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Announcement:
Fifth Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions

January 27 — 29, 1982

A Convocation for Pastors and Laypeople
sponsored by
The International Center of
Lutheran Confessional Studies
to be held at
Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Wednesday — January 27, 1982

1:00 p.m.	Welcome
1:30 p.m.	"The Clarity of Scripture and Hermeneutical Principles in the Lutheran Confessions" Prof. Erling Teigen
3:00 p.m.	Break
3:15 p.m.	"Faith in the Old and New Testaments: Harmony or Disagreement" Dr. Seth Erlandsson
6:00 p.m.	Dinner
7:30 p.m.	Concert: The Confessional Lutheran Heritage in Music
8:45 p.m.	Reception in the Commons

Thursday — January 28, 1982

7:00 a.m.	Breakfast
8:50 a.m.	Chapel
9:30 a.m.	"The View of Prophecy and Fulfilment in the Lutheran Confessions" Dr. Douglas Judisch
10:30 a.m.	Break
10:45 a.m.	"Confessional Lutheran Hermeneutics vs. Contemporary Hermeneutics" Dr. Carl Braaten
12:15 p.m.	Lunch
1:30 p.m.	"Are Law and Gospel a Valid Hermeneutical Principle?" Dr. Horace Hummel

2:45 p.m. Break
3:00 p.m. "Evangelical Hermeneutics: Restatement, Advance, or Retreat from the Reformation?"
Dr. Walter Kaiser
6:00 p.m. Banquet

Friday — January 29, 1982

9:30 a.m. Panel: "Crisis for Reformation Hermeneutics: Is There a Tension Between Grand Rapids, St. Louis, and Philadelphia?" (Drs. Erlandsson, Judisch, Braaten, Hummel, Kaiser and Prof. Teigen)

The Speakers:

Professor Erling T. Teigen, Professor, Bethany Lutheran College and Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota

Dr. Seth Erlandsson, Director of the *Biblicum*, Uppsala, Sweden

Dr. Douglas Judisch, Assistant Professor of Old Testament, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Dr. Carl Braaten, Professor of Systematic Theology, Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, Illinois

Dr. Horace Hummel, Professor of Old Testament, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri

Dr. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Dean of the Faculty and Professor of Old Testament, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois

- Registration and material cost $40.00 per person, and $60.00 for husband and wife. (Thursday's banquet is included in the registration fee.)
- Motel reservations are available should that be preferred.
- We will provide limousine service from the airport — when given your schedule at least two days in advance.
- Limited dormitory space will be available. The cost for a room is $6.00 per person. There will be two people in each room.
- Please include your name, address, congregation, and telephone number with your request for registration. Early pre-registration by mail will guarantee the accommodations of your choice.
- Breakfast, lunch, and supper may be purchased in the Seminary Dining Hall.
- Send address requests for registrations (or requests for further information) together with the registration fee to the International Center of Lutheran Confessional Studies, Concordia Theological Seminary, 6600 N. Clinton St., Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825, or call 219-482-9611.

Perennial Problems in the Doctrine of Justification

Robert D. Preus

There are, of course, no problems in the doctrine of justification, no problems at all. The doctrine presents God's revealed answer to all the major problems of sinful man. Does God's exist? What is He like? Does He love me? What must I do to be saved? Can sinful man ever stand before a holy and righteous God? These and all the other nagging questions of fallen man are answered truly and clearly and decisively by the revealed doctrine of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith.

And so in this essay I address myself not to any problems in the doctrine of justification itself, but to some of the great problems we have made for ourselves in the church, problems which have perennially in the church tended to obscure that brilliant light of justification by grace, to mitigate the doctrine, to deny it, to corrupt it, to ignore it, or to relegate it to the vast limbo of meaninglessness.

What are some of these perennial problems with which, it seems, we evangelical Christians and Lutherans must constantly contend as we seek to confess and teach the Gospel of justification? What are some of the major assaults within the church against this article on which the church stands or falls? I will address myself to five.

1. *The first assault against the article of justification by faith is to define justification as something other than a divine forensic act of acquittal.* Let us repair to our Confessions for our definition. Apology IV (305) has this comment on Romans 5:1: "In this passage 'justify' is used in a judicial way to mean 'to absolve a guilty man and pronounce him righteous,' and to do so on account of someone else's righteousness, namely, Christ's, which is communicated to us through faith" (cf. 252).[1]

It is true that such statements are not definitions as such. They are passing statements touching either the meaning of *dikaioo* as Scripture uses it or the nature of justification (what happens when a person is justified). But these statements, along with every article on justification in our Confessions, indicate that the Lutheran Reformers had a very clear idea of what it meant to be justified and that they held firmly that their entire doctrine was dependent upon and centered in the fact that justification was simply a divine, gracious, forensic act of acquittal and a corresponding imputation of Christ's righteousness (the

obedience of His "doing and suffering," SD, III, 15). If this understanding of the meaning of justification, including and emphasizing as it did so consistently the imputation of Christ's righteousness, the *justitia aliena* which was *extra nos* in every sense, was held, then all problems connected with the doctrine would disappear. For the correct understanding of what justification is would exclude as incompatible all aberrant notions concerning infused grace, *fides formata,* human merit, and the like; and would solicit, as the Gospel always does, the response, the only possible response, to a verdict (or promise), the response of *sola fides.*

It is instructive to note that, as time went on, the dispute between the later Lutherans and the great Roman Catholic anti-Lutheran polemicists such as Bellermine, Stapleton, Gretzer and others centered more and more upon the meaning of justification, on what happens when a person is justified.[2] Elert[3] is correct both historically and theologically when he notes that from Luther through Chemnitz and Gerhard the fundamental issue with Roman theology was concerning the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the sinner in his justification before God.

We need not here rehearse the Roman Catholic doctrine of justification with which Luther and the Reformers contended and with which we still contend as Lutherans.[4] I might just mention, however, that Roman Catholic theologians have always been willing to grant that justification is in a sense a forensic act of God, although only partially so. After all, God does and will at the day of judgment, render a forensic verdict concerning every person who has ever lived, whether he be righteous or not, or how righteous he is. But this is no concession at all to the Lutheran understanding, for in classic medieval and post-Reformation Catholic theology God's judgment, or reckoning, over every man is analytical. God judges a person to be righteous because he is in himself and inherently righteous, and that because of what he is and what he has done. Under no circumstances can the foreign righteousness of Christ which He wrought independently of us and is utterly *extra nos* be imputed to a believer so as to constitute his righteousness as he stands before God. The Council of Trent makes the position very clear in Canon 10 of the sixth session, "If anyone should say that a man is justified either without the righteousness of Christ whereby He has gained merit for us or that through this merit we become righteous formally, let him be anathema."[5] Trent affirmed that the merits of Christ's atonement were the basis *(causa meritoria)* of our becoming righteous before God and that they are actually communicated *(communicantur)*

to us, but piecemeal only and as love is infused, never by a gracious divine reckoning. But it is the second condemnation of the canon which so utterly devastates the evangelical doctrine. For here the doctrine that the merits of Christ, His righteousness, become mine, and that my righteousness before God in its very nature *(forma)* is all that He has done for me by His living and suffering, is condemned. And this was the heart of Luther's evangelical understanding of justification.

To this day the position of Rome has not changed and the doctrine of Trent prevails, in spite of all the changes which have taken place in the Roman Catholic Church. In dialogues with Roman Catholics and in the writings of some we do, indeed, note an openness to the forensic justification and the comfort it offers as it opens up the entire Scriptures and focuses attention on the saving work of Christ; but nothing substantive can be seen. The Lutheran-Roman Catholic dialogues in this country have not even dealt with the subject. And in Europe, where the subject has been broached rather seriously,[6] representatives on the Roman Catholic side have not been particularly representative, and the discussions have been devoted mainly to probings and explorations into the possibility of amalgamating the Roman Catholic and evangelical doctrines or of the Roman Catholic Church accepting Article IV of the Augustana in the light of a Roman Catholic understanding of it.

But the attempt to merge and synthesize the two understandings of justification is an impossible undertaking, as well as an affront to the evangelical doctrine, and every such undertaking, whether by Lutheran or Roman Catholic has failed.[7] For the *justitia aliena,* which is imputed to me and which alone constitutes my righteousness before God, is exclusive and absolutely rules out anything in me (love, works, qualities, virtues — yes, even faith) which would prompt God to adjudge me righteous. And God's forensic justification which takes place in His tribunal (SD III, 32) and therefore absolutely outside *(pure extrinsica)* of man *(circa et extra hominem)*[8] absolutely excludes the doctrine that justification is as a whole or in any part a process taking place in man whereby he becomes progressively more righteous.

2. *The second assault against the article of justification by faith is to separate God's act of justifying the sinner through faith from its basis in Christ's atonement.* The doctrine of justification is threatened when it is not based upon and taught in connection with the universal redemption and legal propitiation wrought by Christ (Apol. IV, 40, 46, 53, 230-1, 244, 269, 291, 299, 308, 382,

387; XXI, 28; XII, 87, 108; XXIV, 19, 23, 38, 58; AC XXI, 2.). Again let me cite the Confessions (SD III, 14-15):

> Therefore the righteousness which by grace is reckoned to faith or to the believers is the obedience, the passion, and the resurrection of Christ when he satisfied the law for us and paid for our sin . . . His obedience consists not only in his suffering and dying, but also in his spontaneous subjection to the law in our stead and his keeping the law in so perfect a fashion that, reckoning it to us as righteousness, God forgives us our sins, accounts us holy and righteous, and saves us forever on account of this entire obedience which, by doing and suffering, in life and death, Christ rendered for us to his heavenly father.

In this statement we note the close connection between the righteousness of faith, our justification, and the vicarious atonement of Christ. They entail each other. There can be no imputation of Christ's righteousness with which I can stand before God, if Christ did not by His atonement acquire such a righteousness. The purpose of Christ's vicarious work of obedience is that it might be imputed to me and all sinners. Therefore, to deny the vicarious atonement or to separate it from my personal justification threatens or vitiates the doctrine of justification by faith entirely.

This was done already in the Middle Ages when Abelard denied the vicarious atonement, but also by the nominalists who taught that justification was indeed a forensic act of God, but made it dependent upon His will rather than the atonement and righteousness of Christ. But the same tendency to separate God's justification of the individual sinner from its basis in Christ's atoning work really pervades all Roman Catholic theology, with a few exceptions, to this very day. Luther rails incisively against this Christless soteriology:

> There are some within the new high schools who say that forgiveness of sins and justification of grace depend entirely upon the divine imputation, that is, on God's reckoning; and that it is enough that God imputes or does not impute sins to a person, for in that manner he is either justified or not justified of his sins, as Psalm 32 and Romans speak, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." If this were true, then the entire New Testament would be nothing and useless. Then Christ worked foolishly and unnecessarily when He suffered for sin. Then God Himself in all this carried out a mock battle and a tricky game [*Kauckelspiell*]. For He was able to forgive and not reckon sins without the

> suffering of Christ. And therefore a faith other than faith in Christ could bring righteousness and salvation, namely, a faith which would rely on such gracious mercy of God which makes one free of sin. Against this miserable and shocking opinion and error the holy apostles have had the custom always to refer to faith in Jesus Christ and to speak of Christ so often, that it is a wonder that there is anyone to whom such a cause is not known. Thus these learned men in the high schools know no longer what Christ is or why He is necessary, or what the Gospel and the New Testament means. They make Christ only a new Moses, a teacher, who gives them new laws and commandments by which man is to become pious and live.[9]

Listen to Luther again as he hammers home his crucial point:

> I have often said before that faith in God is not enough; but there must also be a cost. And what is the cost? For the Jews and Turks believe too, but without means or cost. The Gospel shows us what the cost is. For the Holy Spirit teaches there that we do not have the Father without means and we cannot go to the Father without means. Here Christ teaches us that we are not lost, but have eternal life, that is, that God loved us so much that He was willing to pay the cost of thrusting His own dear Son into our misery, hell and death and having Him drink that up. That is the way we are saved.[10]

Such statements of Luther's could be greatly multiplied. What Christ the Redeemer did then is mine now. Everything He did as Savior and Substitute for me and the whole human race I claim as my own.

Bear in mind that Luther is not reproaching merely the gross denial of the atonement by a few remote scholastic theologians, but his own contemporaries who held to the vicarious atonement in all its Anselmic purity, but did not relate it to personal justification. And we need not look just to Unitarianism or Rome to find this tendency today; it is right within the bosom of Lutheranism wherever pastors think they are preaching the Gospel when they expound the great themes of regeneration, faith, peace with God, yes, even forgiveness of sins, and neglect to mention the work of Christ, His once-and-for-all active and passive obedience, and to proclaim that that and that alone is not only the basis, but the very essence of our righteousness before God and our eternal salvation.

And so it is, strictly speaking, not talk about forgiveness, or talk about faith, or even talk about justification by faith which is the

Gospel, but the work and righteousness of Christ (Apol. IV, 43) which we apprehend by faith, as our Confessions assert again and again (SD III, 13, 25, 30, 38, 41, 42, 43; Apol. XXVIII, 3, 19, 30, 34; X, 7; XII, 42, 61, 65, 116; XIII, 19-20; IV, 45; 43, 50, 48, 56, 55, 304, 264, 267, 272, 291, 292, 217, 270, 299, 338, 386).

In the seventeenth century the Lutheran doctrine of justification which represented the greatest breakthrough of the Gospel since apostolic times was condemned by the Roman Catholic theology for three reasons: (1) because it ruled out every human being's righteousness and good works as a factor in justification, (2) because it gave no place to sanctification or renewal in justification, and (3) because it taught that God works all holiness and righteousness in us through Christ.[11] True, it was granted by Thomas Stapleton that "Christ's actual righteousness (His atoning work) merits righteousness for us, that is, not only the remission of sins, but also the communication of grace by which, when it is given us, we are truly justified."[12] But that we are justified *formaliter* through the imputation of Christ's righteousness is categorically rejected. "Christ justifies us intrinsically by dwelling in us, not extrinsically through an imputed righteousness." Stapleton's final sally against the Lutheran doctrine reveals only his utter ignorance of what the issue is. "If Christ's righteousness is our righteousness formally, it then follows not merely that all our virtues and excellencies are in fact virtues of Christ's righteousness and that we are justified through all these, but it also follows that we cannot be reckoned righteous by any other virtue and no other virtue is able to have any bearing on our imputed righteousness." Exactly so. This is precisely what the Lutherans taught.

In the nineteenth century the greatest Jesuit controversialist of the era, Perrone, argued in exactly the same fashion.[13] Commenting on Romans 4:5, he says, "God accepts our faith gratuitously, and this faith as an actual disposition of ours he imputes for righteousness in view of the merit of Christ. However, He does not impute the formal righteousness of Christ to us, so that by this we are counted just."[14] Again the same blind refusal to see anything but a remote connection between Christ's atoning work and man's present justification before God, the same pathetic refusal to see that Christ's obedience constitutes our righteousness before God and our salvation.

At the same time in Germany, a converted Jew, Philippi, was teaching in Germany, upholding the centrality of the atonement for the doctrine of justification which had meant so much to Luther. With power and pathos he gave the final answer to the

piddling and shallow theological productions of his day by Roman Catholics and liberal Protestants:

> He who takes away from me the atoning blood of the Son of God, paid as a ransom to the wrath of God, who takes away the satisfaction of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, vicariously given to the penal justice of God, who thereby takes away justification or forgiveness of sins only by faith in the merits of this my Surety and Mediator, who takes away the imputation of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, takes away Christianity altogether, so far as I am concerned. I might then just as well have adhered to the religion of my ancestors, the seed of Abraham after the flesh.[15]

The denial or diminution of the vicarious atonement is *eo ipso* a denial of the evangelical doctrine of justification.

3. *The doctrine of justification by faith is threatened or vitiated when any deviation whatsoever from the evangelical, confessional (and biblical) structure, conceptualization,* Vorbild *(pattern), or* hypotyposis[16] *of the doctrine is insinuated, defended, or taught.* What is this evangelical, apostolic "pattern of sound words" as it applies to the doctrine of justification? Let us once again repair to our Confessions for an answer (SD III, 4, 25):

> The righteousness of faith is forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, and the fact that we are adopted as God's children solely on account of the obedience of Christ, which, through faith alone, is reckoned by pure grace to all true believers as righteousness, and that they are absolved from all their unrighteousness because of this obedience.
>
> The only essential and necessary elements of justification are the *grace of God, the merit of Christ, and faith which accepts these in the promise of the Gospel,* whereby the righteousness of Christ is reckoned to us and by which we obtain the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation with God, adoption, and the inheritance of eternal life.

(See also SD III, 9; Apol. IV, 214, 217; XII, 72, 76). On the basis of these two pre-eminent statements, which draw upon Apology IV and summarize it, we can quite easily offer a Lutheran model for the doctrine of justification by faith.

God counts the sinner righteous (i.e., forgives him and imputes Christ's righteousness to him), by (a) grace (not works), (b) for Christ's sake, (c) through faith (in the Gospel). Any deviation from this model buries Christ, burdens consciences, and takes away from the comfort of the Gospel, as Melanchthon says throughout Apology IV — any deviation at all from any aspect of

the pattern. For the article of justification according to the above model is the chief article of Christian doctrine (Apol. IV, 2; SA II, II, 1-3), which is an organic whole, like a human body, so that a distortion or unsoundness of any part affects the whole body.[17]

Likening this simple model to a skeleton, let me add some flesh and blood to the body by explaining terms and mentioning implications and connections within the model and as it relates to all of Christian doctrine and practice. Justification is clearly a forensic act, but so also are the less obviously soteriological terms so often used interchangeably with justification or as part of its definition, such as forgiveness, reconciliation, propitiation, — yes, even redemption.[18] This is clear in our Confessions from the passages cited above and many others. The forensic theme is the dominant soteriological theme which undergirds all others; this was one of the reasons Melanchthon and Luther viewed justification as the "chief article."

Grace, according to our model, is the free and active motivating power of God which has mercy and saves man, always without works, for man is totally sinful (AC II; FC I, II) and unable to contribute anything to his salvation. Grace is always in Christ; the two are inseparable. Does God out of grace send Christ to take my sin and be my Savior? Or does Christ by His perfect obedience and His propitiatory sacrifice make God gracious toward me? Both. In the evangelical Lutheran model of justification it is both. Elert says perceptively, "God lets Christ bear the curse because He loves me, and He loves me by letting Him feel and bear the wrath provoked by me."[19]

In our model we note that the forensic nature of justification and the *sola gratia* are linked together. There can be only one explanation for God behaving in a fashion contrary to an earthly judge who condemns the guilty and acquits the innocent, whose verdict is always analytical — only one reason for God absolving the sinner and imputing to him the righteousness of Christ. The reason is His grace.

But our discussion of the model has now brought us into the middle of a consideration of the work of Christ and the *propter Christum* (for every aspect of the model entails every other aspect). And as we speak of Christ and His work "for us," we find ourselves in the midst of a consideration of faith which alone can apprehend His work.

Faith's role in justification and its relation to its object are affirmed throughout the Apology. We receive forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake through faith (XXVII, 13). What is more certain

than this, that men obtain *(consequuntur)* the forgiveness of sins by faith *(fide)* for Christ's sake *(propter Christum)* (XXVII, 19; cf. 30; XXVIII, 7)? The Gospel promises the gracious remission of sins, and this promised mercy in Christ is apprehended through faith (XXVII, 34, 54).

On the basis of these assertions we can make several comments. The *propter Christum* is exclusive in that it is the *only* basis for God's verdict of justification; and human works are explicitly ruled oout of consideration by the *propter Christum.* "We must hold to the doctrine that we obtain the forgiveness of sins by faith *(fide)* on account of Christ *(propter Christum)*, not because of our works, either preceding or following *(non propter nostra opera praecedentia aut consequentia)* (XII, 116). But the work of Christ referred to in the phrase *propter Christum* is also the object of faith. Of course, the object of faith can be conceptualized differently as the mercy of God, the Gospel, or forgiveness, and we may observe this phenomenon throughout the Confessions. But all these exist only by virtue of Christ's redemptive work and His righteousness.

Finally, we must comment briefly about faith in our model. First, and most importantly, it must be considered in the article of justification as pure receptivity. Melanchthon made this point crystal clear in the statements cited above when he consistently used verbs for receptivity *(consequor, apprehendo, accipio)* in describing the place of faith in what our later Lutheran theologians called God's *modus justificationis.*[20] But does not Melanchthon also call justifying faith trust (Apol. IV, 48, German text; 337)? Yes, but trust very definitely in that it receives the promises or its appropriate object. And faith as receptivity has the element of trust in it (Apol. IV, 48, 227). Years later, in defending the confessional understanding of justifying faith Quenstedt calls it a *fiducialis apprehensio.*[21]

The Lutheran doctrine of justifying faith was rejected by Trent (Session VI, Canon 12). Chemnitz replied that the Lutherans in no way denied a *fides generalis* which believes all the articles of faith; such belief is presupposed by the believer in Christ; but in no sense does it enter into the article of justification. And the Formula of Concord scores of times makes the object of faith a teaching in its constant use of the introductory formula, "We believe, teach, and confess." But such an explanation in no sense satisfied the Roman theologians. Bellarmine calls Melanchthon's understanding of justifying faith (personal trust in God's mercy) "the seed of every heresy of our time."[22] This is a significant statement and, unless it represents merely another case of

Bellarminian bombast, quite perceptive in a sense. Like the scholastics, Bellarmine held that faith justified in a meritorious sense, as "faith formed by love"; and if the Lutheran understanding of faith's merely instrumental and receptive role in justification is correct, the entire Roman Catholic dogmatic structure (whether pertaining to justification, penance, sacraments, or whatever) breaks down.

At least a century was spent by the greatest Lutheran theologians of the age, attempting to defend and clarify the Lutheran position, so crucial to the understanding of justification and communicating the Christian message. Their adversaries were the Romanists who denied that justifying faith was trust and receptivity, but taught that justifying faith was an act of man which could be considered a good work (formed by love); its object was the entire Christian dogma *(fides dogmatica,* Bellarmine). The Arminians too opposed the Lutheran doctrine by making faith (which they granted was trust) a work *(actus)* of man. Like the Romanists they had a synergistic notion of how man came to faith. And, of course, there were the Socinians, who held to an acceptilation theory of the atonement and viewed faith (not in Christ's righteousness but in God's mercy apart from Christ's atonement) as a meritorious work of man. These deviations from the evangelical model of justification are in force today, although in somewhat less gross form. And we have all encountered them.

