CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY

CTQ

Volume 46, Numbers 2-3

APRIL — JULY 1982

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY

CTQ

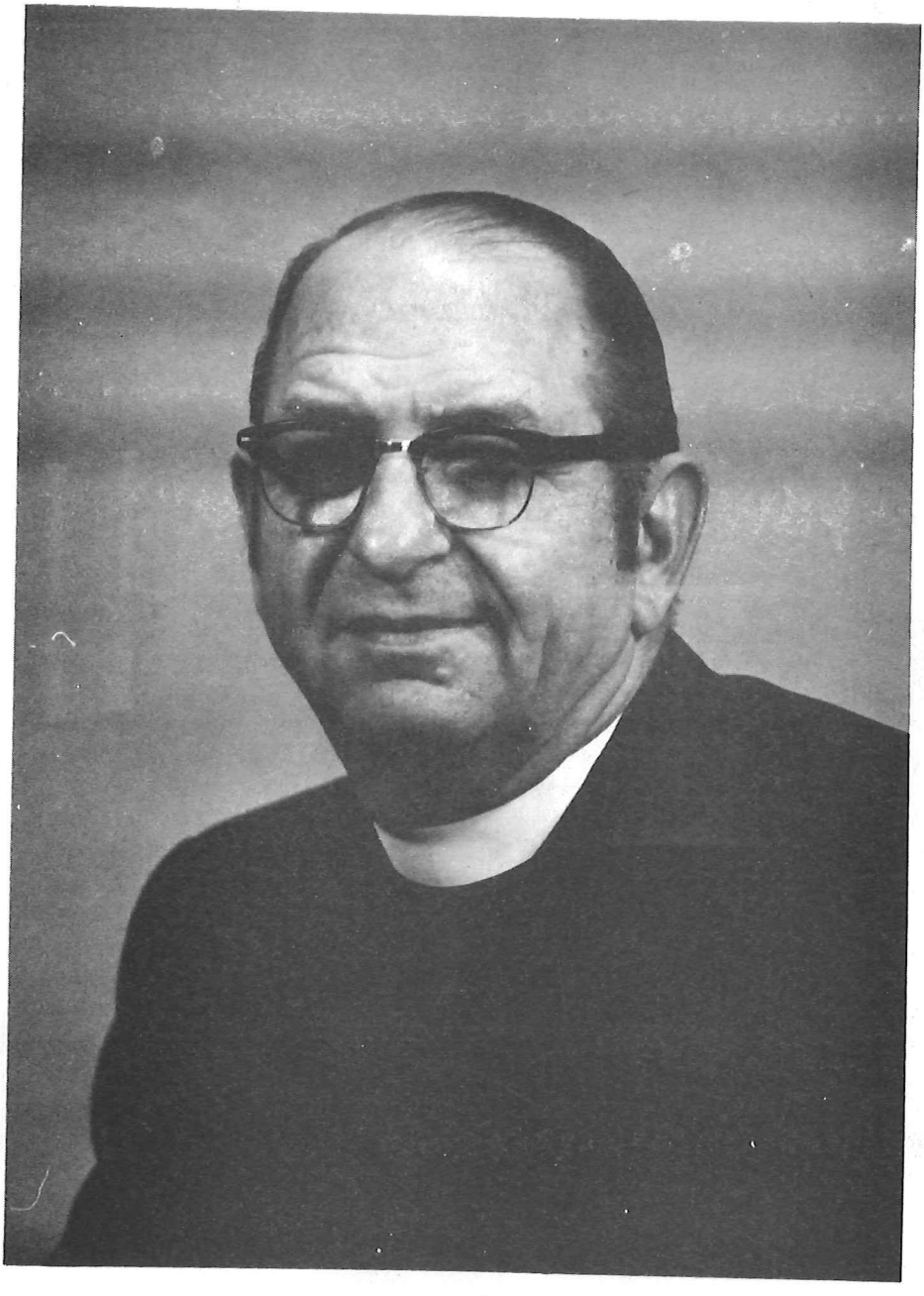
ISSN 0038-8610

Issued Quarterly by the Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary

The *Concordia Theological Quarterly,* a continuation of *The Springfielder,* is a theological journal of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, published for its ministerium by the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY is published quarterly in January, April, July, and October. Changes of address for Missouri Synod clergymen reported to Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, will also cover the mailing change of the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY. Other changes of address, Paid subscriptions, and other business matters should be sent to CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY, Concordia Theological Seminary, 6600 North Clinton Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825.

