a book designed to celebrate the enduring relevance of the Reformation. It is perhaps more relevant to a current debate among theologians in the Wisconsin Synod. Fredrich states, “It is attractive to think that the 39 books we call the Old Testament were a firmly recognized canonical collection well before the birth of Jesus. . . . But we must concede that the Scriptures themselves do not say that those 39 books and no others comprise the Old Testament canon” (49). When this reviewer pulls his *BHS* off the shelf, he looks at the three Hebrew

words on the spine and remembers the words of Jesus in Luke 24:44: “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me” (NKJV). Fredrich comments on this verse:

It is plausible that “the Psalms” here is a *pars pro toto* designation for all the *Ketuvim*. . . . But that interpretation is not so secure as to preclude all doubt. Even if it is clear that Jesus and Luke knew of a third group of canonical writings that were to be found neither in the Law of Moses (first group) nor in the Prophets (second group), “the Psalms” mentioned here could simply be the psalms, a notable source of messianic prophecies and types. (50)

This reviewer’s best guess is that Jesus did, in fact, know of a third group. Compare Fredrich’s comment with a comment from another product of Northwestern Publishing House:

At the time of Jesus, the term *Sacred Writings* was not yet used for the third division. This division was generally referred to by the first book in that division, the Psalms. . . .

Jesus did not name or quote from every book of the Old Testament. He did, however, quote from all three divisions of the Hebrew Old Testament, showing that he accepted them as the authoritative Word of

God. Thus, the 39 books of the Old Testament are established by the authority of the Lord Jesus himself. . . .

[Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Esther, Proverbs, and Ezekiel] then belonged to a group called the *antilegomena* (books spoken against). However, the case is settled. These books belong to the canon of the Old Testament because Jesus accepted them. End of discussion. (Lyle W. Lange, *God So Loved the World*, 51)

Toward the end of his essay, under the heading, “The Unique Tests for Orthodoxy in the Lutheran Confessions,” Deutschlander encourages us to ask these three questions:

1. Is the teaching according to the Scriptures?
2. Does the teaching warn the impenitent and comfort the penitent?
3. Does the teaching give maximum glory to Christ or rob him of his glory?

When we apply these metrics to the debate over what Jesus means in Luke 24:44, which of the comments above receives a higher score?

Zarling’s passionate plea for continued diligence in both biblical and modern languages, which brings a missionary’s zeal to the pastor’s heart, is important. So it broke the heart of this former instructor of Slavic languages when he saw *Vlačić*, the proper Croatian name of Flacius, rendered “Vla i” on page 179. There

are a few other corrections to be made before *Reformation 500* is ready for the time capsule. A boat passes through “straits,” not “straights.” A prophet puts on a “mantle,” not a “mantel.” The possessive of anyone named “Sanders” cannot be both “Sander’s” and “Sanders’.” Finally, though it is taken from a citation, *par excellence* requires a [*sic*], even if the misprint helps Germans and Scandinavians pronounce French correctly.

Some of the topics discussed in *Reformation 500* will be presented by our own essayists at the General Pastoral Conference this year; specifically, Luther’s letters of pastoral counsel and his sermons for *Invocavit* Sunday. Familiarity with Valleskey’s (see also Luke Ulrich’s work on the same topic in *LSQ* 56.4) and Brenner’s papers will be useful.

No matter what Pope Francis might achieve in his attempts to “heal the rift,” the relevance of the Reformation will endure. Its relevance will be shunted in irrelevant directions, its legacy condensed into progressive organizations, Reinhold Niebuhr, and the “Protestant work ethic.” Thankfully, our Confessions will keep the relevance in its proper place: “Men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ’s sake, through faith . . . that we may obtain this faith, the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted” (AC IV, V). *Reformation 500* will enrich our appreciation for the Lord’s servants who restored justification by faith alone to its central position.

The enduring relevance of the Reformation is found in the means of grace. Through them the Spirit satisfies man's need for forgiveness and creates faith that clings to this central article. In this year of jubilee, essayists and preachers will exhibit the right anniversary spirit by trusting the efficacy of the Gospel that proclaims Christ.

— Christian H. Eisenbeis

LSQ

Book Review: Luther's Protest

Braun, John A. *Luther's Protest: From 95 Theses to Reformation*. Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2016. 197 pages. \$15.19. (Kindle edition: \$18.99 through Amazon)

Appreciating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation means understanding the history behind the protest. In the preface of *Luther's Protest: From 95 Theses to Reformation*, John A. Braun sets the tone of offering candid history without sensationalism and novelty. The author succeeds in presenting a diverse array of historical complexities in his brief 180 pages of text. Though the author writes from a Lutheran perspective, Braun also addresses unsavory aspects of the Reformation movement. In the end, all the necessary details are present to make *Luther's Protest* an excellent introduction to Reformation history.

The progression of historical events flows through 20 brief chapters, each focusing on a specific date and place relevant to the Reformation. The

heavily event-orientated organization gives the text a certain ease of reference. The chapters include succinct but lively treatments of major turning points, such as the 95 Theses, the Diet of Worms, Luther's time in the Wartburg, the Augsburg Confession, and the Smalcald Articles. Yet Braun also has chapters dealing with some of the finer points of Reformation history, such as the election of Charles as Emperor in its political context, each Diet of Speyer with context from recent wars, and the Peace of Nuremberg. The reader even gets a flavor of the political and religious shifts taking place in England at the time. Throughout, sufficient anecdotes and little-known facts keep the history from becoming dry.

While the book is largely biographical, it gives ample context outside of Luther for a novice to understand the broader political and ecclesiastical setting for the Reformation. The reader gets a sense of the nuanced political role of the papacy in Western Europe and the uniqueness of the Holy Roman Empire. Before Luther takes the stage, Braun also outlines medieval reforming efforts which preceded him. After Luther's death, the history continues through the Smalcald War and the Augsburg Interim, concluding at last with the Peace of Augsburg.

There are minor shortcomings, however, in how the book presents church history prior to the Reformation as well as the Lutheran perspective on church tradition. Braun's pre-Reformation Christian church seems oversimplified into one homogeneous body with the

exception of the Great Schism between East and West in 1054 (p. 2). Such a generalization risks perpetuating misconceptions about the church being fairly monolithic until the Reformation. Early divisions, such as gnostic Christianity and non-Chalcedonian Christianity, show that even the many post-Reformation splits were not atypical in church history. Regarding ecclesiastical tradition, Luther's views are more nuanced than presented at times (cf. p. 106). He lacked such a strong preference for the early church, and instead could see inadequacies along with faithful witnesses together throughout church history. He made every effort to show his opponents' disregard for certain traditions and statements of Church Fathers when it suited themselves, while pointing out from those same sources how his views were nothing new.

For a softcover, it is printed with exceptional quality, including glossy pages, full-color pictures, portraits, timelines, and maps. It certainly looks the part of an accessible, attractive history for the laity.

Luther's Protest is easy to recommend as an introduction to Reformation history. The needed context and basic Reformation sketch make the quick read useful for novices, church book clubs, Bible studies, and as an introductory undergraduate text. Complete with an index, it can also be a convenient reference tool for clergy. Although there is no shortage of Reformation histories and Luther biographies, Braun's monograph finds its niche in straightforwardness and brevity.

– Nicholas Proksch

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