The Lutherans of the post-Reformation period and up to the present time have countered these aberrations in three ways. First, following Article II of the Formula of Concord, they show that man's receiving the grace of God in faith is itself a gift of grace, and that the absolution that forgives works the very faith to receive the forgiveness (Apol. XII, 39, *passim.*).[23] Secondly, they point out continually that faith's role in justification is purely instrumental, that faith is an *organon leptikon,* like the empty hand of a beggar receiving a gift,[24] that it alone *(sola fide)* is the appropriate vehicle to receive reconciliation, forgiveness, Christ and His merits (SD III, 30-38; Apol. IV, 163; AC XX, 28). Thirdly, they show that justification is *per fidem,* not *propter fidem,* by pointing out that faith justifies by virtue of its object, as Melanchthon used to say (Apol. IV, 56, 338, 227; SD III, 13), and that this is really only a different way of saying, "We are accounted righteous before God for Christ's sake through faith" (Apol. IV, 214).[25]

And so we see that Lutherans with a good deal of consistency

have conscientiously adhered to the biblical and confessional form of sound words in respect to justification — God justifies the sinner by grace for Christ's sake through faith. But we can observe through the study of history and our own times that the assaults against this pattern, along with their disastrous consequences, never cease.

4. *The fourth assault against the doctrine of justification is to deny its reality, or, what is the same thing, to define it merely formally.* Let me again introduce the discussion of this point with citations from the Apology (IV, 72, 78, 117):

> And "to be justified" means to make unrighteous men righteous (*ex iniustis iustos effici)* or to regenerate them, as well as to be pronounced or accounted righteous. For Scripture speaks both ways. Therefore we want to show first that faith alone makes *(efficiat)* a righteous man out of an unrighteous one, that is, that it receives the forgiveness of sins.
>
> Therefore we are justified by faith alone *(sola fide),* justification being understood as making *(effici)* an unrighteous man righteous or regenerating him.
>
> What we have shown thus far, on the basis of the Scriptures and arguments derived from the Scriptures, was to make clear that by faith alone we receive the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake, and by faith alone are justified, that is, out of unrighteous we are made *(efficiamur)* righteous men and are regenerated.

Now what are we to make of these passages which seem to be defining justification in non-forensic terms? The answer is not that Melanchthon is sloppy at this point, for on just this issue he would be meticulously careful. Nor in this discussion in 1531 can it be conjectured that he is acting politically and softpedaling an issue lest he antagonize the Romanists. The fundamental issue in the controversy was whether justification was a forensic act, and Melanchthon has made his position crystal clear (IV, 252, 305, *passim*) throughout the Apology. No, Melanchthon is deliberately using realistic terminology as he defines justification, terminology which could well have been used by his opponents; but he does so not to goad them, but to make clear that man is really made righteous — he becomes righteous when God justifies and imputes Christ's righteousness to him. The term *efficio* consistently used by Melanchthon in the above contexts unquestionably has a forensic connotation. Melanchthon is saying, prior to the Osiandrian error, prior to Trent and its caricature of the Lutheran doctrine of justification as a kind of pious fiction, that the sinner's justification before God is no fiction, but a real

gracious reckoning by God whereby man actually becomes righteous,[26] but by imputation. This is wholly in accord with Melanchthon's "realist ontology" (making no reference to scholastic or to post-Idealistic realism), which means that reality underlies theological assertions about God *(wahrhaftiglich ist Gott,* AC I, 2), sin (*vere peccatum,* AC II, 2), Christ (*vere Deus, vere homo, vere resurrexit,* AC III, 2,4,), and Christ's body and blood in the communion (*vere adsint,* AC X, 1). One cannot overemphasize the importance of this ontology to Luther and Melanchthon; without it all Christianity has no substance, but is a great fiction.

At this elemental point Lutheran theologians since the eighteenth century have attacked the evangelical doctrine of justification. The great Liberal theologian, Albrecht Ritschl, did so in the nineteenth century when he distinguished between religious judgments of value (*Werturteil*) and judgments of being (*Seinurteil*) and when he denied the vicarious atonement,[27] for obviously if there is no real satisfaction made for sins and no real righteousness to be imputed, there can be no justification at all in the realistic Lutheran sense. In our day we see the same rejection of the reality of justification by Rudolf Bultmann as outlined in his notorious programatic essay[28] espousing the radical demythologization of the New Testament theology. Again we can only conclude that, if the vicarious atonement is a myth, then any real transferral or imputation of the results of the atonement in a divine forensic act of justification is impossible. Paul Tillich too affirms an ontology of his own[29] in which *ex hypothesi* the reality of a divine verdict of acquittal is both impossible and unnecessary.

Is any such fundamental assault being waged against the doctrine of justification in Lutheran circles today? I think so. This is, in effect, what Robert Jenson is doing in his recent popular book, *Lutheranism,* written in collaboration with Erik W. Gritsch.[30] To Jenson justification is not a "content item" of the Gospel, along with other content items (p. 43). Dogma, which (I take it) teaches what justification is, is "not a particular proposed content of the church's proclamation, along with other contents. It is rather a metalinguistic stipulation of what *kind* of talking — about whatever contents — can properly be the proclamation and word of the church." Thus, one "does gospel." Jenson rejects the "whole Western ontological tradition," which, as far as I can see, boils down to a repudiation of the view that reality is made up of "substances" with "attributes" (p. 65). "This ontology is inconsistent with the gospel as understood by the Reformers," Jenson

confidently asserts. In the place of this outmoded ontology, Jenson substitutes what I would call his own ontology of "communication." He says that a person has his identity by communication (p. 66); thus justification is not a real, divine forensic act ("Lutherans created the doctrine of justification 'in the heavenly court,' " p. 67) whereby I become forgiven and really righteous before God, but a (divine) "communication" which makes me what I am and becomes the "locus" for "God's reality" for me. What reality means in this context is anyone's guess, but probably it has nothing to do with God's existence, but refers to His gracious presence, or to my existential awareness of that presence which is "real" only in communication. So much for Jenson's position.

Now, if asked, I suppose Jenson would reply that in some sense our justification by God is real, real in communication and dependent upon the absolutely "unconditional promise" (which he never defines — at least, not in Western ontological terms so that the rest of us can understand him). But does my justification rest upon reality, the reality of the *propter Christum,* which is *extra et ante fidem* or any "communication"? And is the verdict of justification itself real, declared *coram tribunali divino,* and not merely real in "communication"? Jenson's reply to these questions, although never explicitly given, is clearly "no."

Now I would be the last to accuse Prof. Jenson of building his entire theology of justification upon some quasi-idealistic philosophy, or upon an ontology of relationship or process which makes cognitive theological assertions unnecessary. But he is certainly applying his orthodox and tradition terminology (e.g., "unconditional promise," faith as "hearing," etc.) to an entirely different *Vorbild*, or pattern, than that of the Lutheran Confessions, something like putting new wine into old bottles. After all, the old *Vorbild,* or doctrinal model, affirmed that the subject of theology, the living God and His actions, was ontologically antecedent to any conceptualization of Him, or pattern of theology. In fact, any pattern of theology must conform to what God is like in Himself and to what He has done according to His own revelation of Himself. According to this classic Christian model, God is real, the creator and sustainer of all that exists; He is really Triune (an immanent, not just an economic Trinity); the first Adam really fell and his sin was really imputed to the whole human race; the Son of God really became incarnate; He really suffered and died and rose again; the atonement is real; heaven is real; hell is real; forgiveness and justification are real, not just metaphors for something else. Unless all this is included in our theological *Vorbild*, there is nothing left of our Christianity and

our Gospel, except words, empty words, impotent words, words without referents and without meaning, like tinsel on a discarded Christmas tree, or bridgework on a corpse.

Again let me sayn I am not accusing Prof. Jenson of attempting a brilliant and sinister *coup de grace* whereby he has deftly and unobstrusively laid to rest outmoded thought-forms and ontologies and offered a whole new *Vorbild* for theologizing, and thus negated the Lutheran doctrine of justification by negating its reality. I am not quite sure I understand him well enough to say that. Perhaps no one does. Perhaps no one can. I am simply suspicious of theologians — not of philosophers or scientists, who have their own stock in trade — but of theologians, whose only source of theology is allegedly the divinely revealed Scriptures, who make light of ontology, especially when it happens to be the ontology of Western (and Eastern) Christianity and of the Lutheran Confessions.

5. *The fifth assault against the evangelical doctrine of justification by faith is to make faith a condition for justification.* The Formula emphatically excludes such a view (SD III, 43; cf. SD III, 13; Apol. IV, 5y, 338):

> 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.

I could have discussed the aberration of conditioning justification on faith under thesis 3, but I think it deserves special attention because it has been such an insidious and persistent force in the church since the Reformation, also among Lutherans. Crassly, of course, historic Roman and Arminian theology made faith as a work and virtue of man a condition for fellowship with God and for salvation. But in a more subtle form the tendency to condition justification on faith is found in every form of synergism and pietism and religious emotionalism, in ideologies which stress inwardness and subjectivity, in Christian Existentialism and Crisis Theology (Emil Brunner), all protestations of adherence to the *sola gratia* notwithstanding. We find the tendency wherever there is a preoccupation with faith as such or an inordinate interest in the phenomenology of faith, rather than in the object of faith, Christ and His atoning work, and in the Gospel. For my faith is not the Gospel or the content of the Gospel, but rather embraces and applies the Gospel. Faith is never directed toward itself. Soren Kierkegaard made faith a condition for justification, not by teaching such an aberration — he was too good a theologian for that — but by an emphasis, by

stressing always the *fides heroica*, the *fides activa* in the Christian life, in answer to the question "How can I become a Christian?" rather than stressing the *fides passiva* which does nothing, but is pure receptivity.

This tendency to make justification dependent upon faith has a long and sorry history in the Lutheran church, which in its Confessions hints at no such thing. The tendency has its origin in synergism (Calixtus, Musaeus) and pietism (Baier, Hollaz). To be sure the monergism of divine grace was consistently affirmed by these theologians along with the conditionality of faith, but the result was confusion and their theology became synergistic all the same.The position taken by Baier is particularly offensive.[31] He asserts, "Now also faith in Christ is rightly considered to be a cause of salvation." How is this to be understood? Baier explains that he is not speaking of faith as an *actus* or quality in man, but only as directed toward Christ. Nor is he implying that faith is any kind of efficient or formal cause. "But its causality," he says, "consists in this, that it presents to God the merit of Christ as something which has been apprehended by man, and in this way faith moves God to grant out of grace salvation to that man. And so faith is rightly referred to as a moving cause, because it moves God, not by its own merit, but by the dignity of the merit of Christ. Thus in distinction from the merit of Christ, faith can be called a *causa impulsiva minus principalis* of salvation." Baier thinks he has safeguarded himself by his reference to the object of faith. And, of course, we must realize that his use of the term cause (*causa*) is not freighted with our present day understanding, but meant only "factor," or "role." But, nevertheless, his misleading, ill-conceived notion of faith as a moving cause of salvation cannot fail to detract from the objective *causa meritoria* of justification, namely, the obedience of Christ, which, along with the grace of God, later called the *causa impulsiva externa* of justification,[32] was the only basis or cause mentioned by Melanchthon in the Apology. Baier's view cannot fail, therefore, to lead to synergismand all kinds of subjectivistic aberrations, which we see later in Hollaz and the pietists.[33] Can you imagine Luther speaking in such a cold way? Listen to him as he speaks of faith's role in a person's salvation:

> Faith holds out the hand and the sack and just lets the good be done to it. For as God is the giver who bestows such things in His love, we are the receivers who receive the gift through faith which does nothing. For it is not our doing and cannot be merited by our work. It has already been granted and given. You need only open your mouth, or rather, your heart, and keep still and let yourself be filled.[34]

Baier's view of faith as a moving cause of justification is really quite inconceivable and self-contradictory. To revert to the well worn Lutheran analogy, how could the empty hand of the beggar, viewed as that which receives a priceless gift, move the benefactor to bestow the gift?

But what about the biblical language which often says that if one believes, God will save, or justify, him (e.g. Rom. 10:9; 4:24). It is, of course, an undeniable fact that Scripture speaks in such a way, as our pietistic and synergistic friends never cease to remind us. How do we reply to this? We must affirm emphatically that, when the Scriptures or our Confessions speak in such a fashion, they are speaking of faith as an ordinate condition, which is really no condition at all in the usual sense. Commenting on Romans 3:22, Sebastian Schmidt concedes that faith may be called a condition, but only in the sense of a *mode* according to which God Himself saves and justifies us, namely, through faith.[35] Gerhard offers us more aid as we combat the synergists and pietists on this sensitive issue: "The term 'if' is either etiological or syllogistic; that is, it designates either cause or consequence. In the preaching of the Law, 'if you do this, you shall live,' the term 'if' is etiological, inasmuch as obedience is the cause on account of which eternal life is given to those who obey the Law. But in the Gospel promises, 'if you believe, you will be saved,' the term 'if' is syllogistic, inasmuch as it relates to the mode whereby God applies the divine promises, and this is through faith alone."[36]

It is difficult to understand how one can make faith a condition of justification (in the causal sense), without teaching that justification is *propter fidem* or at least *post fidem*, rather than *per fidem*. But where do the Scriptures or our Confessions ever say that faith creates, causes, occasions, precedes or conditions God's gracious justification? Faith does not create as it receives; it receives what is already a reality. It is, in fact, the word of forgiveness, already acquired and objectively offered and imparted, that creates faith. Melanchthon (Apol. XII, 42) says, "Faith is conceived and confirmed through absolution, through the hearing of the Gospel."

The danger and the tragedy of making faith a condition for justification is that one begins to look for assurance of salvation and grace, not in the objective atonement and righteousness of Christ, but in the quality or strength of one's faith, as if justifying faith is something other than pure trust and receptivity. C.F.W. Walther has a most enlightening and helpful chapter on the danger of making faith a condition for justification.[37] Walther

points out that to make justification depend upon faith ultimately robs a poor sinner of comfort, for then his faith becomes, not a result of the Gospel's powerful working, but a part of the Gospel itself. Walther shows how foolish it is to go this route by means of many telling examples. Let me use one of my own. Let us say that you and I are engaging in a Kennedy evangelism program and we are admitted to the home of an old unchurched man who, as far as we know, is unconverted. I witness to him, telling him of the boundless grace of God toward all sinners, grace which sent His own Son into the flesh to be our Savior and Substitute, grace which sent Him to the cross to pay for the sins of us all, grace to forgive us totally and save us forever. The man responds with utter joy. "What a wonderful message," he says, "what a wonderful, comforting message for a poor old sinner." But you interject, "Wait a minute, sir, you have to believe this message! Everything my friend here has said is of no value to you unless you believe it." How do you react to this little scenario? Do you think your interjection helped the old man? Is not what you did rather foolish and dangerous? It is like taking in a beautiful sunset on my front porch and being told that somehow my appreciation of it conditioned it, like the *esse est percipi* of the subjective Idealists. But we Lutherans, following Apology IV, the most magnificent treatise ever written on the subject of justification by faith, are realists, and our faith rests on the realities of the Gospel of justification.

FOOTNOTES

1. SD III, 9: "Concerning the righteousness of faith before God we believe, teach, and confess unanimously, in accord with the summary formulation of our Christian faith and confession described above, that a poor sinner is *justified before God (that is, he is absolved and declared utterly free from all his sins, and from the verdict of well deserved damnation,* and is adopted as a child of God and an heir of eternal life) without any merit or worthiness on our part, and without any preceding, present, or subsequent works, by sheer grace, solely through the merit of the total *obedience,* the bitter passion, the death, and the resurrection of Christ, our Lord, whose *obedience is reckoned to us as righteousness*" (cf. 4, 17).
2. The most extensive review of the debate is in John Gerhard, *Loci Theologici* (Tuebingen, 1766), VII, 257ff., where he polemicizes against Andradius, Bellarmine, and others who taught that justification was both the imputed righteousness and the inherent righteousness of the Christian's renewal. See also Chemnitz, *op. cit.*, 168ff.
3. *The Structure of Lutheranism*, tr. Walter A. Hanson (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), p. 109.
4. Ad. Tanquerey, *Brevior Synopsis Theologiae Dogmaticae* (Paris: Typis Societas Sancti Joannis Evang. Desclie, 1946), p. 498, *passim.* Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, tr. Patrick Lynch (St. Louis: Herder, 1954).

5. See Martin Chemnitz, *Examen Concilii Tridentini* (Berlin, 1861), p. 146.
6. George Forell and James F. McCue, editors, *Confessing the Faith* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1981). Joseph Burgess, ed., *The Role of the Augsburg Confession: Catholic and Lutheran Views* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981).
7. Hans Kung, *Justification, the Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection*, tr. by Thomas Collins, Edmond E. Tolk, and David Granskou (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1964). See particularly Karl Barth's letter to the author, pp. xix-xxii. See also Robert Scharlemann, *Thomas Aquinas and John Gerhard* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964).
8. When the Lutheran Fathers insistently spoke of justification taking place *in foro Dei* or *coram tribunali judicis supremi* (cf. John Quenstedt, *Systema* [Leipzig, 1702], P.III, C.8, S.1, Th.16 [II, 754]; *ibid.* S.2, Q.6, Ekth.6 [II, 789]; *passim.*), they did so not to establish a locus for justification in heaven and not on earth, but to retain the forensic image against the idea of an *actus medicinalis* or *physicus* which can only be a gradual process in man whereby he becomes more and more just. Cf. Luther WA 56, 158.
9. WA 10^1, 469
10. WA 10^3, 161-2.
11. Thomas Stapleton, *Opera* (Paris, 1620), II, 215ff.
12. *Ibid.* 221.
13. *Praelectiones Theologicae*, 27 ed. (Regensberg: 1856), II, 235.
14. Later he says, commenting on Rom. 5:19, "Per unius obedientiam justi constituentur multi *meritorie*, C. *formaliter*, N."
15. Quoted in Albrecht Ritschl, *The Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation* (Clifton, N.J.: Reference Book Publishers, 1966), I, 551.
16. *Begriff und Form; forma et quasi typus* (SD Rule and Norm, 1). *Summa und Vorbild der Lehre; compendiaria hypotyposi seu forma sanae doctrinae* (SD Rule and Norm, 9), *Form der Lehre; compendiaria hypotuposi sanae doctrinae. Begriff, Vorbild, form* and *hypotyposis* (2 Tim. 1:13) might best be rendered by "pattern" or "model." The reference is not to the exact wording of the doctrine, which is always drawn from the words of Scripture, but to the proper conceptualization of it, based on Scripture.
17. How this happens is demonstrated throughout Apology IV and SA II. See Robert Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), I, 138-9, for a discussion of Luther's and others' view of Christian doctrine as *una copulativa*. See also Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), I, 91.
18. See Sebastian Schmidt, *Commentarius in epistolam D. Pauli ad Romanos* (Hamburg, 1704), pp. 254ff., for an excellent commentary on Rom. 3:23-26 which illustrates this point well.
19. It is interesting that as much as our Confessions speak of the universal grace and love of God — and the later dogmaticians emphasize this theme even more because of the Calvinistic menace — they stress with equal emphasis Christ as "propitiator," as the one who placates God's wrath against us and makes God gracious and disposed to justify us. This is clearly the basic model for Christ's work in the Apology (see above, p. 4). This was also a common theme of Luther (WA 10^3, 136-7): "To believe in the resurrection of Christ is nothing else than to believe that we have a Propitiator before God, and that Christ makes God into a kind and merciful Father. From birth and from his own reason man has nothing but sin and corruption by which he deserves God's wrath. For God is an everlasting righteousness and bright-

ness who by His nature hates sin. Therefore men and God are always enemies and cannot be friends and agree. For this reason Christ became man and took our sin on Himself and the Father's wrath, and drowned them both in Himself that He might reconcile us to the Father . . . Whatever we receive from God must be got and secured through this Christ who has made Him a gracious Father for us. Christ is our support and our protection under which we hide like little chicks under the wings of the hen. Only through Him may we pray to God and be heard. Only through Him do we receive favor and grace from the Father. For He has made satisfaction for our sins and turned an angry judge into a kind and merciful God."

20. See Sebastian Schmidt, *ibid.*, p. 190ff. Cf. Chemnitz, *op. cit.*, p. 146ff.
21. *Systema*, P.III, C.9, S.1, Th.6, Nota 2 (II, 836).
22. Robert Bellarmine, *De controversiis adversus hujus temporis haereticos* (Paris, 1583), cap.IV de justificatione (III, 722).
23. Jacob Heerbrand, *Disputatio de gratia* (Tuebingen, 1572), p. 15. "Faith is not a human persuasion, which some falsely ascribe to us, a persuasion which would in any case fail. No, it is a work of God and gift of the Holy Spirit in us. We are not justified by faith insofar as it is a quality in us, as once again the enemies of God's grace, the neo-Pelagians, falsely accuse us of teaching that the ungodly are justified when they have a certain idea (or rather dream) that they are righteous. No, we are justified by faith insofar as it apprehends Christ who was made righteousness for us by God, sanctification and redemption, and insofar as faith applies Christ's merit to itself." Cf. also Jacob Andreae, *Disputatio de evangelio* (Tuebingen, 1572), p. 3.
24. Quenstedt, *Systema*, P.III, C.8, S.2, Q.6 *Bebaiosis* 1 (II, 791): "To accept, to apprehend, or rather to receive something, these on the part of the one who receives are purely instrumental actions." Quenstedt goes on to list, all the biblical terms for faith which denote receptivity, and he traces Paul's consistent use of the instrumental genitive or dative when speaking of justification by faith. George Calanus (*Fasciculus dissertationum theologicarum pio libro concordiae* [Abo, 1660] p. clv) has a very extended, typical discussion of this kind, but really such is standard for all Lutheran teachers from the time of the Formula of Concord. See also Olav Odhelius, *Disputationum homologeticarum in Augustanam Confessionem prima-sexta* (Uppsala, 1653), p. 227: "Now since there is no other medium in man through which righteousness and salvation are apprehended except faith, there is every reason in the world to say that we are justified by faith alone."
25. Odhelius, *ibid.*, p. 226: "This faith does not justify absolutely as a quality in us, nor by its own power as our action, nor by any capacity it has to choose; but only organically and relatively insofar as it has to do with its object, God in Christ, and as it embraces the grace of God and the atonement of Christ." Cf. Quenstedt, *Systema*, P.III, C.8, S.2, Q.6, Ek.9 (II, 789) and Obj. dialusis 1 (II, 793). Probably the most adamant debate between Roman Catholics and Arminians, on the one hand, and Lutherans, on the other, centered in just this issue, whether faith justified by virtue of its object only or whether there is some aspect to his faith which prompts God to look favorably upon the believer. The debate centered upon the right understanding of Rom. 4:5 ("His faith is counted for righteousness.") as the crucial passage in determining how faith justifies (Quenstedt, *ibid.* P.III, C.8, S.1, Th.13, Nota 2 [II, 749]). The Arminian Episcopius maintained that faith in us as such is counted by God for righteousness, not the object of faith, according to Paul. Bellarmine held that the apostle in this context had *fides formata* in mind.