Annual subscription rate: $5.00



Henry J. Eggold
1917-1982

Henry J. Eggold, Th.D., D.D.
1917-1982

It is almost two years since Dr. Henry J. Eggold learned that he was suffering from disease of the lungs. A recuperation period of two months following an operation permitted him to return to the classroom in January 1981 for the winter and spring terms. As in many years before, he again interviewed the 1981 graduating class for their first assignments as pastors. Early in the summer of 1981 the illness reoccurred, and his teaching assignments for the approaching school year were cancelled. Throughout the autumn he was seen on campus and managed to muster the strength to attend the annual Christmas dinner for faculty and staff. Shortly afterward he became permanently bedridden with paralysis, and as spring turned into summer he gradually slipped away until the Lord finally took him to Himself. This time gave his colleagues and students an opportunity to wish him farewell. The seminary touring choir, the Kantorei, under the direction of Richard Resch, gave him a concert in his study, which had been converted into his bedroom. In his house near the campus, he received a steady stream of visitors who provided him with news of daily events. As a final token of affection and honor, the faculty awarded him the degree of Doctor of Divinity *honoris causa.* A long-time member of the committee which sifted through the details of doctoral nominations, he would have objected with his usual self-effacing modesty to receiving any such honor. He never considered himself as doing anything extraordinary. Certain jobs were there to be done and he just happened to be there. That was how he looked at it. The faculty's award to him was a statement to itself that his wisdom would be greatly misssed.

The success of any institution is built upon certain individuals in the institution who themselves become living institutions. Henry Eggold had become a living institution within the seminary in a career that began in Springfield in 1951 and concluded thirty-one years later in Fort Wayne. All the graduating classes from 1952 to 1983 knew him in some capacity. This number of students may amount to nearly forty percent of the present ministerium of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

After ten years as a parish pastor, Dr. Eggold came to the seminary where he would teach, represent the semimary on high-

level synodical commissions, and serve as dean of students and acting president. He left his most indelible impression in his position as placement director. Beginning each autumn the graduating seminarians with their wives would wait their turns for an interview which, they thought, would forever seal their geographical destinies and professional fates. The academic work of these seminarians was never an end in itself but only preparation for their life's calling of preaching the Gospel. Henry Eggold, a master in the calling process and completely devoted to the work, never considered himself the ultimate authority. It was a job that had to be done, and he was there to do it. This attitude of doing a job so characterized his entire service for the church that he never got caught up in self-importance. Rather than issuing magisterial memoranda with overtones of sovereignty Henry Eggold used quiet persuasion.

In the autumn of 1973, shortly before the sad and disrupting events of February 1974 at our sister seminary in St. Louis, Dr. Eggold assumed the leadership as acting president of Concordia Theological Seminary, then at Springfield. With the seminaries less than one hundred miles from each other, it was not beyond the realm of possibility that the torrential torrents of those difficult days would sweep us away also. It was the same "job to be done" attitude of Henry J. Eggold that kept the seminary on an even keel during those rough days. The story may have been forgotten or may even be untold how an impasse occurred at the assignment meeting when the Council of Presidents refused to place any candidates from any seminary, including Springfield, unless the graduates of the dissident group also received placements. Dr. Eggold insisted against great odds that our seminary students were being unjustly punished for an act in which they had no part. The calls were delayed, but then delivered. In 1974 any number of possibilites were open to Dr. Eggold. His success as acting seminary president in trying times could have meant new positions of prominence for him, but he asked not to be considered for the office of permanent seminary president. His main interest was the direct preparation of pastors for future generations. So it was back to the classroom and the placement office for another seven years.

Dr. Eggold's academic forte was homiletics. He contributed regularly to *Portals of Prayer* and *The Concordia Pulpit*. He translated *Selected Sermons by C.F. W. Walther* (Concordia Publishing House) and set forth his own homiletical philosophy in *Preaching Is Dialogue* (Baker Book House). To the end he was

a man who lived and worked for his church, a rare virtue at a time when some attempted to tear it down and not build it up.