And the great Catholic exegete, Estius, held that the faith Paul referred to was *fides ut opus spectata.* Quenstedt's response is entirely faithful to the Lutheran model of justification by faith and clarifies the issue as it was, and is, debated. He says, "In this passage faith does not denote merely an instrument which apprehends something, nor does it merely denote metonymically the thing that is imputed, namely, the righteousness of Christ; but here faith must be viewed symplectically and according to its intimate connection with its object as a complex term signifying the righteousness of Christ insofar as it is embraced and received by true faith. In this verse faith is not to be taken as pointing to its activity, but as pointing to its relationship with its object, that is, it is not to be understood as some work of ours, for here expressly and also in other passages faith is opposed to good works. Neither can faith be understood here in some qualitative sense as a quality or virtue, as if in the judgment of God it is thought to be in and through itself so great that God pronounced sinful man to be righteous on account of it. No, faith must be taken here in a *relative* sense insofar as it looks to Christ, who is our righteousness before God and apprehends His merits, or as it is faith in His blood (Rom. 3:25). Nor is this faith righteousness itself as Bellarmine dreams, but it is imputed *for righteousness*, that is to say, faith, or one's trusting *apodoche*, is accepting and receiving Christ and His righteousness as one's own. This faith presupposes an explicit knowledge of its object who justifies us and an assent on our part which is not just general but personal. It is this faith which is imputed to us for righteousness. Or, to say the same thing, God who pronounces forgiveness from the tribunal of His grace reckons the righteousness of Christ apprehended by true faith to the one who believes as his very own righteousness, just as though the believer himself had established his own righteousness as availing before God. And so the imputation of the righteousness of Christ and the imputation of faith for righteousness are one and the same. For faith is envisaged as justifying not by its own dignity, but by the dignity of its object, not by reason of itself, its own virtue or action or because it is our believing, but by reason of its object, that is, Christ whom it apprehends. In this sense faith is imputed by God's reckoning to us for righteousness, that is, reckoned as our own righteousness and obedience as though we had done it ourselves."

26. That Melanchthon, and Luther who used much bolder terms (*justitia infusa* [WA II, 145ff.]), employed such concrete, realistic terms did not seem to impress the Roman theologians at all. They still in Trent and after Chemnitz' *Examen Concilii Tridentini* represented the Lutheran idea of justification as merely putative and therefore unreal. The final answer to this caricature which should have clarified the Lutheran position completely and concluded the matter, but did not, is given by Quenstedt. It is worth citing a few of his statements. Concerning the reality of the imputation of Christ's righteousness he says (*Systema*, P.III, C.8, P.2, Q.5, Observ. 12 [II, 777]), "The righteousness of Christ is not our formal righteousness nor a righteousness that inheres in us subjectively, but is our real (*realis*) and sufficient righteousness by imputation. We do not through this righteousness become righteous by a righteousness inhering in us, but through the imputation of this righteousness we are formally justified in such a way that without it there is not substance to our righteousness before God. From this fact that the righteousness of God is extrinsic to us we conclude that it does not dwell in us formally and intrinsically. And yet it does not follow therefore that righteousness cannot be reckoned to us extrinsically and objectively. For certainly our sins were extrinsic to Christ,

and yet they could be imputed for punishment and guilt to Him and be reckoned to Him." (Cf. *ibid.* Observ. 10, 10). Quenstedt insists that the righteousness imputed to us is real and that we are really righteous by it being imputed to us (*Systema*, P.III, C.8, S.2, Obj. dial. 1 [II, 783]): "We must distinguish between a mere putative righteousness which denies the reality of the righteousness and the imputed righteousness which can be reckoned to others. The righteousness of Christ which has been reckoned to us is in itself neither putative nor fictitious, but absolutely real, corresponding exactly to God's mind and will expressed in the Law, nor as a reckoning is it a mere act of imputing something, but it is an absolutely real judgment of God which is rendered from the throne of grace through the Gospel in respect to the sinner who believes in Christ." Quenstedt is so bent on maintaining the reality of our justification, that, like Melanchthon, he includes this matter in his very definition of justification (*Systema*, P.III, C.8, S.1, Th.3, Nota [II, 738]): "The word 'justify' in the Scriptures never signifies to infuse a quality of righteousness into someone, but denotes nothing else than to account a person righteous judically, or to make one righteous (*justum facere*) by an act totally extrinsic to man, an act extrinsically designating its own subject." Even in his definition of justification as a forensic act he speaks of God *making* the sinner righteous. Why? To nail down the reality of the divine action and the effect upon man, that he *is* righteous.

27. *The Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation* (Clifton, N.J.: Reference Book Publishers, 1966), I,9; III, 474.
28. "New Testament Mythology," in *Kerygma and Myth*, ed. Hans Werner Bartsch, tr. Reginald H. Fuller (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953), pp. 1-44.
29. *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957).
30. Eric W. Gritsch and Robert W. Jenson, *Lutheranism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), pp. 42-44, 64-67, 101-109.
31. John William Baier, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, ed. C.F.W. Walther (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1879), I, 41.
32. Quenstedt, *Systema*, P.III, C.8, S.1, Ekthesis 7 (II, 741).
33. What Baier does here is really a far cry from Quenstedt's procedure, which was also unwise, in making faith a *causa media*, or organic cause, of justification, and attempted to clarify faith's instrumental role in an individual's justification as an *organon leptikon* (*ibid.*, Th. 10, Nota 1 and 2 [II, 742-3]). And Quenstedt (Th. 11) safeguards himself from such consequences being drawn from his calling faith a cause of justification by saying, "The causality of faith in the act of justification is nothing other than organic in that it justifies simply by apprehending the merits of Christ. The reason for its causality, its justifying role, has to do with faith not it itself and insofar as it is an apprehension of something and thus our act which has some kind of dignity, small or great, either in itself and by its own nature, or because it is highly pleasing and acceptable to God. No, the reason for the causality of faith consists only in the justifying object which is apprehended." The error of Baier can be traced back beyond Quenstedt to Gerhard, who in his long and excellent study on justification by faith has a section entitled "On the effect of faith which is justification" (*de effectu fidei qui est justificatio*). The actual discussion is inoffensive and never insinuates that faith is a moving cause of justification. But the seed was sown. There are troubles in the causal method brought into Lutheran dogmatics by Gerhard. C.F.W. Walther (*The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel*, tr.

W.H.T. Dau [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1929], p. 274) calls it a "dangerous method." In this case it certainly caused a lot of trouble and paved the way for synergism. And synergism, regardless of one's good intentions, is still synergism.

34. WA² XI, 1104.
35. *Op. cit.*, p. 326. Earlier he says (p. 254), "The apostle has pointed out the true mode of justification in Rom. 3:21-2, not through the Law or our own righteousness, but through the righteousness of God appropriated by faith. This universal mode of justification is for all men, provided that (*modo*) they believe."
36. *Loci Theologici*, VII, 117.
37. *Op. cit.*, chapter 25.

A Linguistic Analysis of Glossolalia: A Review Article

Theodore Mueller

TONGUES OF MEN AND ANGELS. The Religious Language of Pentecostalism. By William J. Samarin. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1972. 277 pages. $7.95.

The author, an eminent linguist, professor of anthropology and linguistics at the University of Toronto, attempts to answer the question: Why do so many educated and well-established members of society "speak in tongues"? He first examines glossolalia from a linguist's point of view and shows "what Christians, at least, do when they talk in tongues" (p. 2).

His examination is based on a large sample of glossolalia recorded in private and public meetings over a five-year period in Europe and North America. In-depth interviews and questionaires provided further information about the people and their beliefs. The book is a sympathetic analysis, showing respect for the beliefs of these people as "sacred ground" (p. 236). Samarin dismisses such frequently mentioned psychological causes as repression and emotional release. In some sense glossolalia is "learned behavior" (p. 73), yet not learned as foreign languages are learned. "The tongue speaker is the product of considerable instruction, whether or not glossolalia comes suddenly or gradually" (p. 72). Thus, tongue-speaking is not a "supernaturally acquired skill."

Samarin analyzes the speech of tongue-speakers in the same manner that a linguist analyzes a foreign language. He makes a phonetic and semantic inventory, and describes its prosodic and paralinguistic features. The discourse "is divided into units of speech . . . through accent, rhythm, intonation and pauses" (p. 78). "The breathgroup itself can often be divided into subgroups through phonological features" (p. 79). It consists of syllables made up of consonants and vowels taken from the speaker's native language or a foreign language known to him, with much repetition, alliteration, and rhyme. However, the "syllable string does not fall into words" (p. 81), even though one gets the feeling that "words are almost emerging" (p. 82).

In comparing glossolalia to real language Samarin shows how the two differ in form and function. In form, real language is a

systematic relationship between the segments of speech and concepts, a relationship which is missing in glossolalia. While language has communication as its function, there is no meaning to individual strings of syllables in glossolalia. The resemblance to real language is superficial: "It is verbal behavior that consists of using a certain number of consonants and vowels . . . in a limited number of syllables that in turn are organized into larger units that are taken apart and rearranged pseudogrammatically . . . with variations in pitch, volume, speed and intensity" (p. 120). It is "only a facade of language, although at times a very good one indeed" (p. 128). Yet it is not "a specimen of human language because it is neither internally organized nor systematically related to the world man perceives" (p. 128). Yet glossolalia has meaning to the speaker; the meaning is in the area of emotions (joy, concern, anxiety). Thus Samarin defines glossolalia as a "meaningless but phonologically structured human utterance, believed by the speaker to be a real language but bearing no systematic resemblance to any natural language, living or dead" (p. 2).

Other pseudo-languages with glossolalic features are common indeed. Some pretend to be communicative and supernatural — spiritism, Haitian Voodoo, Santeria cult, spells, incantations, verbal charms which are part of the occult. Others make no such claim — children use it; it is an in-group signal; it may have a ludic function (Danny Kaye or Charlie Chaplin imitating a language); a farmer uses it when talking to his cow because she does not understand English; a pious Baptist uses it for swearing; it is found in be-bop jazz, and in lullabies. These instances are adduced to show "the normality of glossolalia" (p. 149).

The use of glossolalia has psychological functions — it signals the transition into a new state, like an initiation rite; it serves as proof validating the individual's baptism of the spirit; it indicates man's "yielding to God" and results in peace in the face of incomprehensible fate; but it also is a mode of self-assertion. The glossolalist derives pleasure from it — he becomes proficient in a new skill admired by many; it gives reign to his fantasy; it is used "to express emotion or feeling" (p. 205) comparable to impressionistic poetry and music. For those who stress feeling in religion it is therapeutic; many state explicitly that they have been helped in resolving emotional problems. It has sociological functions — it identifies membership; it sets the group apart and often leads to division through "a feeling of superiority on the part of the tongue speakers" (p. 214). It contributes to the ethos of

the occasion. Leadership and authority in the group are enhanced by its use. Real language fulfills many of the same functions.

In his conclusion Samarin reiterates that glossolalia is not a supernatural phenomenon, nor is there any mystery in it. He modifies his original question in this way: Why do people *want* to utter something which is language-like but fundamentally not language? Samarin answers this question by stating "that it is part of a movement that offers them the fulfillment of aspirations that their previous religious experience created in them. They want to believe in God passionately, to know the delight of communion with Him and to see Him at work in life. They see evidence of this in members of the charismatic movement. It is intellectually satisfying, and belief is nurtured by intimate personal relations" (p. 236).

Many theological arguments have been adduced for or against glossolalia to prove or disprove a variety of positions without first establishing the facts, that is, a clear definition of the behavior. Samarin has given us a scientific analysis without bias. His findings should be a first step in any discussion of glossolalia. Samarin's study also provides some valuable insights into the theological orientation of tongue-speakers. As a neutral observer and a trained scientist without a theological viewpoint to defend, he gives an account of what they believe and of what is important in their thinking. His observations lend themselves to a comparison with the three *sola*'s of the Lutheran faith.

God's presence and his direct communication with man play a predominant role in the glossolalists' theology: "God is existentially and palpably immanent. He reveals himself in a way you can feel" (p. 4). "Glossolalia is palpable proof of God's influence on man" (p. 199) and "for his presence" (p. 232). It "is seen as an instrument, a 'means of grace', to bring down God's power" (p. 159). It "is used to pass on a message from God" (p. 159). "A person is inspired by the Holy Spirit and has a prophetic message" (p. 160). "They see themselves performing a special role with special powers for the good of others" (p. 158). According to these observations, the Gospel enunciated by Scripture is not the "means of grace" by which God comes to us, reveals Himself, and bestows His gifts. For the glossolalists there is a continuous revelation through tongue-speaking, and through them as God's prophets, which explains the frequently heard expression, "The Lord has told me . . ." *Sola Scriptura* has no meaning for these people.

To obtain God's favor man must fulfill certain conditions, according to glossolalial theology: "God takes over only when a

person deliberately yields himself to Him . . . You have to bend your intellect and submit your tongue to Christ . . . One must be willing to risk all . . . " The tongue-speakers "make blessing conditional on submission" (p. 200). Glossolalia proves their commitment. Demands are made on the individual, particularly the "stress on personal devotion" (p. 199). According to their statements, God is favorable to these people *because of* something they have done or an attitude they have attained. There is no mention of Christ, His atonement, His sacrifice as the Lamb of God. Jesus is the Lord to be obeyed. There is no gracious Father whose anger has been allayed by Christ's suffering and death, who has been reconciled and therefore offers one and all the forgiveness of sins. Personal devotion, submitting to God, "being right" with God, which is work-righteousness, is substituted for *sola gratia* as the cause of all blessings.

The faith of glossolalists is based on their inner emotional voice. Faith, emotions, and feelings merge into one vague concept. *Sola fide* is not the instrument by which God's grace and forgiveness are appropriated. It is not the assurance and certainty that one is God's child through Christ. It is not trust.

Samarin stresses the non-aberrant nature of glossolalia, a behavior which provides some innocent pleasure for its users — why not view it as some harmless practice with religious significance for those who enjoy it? But is it so harmless? Most respondents were recent converts to the movement and reported frequent, that is, almost daily use of tongue-speaking. But time lapse seems to lead to less activity and to inactivity. When glossolalists are questioned about such disuse, "the usual explanation is that there is some kind of breakdown in communion with God . . . This can result from sin, 'spiritual dryness', . . . or unwillingness to be fully dedicated to God" (p. 195). In other words, inactivity signals separation from God. Where will this lead when the individual is somehow confronted with the reality of his sinfulness — when he is stretched out on a hospital bed, drained of all emotional fervor, anxiously awaiting a doctor's dreaded verdict? From a comparison with past experience glossolalists may well come to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit has left them, that they have lost God's favor, since there is no longer any internal proof or assurance of God's presence. Their little voice has died, and there is silence when they need comfort and assurance most.

Samarin shows that there is no demonstrable personality difference between those who join and those who do not join the

charismatic movement. However, those who embrace glossolalia seem to have certain definite expectations: "They too want to believe in God passionately, to know the delight of communion with Him, and to see Him at work in life" (p. 236). They seek proof and assurance of belonging to God. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that this yearning has not been fulfilled in the churches of which they are members. Consequently here is a message for pastors. Each shepherd should ask himself a few questions about his preaching and teaching: Does he present God's love and mercy in each sermon? Is Christ's reconciliation the focal point of all preaching? Is the grace of God in and through Christ the centerpiece from which every exhortation flows? Does he plead with his parishioners by the mercies of God? Or does he stress the law, how people should live, how they should support the current church project, and bring in the unchurched? Does he present Scripture as the anchor and foundation of our hope and peace? Does he direct his listener's to the sure Word of God, devoid of error, in which they see their God and Savior, who has redeemed, purchased, and won them at such an exorbitant price? Does he constantly show the people the innumerable passages affirming and confirming that we are God's children? Does he glowingly describe the peace which passes understanding obtained by trust in Christ and His promises?

For some, glossolalia is a means of establishing their authority: "The individual can use glossolalia for his own good as a participant in that group. . . This is clear with leadership and authority; both are enhanced and validated by the use of glossolalia in religious meeting" (p. 217). What can be said about those pastors who seek to establish leadership and authority by means of a pseudo-language, alleged to be the language of the Holy Ghost? Is there any greater deceit anywhere? The New International Version aptly translates God's description of such prophets as "those who wag their own tongues and yet declare 'The Lord declares' " (Jer. 23:31). How will such a pastor stand before the judgement throne of his Maker and Redeemer?

Some exegetical inferences can be drawn about the Greek expression *heterais glossais lalein* (Acts 2:4). The question centers around the word *glossa:* Does it mean exclusively a real language, or does it include the pseudo-language described by Samarin? Semantics, that is, the science of meaning, describes meaning in terms of "semantic features" — the characteristic feature or features which distinguish one word from another word, or one set of words from another set sharing enough meaning to make

them related entities. Thus, for instance, the words "father," "brother," "husband," "mother," "sister," "wife" have in common the notion of family relationship. The set "father," "brother," "husband" is distinguished from "mother," "sister," "wife" by the feature "maleness," which is absent from the second set. Likewise, the words "corpse" and "body" are related in meaning, referring to the physical structure of humans and animals. However, the feature "being dead" distinguishes "corpse" from "body" so that "corpse" can never refer to a living body. This reasoning can be applied to the word *glossa*, which, apart from its physiological referent, means a real language in secular Greek literature. As indicated by Samarin, real language has two semantic features: (1) a patterned systematic relationship between speech and concept, and (2) communication as its function. There are other systems of communication; cries of birds or gestures of human beings communicate quite well. However, the first feature, that of a patterned symbolic system, is not associated with them, and thus they are not real languages. Since both semantic features are absent from glossolalia, it seems self-evident that a pseudo-language is not included within the bounds of meaning of the Greek term *glossa*. This conclusion should be plausible to those who subscribe to the traditional Lutheran doctrine of verbal inspiration, with its insistence that every word of Scripture is inspired and that the words of God are not used carelessly or ambiguously.

In conclusion, a historical note might be added showing that the phenomenon of glossolalia is part of a trend. The charismatic movement, with its stress on feelings, individual commitment, and devotional life and its concept of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, seems to be a twin to eighteenth-century pietism. For the pietists, too, "The Holy Spirit gave assurance of grace through new and peculiar sensations, impressions and revelations wrought in the heart independently of the Word and alongside faith."[1] Walther, who grew up in the midst of pietists, mentions their teaching that "a person must suddenly experience a heavenly joy and hear an inner voice telling him that he had been received into grace."[2] And there are other parallels. Pietism was a counter-movement which coincided with Romanticism, a literary movement stressing emotions and feelings. It was a reaction against the Enlightenment, with its cold rationalistic approach to life, and found expression in Goethe's *Werther* and Rousseau's *Emile*. In religion pietism was similarly a reaction against the so-called "dead orthodoxy," a rational and logical exposition of a doctrinal system. In many respects the twentieth century parallels the

eighteenth; the cold logic of the scientific age and the impersonality of the computer age are being challenged by a stress on emotionalism in art, literature, and music or by the hedonism of rock concerts. Thus, in twentieth-century religion, Neo-Pentecostalism seems to fill a similar need and signals a turning away from the vagaries of liberalism, the social gospel, and formal religion, and a turning to a more personal form of worship which is also expressed in folk-masses, spirituals, and Gospel songs. Clearly many of the same features and circumstances relate pietism to the present charismatic movement. And this too shall pass.

FOOTNOTES

1. Th. Engelder, W. Arndt, Th. Graebner, and F. E. Mayer, *Popular Symbolics* (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1945), p. 94.
2. C. F. W. Walther, *Law and Gospel* (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1928), p. 194.

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Reformed and Neo-Evangelical Theology in English Translations of the Bible

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In 1975 the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, in attempting to clear up some of the confusion in our church regarding the reliability of the various English translations of Scripture, issued a report entitled, "Comparative Study of Bible Translations and Paraphrases." Though obviously a product of serious research, the study suffered from several weaknesses. It considered only those passages which are cited in the Synodical Catechism's discussion of Christology — a subject of central importance to the Christian faith, to be sure, but not nearly as controversial on a popular level as, for example, eschatology. The report also failed to provide any rationale for judging any given translation to be erroneous. At times, indeed, it was difficult to ascertain the difference between a translation considered "acceptable" and one considered "not usable."[1]

This essay, then, will attempt to supplement the CTCR's work by examining how the various English translations have handled passages involving the sacraments and eschatology — two major points of disagreement between Lutherans and those Christians who identify themselves as Reformed or neo-Evangelical. The translations to be considered are the following:[2]

KJV: *The Holy Bible: Authorized King James Version.*

NKJV: *The New King James Bible: New Testament.* Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 1979.

RSV: *The Revised Standard Version of the Bible.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1971.

NEB: *The New English Bible.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1971.

JB: *The Jerusalem Bible.* Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1968.

MLB: Gerrit Verkuyl. *The Modern Language Bible: The New Berkeley Version in Modern English.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969.

NASB: *New American Standard Bible.* Glendale, California: Gospel Light, 1972.

NIV: *The Holy Bible: New International Version.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1978.

Beck (1): William F. Beck. *The Holy Bible: An American Translation.* New Haven, Missouri: Leader, 1976.
Beck (2): William F. Beck. *The Holy Bible in the Language of Today: An American Translation.* Philadelphia and New York: A.J. Holman, 1977.
LB: Kenneth Taylor. *The Living Bible Paraphrased.* Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale, 1971.
GNB: *The Good News Bible: The Bible in Today's English Version.* New York: American Bible Society, 1976.
Phillips: J.B. Phillips. *The New Testament in Modern English.* New York: Macmillan, 1958.

I. Passages Dealing with the Sacraments

A. Matthew 3:11

Acceptable Renderings

KJV: "I indeed baptize you with water *unto repentance* . . ."
NKJV: "I indeed baptize you with water *to repentance* . . ."
RSV, NEB, MLB: "I baptize you with water *for repentance* . . ."
JB, NASB, NIV: "I baptize you in water *for repentance* . . ."
Beck: "I baptize you with water *for a change of heart* . . ."

Incorrect Renderings

LB: "With water I baptize *those who repent of their sins* . . ."
GNB: "I baptize you with water *to show that you have repented* . . ."
Phillips: "I baptize you with water *as a sign of your repentance* . . ."

The italicized phrases are the various translations' renderings of *eis metanoian.* The problem with all three incorrect renderings is that they have apparently ignored the obvious sense of *eis* in this passage. When it does not have a locational sense ("into," "towards," etc.), *eis* is commonly employed in the New Testament to indicate the purpose or intended result of an action. This usage is seen in the common phrase *eis aphesin hamartion,* "for (the purpose of) the forgiveness of sins"; the idea is that forgiveness follows as the intended result of such actions as the shedding of Christ's blood (as in Matthew 26:28). In Matthew 3:11, the sense would be "for (the purpose of) repentance"; John is asserting that baptism is designed to bring about repentance in a person's life. The latter three translations above, however, have reversed the order, making repentance a prerequisite for baptism. The reason for this alteration is clear; it brings the passage into harmony with Reformed notions that baptism is an act in which a person's conversion to Christianity is symbolized. This presupposition will be shown to have influenced the translations of several key baptismal texts in the New Testament.

Though it is listed as an acceptable rendering, NKJV's "to repentance" represents anything but a clarification of the passage. There appears to be a great tendency in translations produced by multi-denominational committees to preserve or create vague constructions so that no one school of opinion is offended. For the reader, however, more questions are raised than answered.

It should also be noted that, although "repentance" in English usually means "confession of sins," that is not the true meaning of *metanoia*, which literally means "a change of mind." What many do not realize is that the word "repentance" has changed meaning since King James' day. The KJV, in fact, states in several passages[3] that God Himself "repented" of something; certainly this does not mean He confessed His sins. In this and related contexts, *metanoia* refers to the ongoing (note the present imperative *metanoeite* in verse 2) process of revising one's thoughts and attitudes, purging those of materialism, egotism, etc., and replacing them with thoughts of trust in God's promises and obedience to God's law. John is asserting that baptism is a means of initiating this process.

B. Mark 1:4 and Luke 3:3[4]

Acceptable Renderings

KJV, NKJV: ". . . preaching *the baptism of repentance* for the remission of sins." (In Mark, KJV replaces "preaching" with "did . . . preach.")

RSV, MLB, NASB, NIV: " . . . preaching *a baptism of repentance* for the forgiveness of sins." (In Luke, NASB omits "the.")

JB: " . . . proclaiming *a baptism of repentance* for the forgiveness of sins."

Incorrect Renderings

NEB: " . . . proclaiming *a baptism in token of repentance* for the forgiveness of sins."

Beck (Mark): " . . . preaching *that people repent and be baptized* to have their sins forgiven."

Beck (Luke): " . . . preached: '*Repent and be baptized* to have your sins forgiven.' "

LB (Mark): " . . . taught *that all should be baptized as a public announcement of their decision to turn their backs on sin*, so that God could forgive them."

LB (Luke): " . . . preaching *that people should be baptized to show that they had turned to God and away from their sins*, in order to be forgiven."

GNB: " '*Turn away from your sins and be baptized*,' he told the

people, 'and God will forgive your sins.' " (In Luke, "preaching" is placed at the front of this phrase, and "he told the people" is omitted.)

Phillips: " . . . proclaiming *baptism as the mark of a complete change of heart* and of the forgiveness of sins." (In Luke, "the mark" is changed to "a mark.")

In his recent *CTQ* article,[5] Theodore Mueller demonstrated what should be obvious — that the key to understanding the description of John's baptism as a *baptisma metanoias* in Mark 1:4 and Luke 3:3 lies in John's own words on the subject, namely, "I baptize . . . *for* repentance" in Matthew 3:11. Unfortunately, an even greater number of translations reverse or confuse the relationship between baptism and repentance here than in Matthew's quotation. Beck and GNB apparently have taken Peter's statement on Pentecost ("Repent and be baptized," Acts 2:38) as the explanation of *baptisma metanoias*; the result is that repentance is seen either as prerequisite to or simultaneous with baptism (depending on how one interprets "and"), and the concept of repentance as a result of baptism is lost. NEB and Phillips go further, presenting the classic Reformed concept of baptism as an act which symbolizes ("token," "mark") a change in man which has already occurred. LB, however, is the most blatant of all in injecting Reformed theology into the passage. Here is found the concept of baptism as a kind of visual personal testimony ("public announcement") as well as a symbolic act ("to show"). Also noteworthy is the presence of "decision for Christ" theology — the forgiveness of sins is said to result from a personal "decision to turn [one's] back on sin," whereas the text clearly shows that forgiveness, like repentance, results from baptism.

It should be pointed out that even those translations judged "acceptable" are actually less than adequate. The mechanical reproduction of the genitive gives little help to the English reader as to what the precise relationship is between baptism and repentance. Though not introducing any alien ideas, the translation "baptism of repentance" will probably lead few readers to conclude that the real sense is "baptism resulting in repentance."

C. 1 Corinthians 11:29

Acceptable Renderings

KJV: "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, *not discerning the Lord's body.*"

NKJV: "For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, *not discerning the Lord's body.*"

RSV: "For any one who eats and drinks *without discerning the body* eats and drinks judgment

upon himself."

NEB: "For he who eats and drinks eats and drinks judgment on himself *if he does not discern the Body*."

JB: " . . . because a person who eats and drinks *without recognizing the Body* is eating and drinking his own condemnation."

NIV: "For anyone who eats and drinks *without recognizing the body of the Lord* eats and drinks judgment on himself."

Beck: "Anyone who eats and drinks *without seeing that the body is there* is condemned for his eating and drinking."

Phillips: "He that eats and drinks carelessly is eating and drinking a judgment on himself, *for he is blind to the presence of the Lord's body*."

Incorrect Renderings

MLB: "For whoever eats and drinks *without due appreciation of the body of Christ* eats and drinks to his own condemnation."

NASB: "For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, *if he does not judge the body rightly*."

LB: "For if he eats the bread and drinks from the cup unworthily, *not thinking about the body of Christ and what it means*, he is eating and drinking God's judgment upon himself; for he is trifling with the death of Christ."

GNB: "For *if he does not recognize the meaning of the Lord's body* when he eats the bread and drinks from the cup, he brings judgment on himself as he eats and drinks."

The key to the correct interpretation of this passage is the meaning of the verb *diakrino*, occurring here as the present active participle. Classical Greek employed this word in three basic senses: "toseparate,"[6] "to recognize,"[7] and "to decide."[8] In addition, there were various minor uses of this word that all had some connection to the process of making decisions.[9] One might argue that Paul is using *diakrino* in the first sense, implying a failure to differentiate the body of Christ in the sacrament from ordinary bread.[10] But there is no need to read extra words into the passage; it can be translated simply, "not recognizing the body," i.e., not discerning its presence.

Three of the four translations judged to be incorrect have either added words to the text or adopted meanings for *diakrino* which do not occur elsewhere, resulting in renderings which attempt to avoid any notion of condemnation for failure to accept the Real Presence. MLB's idea of appreciation is unknown as a possible meaning of *diakrino* in the New Testament and elsewhere, as is LB's translation "thinking about." GNB's addition of "the meaning" contravenes the natural sense — to recognize or discern something primarily means to realize its identity (as in "I recognize that man," i.e., "I know who he is"); understanding its meaning or significance is secondary and might not be intended at all. The effect of all three versions is to present the Reformed idea that the Lord's Supper serves as a visual aid for meditation on the meaning and significance of Christ's (ascended) body and His saving acts, rather than as a vehicle by which Christ's body and blood enters believers.

The fourth incorrect translation (NASB) is technically possible given the range of meaning which *diakrino* has, though this word of itself does not imply "judging *rightly*." Furthermore, this rendering would appear to lack clarity. What is the nature of this judgment that one is to make concerning Christ's body? What criteria determine whether or not the judgment is correct? The probability is high that this translation makes it possible for various views of the Lord's Supper to coexist; Lutherans might understand this to mean "recognize the Real Presence," while Reformed individuals could view it as referring to "due appreciation" of Christ's death and resurrection.

D. Ephesians 5:26

Acceptable Renderings

RSV, NASB: "... that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her *by the washing of water with the word.*"

NEB: "... to consecrate it, cleansing it *by water and word.*"

Incorrect Renderings

KJV, NKJV: " ... that he might sanctify and cleanse it *with the washing of water by the word.*"

JB: "... to make her holy. He made her clean *by washing her in water with a form of words.*"

MLB: " ... in order that by cleansing her *by means of the washing in water* He may sanctify her *through His word.*"

NIV: " ... to make her holy, cleansing her *by the washing*

with water through the word."

Beck: "... to make it holy *by washing it* clean *with water by the Word.*"

LB: "... to make her holy and clean, *washed by baptism and God's Word.*"

GNB: "He did this to dedicate the church to God *by His word,* after making it clean *by washing it in water.*"

Phillips: "... to make her holy, having cleansed her *through the baptism of his Word.*"

The wide variation in translating *to loutro tou hudatos en rhemati* in this verse necessitates that each approach be considered separately. The most obvious translational error is JB's interpolation, "with *a form* of words." How such a rendering was arrived at, and what meaning was intended, is not at all obvious. Possibly the "form of words" in mind was the statement in Matthew 28:19 ("baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"), but this is only conjecture.

Two versions paraphrase part of this verse with the word "baptism." Phillips "baptism of his Word" suggests a figurative sense of baptism, but Paul's inclusion of *tou hudatos* renders this understanding impossible. In LB, "baptism" is apparently employed in its literal sense, but the idea that "baptism" and "water" are synonymous represents a rather brazen interpolation of Reformed opinion. In effect, baptism is being presented as "simple water only,"[11] possessing of itself no power from God to cleanse or sanctify people.

The same desire to break any connection between "the washing of water" and "the word" has apparently motivated MLB and GNB to re-shuffle the sentence order. It is difficult to understand, however, how the act of washing with water could by itself be a means through which the church is sanctified (MLB) or cleansed (GNB).

The correct sentence order is retained by KJV, NKJV, NIV, and Beck, but like MLB and GNB they have translated *en* as "by" or "through." This results in a rather clumsy sentence structure; it is difficult to ascertain exactly what "by" or "through the word" modifies. Whether deliberately intended or not, it has the effect of permitting the reader to make the same break between the washing and the word as MLB and GNB openly suggest, in that "by" or "through the word" appears as a second expression of means. This may be another example of deliberate ambiguity designed to appease divergent schools of thought, though this is hard to believe in Beck's case. Possibly he wished to indicate some

subtle distinction between the word as the proper means of cleansing and the water as the instrument, but it is questionable whether the English prepositions involved can convey such subtleties, especially to the average reader. It should also be noted that Beck's rendering involves another re-shuffling of this verse's contents.

The position of the phrase *en rhemati* in the sentence, along with the point mentioned above in connection with MLB's and GNB's rendering that this phrase could not indicate a second means of cleansing separate from "the washing of water," leads to the conclusion that it most likely modifies the word immediately preceding it, namely "the water." This appears to be the view of RSV and NASB. Admittedly, "with" could be used to indicate a means or instrument, but the natural flow of the sentence suggests rather the meaning "together with" or "connected with." Doubtless this was Luther's view of the passage, as he employs almost identical language in defining baptism — "water . . . connected with God's word."[12] This translation agrees with the basic use of *en* as meaning "in," "inside," and thus "surrounded by" or "encompassed by" (cf. *en Christo*). Paul is stating that the water of baptism is able to cleanse the church by virtue of its being encompassed by God's Word.

NEB is obviously not an ideal translation in view of its deletion of any reference to the washing. Nevertheless, the basic thought is retained — that Christ employed one unified procedure, the components of which are water and the word, to cleanse the church.

E. 1 Peter 3:21

Acceptable Renderings

RSV: "Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you . . . as an appeal to God for a clear conscience . . ."

NASB: "And corresponding to that, baptism now saves you — . . . an appeal to God for a good conscience . . ."

Beck (1): "In the same way now the water saves you in baptism — . . . by asking God for a good conscience . . ."

Incorrect Renderings

KJV: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us . . . the answer of a good conscience toward God . . ."

NKJV: "There is also an antitype which now saves us, namely baptism . . . the answer of a good conscience toward God . . ."

NEB: "This water prefigured the water of baptism through

which you are now brought to safety. Baptism is . . . the appeal made to God by a good conscience . . . "

JB: "That water is a type of the baptism which saves you now, and which is . . . a pledge made to God from a good conscience . . . "

MLB: "Its counterpart, baptism, saves you now . . . by . . . the earnest seeking of a conscience that is clear in God's presence . . ."

NIV: " . . . and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also . . . the pledge of a good conscience toward God."

Beck (2): "In the same [way] also, baptism now saves you . . . by promising God to keep one's conscience clear . . . "

LB: "That, by the way, is what baptism pictures for us: In baptism we show that we have been saved from death and doom . . . because in being baptized we are turning to God and asking him to cleanse our hearts from sin."

GNB: " . . . which was a symbol pointing to baptism, which now saves you. It is . . . the promise made to God from a good conscience."

Phillips: "And I cannot help pointing out what a perfect illustration this is of the way you have been admitted-to the safety of the Christian 'ark' by baptism . . . it means the ability to face God with a clear conscience."

As in the case of Ephesians 5:26, this verse has received a wide variety of treatments from the various versions. The verse begins with the statement that baptism is an *antitupos* of the Flood, in which, according to verse 20, "eight souls were saved through water." The Flood is, then, a prototype of baptism, a model after which baptism is patterned. There are obvious differences between the two, but they nevertheless share the same basic characteristic; they both are incidents of salvation through water. In Noah's case, the water saved him and his family from the decadent, unbelieving society around them; in our case, the water of baptism saves us from the decadence and unbelief present in ourselves. Few of the English translations catch the full flavor of this relationship, but most nevertheless present similar concepts. Even the translation "symbol" (NIV, GNB) or "illustration" (Phillips) is basically correct; the Flood does, in fact, symbolize or picture how baptism works. LB, on the other hand, introduces a major error into the text by presenting *baptism* as picturing something.

Several translations refuse to reproduce the statement "baptism saves you" or "us" without some modification. Beck (1) introduces no error with "the water in baptism saves you", but does not really improve the verse either. NEB changes "saves" into "brings to safety," which, though a synonymous expression, might enable one to think that this refers to something other than eternal salvation. Phillips has employed a similar phrase in an expansion of the parallel between baptism and the Flood. By stating explicitly what "safety" is produced by baptism, this is certainly preferable to NEB, but it seems unnecessary to go to such lengths to "explain" the text; "baptism saves you" is not a particularly complicated or obscure phrase. LB, on the other hand, cannot be called an attempted explanation, but rather a wholesale re-writing of the phrase. The subject ("baptism") is placed into a prepositional phrase, the direct object ("us") becomes the subject, the verb is changed from third person singular present active to first person plural perfect passive, and the verb "show" is inserted. The result is another classic statement of Reformed theology and demonstrates to what lengths adherents of this theology must go to harmonize the Scriptural witness with their opinions.

The next part of the verse — Peter's negative definition of baptism — was omitted above in the interest of brevity. None of the translations introduce any significant error into the text at this point, though only four correctly reproduce the original syntax: "not the removal of dirt from the flesh" (NASB; RSV, NIV, and Beck are similar). LB again involves a complete revision of the phrase ("not because our bodies are washed clean by the water"). The remaining versions construe *sarkos* as modifying *rhupou* (vice versa in the case of Phillips), which appears highly doubtful in view of the positions of these words in the phrase. These latter translations then miss the parallel between this construction and the construction employed in the succeeding positive definition. The following illustrates this parallel:

Baptism is not *sarkos* *apothesis* *rhupou*
Baptism is *suneideseos agathes* *eperotema* *eis theon*

Both phrases contain three basic parts in the same order — anarthrous genitive, anarthrous predicate nominative, and anarthrous prepositional phrase. It would only seem logical that the syntax of the two phrases would be similar. The syntactical relationships in the first phrase are seen better if the predicate nominative "removal" is converted into the equivalent verb: "Baptism does not remove dirt from the flesh." Here "dirt" is the direct object of the verb and "from the flesh" indicates the sphere

or area in which the removal takes place. If the parallel holds, *eis theon* should be the object of the second verb and *suneidesios* should also indicate the sphere of activity. The resultant translation would then be, "Baptism asks God for a good conscience." Here "God" is the indirect, rather than direct object (this explains why the third part of the first phrase is a genitive and the equivalent part of the second is a prepositional phrase with *eis*) and "conscience" is the area in which the request is made, i.e., the object of the request.

The most common translation error here is the failure to see the specific parallel between *sarkos* and *suneideseos agathes.* KJV, NKJV, NEB, JB, MLB, NIV, and GNB all interpret the latter as the source or agent of the *eperotema.* It is hard to justify this in view of the fact that *sarkos* is anything but the souce or agent of the removal in the first phrase. However, such a translation reflects the same viewpoint that LB states more bluntly — that baptism is an activity in which *we* do something either to gain salvation or to express gratitude for having received it. It should also be noted that if *suneideseos* indicates agency, there is then no information in the phrase as to the content of the *eperotema.*

The translation of this latter word is also a matter of some dispute, which in view of its etymology is rather surprising; *eperotema* comes, not unexpectedly, from *eperotao*, "I ask," "I request." *Eperotema* is thus employed in pre-Christian times to mean "question" or "request."[13] Only in the second century A.D. and later do such specialized meanings as "pledge" or "answer to inquiry" appear, in such works as Justinian's Code. Yet despite the fact that these are post-Biblical, legal senses of *eperotema*, KJV, NKJV, JB, NIV, Beck (2) and GNB have chosen them over the original sense. Such translations fit in well with the Reformed concept of baptism as a response to salvation.

Other alien ideas in this part of the verse include the insertion by Beck (2) of the infinitive "to keep" (which removes the concept of baptism as initiating salvation), the insertion by Phillips of "it means" ("symbolizes"?), the latter's translation of *eperotema* as "ability," and MLB's translation of the same word as "earnest seeking." Of course, the worst by far is LB, which bears little or no relationship to the original text at all.

Those of a Reformed persuasion would probably greet the translation, "baptism is an appeal or request to God for a good conscience," with the question, "How can water do this?" If baptism is nothing more than water, of course, it could not. But if it is true, as suggested in John 3:5, Acts 2:38, and elsewhere, that

the Holy Spirit is present in baptism, this statement of Peter makes perfect sense. The Spirit intercedes for us in baptism, asking God to grant us that for which we as unregenerate sinners cannot ask — salvation, a clean conscience, etc. This truth should be of immense comfort to Christians, because we know that the Holy Spirit's requests to God are always answered in the affirmative.

II. Passages Dealing with Eschatology

A. Matthew 24:34, Mark 13:30, and Luke 21:32[14]

Acceptable Renderings

KJV: "Verily I say unto you, *This generation* shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." (In Mark, "that" is inserted before "this generation" and "fulfilled" is changed to "done.")

NKJV: "Assuredly, I say to you, *this generation* will by no means pass away till all these things are fulfilled." (In Mark, "are fulfilled" is changed to "take place.")

RSV: "Truly, I say to you, *this generation* will not pass away till all these things take place." (In Luke, "take" is changed to "have taken.")

NEB: "I tell you this: *the present generation* will live to see it all."

JB: "I tell you solemnly, before *this generation* has passed away all these things will have taken place."

MLB (Mark): "I assure you, *the present generation* will not pass on until all this takes place."

NASB (Matt., Luke): "Truly I say to you, *this generation* will not pass away until all these things take place."

GNB: "Remember that all these things will happen before *the people now living* have all died." (In Luke, "happen" is changed to "take place.")

Phillips (Matt., Luke): "Believe me, *this generation* will not disappear till all this has taken place."

Phillips (Mark): "I tell you that *this generation* will not have passed until all these things have come true."

Incorrect Renderings

MLB (Matt.): "I assure you, all these things will take place before *this present generation* passes on." Footnote: "The destruction of Jerusalem is a figure of the world's destruction at the return of the Lord."

MLB (Luke): "I assure you that all this will happen before this generation passes away." Footnote: "The word 'generation' is translated from the Greek *genea* which

means (1) *generation*, i.e., contemporaries living on earth or the span of an individual's lifetime; (2) *race*; and (3) *family*."

NASB (Mark): "truly I say to you, *this generation* [footnote: "or, *race*"] will not pass away until all these things take place."

NIV: "I tell you the truth, *this generation* [footnote: "or *race*"] will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened."

Beck: "I tell you the truth, *these people* will not pass away till all this happens."

LB (Matt.): "Then at last *this age* will come to its close." Footnote: "Or, 'after all these things take place, *this generation* shall pass away.' "

LB (Mark): "Yes, these are the events that will signal the end of *the age* [footnote: "Literally, 'of *this generation.*' "]."

LB (Luke): "I solemnly declare to you that when these things happen, the end of *this age* [footnote: "Or, '*this generation.*' "] has come."

Have the events which Jesus predicted as signs of the end of the world already been fulfilled, or do they still await completion? Many Christians of a "neo-Evangelical" persuasion believe the latter to be the case. They run into difficulty, however, when they read the traditional translation of Matthew 24:34 and its parallels, which clearly teach that these signs would already be manifested in the lifetime of Jesus' original disciples. In order to escape this conclusion, some translations have introduced alternate meanings for *genea* either in footnotes or in the text itself.

The footnote in MLB at Luke 21:32 is indeed correct as far as the classical usage of *genea* is concerned. What MLB and others have apparently failed to consider, however, is whether or not the New Testament recognizes the same range of meanings. Indeed, a study of MLB itself reveals no example of where *genea* is ever translated "race" or "family."[15] It is especially clear that *genea* in the mouth of Jesus always means the contemporary generation of Jews, not the Jewish race as such.[16] Those who nevertheless translate "race" are able to conclude that the signs of the end have yet to occur, since it is commonly accepted thatthe Jewish race has yet to pass away.