With the death of Henry Eggold, a seminary institution has passed away. Already during the past year, he was missed and now we must accustom ourselves to his absence. He must have had the satisfaction that the church and seminary, both of which had come upon hard times, were both at the time of his passing vital institutions. Yes, he lives with Jesus, but he also continues to work through the many pastors who learned their pastoral and preaching skills from him. The annual call service is always a confluence of high emotions, great satisfaction, and not infrequently disappointment. As placement director, Dr. Eggold found himself annually in the middle of the joys and disappointments of the candidates and their families. Yet he seemed to rise above these ephemeral emotions. Each call was, after all, only a job, but what a job! It is the job through which the Gospel is preached, the kingdom extended, and the church strengthened. And it is a job that was well done by Henry J. Eggold.

David P. Scaer

Announcement:
The Sixth Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions

celebrating the
Five Hundredth Anniversary of Luther's Birth

A Convocation for Pastors and Laymen
sponsored by
The International Center of Lutheran Confessional Studies

Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, Indiana
January 26 - 28, 1983

THE SCHEDULE

Wednesday, January 26, 1983

1:00 p.m.	Welcome
1:15 p.m.	"Luther and Justification" Pres. Robert D. Preus
2:00 p.m.	"Luther on Church and Ministry" Prof. Eugene F. Klug
3:00 p.m.	Coffee Break
3:30 p.m.	"Confessio Augustana Mea Est" Prof. Leif Grane
6:00 p.m.	Dinner
7:30 p.m.	Concert: "Luther's Heritage"
8:45 p.m.	"Gemuetlichkeit" in the Commons

Thursday, January 27, 1983

7:00 a.m.	Breakfast
8:50 a.m.	Chapel
9:30 a.m.	"Luther's Last Battles" Prof. Mark U. Edwards, Jr.
10:45 a.m.	Coffee Break
11:00 a.m.	"American Interpretations of Luther" Prof. Lewis W. Spitz
12:15 p.m.	Lunch
1:45 p.m.	"Luther's Impact upon the Universities and the Reverse" Prof. James M. Kittelson

3:00 p.m. Coffee Break
3:30 p.m. "Luther Then and Now"
Prof. Heino O. Kadai
6:30 p.m. Banquet
"Luther, the After-Dinner Speaker"
Prof. Lewis W. Spitz

Friday — January 28, 1983

7:00 a.m. Breakfast
8:50 a.m. Chapel
9:30 a.m. Panel: "The Theology of Luther - *Sola Scriptura, Sola Gratia, Sola Fide*"
Profs. Grane, Edwards, Kittelson, Spitz, Preus, Kadai, Klug

THE SPEAKERS

Prof. Dr. Robert D. Preus, President of Concordia Theological Seminary and Professor of Systematic Theology, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Prof. Dr. Eugene F.A. Klug, Chairman of the Department of Systematic Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Prof. Dr. Leif Grane, University of Copenhagen, Institute of Church History and Missions, Chairman of the International Luther Congress Continuation Committee, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Prof. Dr. Mark U. Edwards, Department of History, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana.

Prof. Dr. Lewis W. Spitz, Wm. R. Kenan Professor of History, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

Prof. Dr. James M. Kittelson, Department of History, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

Prof. Dr. Heino O. Kadai, Chairman of the Department of Historical Theology, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

The fee for registration, program material, and participation in the banquet is $45.00 per person, $70.00 for husband and wife. In the case of pastors emeriti, however, the fee is $25.00.

The registration fee for a single day is $20.00. The fee for participation in the banquet is $12.50 per person.

College and seminary students may register at no cost (although participation in the banquet will require payment of a fee).

The seminary will provide limousine service from the airport for $10.00 per person when given at least two days' notice of arrival time.

Limited dormitory space is available for registrants and their wives. The fee for a room is $7.00 per person. There will be two people in each room. Motel reservations are available should they be preferred.

Please include your name, address, congregation, and telephone number with your request for registration. Early registration by mail will guarantee the accommodations of your choice.

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner may be purchased in the seminary dining hall.