The translation "age" would be acceptable if it were made clear that this is a period of relatively short duration. LB, however, appears to suggest by "age" the entire New Testament period. This translation has the same effect as the translation "race."

Beck's translation "these people" could be understood to mean "those who lived at that time," but could just as easily be interpreted to mean "the Jewish race." This rendition is probably due to an oversight rather than a conscious desire to allow for neo-Evangelical opinion.

Finally, MLB attempts in Matthew 24:34 to make this text symbolic, calling the destruction of Jerusalem "a figure of the world's destruction" in a footnote. The actual words of Jesus in this chapter, however, support no such conclusion.

B. Revelation 1:9 and 7:14

Acceptable Renderings

KJV: "tribulation," "great tribulation"
NKJV: "tribulation," "the great tribulation"
RSV, NASB: "the tribulation," "the great tribulation"
Beck: "suffering," "great suffering"

Incorrect Renderings

NEB: "the suffering," "the great ordeal"
JB: "sufferings," "the great persecution" (footnote: "under Nero")
MLB: "the distress," "the great tribulation"
NIV: "the suffering," "the great tribulation"
LB: "sufferer," "the Great Tribulation"
GNB: "the suffering," "the terrible persecution"
Phillips: "the distress," "the great oppression"

The Greek phrases that correspond to the above are *te thlipsei* and *tes thlipseos tes megales*. One might expect the word *thlipsis* ("tribulation") to be similarly translated in both verses, but unfortunately a neo-Evangelical eschatological opinion has been responsible for distinguishing the two in many versions. Though there are many controverted details, this opinion generally holds that the church will be subjected to an especially virulent persecution immediately prior to the Second Coming. The "prooftext" for this event is Revelation 7:14, from which the name of this persecution period is derived — "The Great Tribulation." Other passages in the New Testament, however, suggest that the tribulation has already begun — indeed, that it dates at the latest from the time of Pentecost. Revelation 1:9 is such a passage, where John states that he is a co-participant (*sugkoinonos*) in the *thlipsis*. It could be argued that the addition of *megales* in Revelation 7:14 makes this tribulation different from the one referred to in 1:9; but even if such be the case, this difference would not justify a translation which, in effect, locks the Tribulation doctrine into the text, preventing the reader from

deciding for himself concerning its nature. As this author has noted elsewhere,[17] the extreme form of this tendency is reached in NIV, which translates *thlipsis* as "tribulation" in Revelation 7:14 but employs nine other words in all occurrences of *thlipsis* elsewhere.

JB presents a different opinion — that the tribulation referred to is Nero's persecution. Many modernist scholars, indeed, view the book of Revelation as a colorful history of the church's struggles with the Roman Empire.

C. Revelation 20:4

Acceptable Renderings

KJV, NKJV: "... and *they lived* and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." (KJV omits "for.")

Beck: "*They lived* and ruled with Christ a thousand years."

Incorrect Renderings

RSV, JB, MLB, NASB, NIV, Phillips: "*They came to life* and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." (RSV, MLB, and NIV omit "for"; NASB begins the sentence with " . . .and.")

NEB: "*These came to life again* and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."

LB: "*They had come to life again* and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."

GNB: "*They came to life* and ruled as kings with Christ for a thousand years."

This is the most obvious and yet also the most widespread translational error encountered in this study. The verb in question is *ezesan*, the third person plural aorist active indicative of *zao*, "I live." The fact that this is an aorist verb precludes the translation "came to life," since the idea of the aorist (from *aoristos*, "without boundary") is to present the bare fact of an action, without reference to its inception, duration, or conclusion. Only if the verb had been an imperfect indicative would the translation "came to life" or "began to live" have been appropriate.

This translation harmonizes the passage with millenialistic theory, which holds that the two resurrections mentioned in Revelation 20 are both physical resurrections — one for believers prior to the millenium, the other for unbelievers afterwards. The translation "they lived" does not of itself rule out this theory, yet it enables one to consider other possible senses of "the first resurrection" besides a physical sense (such as that referred to in Romans 6:4).

The following table[18] indicates the overall performance of the translations examined:

Version	Sacramental Errors	Eschatological Errors	Total Errors	CTCR[19] Rank
RSV	0	1	1	4
KJV	2	0	2	1 (tie)
NKJV	2	0	2	-
NASB	1	2	3	1 (tie)
JB	2	2	4	8 (tie)
NEB	3	2	5	7
Beck (1)	3	3	6	5
MLB	3	4	7	-
NIV	2	5	7	3
Beck (2)	4	3	7	-
Phillips	5	2	7	8 (tie)
GNB	6	2	8	6
LB	6	5	11	10

A comparison of this study and the CTCR study of Christological passages produces some interesting results. "Liberal" versions (RSV, NEB, JB) can be trusted more in sacramental and eschatological passages than in Christological ones, while the reverse is true for the "conservative" NIV. Paraphrases (especially LB and Phillips) appear to be universally inferior, whereas KJV and NASB are rather consistently accurate. Given the inherent superiority of NASB over KJV in such areas as modernity of expression and quality of the Greek text employed, NASB appears to be the best current English version. Of course, even in this case the CTCR recommendation remains valid: "Competence in the Biblical languages is indispensable in judging a version."[20]

III. Conclusion

This brief survey of key sacramental and eschatological passages has revealed that Reformed and neo-Evangelical theology has indeed made deep inroads into several versions, especially so-called "paraphrases." The dangers of paraphrasing are amply demonstrated by the fact that even the work of an LC-MS theologian (Beck) makes unwitting allowances for Reformed opinions.

FOOTNOTES

1. E.g., p.7 of the report, where Phillips' translation of John 1:14 — "as of a father's only son" — is judged "not usable." At least at first glance this would seem to be a more literal rendering of *hos monogenous para patros.*

2. These are, with the addition of *The New King James Bible: New Testament, The Modern Language Bible*, and the Holman edition of Beck's translation, the same translations employed in the CTCR study.
3. E.g., Ps. 106:45, The LORD "repented according to the multitude of his mercies"; and Jer. 26:19, "The LORD repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them."
4. The quoted sections of these verses are identical in the original.
5. Theodore Mueller, "An Application of Case Grammar to Two New Testament Passages," *CTQ*, 43, pp. 320-323.
6. E.g., Homer, *Iliad*, 7.292, where two combatants are parted.
7. E.g., Homer, *Odyssey*, 8.195, where the reference is to the recognition of a sign (*sema*). Cf. Matt. 16:3.
8. E.g., Herodotus, 1.100; Theocritus, 25.46; etc.
9. A notable example is the New Testament's use (e.g., Matt. 21:21) of *diakrinomai* to mean "doubt" or "waver."
10. Thus R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of I and II Corinthians*, p. 482, and F. Buchsel, "*krino*, k.t.l.," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed., G. Kittel, III, p. 946.
11. *Small Catechism*, IV, 2.
12. *Ibid.*
13. E.g., Herodotus, 6.67; Thucydides 3.53; etc. I Peter 3:21 is the only occurrence of *eperotema* in the New Testament; *eperotao* occurs quite frequently, always in the sense of "ask" or "request."
14. These three verses are identical in the original, except that Mark uses *mechris hou* instead of *heos an* (both mean "until"), and Luke deletes *tauta* ("these things"). Additional differences in the translations are noted after each version.
15. Thirty-four of the 38 occurrences of *genea* in the New Testament are translated "generation" by MLB. Two others are cases of inconsistent translation — Luke 11:31 has "age" while its parallel Matt. 12:42 contains "generation," and the quote of Is. 53:8 (which reads "contemporaries") in Acts 8:33 employs "offspring." The final two occurrences, in Acts 14:16 and 15:21, read respectively "in days gone by" (literally, "in past generations") and "from earliest times" (literally, "from ancient generations").
16. E.g., Matt 11:16, "But to what shall I compare this generation?" This is followed by an indictment, not of the entire Jewish race, but only of the ones living at that time who rejected Jesus and John the Baptist.
17. "The New International Version — Nothing New," *CTQ*, 43, pp. 242-3.
18. Six sacramental passages and six eschatological passages were considered. For purposes of tallying incorrect renderings, however, Rev. 1:9 and Rev. 7:14 were counted together, since the error involved a failure to translate the one like the other. Thus the highest possible "incorrect" score is six in sacramental passages and five in eschatological ones, for a total of eleven.
19. CTCR, *op.cit.*, p. 22.
20. *Ibid.*

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The Mirror of God's Goodness: Man in the Theology of Calvin

B. A. Gerrish

"Where there is no zeal to glorify God, the chief part of uprightness is absent."[1] Whatever the strange figure of the Hidden God may have meant for Luther's faith, it is plain that his faith grasped the Revealed God as "pure love" *(eitel liebe).* In his *Large Catechism* he writes: "It is God alone, I have often enough repeated, from whom we receive all that is good . . . He is an eternal fountain which overflows with sheer goodness and pours forth all that is good in name and in fact."[2] Calvin's understanding of man and his place in the world might almost be said to provide a theological commentary on this matchless confession of Luther's faith.

In the opening paragraphs of his 1559 *Institutes,* Calvin announces that the knowledge of God and the knowledge of man, the basic themes of theological wisdom, mutually condition each other. If, then, God is for him, as for Luther, *fons bonorum* (the Fountain of Good), we should expect the being of man to be somehow defined as the correlate of this regulative concept of God. It may be that the systematic coherence of Calvin's anthropology tends to get buried under the sheer mass of dogmatic material; and it has to be remembered that nothing less than the whole of the *Institutes* is required to set out his doctrine of man, just as the work *as a whole* presents his doctrine of God. Nevertheless, it is fair enough to hold that two segments of the *Institutes* are of decisive importance for our theme. There is, we are told, a twofold knowledge of man. God has made Himself known to us as Creator and Redeemer; correspondingly, we are to know what man was like when first created and what his condition is since the fall. Human nature as created is the particular theme of book 1, chapter 15; Calvin turns to human nature as fallen in book 2, chapters 1-5. That these two segments may not be taken to exhaust his doctrine of man is evident; he subsumes the fall and sin under the knowledge of God the Redeemer, and further discussion of man remains particularly for the sections on christology and the life of the Christian man. Indeed, there is plainly a sense in which, for Calvin, the restoration of man in Christ has dogmatic precedence even over the doctrine of the original estate, since, so he argues, we know of

Adam's original blessedness only by viewing it in Christ, the Second Adam.

If, however, with these reservations, we confine our attention to the two designated segments, we do in fact have enough to uncover the distinctive pattern in Calvin's anthropology. Admittedly, he has a lot of other important things to say even in these two segments, but I think we can fairly sum up the heart of the matter like this: The existence of man in the design of God is defined by thankfulness, the correlate of God's goodness; the existence of man in sin is defined by pride or self-love, the antithesis of God's goodness. To have said this much is, of course, already to recognize that in his understanding of man Calvin was working with ideas inherited from the Apostle Paul by way of Augustine.

As with Calvin's doctrine of God, one has to call at the outset for setting aside of hoary misconceptions. It is not true that Calvin's was an authoritarian religion, in the sense that man's most fitting posture is one of cringing before the divine despot. (This is what students of psychology may think they have learned from Eric Fromm; but in truth it has more to do with Calvin's notion of idolatry than with his notion of piety.) Nor did Calvin hold that fallen man is in no sense capable of achieving anything beyond his own self-degradation. Here, it must be admitted, Calvin's rhetoric sometimes obscures rather than reinforces a theological point. If his description of man as a "five-foot worm" was suggested to him by one of the Psalms (Psalm 22:6), it is hard not to judge that he was carried away by his own rhetoric when he pronounced man unfit to be ranked with "worms, lice, fleas, and vermin."[3] But *how* does one judge that such language really is, in fact, the obfuscation of a strictly theological point? Only by taking due note of the sober theological distinctions made elsewhere — these enable us to see in the heavy rhetoric Calvin's horror that man in sin has surrendered his very humanity to a life of thanklessness.

I. The Design of God

Calvin has already introduced man at the end of his chapter on creation. Having fashioned the universe as a magnificent theater of His glory, God placed man in it last of all as the privileged spectator. Even in himself, adorned by God with exceptional gifts, man was the most excellent example of God's works. And he was endowed besides with the capacity to turn his eyes outwards and admire the handiwork of God in others of His creatures.

> How great ingratitude would it be now to doubt whether this most gracious Father has us in his care, who we see was concerned for us even before we were born! How impious would it be to tremble for fear that his kindness might at any time fail us in our need, when we see that it was shown, with the greatest abundance of every good thing, when we were yet unborn![4]

There, already, is the heart of Calvin's anthropology. But he turns to man in detail only in chapter 15 of the first book.

It is in this chapter (secs. 3-4) that Calvin writes of the *image of God* in man. He introduces the subject in a strangely off-handed way, apparently to clinch his argument for the immortality of the soul. But the notion of the divine image has far greater systematic importance than its modest entrance suggests. The way in which Calvin interprets it opens up, better than anything else, the heart of his understanding of man and his place in the world. Further, it constitutes an important link with other parts of the system. It is closely bound up, for instance, with Calvin's teaching on *redemption,* since Jesus Christ, as the Second Adam, is the one in whom the divine image is restored: being "saved" means being renewed after the image of God in Christ. In addition, Calvin builds his *social ethics* partly on the endurance of the divine image even in fallen man.[5] The sacredness and dignity of human life are guaranteed by the fact that man was made in the image and likeness of God, and that the remnants of the image persist. It is not only Genesis 1:26 that serves Calvin in this connection, but also Genesis 9:6: "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in His own image." This meant, for him, that the image was not lost but remained regulative of man's social relationships. (The christological reference of the divine image he found especially in 2 Corinthians 4:4, which speaks of the "light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God.")

Perhaps Calvin's doctrine of the image of God in man did receive a somewhat external interest from the well-known debate between Barth and Brunner. At least, it is largely to that debate that we owe the careful attention the scholars have paid to this theme in Calvin's theology.[6] But it does not follow that the theme was marginal to his own thought. He made extensive use of it, perhaps more than the Scriptures warrant. At any rate, he pulled together under this rubric somewhat diverse biblical topics, linked accidentally by a single word, and gave them a distinctive interpretation. Whether or not the interpretation was strictly original, we do not, for now, need to inquire.

What does he mean, then, by the "image of God"? His treatment of the term in the *Institutes* is highly characteristic of him. He liked formal definitions. But, being trained in the rhetoric of the Renaissance, he thought it gauche to offer his definition first: it was more elegant to lead up to it. At the risk of appearing gauche, we shall begin with it. Calvin writes:

> The integrity with which Adam was endowed is expressed by this word [*imago*], when he had full possession of right understanding, when he had his affections kept within the bounds of reason, all his senses tempered in right order, and he truly referred his excellence to exceptional gifts bestowed upon him by his Maker.[7]

It is apparent that what Calvin seeks in his definition is comprehensiveness. The image is anything and everything that sets man apart from the rest of God's creation; or again, by argument back from the restoration of the image in Christ, it is anything and everything that we receive by redemption. In detail, he seeks to divide the general concept by adopting common psychological categories, according to which, as he goes on to put it in a summary formula, Adam had light of *mind* and uprightness of *heart* (with "soundness of all the parts"). That is to say, Adam's intellect saw with clarity, and the affections were duly subordinated to it.

Surveying the opinions of others (another of his favorite procedures), Calvin appropriates whatever he can, but does not hesitate to tell us where his predecessors went wrong. The distinction of Irenaeus between the "image" and the "likeness" of God he rejects: Irenaeus did not understand the nature of Hebrew parallelism. Even Augustine went astray by suggesting that the image refers to the psychological "trinity" of man's intellect, will, and memory, which he held to be an image (or analogy) of the Blessed Trinity. This, Calvin decides, is mere speculation. On the other hand, he apparently thinks Chrysostom had a point when he identified the image with man's dominion over nature. At least, this is part of it. But it is not the sole mark by which man resembles God, and the image is to be sought more correctly *within* man as an inner good of the soul. Finally, Calvin does not want to reject out of hand even the exegesis of Osiander, although he was a man "perversely ingenious in futile invention." Osiander thought the image pertained to the body as well as to the soul, in that Adam's body pointed forward to the incarnation of the Son of God. This, Calvin assures us, is unsound. But he has already admitted that the upright posture of the human body is at least an outward token of the divine image; for, as Ovid says in the

Metamorphoses, while other living beings are bent over earthwards,

> Man looks aloft and with erected eyes
> Beholds his own hereditary skies.[8]

Perhaps, however, the desire to be comprehensive and to take the opinions of others into account may obscure the distinctive feature of Calvin's interpretation. And one has to look to his commentaries (as well as to other sections of the *Institutes*) to shed further light on his definition.[9] The first point to notice is the exact metaphor Calvin had in mind when he spoke of an "image." He meant the image seen in a mirror — a reflection. This was a metaphor he particularly liked, and he had used it already in earlier chapters of the *Institutes*; the whole of creation had been represented as a mirror in which the glory of God is to be viewed. We are, Calvin says, to "contemplate in all creatures, as in mirrors, those immense riches of his wisdom, justice, goodness, and power."[10] Similarly, in the chapter on man's nature as created (book 1, chap. 15) Calvin states that "even in the several parts of the world some traces of God's glory shine." If, then, the doctrine of the image of God in man is intended as a "tacit antithesis," to set man apart from the rest of creation, the question must be asked: How, or in what sense, is man peculiarly and particularly a mirror of deity? In what special manner is he the "reflection of God's glory"?

The answer is most clearly read in the last phrase of Calvin's definition: " . . . and he truly referred his excellence to exceptional gifts bestowed upon him by his Maker." While the entire created order reflects God's glory as in a mirror and in this sense "images" God, man is set apart from the mute creation by his ability to reflect God's glory in a conscious response of thankfulness. It is this, above all, that sets him apart from the brute beasts; they likewise owe their existence to God, and so reflect His glory, but they do not know it. Man is endowed with a soul by which he can consciously acknowledge God as the Fountain of Good. The soul is not itself the image, but rather the mirror in which the image is reflected. Properly, then, we can speak of man as bearing the image of God *only* when he attributes his excellence to the Maker. Man is the apex of creation in the sense that the entire creation has its *raison d'etre* in the praise that man alone, of all God's earthly creatures, can return to Him.[11]

To sum up: In Calvin's view, the image of God in man denotes not an endowment only but also a relationship. That is to say, he does not seek to define the image solely by what man possesses as

his "nature," but also by the manner in which he orients himself to God. Man is not made in the image of God simply because he has reason, for instance, whereas the rest of God's creatures do not. Even an individual endowed with a wealth of special "gifts" is not in the image of God, in the fully human sense, unless he *acknowledges* them as the gifts of God. The relationship of man to God is thus made constitutive of his humanity; and, as we were led to expect, there is a correlation between the notion that is constitutive of deity and the notion constitutive of humanity. God as Fountain of Good has His counterpart in man as His *thankful* creature. And the disruption of this relationship is, for Calvin, nothing less than de-humanizing.

The distinction implicit here becomes crucial for understanding Calvin's view of sin and the fall. The scholars have found an ambiguity in Calvin's answer to the question: Is the image of God lost in fallen man? But if the image includes both man's rational nature and its proper use toward God, the answer is bound to be two-sided. Insofar as the image culminates in the thought of a "right spiritual attitude,"[12] one can hardly speak of it as other than "lost" in fallen man, who (by definition) is man fallen out of the right spiritual relationship to God. Redemption, accordingly, is nothing less than restoration of the image. Later, in discussing the effects of the fall, Calvin will assert that faith and love for God, since they are restored to us by Christ, must be accounted lost by the fall — taken away. But the rational nature of man, by which he is *enabled* (in distinction from mere beasts) to love God, is not simply wiped out.[13] In short, the image of God in man embraces both a gift and its right use, both man's rational nature and its orientation to God in thankfulness. For, "We are no different from brutish beasts if we do not understand that the world was made by God. Why are men endowed with reason and intellect except for the purpose of recognizing their Creator?"[14]

II. The State of Sin

With these remarks, the transition is already made from man in the design of God to man in the state of sin. Once again, the important point is to grasp the systematic coherence of Calvin's thoughts. Quite simply, if Adam's *original* state was one in which he acknowledged his endowments as the gifts of God, his *fallen* state was induced by the pride that claimed something for himself. Not content to be *like* God, he wanted to be God's *equal*; and in seeking his own glory, he lost the capacity to reflect the glory of God. It one can hold firmly to this cardinal thought, then much of the nonsense that is commonly retailed concerning "total

depravity" can be quickly disposed of. Calvin had no interest in belittling the moral and intellectual achievements of man. He was too well schooled in the classics and in Renaissance scholarship to do that. But he had also gone to school with his master Augustine, and what he did wish to show was that all the works of man, even the very best, remain radically defective when the doer no longer receives his life as a gift. And precisely because he knew classical and Renaissance man so well, he could argue his case with penetrating insight.

Now there are several intricate questions in Calvin's discussion of sin that we must risk leaving out. In particular, he wrestled with two problems bequeathed to him by his mentor, Augustine: the *cause* of Adam's sin and the *mode of its transmission* to the rest of us. These are admittedly important questions, and Calvin's reflections on them are both intriguing and important. But it is obvious that one could not, in any case, resolve the problems of sin's cause and transmission without determining what sin is. This, then, is the first matter on which one must comment. And the only other matter which this study will take up (because of its pertinence to our central theme) is the extent of the damage wreaked by sin on human nature.

We are not surprised to find that Calvin has a definition of original sin (*Institutes*, 2.1.8). But what is the *nature* of the "depravity" and "corruption" to which the definition refers? His analysis of the concept of sin is, in fact, more clearly given in his interpretation of Genesis 3; it is the "history" of Adam's fall that shows us what sin is (*Institutes*, 2.1.4). As usual, Calvin proceeds by telling us what others have said on the subject, especially Augustine.

We read that Adam ate a tempting fruit, "good for food . . . a delight to the eyes" (Gen. 3:6). Was his sin, then, that he indulged his appetite? Calvin answers: "To regard Adam's sin as gluttonous intemperance (a common notion) is childish." The forbidden fruit was a test of obedience, an exercise of faith. In a paradise abounding with delights, abstinence from only one fruit would hardly have made him virtuous. Rather, "the sole purpose of the precept was to keep him content with his lot." So, Calvin moves on to Augustine's interpretation, which states that pride was the beginning of all evils: "For if ambition had not raised man higher than was meet and right, he could have remained in his original state." Is Augustine right, according to Calvin? The English translation says that Augustine "speaks rightly." But what Calvin wrote was "non male." And he seems to have meant it

literally: Augustine's answer is not bad, but it is not quite right either.[15]

Calvin wants, in fact, to get behind human pride to the root cause of it. And what is that? He has several words for it; perhaps "unfaithfulness" is the regulative one. But it is crucial to note that, for him, the essence of infidelity is *not listening to God.* That is the way he read the biblical narrative. The serpent's opening gambit, it will be recalled, is to ask the question, "Did God say. . .?" (v. 1). A little later, somewhat emboldened, he assures Eve: "You will not die" (v. 4). The serpent works by instilling contempt for the Word of God. Here is the theme Calvin wants to pick up, in order to show the root of pride and so to improve on Augustine. Adam, in short, was *verbo incredulus;* he questioned the Word. And this destroyed his reverence for God, whom he pictured as not only deceitful but envious and hostile to His own creature.

Finally, at the end, Calvin seems to return to the theme of carnal desire, and says: "As a result, men, having cast off the fear of God, threw themselves wherever lust carried them." Bondage to carnal desire, in other words, is not the beginning of sin, but its final consequence. The heart of the matter, as Calvin saw it, is summed up like this:

> Unfaithfulness, then, was the root of the Fall. But thereafter ambition and pride, together with ungratefulness, arose, because Adam by seeking more than was granted him shamefully spurned God's great bounty, which had been lavished upon him. To have been made in the likeness of God seemed a small matter to a son of earth unless he also attained equality with God — a monstrous wickedness!

It will be noticed, in this passage, how Calvin can equally well make his point with the word "ungratefulness"; or, from the perspective of God, he can state that "Adam, carried away by the devil's blasphemies, as far as he was able extinguished the whole glory of God." Plainly, here is the same complex of ideas — with some shifts in terminology — that we have found already in Calvin's thoughts on the image of God in man. But now everything is, so to say, inverted; for whereas man was created to image God's glory in an act of thankful acknowledgment, he has fallen into thankless pride that spurns God's bounty.

Calvin rounds off his anatomy of sin with a remark that points forward to redemption: "The door of salvation is opened to us when we receive the gospel today with our ears, even as death was then admitted by those same windows when they were opened to Satan." (As so often, he is quoting Bernard of Clairvaux.) But his

immediate agenda requires him to address himself, next, to original sin and the ravages of sin in the intellect and the will of man. Here we find some of Calvin's gloomiest rhetoric; but it can hardly account for the common opinion that there is a sharp difference between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism on the extent of sin's damage to the soul. Although he is sharply critical of the Schoolmen at many points, Calvin thinks one cannot improve on their distinction between the natural and the supernatural gifts of God: "The natural gifts in man were corrupted, but the supernatural taken away."[16] The problem is that the Schoolmen did not agree on a satisfactory *explanation* of the formula. And in this respect the earlier Schoolmen are judged better than the "more recent Sophists."[17] Hence a great part of the discussion requires Calvin, as usual, to sort out the sheep from the goats among his predecessors and to arrive at satisfactory definitions of terms. The sole point which this study must stress, however, is that Calvin seems explicitly to caution us against "adjudging man's nature wholly corrupted."[18] At any rate, what he was concerned to establish was, not that man is utterly bad, but that the taint of sin vitiates even his best and leaves no corner of his life unblemished. And Calvin tried to demonstrate this thesis, in turn, with respect to both man's intellectual and his moral achievements.

Hence, writing of the human *intellect,* Calvin certainly will not allow that it can attain to a sound knowledge of God; for it cannot reach the assurance of God's benevolence (a point that Luther, too, liked to stress).[19] Nevertheless, it is entirely consistent with Calvin's standpoint that he maintained a firmly positive attitude toward the attainments of human culture, since failure to do so would be denial of his fundamental notion of God as *fons bonorum:*

> The mind of man, though fallen and perverted from its wholeness, is nevertheless clothed and ornamented with God's excellent gifts. If we regard the Spirit of God as the sole fountain of truth, we shall neither reject the truth itself, nor despise it wherever it shall appear, unless we wish to dishonor the Spirit of God. For by holding the gifts of the Spirit in light esteem, we contemn and reproach the Spirit himself.[20]

Calvin then parades the cultural achievements of man in law, natural philosophy, logic, medicine, mathematics. And, as a good humanist, he concludes:

> We cannot read the writings of the ancients on these subjects without great admiration. We marvel at them because we are

> compelled to recognize how preeminent they are. But shall we count anything praiseworthy or noble without recognizing at the same time that it comes from God? Let us be ashamed of such ingratitude, into which not even the pagan poets fell, for they confessed that the gods had invented philosophy, laws, and all useful arts.[21]

Similarly, when Calvin turns to his discussion of the fallen *will,* he insists that even in sin man cannot be wholly bad; otherwise, we could not say that one man is "better" than another:[22]

> In every age there have been persons who, guided by nature, have striven toward virtue throughout life. I have nothing to say against them even if many lapses can be noted in their moral conduct . . . Either we must make Camillus equal to Catiline, or we shall have in Camillus an example proving that nature, if carefully cultivated, is not utterly devoid of goodness.

Then, of course, comes the refrain: this "natural goodness," too, must be traced to the special bounty of God. "The endowments resplendent in Camillus were gifts of God." But now the question is this: Did the ancient heroes, such as the patriot Camillus, acknowledge gifts as gifts?

Calvin's answer is that "heroes" are driven by their own ambition. In other words, we may say, the glory they seek is their own. Hence Calvin grants that their virtues will have their praise in the political assembly and in common renown among men, but not that they make for righteousness before the heavenly judgment-seat. For, "Where there is no zeal to glorify God, the chief part of uprightness is absent." While, therefore, in ordinary, day-to-day usage ("common parlance," as Calvin says) we do not hesitate to distinguish one man as "noble" and another as "depraved" in nature, we are still to include both under the theological verdict of human depravity. Plainly, Calvin is making the point that Luther conveyed by his distinction between "Christian" and "civil" righteousness. To say (theologically) that a man is "depraved" is not to say that, morally considered, he is a bad man. All turns on the motivation out of which a man acts — whether or not, that is, his deeds are done in thankfulness to the Fountain of Good. The doctrine of sin is not strictly about a person's moral condition, but about his relationship to God; it pronounces a religious, not an ethical verdict. Pagan virtues, properly understood, are in truth tokens of grace; but insofar as they are the virtues of a man who claims them for himself, they differ from the virtues of the justified man because they issue from a quite different orientation of the total self.

While it cannot be claimed that Calvin's language is always perspicuously self-consistent, a consistent thread does run through his thoughts on human nature as created, fallen, and redeemed. Man's being points beyond himself to the source of his existence and of the existence of all that is. He was fashioned as the point of creation at which the overflowing goodness of the Creator was to be reflected back again in thankful piety. This is the condition from which he fell, no longer heeding the voice of God. And it is the condition to which, in hearing the Word of God in Jesus Christ, he is restored.

FOOTNOTES

1. John Calvin, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion,* trans. from the 1559 Latin edition by Ford Lewis Battles, ed. John T. McNeill, 2 vols., "Library of Christian Classics," vols. 20-21 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 2.3.4 (1:294). The 1559 *Institutes* (hereafter *Inst.*) is cited by book, chapter, and section; the numbers in parentheses give the volume and page in the translation.
2. Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 368.
3. *Inst.*, 1.5.4 (1:56); *Sermon on Job*, 2,1 *seq.* I owe the second citation to Cairns (see n. 6 below), p. 139.
4. *Inst.*, 1.14.22 (1:182).
5. See, e.g., *Inst.*, 3.7.6 (1:696-97).
6. See esp. David Cairns, *The Image of God in Man* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1953); Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin,* trans. Harold Knight (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956); T.F. Torrance, *Calvin's Doctrine of Man* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1949).
7. *Inst.*, 1.15.3 (1:188).
8. I have borrowed the English version of Ovid's lines from the older translation of the *Institutes* by Henry Beveridge. It should be noted that here, as also in the mention of Irenaeus and Chrysostom, I am furnishing the name of Calvin's source.
9. Torrance (see n. 6 above) is the most useful guide on the theme of the *imago dei* in Calvin's sermons and commentaries.
10. *Inst.*, 1.14.21 (1:180).
11. See further B.A. Gerrish, ed., *Reformers in Profile* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp. 153-54.
12. Niesel, *op. cit.*, p.67.
13. *Inst.*, 2.2.12 (1:270).
14. Calvin, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews and the First and Second Epistles of St. Peter,* trans. William B. Johnston, "Calvin's Commentaries," ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1963), pp. 158-59 (on Heb. 11:3).
15. All quotations in this and the following two paragraphs are from *Inst.*, 2.1.4 (1:244-46).
16. *Inst.*, 2.2.4 (1:260).
17. *Inst.*, 2.2.6 (1:263).
18. *Inst.*, 2.3.3 (1:292).

19. *Inst.*, 2.2.18 (1:277).
20. *Inst.*, 2.2.15 (1:273-74).
21. *Inst.*, 2.2.15 (1:274).
22. All quotations in this and the following paragraph are from *Inst.*, 2.3.3-4 (1:292-94).

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Hermeneutics in Thomas Aquinas: An Appraisal and Appreciation

John Franklin Johnson

Dr. Stanley Gundry has recently noted that North American evangelical Christians, by and large, are but minimally conscious of their connection with the Christian past in dealing with crucial theological and ecclesiological issues of the day.[1] Although Gundry does not explicitly identify that expanse of the tradition most often dismissed, it would not be far off the mark to suggest the medieval era as the most likely candidate — especially in terms of dealing with questions of Biblical authority and interpretation.

Indeed, when many a Protestant thinks of medieval theotogy the initial images which come to mind are titles of tomes like the *Sententiae* of Peter Lombard or the *Quaestiones Disputatae* of Thomas Aquinas. Moveover, he recalls a "scholastic" manner of thinking and presentation characterized by sophisticated divisions, stereotyped literary forms, definitions, syllogisms, and constant subtle delineations; in short, a dry intellectualism which seems to have neglected the vivid originality of the Holy Scriptures. Certainly in the Lutheran heritage there is evidence of this general predisposition regarding the aridity of medieval theological reflection. There are few who would take issue with Luther's opposition to the use of Aristotle by that "chatter-box" Thomas Aquinas — an opposition that is evident from the fact that, while Aquinas consistently referred to Aristotle as "the philosopher," Luther just as consistently refers to him as "that damned pagan" (in addition to other choice epithets that form a long and impressive catalog).[2] But even beyond the Lutheran denominational pale, it is to be doubted if many Protestants would dissent from Luther's estimate of Peter Lombard or hesitate to apply it even more generally to other medieval theologians. "Peter Lombard," Luther said, "was adequate as a theologian; none has been his equal. He read Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory, and also all the councils. He was a great man. If he had by chance come upon the Bible he would no doubt have been the greatest."[3] In other words, there is the suspicion among contemporary "evangelical" Christians that the Scriptures were so ignored in the Middle Ages that the theology of the period is but bare rationalization.

However, what is less known but decisive for an accurate understanding of medieval theology and its literary expression is that this scholasticism was developed on the basis and in the

framework of what might be termed today an "evangelical movement."

The period of the last third of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century is characterized by the breakthrough of a desire for biblical knowledge which could not be satisfied by means of glosses between the lines or on the margin of the text.[4] Obviously, this thirst for knowledge had a sociological dimension; from a more exact hearing of the biblical word arose an impulse toward a renewal of the church, and soon this movement expressed itself in new institutional forms — as, for instance, the orders of the Franciscans and the Dominicans. Yet, this thirst for scriptural knowledge soon developed as an academic tendency in its own right. New methods were invented to diffuse the text of the Scriptures in greater quantity; corrected copies of the text were attempted, both Latin and vernacular; the text was divided into pericopes; the first concordances appeared; and, above all, the theological educational system was rearranged in harmony with these tendencies. The consistent presentation of systematic theology was the concern of the "baccalaureus," who explained the *Sentences* of Lomard. At one time historians commonly assumed that masters in theology lectured on the *Sentences* as well, but in 1894 Heinrich Denifle demonstrated conclusively that the official textbook of masters in theology in the medieval university was the Bible.[5] Once a young man became a master, he was not allowed to lecture on Lombard; rather his task was to comment on the Holy Scriptures, and his official title was "Master of the Sacred Page."

In addition to this medieval "evangelical movement," a second development helped shape biblical study — the introduction of Aristotelianism into the theology of the Church through the medium of Arabian and Jewish scholars. The significance of this phenomenon for hermeneutics in the Middle Ages is not to be seen in the use of new methods so much as in the close integration of language and thought that it produced. Interpretation, it was realized, cannot be isolated from the rules of thought which govern all areas of knowledge; it must be conducted scientifically, with adequate reasons given for the significance established.[6] The impact of this Aristotelian thought on medieval hermeneutics was basically felt in two connections.

First, it challenged the sharp distinction between sense and thought. According to the Platonic philosophical orientation, there was a world of ordered forms above and apart from the world of sense-experience; they are reflected in it to be sure, but knowledge of them is reached only through transcending sense-

experience. That made it possible for the late patristic and early medieval ages to develop an entire world of allegory and spiritual meaning in detachment from history and event. According to the Aristotelian view, however, the universal ideas exist only as expressed in the individual objects of the sensible world, and we know them apart from, but only through, sense-experience. All of this had a very sobering effect on exegesis. It disparaged the cultivation of a world of meaning which could be correlated on its own without scientific reference to the historical sense of Scripture and careful examination of its words and concepts. The Aristotelian philosophy, that is to say, refused to separate matter and form because they are two aspects of one thing. In terms of hermeneutics, one cannot understand the Bible by naively distinguishing letter from spirit and making a separate study of each.

In the second place, the Aristotelian notion of science as that which establishes rational connections and gathers them around a center had an impact on hermeneutics.[7] Scientific knowledge, according to the Aristotelian model, is the orderly arranging and demonstration of sequences of truths in a particular science according to the particular principles relevant to it (e.g., biological sequences within biology and geometrical sequences within geometry). Knowledge arises through a development from sense-experience by drawing out what is implicit in it and so proceeds by abstraction to the formulation of general notions, and to explanation by testing the relation of their causes to particular effects. The application of this concept to biblical interpretation in the medieval theologians does not mean that the truths of divine revelation have to be demonstrated, but that the interpretation of the Scriptures cannot be separated from careful analysis of propositions. The interpretation of language is, after all, the interpretation of thought. This, in turn, had twin ramifications for exegesis. On the one hand, it detached the interpretation of the Bible from a realm of mystical meanings that could not be rationally related to the text and thus brought theology and exegesis into closer relation to one another. On the other hand, it introduced a powerful element of inferential reasoning into interpretation, whether of the linguistic signs used in Scripture (its words and sentences) or of the things they signified. Consequently, there arose a natural theology side by side with revealed theology, and because the former could only be regarded as *praeparatio fidei*, it tended to provide the general framework within which biblical interpretation was carried on.[8]

To perceive in a concrete way how these two developments coalesced — the renewed movement toward the centrality of

Scripture and the implications of Aristotle's philosophy for hermeneutics — one must look preeminently to Thomas Aquinas. Thomas was, of course, a Dominican friar and very much committed to the medieval "evangelical movement", a commitment sharpened in the midst of the anti-mendicant controversy which was at its zenith when Thomas incepted at the University of Paris in 1256. In the following year he began lecturing on the Bible as a master of sacred theology. From that time until his death some seventeen years later, Thomas lectured and wrote commentaries on a number of biblical books including Isaiah, Jeremiah, Job, the Psalms, Matthew, John, and the Pauline epistles. Indeed, according to Pope Leo XIII, Thomas was the leading exegete of Holy Scripture among the scholastic theologians.[9]

In terms of Aristotelian influence, Thomas is well known as an interpreter of that philosophical position. His massive *Summa Theologiae* stands as a monumental synthesis of Aristotelian philosophy and Christian theology. As Paul Vignaux notes, Aquinas placed Christianity "in the midst of Aristotelian natural philosophy, in the very center of the science of nature."[10]

The present question, then, is what brand of biblical hermeneutic emerges from a theologian whose understanding of the Word of God develops in the matrix of these two currents. Is it a hermeneutic hopelessly mired in the intricacies of scholastic subtleties and of little value today? Or is it a hermeneutic — deficient, to be sure — but suggestive of some important motifs to which all who appreciate the authority of Scripture can resonate? And, perhaps just as importantly, what does it say about a scientific hermeneutic forged from the fires of both an "evangelical" renaissance and an Aristotelian philosophical orientation in a time when many Protestants seem to think of Platonism as a theological virtue? While exhaustive answers to these questions cannot be offered in this brief essay, perhaps the most appropriate way to begin the task is to identify those concepts at the basis of the hermeneutic of Thomas Aquinas and their implications for the role of Scripture in his theology.

In interpretation, Thomas held, one has to determine the intention of the author and discern the significant form of what he has to say through turning one's attention to the things signified and through noting the use of his words by examining their relation to the whole of his discourse.[11] In all of this, interpretation is fundamentally an act of the intellect or understanding (*intellectus*) in which the mind pierces through to see the *quid* of a thing, that is to say, to read the truth in the very essence

of it (*interius in ipsa rei essentia rei veritatem quodammodo legere*).[12]

The etymology of *intelligere* accepted by Thomas was from *intus legere*, to read within, to penetrate beneath the sensible surface and discern the relational meaning. This provides an important clue to the Thomistic conception of interpretation as an act of understanding or intimate knowledge (*intellectus*). In the *Summa* he writes:

> Sensitive cognition is concerned with external sensible qualities but intellective cognition penetrates into the very essence of a thing, because the object of the understanding is that which is (*quod quid est*). But there are many kinds of things which lie hidden within, to which man's cognition ought to penetrate from the inside, as it were. For under the accidents lies hidden the substantial nature of the thing; under words lie hidden the things signified by the words; under similitudes and figures lies hidden effects, and conversely. But since man's cognition begins with sense as from without, it is manifest that the stronger the light of the intellect is, the farther it can penetrate into the inmost depths. However, the natural light of our intellect is of finite strength and hence can but reach to what is limited. Therefore man needs supernatural light, that he may penetrate farther in order to learn what he cannot learn through his natural light, and that supernatural light given to man is called the gift of understanding (*donum intellectus*).[13]

By this supernatural light Thomas was not referring to some special grace but to the gift of simple intuitive apprehension which Aristotle had spoken of as the divine in man and which St. Augustine had taken over from his Platonic sources. Although he was critical of Augustinian Platonism, Aquinas still held that the power of the intellect in penetrating into the essence of a thing, into its ultimate structure or spiritual content, would not be possible were it not that man has been given a share in the divine light. To be sure, in the above cited passage Thomas is not discussing hermeneutics *per se*, but, as he indicated, the same procedure applies to the interpretation of words, for we have to discern not only their sense but break through to the real meaning. To understand is to read the hidden meaning. This does not refer to some esoteric art, but to the same sort of activity one employs when one seeks to know the quiddity of anything.

But how is one to think of this intuitive apprehension of essences when it is applied to the interpretation of the divinely

inspired writings of Scripture, which can be approached "scientifically" only if they are interpreted in a mode appropriate to their nature? The Bible has two authors; the principal author is God, Thomas affirms, but man is the instrumental author.[14] Thus, in interpreting Scripture, the intellect must penetrate through the sense of the words to the meaning of the human author and to the meaning of the divine author. This does not mean that the Scripture is equivocal, for God reveals Himself through the literal sense intended by the human author; but it does mean that the interpreter has to penetrate to the divine intention through the literal sense, the grammatical sense.

On the one hand, then, the Scriptures must be interpreted as divinely inspired. In them, Aquinas writes, "the Word of the eternal Father, comprehending everything by His own immensity, has willed to become little through the assumption of our littleness, yet without resigning His majesty . . . ."[15] Because it is our nature to learn intelligible truths through sensible objects, God has provided revelation of Himself according to the capacity of our nature and has put forward in the Holy Scriptures divine and spiritual truths through comparisons with material things. That is why the Lord spoke in parables. Thus it is apparent that, as Thomas states in the introduction to his *Summa*:

> The divinely inspired Scripture does not come within the philosophical disciplines that have been discovered according to human reason. Accordingly, there is needed another science divinely inspired beyond philosophical disciplines . . . because man is ordained to God, to an end that surpasses the grasp of his reason.[16]

The science of interpreting these Scriptures needs supernatural grace and special illumination that the intellect may penetrate into the inner depth of the divine revelation, into the very heart of the truth.[17] It will not, however, leave the grammatical-historical sense behind nor deprecate it; for it is only in and through the literal sense that the illuminated intellect can reach the spiritual content and reality that lie behind them.

On the other hand, the Scriptures must be considered from the viewpoint of their human authorship, according to Thomas. The fact that he distinguished the human author from the divine, as the instrumental author, means that he thinks of the human authorship in terms of second causes. Thus, while God is the Principal Author or Cause, the human author is given a relative place under Him as secondary cause so that what he produces must be investigated in its *relative* independence as a human composition. When the act of *intelligere* is directed to the human

words of Scripture it penetrates beneath them to read them from their inner aspect and so through the *sensus* it reaches what the author intended the words to signify, the *intellectus litteralis*. In determining this, one has to consider the end to which they conduce and therefore the reason for them. Therefore, interpretation is concerned not only with the literal sense of the words but with the literal causes and reasons that lie behind them. If language and thought, words and reasons, belong so closely together, then a faithful interpretation of the text will be inseparable from an interpretation of the thought.

In the Scriptures, then, the interpreter is concerned with rational communication; the rational disciplines, accordingly, have to be used in their interpretation. The influence of Aristotle's *Perihermenias* on Thomas is manifest at this juncture; if men only made natural sounds without any intention or mental image lying behind them they could no more be interpreted than the noises of animals.[18] If it is this rational communication in and through words that one has to interpret in the Bible, then the exegetical and argumentative modes of interpretation are not to be divorced from one another. That is to say, unless one probes right into the sequence of thought a passage involves, one is unable to deal adequately and lucidly with the text. Exegesis requries problematic thinking.