Send requests for registration (or requests for further information) together with the registration fee to the International Center of Lutheran Confessional Studies, Concordia Theological Seminary, 6600 North Clinton Street, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825, or call 219-482-9611.

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, Zip Code: _____

Check the appropriate box:

Please reserve a dormitory room for me ☐ and my spouse ☐

Please reserve a motel room for me ☐ and my spouse ☐

I will make my own accommodation arrangements ☐

Justification through Faith in Article Four of the Apology

Martim C. Warth

Article Four of the Apology is an article of great consolation and certainty. It is the affirmation of free consolation through the remission of sins and of the certainty in Christ. Although one has to agree with Dr. C.F.W. Walther that "it is not an easy matter correctly to present the doctrine of justification,"[1] one has to thank God for such a fine and clear treatise on the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae* as Melanchthon has given the church. It was hard work; Melanchthon worked for months on the Apology, and a quarter of the Apology is dedicated to the doctrine of justification. This article required special reflection, dealing as it does with the heartbeat of the Reformation and, indeed, of the whole Christian existence. When the Apology finally was to appear in printed form at the end of April or the beginning of May 1531, Melanchthon still was not satisfied with the result, and at the last minute suppressed five and one-half already printed double sheets of the article on justification.[2]

I. Introductory Matters

A. The Centrality of the Doctrine

It is not only the "lay theologican"[3] in Melanchthon who struggles with the difficulty to describe correctly "the main doctrine ofChristianity" (*praecipuus locus doctrinae Christianae*) (2), but it is also the thirty-four-year-old mature Christian who knows by experience "how difficult a thing faith is" (350). On January 1, 1531, he wrote Camerarius: "In the Apology I experience much trouble with the article of justification, which I seek to explain profitably."[4] It was most certainly "the first manifesto of his 'mature' thought on this central doctrine,"[5] although he had worked on it in his *Loci Communes* of 1521 and continued to do so in his Romans Commentary of 1532.[6] He considers this doctrine the "most true and certain and indispensable for all Christians" (398), since it concerns "an important issue, the honor of Christ and the source of sure and firm consolation for pious minds" (156). It deals with "the purpose of the history" of Christ, namely, "the forgiveness of sins" (51). For this reason Melanchthon says that "this teaching about the righteousness of faith dare not be neglected in the church of Christ" (377).

B. Melanchthon's Sources

To prepare the defence of Article Four of the Augsburg Confession Melanchthon could not rely on good systematic or exegetical sources, since they were not yet available. Thus Melanchthon, the learned humanist, had to use his humanistic skills to set straight the relation between revelation and reason. He knew that he was preaching "the foolishness of the Gospel," thus knowing "how repulsive this teaching is to the judgment of reason and law and that the teaching of the law about love is more plausible; for this is human wisdom" (230).

As a humanist he inherited a respect for the opinion of others which gave him his ecumenical tendencies. But to preserve a true ecumenicity he had to become a confessor. He confessed his agreement with Scripture against the defenders of the Roman Confutation, declaring that "it is surely amazing that our opponents are unmoved by the many passages in the Scriptures that clearly attribute justification to faith and specifically deny it to works" (107). He confessed his agreement with the early church, since he found that "there are similar statements here and there in the holy Fathers" (103). But the opponents "have no more understanding than the walls that fling back an echo" (237). The time of the Augsburg Confession was past and Melanchthon had no more illusions about an agreement. Thus, the soft humanist can also say that the canonists have "twisted" and "distorted" (288) and that the opponents delight in "childish sophistry" (336). Their "trust is simply wicked and vain" (146). Melanchthon reminds his readers that the "opponents counsel pious consciences very badly" (285) with "harmful" modes of justification which reveal "ungodliness" (290). He concludes that the opponents "defend human opinions contrary to the Gospel, contrary to the authority of the holy Fathers, and contrary to the testimony of pious minds" (400). This statement reveals Melanchthon's main sources. The "pious minds" include especially his friend and co-reformer Martin Luther.[7]