It is to be observed that when one does penetrate into the literal reasons that lie behind the literal sense of Scripture one is interpreting what is intended by the divine author as well as the human author who was moved by God to write. For instance, when one considers the reasons for the ceremonial precepts in the Old Testament, one discovers that there was a twofold end which must guide the interpretation; they were ordained for divine worship to commemorate certain divine benefits, but they were also ordained to foreshadow Jesus Christ. They may, therefore, be taken in two ways but never in such a way that they go beyond the order of literal causes.[19] Thus, even though one gives some of these ceremonies a Christological interpretation, one can only do that if it is congruent with the literal signification and rooted in it.

When handling the question of biblical interpretation, Aquinas speaks prominently of the *sensus litteralis*; indeed, it is interesting to note that in his biblical commentaries the early church fathers are not cited as often as in the works of other medieval exegetes. The so-called spiritual sense is handled much more soberly by Thomas than his contemporaries. The literal sense is primary and essential, while the spiritual is derived and based on the former.

Recalling the Augustinian fourfold distinction in determining the sense of the Old Testament: the historical, the aetiological, the analogical, and the allegorical, Thomas argues that all but the allegorical are to be included in the literal sense. History is the straightforward account, aetiology is the causative account, and analogy is the comparative account in which the truth of one is shown not to contradict the truth of another. The rule to be observed is that all the senses are built upon the literal sense — the sense of words — and that argument and doctrine are to be taken from the literal sense alone, never from the allegorical or spiritual sense.[20] Aquinas is very emphatic about this. Historical truth must be kept as the foundation, while spiritual expositions are to be built on top of it. As he writes in his commentary on 2 Corinthians, to wrest the Scripture to an alien end is a form of spiritual adultery.[21]

By the spiritual sense, Aquinas refers in traditional terms to the allegorical, tropological or moral, and the anagogical senses. But he insists that Scripture does not teach under the spiritual sense anything necessary for faith which it does not teach with clarity under the literal sense.[22] In so far as it is not explicitly revealed, the spiritual sense is always uncertain and therefore cannot be employed in sacred doctrine. However, by this nothing is lost from the revealed truth since "nothing is taught mysteriously in any place of Scripture which is not explained clearly elsewhere; therefore, the spiritual explanation must always be based on the literal."[23] This sentiment is in part, of course, reminiscent of the Lutheran insistence on the perspicuity of Scripture and the truth that Scripture interprets Scripture.

The primary necessity for Thomas, then, is to study the text. The interpreter of the Word of God has to see the parts in relation to the whole and the whole in relation to the parts that comprise it. No part separated from the rest has the form of the whole any more than a hand separated from man has human form.

From start to finish Thomas Aquinas is a rational, scientific thinker. It is not surprising therefore that he should act in the same way with regard to Sacred Scripture. A science, according to him, is the way of knowledge in which from things already known one derives a knowledge of things previously unknown. This embraces a ratiocinative process from first principles to conclusions through which knowledge is sifted out and arranged in an order which the intellect seeks to see as a whole. No science can prove its first principles, but it is in the light of them that it knows what is less knowable; and in ordering its matter in the light of the first principles it does succeed in connecting the contents

rationally together and so directs attention back again to first principles. When this scientific method is applied to theology, Thomas claims, the Bible occupies the place of first principles, and it is in the light of the truths they reveal that the whole process of theological activity is undertaken.[24]

However, Aquinas also suggests that there are two kinds of science. Some sciences are grounded on first principles that are *per se nota* evident to the natural intelligence, such as geometry; but there are others that operate under the light of God's own knowledge and which He manifests to us through the words of Scripture. In this way, it could be said, Thomas unequivocally bases the doctrines of theology upon the Word of God. The authoritative pronouncements of Scripture ought to have supreme place; theology can only make use of other authorities or teachers as extrinsic and probable corroboration.[25] Theological science receives its principles immediately from God through the divine revelation given to the prophets and apostles. "We must keep to that which has been written in Scripture," says Aquinas, "as to an excellent rule of faith so that we must add nothing to it, detract nothing, and change nothing by interpreting it badly."[26]

Certainly, there are many deficiencies in other aspects of Thomistic hermeneutic. In refusing to allow the propositions of the Roman Church to come under the criticism of scriptural truth, for example, Aquinas virtually made the authority of the Church dominant over the *prima veritas*. Certainly, too, after Aquinas there emerged medieval theologians for whom the scholastic system was the principal matter and the interpretation of the Bible a secondary matter. Yet, the thrust of the present discussion is to demonstrate that such a mentality is far from that of Aquinas. There are, indeed, some motifs in his theology that distinguish his handling of Scripture from others in his own time, motifs which remain instructive in our time also. This is a significant point to make if modern Lutheranism is to capitalize on its wider connection with past Christian tradition and to mine that connection, where valid, for all of its gold in defending the primacy and infallibility of the Word of God in our own day.

FOOTNOTES

1. Stanley Gundry, "Evangelical Theology: Where Should We Be Going?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, XXII (March, 1979), p. 8.
2. Quoted in Friedrich Nitzsch, *Luther und Aristoteles* (Kiel, 1883), p. 3.
3. Martin Luther, *Table Talk* (Philadelphia, 1967), p. 26.

4. See Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1952).
5. Heinrich Denifle, "Quel livre servait de base a l'enseignement des Maitres en Theologie dans d'Universite de Paris," *Revue Thomiste*, II (1894), pp. 129-161.
6. It would be well, incidentally, for evangelical Lutherans to explore this Aristotelian motif in view of the threat to modern biblical theology by a new nominalism that appears to question very radically the relation of language to thought. See, for example, James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford, 1961).
7. For a concise summary of the Thomistic stance on the subjects of a science see Armand Maurer's "Introduction" to Thomas Aquinas, *The Division and Methods of the Sciences* (Toronto, 1963).
8. *Expositio super librum Boethii de Trinitate*, q. 2, 22.
9. Pope Leo XIII, "Thomas Aquinas inter eos habuit palmam," in the encyclical *Providentissimus Deus*.
10. Paul Vignaux, *Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1959), p. 119.
11. See *Perihermenias*, Bk. I, 1-7.
12. See Hans Meyer, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (St. Louis, 1944), p. 190ff.
13. *ST*, II-II, q. 8, a. 1.
14. *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*, q. 6, a. 3.
15. *Compendium Theologiae*, I. 1.
16. *ST*, I-I, q. 1, a. 1.
17. *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*, q. 6, a. 1.
18. *Perihermenias*, Bk. 1, 1.
19. *ST*, I-II, q. 102, a. 2, ad 1.
20. *ST*, I-I, q. 1, a. 10, ad 1.
21. *Comm. in 2 Cor.*, 2, lect. 3, fin.
22. *ST*, I-I, q. 1, a. 10, ad 1.
23. *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*, q. 7.
24. *ST*, I-I, q. 1, a. 2; a. 3.
25. Consistently in Thomas's systematic works *sacra scriptura* and *sacra doctrina* are taken as equivalents. See, for example, *ST*, I-I, q. 1, a. 5, ad 2; a. 8, ad 2; II-II, q. 1, a. 5, ad 2; *Summa contra Gentiles*, bk. I, ch. 9.
26. *In De Divinis Nominibus*, II, lect. 1.

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Homiletical Studies

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT
I Corinthians 1:3-9
November 29, 1981

Knowing what we do about the Christian congregation in Corinth, it is interesting to see that St. Paul begins his first letter to them on a very positive note. He thanks God for all that God has wrought in them. Despite their many weaknesses and petty factions, they had been enriched in every spiritual way. God had done no less for them than He had done in others. Therefore the Corinthians could be certain as to how they would fare on the last day when Christ would come again.

Advent is a time for solemn and sober thought about our sins. Like the first century Corinthians we have many weaknesses. Yet God comes to us in this season of new beginnings to remind us that in Christ we too have been enriched in every spiritual way. We can be sure that it will be well for us on the day He comes in glory.

Introduction: The season of Advent offers us a panoramic view of the entire Christian era. We see the past as we contemplate Christ's first coming, His birth in Bethlehem. We presently experience Christ's continual coming into our hearts and lives. We look to the future and the second coming of Christ when "He shall come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead." But whether we look back, at the present, or to the future, we can always be certain of one thing. In Christ

We Are Rich in Every Way

I. We have received God's love in Christ (vv4, 6).
   A. God sent His Son into the world.
      1. He was born of the virgin (Ga 4:4a).
      2. He lived under the Law (Ga 4:4b).
      3. He redeemed those under the Law (Ga 4:5).
   B. God sent His Son into our hearts.
      1. The truth of Christ was confirmed in us (v6).
      2. We have received adoption as sons (v9 — "called into fellowship"; Ga 4:5).

II. We are receiving wonderful gifts.
   A. God sends us gifts to confirm our faith in Christ (v6).
      1. He endows us with grace (v3 — Lenski: "May God and the Lord give you an abundance of His undeserved gifts.").
      2. He fills us with peace (v3).
   B. God sends us gifts for sharing our faith in Christ (v5).
      1. He enriches us with knowledge.
      2. He empowers us to communicate this knowledge.

III. We will receive an eternal inheritance.
   A. God will send His Son again (vv7, 8).
      1. He will come at the last great day ("as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ").
      2. He will come to judge the living and the dead.
   B. God will send us home to heaven.
      1. He has promised to sustain us in our faith until the end (v9 — "God is faithful"; v8 — "Who will sustain you to the end").
      2. He will declare us guiltless on the day of judgment (v8).

Conclusion: Many people long to be rich. Some enjoy the luxuries of the

present day. Many can only dream of what might be. But we who know Christ, whether we look back, or to the here and now, or to the future, can be certain that in Christ WE ARE RICH IN EVERY WAY.

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THE SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT
II Peter 3: 8-14
December 6, 1981

In this pericope Peter focuses on three important truths concerning the *Parousia* (Christ's advent in glory to judge the world at the end of this age). (1) God is delaying the second coming of His Son out of His great love for mankind as He keeps open for as long as possible the door of repentance. (2) That Christ will come again is absolutely certain, and His coming will carry with it definite consequences for the physical world as well as for all mankind. (3) In view of the fact that Christ could return at any moment and being aware of God's forbearance, Christians should strive toward holy living.

Introduction: It seems that in our more and more sophisticated society people are less and less patient. We just cannot wait! We live in an age of instant oatmeal, minute-rice, microwave cooking, drive-through restaurants, supersonic travel, etc. We cannot even wait for Christmas anymore, but allude to its coming long before Advent. Today the Apostle Peter reminds us that perhaps it is time for all of us to slow down and once again use Advent as a time to

Wait on the Lord

I. Wait on the Lord with patience (vv8, 9).
   A. The Lord's delay in coming again must be measured against His relation to time.
      1. With the Lord one day is like a thousand years (v8; Ps 90:4).
      2. The Lord is not slow to do what He promised as we count slowness (v9a; Gn 6:3ff).
   B. The Lord's delay in coming again must be measured in accordance with His divine purposes.
      1. The Lord would have all men to be saved (v9b; 1 Tm 2:4).
      2. The Lord would give all men the opportunity for repentance (v9c; Gn 18:17ff).

II. Wait on the Lord's sure promise.
   A. The Lord's justice has promised the destruction of the present heavens and earth.
      1. This day of the Lord will come suddenly at some unexpected future time (v10a; Mt 24:43).
      2. This day of the Lord will be a day of total annihilation (vv10, 12). The heavens will pass away with a roar, the elements will be destroyed by heat, and the earth and the works in it shall be burned up.
   B. The Lord's grace has promised the establishment of new heavens and a new earth (v13).
      1. The new heaven and earth will be a place where righteousness lives (v13).
      2. The new heaven and earth will be a place of perfect bliss (Re 21:1-4).

III. Wait on the Lord in peace (v14).
   A. Because of Christ we need not fear His coming.
      1. Through Christ we are without spot or blemish (v14; Jd 24; 1 Jn 1:7-9).

2. Through Christ we have peace with the heavenly Father (Ro 5:1-2). Hymn 66 (*TLH*), st. 2-4.

B. Because of Christ we can serve the Lord in peace as we await His coming.
1. In Christ we are empowered to live holy and godly lives (v11).
2. In Christ we can hasten the day of His coming as we enable people to come to repentance (v12).

Conclusion: One day our "waiting on the Lord" will be over. When that glorious day comes we will join the heavenly chorus to sing (*TLH* 66, st. 5):

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim
And heaven's eternal arches ring
With Thy beloved name.

RWI

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT
I Thessalonians 5:16-24
December 13, 1981

God desires His people to wrap and adorn their faith with many good works, much as we wrap the gifts around our trees with colorful paper and ribbon. But just as the wrapping paper does not make the gift, neither do our good works contribute to our justification before God. This text affords the pastor the opportunity to stir up God's people to good works while reminding them that it is their faithful God who is responsible for all the good they do or enjoy.

Textual Notes: Note the triad in vv16-18 ("rejoice, pray, give thanks"); cf. Kretzmann who ties these three together. Note also the present tenses implying continuous action; the *touto* of v18 undoubtedly includes the entire triad. Note the *en Christo* (v18) which reminds us that God's will for us is always tied intimately to our Lord Christ's person and work. Vv19-20 should be understood as referring to the normal preaching of the Word and administration of the Sacraments, certainly not to some "charismatic" experience of sorts (cf. Luther, *Smalcald Articles*, VIII)! Could vv21-22 refer to the sifting of true and false doctrine? Kretzmann and Lenski seem to think so; however, more is probably also included. The pastor must guard lest he give the impression to his hearers one is not a Christian if he is not "always praying," or "always giving thanks," and so on; such an impression would be a horrible mixing of Law and Gospel as C.F.W. Walther makes clear in Thesis XVII of his *Law and Gospel.* V23: Note the emphatic *Autos.* This entire section (vv23-24) gives all glory to God alone. See Lenski's rather thorough discussion of the continuing debate between the so-called "trichotomists" and "dichotomists"; perhaps Luther's understanding of v23 is the best, " . . . der Gott des Friedens, heilige euch durch und durch . . ." ("through and through"). *Parousia* is v23 is best understood as referring to Christ's second advent (see context of entire epistle). The agent of the verb *teretheie* (aorist passive) is certainly God, emphasizing again the *sola gratia* thrust of this section. V24: Note how *pistos* is emphatic; God calls through the gospel (cf. Small Catechism, third article) and it is this call which assures us of His eternal faithfulness (cf. Php 1, 6).

Introduction: Wrapping paper and ribbon . . . certainly an important part of our Christmas gifts but not giving those gifts their value. Some Christians seem most concerned about the wrapping and ribbon in their Christian life; that is, the good works they do. Looking at our text we ask,

Is the Wrapping All That Matters?

I. The wrapping is important; that is, good works are a necessary adornment to the Christian faith.
   A. God commands us to do good works; this is His will for us (v18b).
   B. What are some of these good works He commands?
      1. Always rejoice (v16).
      2. Pray constantly (v17).
      3. Give thanks in everything (v18).
      4. Do not despise God's Word (vv19-20).
      5. Avoid all false doctrine and wickedness ((vv21-22).

But we know that while God commands such good works, none of us can do them as God desires (note the present tenses in the verbs). The wrapping does not make us valuable to God.

II. The condition of our heart is that which makes us valuable to God.
   A. By nature our heart is broken, filthy, and unacceptable to God.
   B. For Jesus' sake, God forgives us all our sins, making us perfect and valuable in His sight ("through and through," Luther) (v23).
   C. We can depend on the God who first washed us from all our sins in baptism and continues to work faith in our hearts through His gospel. He will continue to keep us in this faith through the same means by which He first called us — His Word and sacraments (v24).

Conclusion: Let us give all glory to God alone for what we are and what we do. But let us also seek by His grace to wrap our faith in many good works which always glorify Him.

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FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT
Romans 16:25-27
December 20, 1981

Christmas is a happy time, an exciting time, a time of giving and receiving gifts. Those gifts piled around the tree should, of course, remind us of the greatest gift of all, the gift of God's hidden love which He gave to our world two thousand years ago in Bethlehem. This text reminds us to give God the glory this Christmas, for He has made Christmas what it is.

Textual notes: See Lenski, pp. 926ff., for a discussion of the alleged spuriousness of this pericope. The writer of this study accepts the text as genuine and in its proper place. Note how the entire pericope directs our attention and worship entirely to God, beginning and ending with datives of which God is the object (v25 *to de dunameno* . . . v27 *to mono sopho theo*). V25: *dunameno* is a pres. ptc. emphasizing God's continuing and eternal power; this root coupled with *euangelion* recalls Paul's earlier statement, "The gospel is God's power unto salvation . . ." (1:17). *Iesou Christou* is best taken as an objective genitive; Jesus as the Christ is the message of the gospel. V26: The aorist participle passive *phanerothentos* recalls the entire Christ event — His incarnation, passion, glorification — which has unlocked the Old Testament revelation (*graphon prophetikon* taken as a reference to the Old Testament Scriptures). *dia te graphon prophetikon* teaches the doctrine of the means of grace. The phrase *eis hupakoen pisteos* is perhaps one last subtle jab at works-righteousness. *eis panta ta ethne* emphasizes the universality of God's grace in Christ. V27: As Lenski points out, even our praise would be unacceptable to God were it not for the

mediation of Christ (*dia Iesou Christou*). Stoeckhardt in his *Romerbrief* takes the relative *ho* to refer to Christ, making the point that Paul here ascribes equal honor and glory to the Father and the Son, "who with the Father, is God over all . . . the source and author (*die Quelle und der Urheber*) of our salvation! To Him be glory forever and ever! Amen."

Introduction: It is exciting to hear the children's happy shrieks as they rip open the gifts piled around the tree. In a similar way we Christians feel like shrieking with delight this Christmas as we cry out to each other again:

Look! God Has Opened His Gift of Love!

I. It is a gift wrapped and hidden from natural man.
   A. God's free love and mercy for the sake of the coming Christ were hidden for ages in the prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures, known and understood only by a remnant of God's Old Testament people (v25).
   B. God's free love and mercy for Christ's sake are still hidden from all those who are without the revelation of God's Word and the key to that Word — Jesus Christ (v26), for all people are, by nature, blind and dead in their sins.

II. In sending His Son to our world God made known His love and mercy.
   A. God has revealed His love so that sinners might have confidence (v25, "be strengthened") in God's forgiveness of all their sins and enjoy such forgiveness of sins by faith alone (v26, "the obedience of faith").
   B. God has unwrapped the gift of His love for all people (v26, "to all the nations").
   C. People are brought to faith in God's Christ and given the forgiveness of their sins through the preaching of God's Word which centers in Christ (v26, "through the prophetic writings is made known").

III. God's gift of love in Christ brings all glory to Him alone!
   A. Many seem to be trying to steal Christmas away from God; this is man's way, to give glory to self rather than to God where it rightly belongs.
   B. Christmas is God's day — He should receive all the glory.
      1. He is the one who gave us the gift of His love (v26, God being the agent of the passive *phanerothentos*).
      2. He is the one who works faith in our hearts (v25, *to de dunameno humas sterixai*).

Conclusion: As we open our gifts this Christmas, let us not forget to give the greatest glory to God for the gift of His love.

SCB

CHRISTMAS DAY
Hebrews 1:1-9
December 25, 1981

In a spiritual sense Christmas can be described most fully with the term "fulfilment." "Many and various" (v1 RSV) elements of prophecy, works of judgment, and special revelations were, in a sense, finally tied together in God's declarative act in speaking to man by a Son (v2). The writer to the Hebrews is in reality distinguishing between theOld and New Testaments ("of old," v1, and "these last days," v2) as he speaksabout prophecy and fulfilment, the two-stage revelation of God, first through the fathers and prophets and then in His Son. A new age has been inaugurated (*eschatou*, v2) with the coming of this Son, the final age of the world.

The writer identifies seven facts about the Son (vv2,3) to underscore the full divinity and complete fulfilment which this Son reflects ("bears the very stamp of His nature," v3 RSV). He is indeed "better" (used thirteen times in Hebrews) than the old order, better than, for example, angels, who were communicators of the old covenant (2:2). The author quotes heavily from the Old Testament (vv5-9) to substantiate this truth.

The central thought of the text is that after a long period ofpreparation God has finally spoken in fulfilment by His Son, the Savior from sin, who is "better" than angels and is indeed true God. The goal of the sermon is that the Christmas worshiper recognize the meticulous plan of God in both promising and delivering a Son, who represents God's finest Word (see Jn 1:1) in bringing salvation, and be heartened and strengthened by such love. The problem centers on the inclination of people to make the story of Jesus' coming too superficial and to miss the depth of God's plan and fulfilment. The means to the goal is to identify God's careful planning and its stunning results in the hearts of sinners.

Introduction: A recent television commercial advertising a certain investment firm makes much of the fact that when this firm speaks, people listen, dropping whatever they are doing, in fact, in the hope of hearing a valuable tip. In a much more profound manner, Christmas is God speaking His best Word to mankind. And people are listening, perhaps more on this day than any other day of the year. What better time, then, to listen to God carefully to hear about what is

His Last and Best Word

I. Jesus is God's last Word.
   A. God prepared the way for Jesus in a variety of ways (v1).
      1. The fathers received God's promises of old.
      2. The prophets gave glimpses of the age to come.
   B. God spoke often in years past to prepare the way for speaking once and for all by His Son.
      1. Jesus' coming fulfils the promises of God.
      2. Jesus' ministry completes the salvation plan of God (v3b).

II. Jesus is God's best Word.
   A. God identifies His Son as bearing "the very stamp of His nature" (v3 RSV).
      1. Jesus is heir of all things (v2).
      2. Jesus is co-creator of the world (v2).
      3. Jesus reflects the glory of God (v3).
      4. Jesus upholds the universe (v3).
      5. Jesus cleansed the world of sin (v3).
      6. Jesus sits at the right hand of majesty (v3).
   B. God identifies His Son as "better" than angels.
      1. No angel is worshiped as Jesus is honored (v6).
      2. No angel rules into eternity (v8).

Conclusion: Christmas, which marks the birth of Christ, is God's profound statement to man that all the words and predictions of old are now fulfilled and completed in Jesus, who is His last and best Word.