C. The Structure of the Article

Melanchthon "was a logical man,"[8] and his Apology was an "intellectual defense of the Augsburg Confession."[9] In Article Four he reveals not only his intellectual and logical ability, but his theological ability as well. With Luther he had grasped the main thrust of Biblical theology and the critical centrality of the doctrine of justification.[10] He helped Luther to systematize the theological concepts, so that they were not only accepted by Luther,[11] but became standard for later Lutheran theology.[12]

In Article Four there is no deviation from Luther's position, as some argue,[13] since both Luther and Melanchthon agree that "justification in the Pauline sense . . . signifies a declaration of justification" in a forensic sense. There is an imputation of alien righteousness.[14] But this is not "merely" a declaration of justification, as Haegglund reads in Melanchthon. Both Luther and Melanchthon know that through justification Christ Himself "becomes ours,"[15] as Luther says, and that through justification "we are in Christ" (140) and "Christ still helps us to keep the law" (299), as Melanchthon says.

The main arguments in Article Four are determined by an anthropology that is completely different from the anthropological optimism of the Roman church, as seen especially in the Roman Confutation. This Melanchthon makes clear in the preceding article on original sin. In analyzing these arguments it is almost impossible to believe that Melanchthon really became a synergist.[16] He emphasizes all through Article Four the monergism of God. It is God who offers the *promissio* of the Gospel. The *promissio* is only *propter Christum.* The *promissio* creates faith, so that justification is received *per fidem* as a gift of God. Since the *promissio* is divine, the Holy Spirit comes with faith, so that now *propter fidem* begin in the believer the "battle of Christ" (192) and the "reign of Christ" (189). When Melanchthon adds a word "about reward and merit" (193) and says that "we teach that good works are meritorious" (194), he says only that God is rewarding His own work in the believer, since "through these works Christ shows his victory over the devil" (192). This is a total monergism of God. It guarantees the two main concerns in this controversy, namely, "the honor of Christ" and "the abundant consolation" for pious consciences (2).

II. The Basic Presuppositions

A. The Anthropological Predicament

For Melanchthon the anthropological predicament is an "important issue" (2). The opponents "confuse this doctrine miserably" (3), since they affirm that "men receive the forgiveness of sins because of their merits" (1) and so "they obscure the glory and the blessings of Christ, and they rob pious consciences of the consolation offered them in Christ" (3). This means that, for Melanchthon, the main question is the correct understanding of the benefits of Christ.[17] This was already his concern in the *Loci Communes* of 1521: "Hoc est Christum cognoscere, beneficia eius cognoscere."[18] There are two differing interpretations for the

"benefits of Christ" — the interpretation of the *Confutatio* and that of the Apology.

1. THE ROMANIST ANTHROPOLOGY

Melanchthon gives the key to the correct understanding of God's revelation in Scripture. There are two chief doctrines, and "all Scripture should be divided into these two chief doctrines, the law and the promises" (5). The opponents selected the way of the law (7) to interpret the benefits of Christ. Since "reason can somehow perform" external, civil works (8) "without the Holy Spirit" (9), the opponents "claim to keep the law, though this glory properly belongs to Christ" (146).

There is a difference between "external works that reason can somehow perform" (8) and "keeping the law" (146). The Decalogue "requires other works far beyond the reach of reason, like true fear of God, true love of God, true prayer to God, true conviction that God hears prayer, and the expectation of God's help in death and all afflictions" (8). Keeping the law involves the first table of the Decalogue, especially the First Commandment, "which commands us to love God, to be sure that God is wrathful at our sin" (34).

Melanchthon has put the two commands together, the command to love God and the command to be sure about God's wrath, so that the opponents may recognize that it is altogether impossible to satisfy the law. For this reason Melanchthon repeats, at least nine times, that "the law always accuses ("lex semper accusat") us, it always shows that God is wrathful" (128, 38, 157, 167, 204, 260, 270, 285, 295). And he concludes that "we cannot love God until we have grasped His mercy by faith. Only then does He become an object that can be loved" (*obiectum amabile*) (129).

The opponents "teach the law in such a way as to hide the Gospel of Christ" (286). So the benefits of Christ are interpreted in a way that is false and detrimental to the Gospel, the promise of the forgiveness of sins. Their "whole system is derived either from human reason or from the teaching of the law rather than the Gospel" (287). They teach two modes of justification — one based upon reason, the other based upon the law. "Neither one is based upon the Gospel or the promise of Christ" (287).