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FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS
Colossians 3:12-21
December 27, 1981

The connection of this text with the preceding verses of chapter three is unmistakable. Paul identifies the true focus of the Christian life (vv1-4) by underscoring what is to be avoided (vv5-11) and what is to be "put on" (v12 RSV). A description of the virtues which are to be put on makes up the substance of the text as Paul, almost in list form, deals with the qualities of the transformed Christian life. The aorist tense (one-time action) of the verb "put on" (*endusasthe* v12) is significant. Christian virtues are not put on and taken off like a coat but are to be the "permanent acquisition" (Lenski) of the genuine believer. These virtues such as patience, forebearance, forgiveness, love (*agape* v14), and peace stand in sharp contrast to the demands of the Judaizers, who were certainly not far from Paul's thoughts as he prepared this letter. This group, which insisted on strict adherence to the Jewish ceremonial law on thepart of Christians, had been troubling the Colossians (2:16,17). In addition, some form of Gnostic philosophy sought their attention with demands for asceticism, worship of heavenly creatures (v18) and a higher knowledge. Against this backdrop Paul, firmly but gently, encourages the cultivation of the true Christian virtues mentioned earlier, which will have a positive effect on all manner of personal relationships (vv16, 18-21).

The central thought of the text is that the transformed Christian life is built on the indwelling presence of Christ (vv15, 16), who empowers in the hearts of His people personal virtues which lead to positive personal relationships. The goal of the sermon is that God's people would understand the nature of a genuine Christian life-style and the beneficial impact of this style of living upon themselves and others. The problem is that this Christian life is too often, contrary to Paul's directive, put on and taken off like a garment, and the joyous possibilities of this life are blunted or even missed entirely. The means to the goal is the realization that the Christian's participation with Christ in His resurrection through faith (v1) taps the unlimited potential for true Christian living and conduct by the power of the Christ within him.

Introduction: The delights of Christmas have probably faded very little, since the special day has only recently passed and all the trimmings of the holiday are still in place. Most would be overjoyed if these happy moments surrounding Christmas could last throughout the year, but experience has taught us that the joy will begin to fade very soon. But this does not have to happen. The virtues of a genuine Christian style of living have great staying power and can bring enduring happiness to every phase of our life. It is, in fact, a joy to report that, concerning the happiness of Christmas,

It Doesn't Have to End

I. Because we have, in Christ, put on virtues that endure.
   A. The Christian life is a changed life, a permanent acquisition, meant to be put on but not taken off (v12).
      1. Its changed nature depends on participation in Christ's death and life (vv1-3).
      2. Its permanence stems from the indwelling Christ (vv15, 16).
   B. The Christian life is a joyful life, because its virtues are built on that which brings lasting happiness.
      1. Love brings harmony (v14).
      2. Forgiveness settles complaints (v13).
      3. Peace promotes unity (v15).

II. Because we have, in Christ, put on relationships that edify.
  A. The Christian life encourages mutual admonition and instruction as God's people learn to help one another in the business of living for Christ (v16).
    1. We worship together (v16).
    2. We give thanks in this relationship with one another (v17).
  B. The Christian life reminds families of the responsibilities that promote growth.
    1. Wives understand their relationship to their husbands (v18).
    2. Husbands understand how to love both their wives and children (vv19, 21).
    3. Children learn the pleasing value of obedience (v21).

Conclusion: There is ample reason why the joy of Christmas should endure throughout the year if God's people remember that the business of Christian living involves God-directed and lasting virtues and relationships. In putting on Christ through faith, we have fullness of happiness which never has to end.

DES

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS
Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-18
January 3, 1982

Whenever a pericope talks about the eternal plan God had to save the world, the preacher knows he is going to be talking about the mysterious doctrine of election. This beautiful teaching begs to be proclaimed in every age to people who celebrate with confidence their involvement with God's eternal plan through faith in Jesus Christ. It might be beneficial to dig into the dogmatics book and review in a systematic way this precious doctrine. Then the proclamation of the positive truths of this text should happen.

Introduction: The celebration of Christmas has been going on for a long time. We usually think that the celebration started with the announcement of the angels to the shepherds, who then made haste with joy to see the great thing that had happened. But then we are reminded that people in the Old Testament looked forward with joy to the coming of the Messiah, too. Christians today celebrate the birth of God's Son. Even though the calendar has changed to a new year, Christmas is still on our minds. The text for today lends itself to a continuing celebration of Christmas and adds an eternal dimension to our celebration as it talks about

The Eternal Christmas Plan

I. Christmas began before the world was made.
  A. God loved us then already, v4.
    1. He did not fall in love with us. He loved us because He is love (I Jn 4:8), in spite of our sins which separated us from Him (Eph 2:4-5).
    2. His love had a purpose and design which set the pattern for all that would happen in the world, v4.
  B. He planned to make us His sons. He chose us, v5.
    1. This would happen in Christ who would effect the forgiveness of our sins by His sacrificial death on the cross, v5.
    2. In His grace God would also attach us to Christ by faith so that we would enjoy and have for our very own the forgiveness of our sins, v8.
    3. This is how His plan would work out in time to make us holy and blameless before Him.

II. Christmas happened at Bethlehem.
  A. We went in spirit to Bethlehem last week and there adored again the newborn Savior.
    1. It was not a new celebration but a special celebration of God's faithfulness to His plan and promises.
    2. Our wisdom and understanding grew through the means of grace.
  B. We cannot limit the celebration of Christmas to one week.
    1. The celebration is a lifestyle.
    2. We celebrate all year long.
III. Christmas is taking place today in the life of the New Testament Church.
  A. The eternal plan is being worked out among us.
    1. We have been brought to faith in the Lord Jesus, v15.
    2. We love each other, v15.
    3. We know and believe we have been chosen.
  B. The eternal plan moves us to specific prayers for God's people.
    1. We thank God for believers in Christ, v17.
    2. We pray that God's people may grow in knowledge and faith, v17.
    3. We pray that the church may be filled with the hope of the glorious inheritance prepared for God's people, v18.
    4. Christmas points us forward to the celebration that will take place in eternal life.

Conclusion: Christmas involves an eternal plan. It started before the world was made, it was worked out in time when Christ was born, and the plan continues to unfold in the life of the church today. God had you in mind from the beginning of the world and has worked out that plan so that you might have eternal life.

Lowell F. Thomas
Fort Wayne, Indiana

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY
Acts 10:34-38
January 10, 1982

Introduction: Almost every day someone, somehow, tries to create in us a preference for someone or something. Because of the choices we have in cars, peanut butter, and paper towels, advertisers set out to show why we should prefer one to another. We have even come to label people according to their preferences.

It is no wonder that man tries to figure out the preferences of God. Who is His favorite among men? Because of His covenant with Abraham, many people of old as well as many today assumed that God preferred the Jews to anyone else. The events surrounding what we call the Epiphany discount this idea. The angels said that the Savior was born for all men. The star led non-Jewish men to the house where Jesus was. The ministry of Jesus touched the lives of Jews and Gentiles. The sermon text for today, part of an account involving a Gentile named Cornelius, also teaches us about

God's Manifested Preference

I. God does not prefer one man to another.
  A. One race or nation is not His favorite.
    1. Peter learned this in a vision recorded earlier (vv. 9ff). The sheet let down from heaven contained clean and unclean animals to eat.
    2. One would think that the idea of racial or national superiority in God's sight would disappear; but it still lingers.

B. Nor does God prefer people according to their conduct.
   1. Cornelius was a religious man, but needed more; so he sought out the synagogue.
   2. The synagogue had conduct and codes galore, but needed more; so Peter was sent there.
   3. Today, people live with the idea that until they keep the rules, God will not love them. Finally, people equate despair with trying, and hold despair to be a virtue accepted by God. There are many people walking around who have given up on God and religion because they could not meet the requirements.

C. The Epiphany perspective is that all men are in the same boat, as far as God is concerned.
   1. The sons of Israel had a promised Savior.
   2. The Gentiles needed Him too. God's love in Jesus Christ included all men.

II. God's preference is for all men to fear Him and do what is right.

A. Do you fear God? Do you know how? It does not mean being frightened of Him.
   1. He is God — none other.
   2. He is a just God.
   3. He wants you to believe in Him.
   4. He wants you to obey Him.
   5. He wants you to pay attention to His Word.
   6. To stand before Him in reverent awe is the fear He wants. To fear God is to meet Him and see Him for what He is — God!

B. Do you do what is right (I Th 4:3)?
   1. The sinner does right when he repents — the mark of this condition is daily sorrow and repentance. Is this what you are doing?
   2. The sorry sinner does right when he believes and accepts God's pardon in Jesus Christ, and renews his faith daily through Word and sacrament. Do you?
   3. The believer does right when by faith he runs the way of God's commands, follows Jesus' footsteps. Do you?
   4. To fear God and live aright, to live under God's preference, is not a simple matter.

III. God works out His preference through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

A. He does it through the Good News of peace through Jesus Christ.
   1. John proclaimed it; he tied the Old and New Testaments together.
   2. Jesus fulfilled it. With His baptism He started His ministry — having the full measure of the Holy Spirit, healing and rescuing those under the power of the devil. Peter explains what else Jesus accomplished in the words following the text — vs39ff.
   3. This is how God worked out His preference that all be saved. God did it, not man!

B. Jesus, who is the Good News, is Lord of all! (v36).
   1. The impact of this fact is felt when you realize He is *yours* — no matter who you are — Jew, Gentile, black, white, mixed, native, foreigner, healthy, sick, well-behaved, ill-behaved, employed, unemployed, unemployable, student, preacher, professor, layman, man, woman, child! Did I forget someone? God did not.
   2. The preference of God sets the mood, mission, and disposition of our church.
      a. We are not a little light on a little hill for those dwelling upon it.
      b. Rather, we are a divine searchlight for all those in the valley of

death, v36.

c. We are the ones who repeat to the world the words of the voice from heaven: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him" (Mk 1:11).

You have heard Him because that is God's Epiphany preference!

LFT

Book Reviews

DON'T BE AFRAID: SIX LENTEN SERMONIC STUDIES AND SIX LENTEN LITURGIES. By Gerhard Aho and Richard Kapfer. Concordia Theological Seminary Press, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Paper. 123 Pages. $3.95.

Dr. Aho of the seminary faculty and Pastor Kapfer of Ames, Iowa, team up to present an immediately useful volume for the pastor who wants to present to his congregation a set of unified sermon studies and worship services for Lent. Each of Aho's sermon studies consists in ten parts: (1.) general setting; (2.) immediate context; (3.) text in vernacular; (4.) text in the original; (5.) truths of the text; (6.) parallel passages; (7.) central thought; (8.) goal; (9.) illustrations; and (10.) the sermon outline itself. The preacher prepares the sermon, but the sermon ingredients are all placed out for him. Kapfer has prepared a Lenten liturgy to fit each of Aho's sermon studies. Hymns are suggested and prayers and litanies are provided. Along with the copyright notation, permission is granted for copying the services. Pastors choosing to use them can immediately proceed to do so. The phrase "don't be afraid" has been incorporated into each of the sermon titles. The topics handled are love, being alone, admitting wrong, being accepted, speaking up, and doing right. The pastor in using each study has the opportunity to go along step by step with Aho as he prepares the sermon. *Don't Be Afraid* will make Lent a little easier and richer for many pastors. It may be ordered directly from the seminary bookstore.

David P. Scaer

EINIGKEIT IM GLAUBEN UND IN DER LEHRE. By Hans Kirsten. Verlag der Lutherischen Buchhandlung Heinrich Harms, Zahrenholz, Grosz Oesingen (Germany), 1980. 279 pages.

Dr. Kirsten has graciously dedicated this book to Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, as a token of appreciation for its recent conferral on him of the degree of Doctor of Divinity *honoris causa*. Dr. Kirsten has served the Lutheran free churches of Germany with distinction since the time of World War II as pastor, church president, and theological professor. That which makes this book extremely valuable is that the author chronicles for posterity the very significant years of Lutheran theological church happenings between 1945 and 1949. He was an eyewitness of and a participant in the shaping of the SELK (Selbstaendige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche) during these years. The story is all here, both in narrative account and also in documents that formed the basis of the formative proceedings. A second volume is in the planning stages, in view of the fact that this book traces only the initial years, chiefly up to 1949.

It is a poignant, often pathos-filled, story of the struggles that faced these independent Lutheran churches (separate from the state churches) as they emerged from the ruins of World War II and picked up the pieces. But more than a story, it is really a documentary of names, places, events, happenings, and documents that have played a role in the shaping of the SELK, the loyal, conservative, genuinely Lutheran synod of churches faithful to the Scriptures and the Lutheran confessions. Expressions of gratitude for the Missouri Synod's help during the critical years of reconstruction become explicit in names such as J.W. Behnken, L. Meyer, Herman Harms. When President Behnken and Meyer first met with some of the remnant, specifically President Petersen of Berlin, amidst the ruins of Berlin, in November of 1945, their meeting place was a field in Zehlendorf; there was nothing else. Behnken's "Brethren, how can we help you?" will forever be remembered by these fellow-Lutherans of the Reformation's

heartland. CARE packages from the U.S.A. were one thing, and important; but also vital was the spiritual edification that came through theological nurturing. The German churches had great need not merely to build buildings, but also to establish a sound basis for church fellowship. Missouri urged them on. This process eventually led to the merger in 1972 of the various independent remnant churches into the SELK. For the attainment of this ultimate goal the years between 1946 and 1949 were crucial; Kirsten has detailed the account, often with quotations from letters, personal experience, and firsthand aquaintance with events and individuals, some now dead, a few still living. There was trauma. He tells the story of Drs. Hopf and Sasse, who at great personal cost of station and reputation in the scholarly community, stood up for confessional Lutheran theology and practice. There were the Bad Boll conferences, sponsored by Missouri, which established contacts with other Lutherans from the state churches that had not been explored for a hundred years or more. Lutherans from one side of the ocean met with those from the other side, in order to discuss basic doctrinal issues in theology.

Kirsten is fair in describing the spell of euphoria which at first prevailed, as well as the naivete of the Missourians, who, with some exceptions, thought that many of the state-church theologians were actually taking them seriously in their quest for church fellowship grounded upon agreement in doctrine and practice. Bad Boll, a health spa in Swabia, was in many respects a "bad ball game" that came to haunt Missouri through the influence that it had on the synod's own "new orientation" of theology in the late 1950's and 1960's. There is reason to believe Kirsten's (and Oesch's and Sasse's) judgments that "St. Louis" was star-struck and bamboozled by its firsthand contacts with the high-browed theology and theologians of Europe. In this situation it was the loyal German Lutherans who helped most — even though they were greatly involved in trying to effect the unification of their own ranks — to show their brethren from America that not all that glitters is gold, not all that claims to be Lutheran is the real thing.

Approximately one-third of the book, the last part, is devoted to the important documents, essays, theses, etc., which were vital to the restructuring of the Lutheran free churches into a viable and enduring entity, along with its theological school at Oberursel. As the subtitle states, Kirsten has succeeded in depicting graphically "the way of the Lutheran free churches in Germany after the last war." We commend the book heartily to every reader who is still somewhat at home in German; Dr. Kirsten's style is smooth and uncomplicated. The volume is an invaluable record of the recent history of our sister church in Germany. An interesting file of selected photos adds luster to the appendix.

E. F. Klug

HOW MELANCHTHON HELPED LUTHER DISCOVER THE GOSPEL: THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION IN THE REFORMATION. By Lowell C. Green. Verdict Publications, Fallbrook, California, 1980. Cloth. 274 Pages. $9.95.

Dr. Green's reworked doctoral dissertation was presented in its original form in 1955 to the University of Erlangen. Green, now a professor of church history and systematic theology at Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Catharines, Ontario, sees 1518 through 1520 as the years in which Luther came to his mature understanding of justification. The dating of Luther's full understanding of justification is important since scholars recognize that the earlier Luther held to the Augustinian view that justification was freely given (*sola gratia*), but this justification was a quality infused into the believer through faith. Green

convincingly defends the view that under the exegetical guidance of Melanchthon, who in turn was somewhat dependent on Erasmus, Luther came to see justification not as a quality given to believers, but rather as a proclaimed and alien righteousness. The sinner is found acceptable because of Christ's righteousness. Righteousness is an attitude in God which is proclaimed to the sinner.

Green carefully lays out the historical options in trying to determine Luther's concept of justification. One group sees the true Luther in his pre-1518 writings. With this view justification centers in the believer and not in God's declaration. Justification is seen as a *quality* freely given. Another group holds that Luther held to the forensic view as early as 1512 and sees no development in the Reformer's thought. By locating Luther's own comments on his development and through careful literary study of the Reformer's writings, Green presents a formidable defense of the position that Luther did change from the Augustinian to the forensic view and that Melanchthon was largely responsible for this change. Of course, this means that Luther's writings before October 1518 and even some as late as 1519 and 1520 do not contain his real thoughts on many subjects, especially justification. These writings would include his lectures on Romans and the Ninety-Five Theses themselves!

While crediting Melanchthon with helping Luther discover the real meaning of justification by grace, Green shows that it was Luther and not Melanchthon who made this principle the center of theology. At points Melanchthon's theology did not remain true to the principle which he had grammatically uncovered. Without endorsing humanism, Green argues that without humanism's linguistic achievements, Luther's Reformation would not have occurred — humanly speaking, of course.

Green's historical research is thorough and convincing, but much more important are the theological implications of such a study, especially one bearing the sub-title of "The Doctrine of Justification in the Reformation." A church which has never felt uncomfortable with the charge of "repristination theology" can hardly avoid giving careful consideration to such a work.

Green introduces into his presentation two significant terms: "analytical justification" and "synthetic justification." Though not immediately recognizable as part of our dogmatic tradition, they are extremely useful. "Analytical justification" refers to that view which holds that God sees faith in an individual and counts and regards that faith as if it were righteousness. Faith becomes in God's eyes the substitute for the good works that Christians should do. With analytical justification, full justification is a future possibility, but never a present reality. It cannot be complete. Sanctification does, in fact, replace justification. Here the believer focuses on himself, and works in some sense become part of justification. Justification becomes a process. "Synthetic justification" refers to a declarative justification; is it God's favor existing in Christ which is proclaimed by preaching to sinners. The question of whether a person is righteous is not ultimately answered by looking at something, even faith, in the believer, but is answered already in the word which proclaims or declares this righteousness. An adequate abbreviation of this view is Luther's *simul justus et peccator*; the Christian appears to God as a justified saint, even though he appears to the world as a sinner. There is no suggestion here that Luther was a libertine, but the Christian is a wretched sinner as long as he lives. Melanchthon agrees with Luther here: " 'But in this present life, although God dwells within those who are holy, nevertheless our other nature is still full of impurity and sinful weaknesses and lusts . . .' " (p. 264) Green builds much of his case on how Luther changed in his preaching on the pericope of the Pharisee and

the tax collector as justified in the very moment of the acknowledgment of his wretchedness.

Green's work not only serves as a guide to Luther, but is a corrective of that dreadful pietism into which Lutheranism too frequently slides. The seventeenth-century pietists interpreted Luther's view that the Christian was saint and sinner, not *simultaneously*, but chronologically. Let Green make his own point: "They thought one was a sinner and then a just person (in a before-and-after arrangement) rather than as simultaneously sinful and just through forensic justification. The new life of obedience was thereby emphasized to the point of perfectionism, to the utter ruin of justification. Of course, pietists have never liked the concept of justification. But whenever they forgot that the believer is simultaneously sinful and righteous, they strayed from an evangelical understanding of justification. Thus, they abandoned the theology of Luther and Melanchthon" (p. 264).

There are very few, if any books, which should receive an unqualified endorsement. This one should. Green did his work first under Werner Elert and, after his death, under Paul Althaus. Available here is profoundly important theological and historical work, which is at the same time easy to read and relevant. It may be ordered from the seminary bookstore. A price-tag of only $9.95 for a work of this kind is almost too good to be true. More than adequate documentation is provided in the footnotes, which are in many cases delightful mini-theological discussions.

David P. Scaer

THE ARABS. By Peter Mansfield. Penguin, Baltimore, 1978. 572 pages. Paper. $4.95.

More and more historians are now persuaded that "the Arab Renaissance" will rank as one of the top two stories of the late twentieth century. One of them is Peter Mansfield. This book is a brilliant defense of that thesis. Born in India, educated in England, long resident in the Arab East, Peter Mansfield brings to his writing decades of experience as a diplomat and news correspondent. The reading public is familiar with his work from the pages of the *Financial Times, Economist,* and *Guardian,* as well as such previous books on the Middle East as *Nasser: A Biography.* Combined with experience and education is a deep and abiding sympathy for the aspirations of the Arab people. All these forces cooperate to produce a book of compelling excellence.

This comprehensive study of the Arabs from antiquity to modernity is divided into three parts: Part I is a rapid chronological survey of the Arab past, concentrating on both the Golden Age of the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates as well as the silent centuries of foreign rule (both Ottoman and Western), climaxing in "the Arab Awakening" that led to the "year of decision," the "turning point" politically, economically, and militarily for the Arabs *vis a vis* Israel and the West — 1973. Part II is a quick geographical survey of the Arab World, ranging from Morocco, "the Kingdom of the Far West," to Iraq, "the dynamic outsider," with sufficient attention to the millions in the middle, whether the residents of "Eldorado States," such as Kuwait, or the inhabitants of such potential superpowers as Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Part III is a short psychological analysis of contemporary views of the Arabs in the West as well as Semitic self-perceptions. The forecast with which the volume concludes is an arresting and compelling one, anticipating a revival of Islam *and* Arab political influence as central features of the twenty-first century. For the Christian leader this is a crucial book for an understanding of the rapid shifts in world power that have facilitated the "resurgence of Islam" and the "Arab Renaissance."

As is the case with any book of this size, there are errors of fact. Most scholars believe there are 750 million, not 500 million, Muslims (p. 21). Napoleon fled Egypt in 1799, not 1800 (p. 120), one speaks of the Christian powers of the West, not the Near East (p. 126), and references to the Shah of Iran and the "White Revolution" as models for the Moroccan monarchy now seem terribly dated and highly debatable. Furthermore, the Western reader will find provocative statements of opinion at critical points in the text. These, in my opinion, add to the value of the book — as a catalyst to some long over-due creative thought in the West about the Arabs and Islam.

C. George Fry

Note: The review of E. Glenn Hinson's *The Integrity of the Church* published in the previous issue of the *CTQ* (pp. 148-149) was written by Albert L. Garcia.

Books Received

COMMUNICATING THE MISSION OF THE PARISH: A Planning Guide for the Public Relations Committee. By Henry A. Simon. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1979. 32 pages. Paper. No price given.

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