The first mode of justification, according to the opponents, "is that men merit grace by good works — first by the merit of congruity, then by the merit of condignity" (288). This doctrine can teach only those who are blind to the uncleanness of the heart.

Those who feel the "terrors of conscience" add still "many other painful sorts of works to appease the wrath of God." So they later "thought up monastic orders" to counteract "the terrors of conscience and the wrath of God," although "the Fathers had enacted them" not to seek righteousness, but "for the sake of social tranquility" (288).

The second mode of justification "teaches that we are righteous through a certain disposition (which is love) infused by God" (*gratia infusa*) (289). With this infused grace, the Romanists say, "we obey the law of God both outwardly and inwardly." This obedience of the law is supposed to be "worthy of grace and eternal life" (289). This doctrine "imagines that we produce an act of love whereby we merit the forgiveness of sins" (290). Justification is, therefore, progressive in this system. It is the reward of virtue, and depends on what man accomplishes.[19]

The benefits of Christ, in this system, provide the *prima gratia* necessary to merit *de congruo*. But they provide also the *gratia infusa* available through the sacraments and the church to merit *de condigno* (17, 288). Melanchthon calls attention to the fact that works and merits before and after the first grace are identical, and that if a man has received the first grace, he no longer would really be meriting *de congruo*, but already *de condigno*. He says that in this distinction the Romanists are only "playing in order to avoid the impression that they are outright Pelagians" (19). Infused grace would be necessary only to "love God more easily" or to "do so more freely" (17). But Melanchthon argues that this is nonsensical, since "they bid us merit this first disposition by our preceding merits."

The Council of Trent would later declare that faith is the beginning of salvation (*initium salutis*), that faith is *notitia historica* of the benefits of Christ, and that faith is partly a gift of God and partly an achievement of the will of man. Today Roman theology insists that faith is not even that beginning, but that the way to faith is already prepared by inclinations (*inchoationes fidei*) which man has through the *universal grace* which God gives even to all pagans. Those pagans who have never had contact with the Gospel "ought to reach grace through a purely interior way."[20] According to Roman doctrine, there are as many extraordinary ways of salvation as there are men who are "outside the salvation order."[21] When these external (universal grace) and internal (man's virtue) circumstances are favorable, the free will of man will itself decide to make of this grace an effective grace (*gratia congrua*).[22] This grace is still supposed to be the result of the

benefits of Christ, but it is no longer bound to the *notitia historica* of the Gospel — the correlation of word and faith.

Since the universal grace of God cannot be known apart from the Word, Melanchthon is right when he says that the Romanists "bid us merit this first disposition by our preceding merits" (17). The benefits of Christ are downgraded and human virtues are extolled. Roman anthropology asserts that "nature is not evil" and that "nothing is sin unless it is voluntary" (Ap. II:43). The Romanists do not recognize their evil, and so they cannot acknowledge the benefits of Christ correctly, since Melanchthon says that "we cannot know his blessings unless we recognize our evil" (Ap. II: 50). This is why Article Four of the Augsburg Confession simply says that "men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, . . . or satisfactions."

2. MELANCHTHON'S ANTHROPOLOGY

Melanchthon asserts that when the article on justification is properly understood, "it illumines and magnifies the honor of Christ and brings to pious consciences the abundant consolation that they need" (2). With this introduction he points to two important issues: First, the "recognition of original sin is a necessity." Secondly, we cannot "know the magnitude of the grace of Christ unless we acknowledge our faults" (Ap. II: 33). Thus, Melanchthon knows that there is need for "abundant consolation" and that this consolation is available only through "the magnitude of the grace of Christ."

The Roman opponents make one great mistake: "They utterly overlook that eternal law, far beyond the senses and understanding of all creatures. 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart' (Deut. 6:5)" (131). At the beginning "man was created in the image of God and after his likeness (Gen. 1:27)" (Ap. II:18). This image was the "wisdom and righteousness and truth" which God had "implanted in man," a wisdom and righteousness by which man "would grasp God and reflect him" in truth (Ap. II: 18, 20). Melanchthon mentions three fundamental gifts which were received with this image — first, the knowledge of God," second, "the fear and love of God," and third, "the trust in God" which in the restoration of the image reappears as faith (Ap. II: 7, 18, 23, 26).

Melanchthon understands that all this was lost through the fall. In place of the image of God there is original sin, which has two aspects — imputed guilt (Ap. II: 35, 36) and inherent concupiscence, which Melanchthon calls a "continual inclination of

nature" (Ap. II: 3) and a "disease since human nature is born full of corruption and faults" (Ap. II: 6). This is what Melanchthon reads in the "old definition" which held that "original sin is the lack of original righteousness" (Ap. II: 15). Melanchthon's definition of original sin "denied to man's natural powers the fear and trust of God" (Ap. II: 14), denying to man the ability to keep the First Commandment. Original sin involves such faults as "ignorance of God," "contempt of God, lack of fear and love," so that "man hates God," and "lack of trust," so that "man cannot believe in God, man despises the judgment of God, and man trusts in temporal things" (Ap. II: 8, 14, 17, 24). So "all righteousness of man is mere hypocrisy before God unless we acknowledge that of itself the heart is lacking in love, fear, and trust in God" (Ap. II: 33). Man is not "neutral" in spiritual matters (Ap. II: 45). The penalty for original sin is that "human nature is subjected not only to death and other physical ills, but also to the rule of the devil" (Ap. II: 46). The only one who is able to re-establish fellowship with God is the Faithful One, the God-man Jesus Christ. "Christ was given to us to bear both sin and penalty and to destroy the rule of the devil, sin, and death; so we cannot know his blessings unless we recognize our evil" (Ap. II: 50).

B. God's Monergism

Because of the "inner uncleanness of human nature" (Ap. II: 12) it is impossible for man to be "justified before God by philosophical or civic righteousness, which we agree is subject to reason and somewhat in our power" (Ap. II: 12), for this would attribute "more than [is] proper to free will and to 'elicited acts' " (Ap. II: 12). It is impossible, since concupiscence is "the continual inclination of nature" (Ap. II: 3) and it remains in the mortal flesh" (Ap. II: 36), as Melanchthon affirms with Augustine. In other words, all synergism and all Pelagianism is excluded, since concupiscence, the flesh, the carnal inclination, remains until the Last Day.

But the promise which God gives to sinful man is that sin "is not imputed to those who are in Christ" (Ap. II: 40). Melanchthon employs Luther's doctrine of Baptism "condemned by Leo X" (Ap. II: 35) and affirms that "Baptism removes the guilt of the original sin" but that consupiscence, the "material element" of original sin, remains in the baptized one. God promises to "those who are in Christ" through Baptism that the guilt is not longer imputed, and this faith in Christ simultaneously "brings the Holy Spirit" (116), "given in Baptism" (Ap. II: 35), who "begins to mortify lust and to create new impulses in man" (Ap. II: 35). This

reference to Baptism introduces and summarizes Melanchthon's whole essay on justification in Article Four.

II. Justification through Faith

A. The Basis of Faith

Melanchthon charges that the opponents have chosen the way of the law to find justification. It is Melanchthon's contention in the Apology, however, that "we obtain justification through a free promise," and that "the Gospel is, strictly speaking, the promise of forgiveness of sins and justification because of Christ" (43). Justifying faith is based on the following three elements which belong together: first, "the promise itself," second, "the fact that the promise is free," and third, "the merit of Christ as the price and propitiation" (53).

1. THE PROMISE

We have already seen that Melanchthon accepted Luther's interpretation of Baptism; so when he says that "justification takes place through the Word" (66), he affirms that the sacrament of Baptism justifies because of the Word of God comprehended in it. Since the Gospel "proclaims the righteousness of faith in Christ" (43), it "compels us to make use of Christ in justification" (291). It is even "the command [*mandatum*] to believe that we have a gracious God because of Christ" (345). Melanchthon can say that the promise is "a command," because he knows that it can "be obeyed" only when there is a gift on both ends — the gift of the promise and the gift of faith. That faith is a gift is "Paul's chief argument, which he often repeats (Rom. 4:16, Gal. 3:18)," since it is "based upon the nature of a promise" (84). Paul "denies us any merit" and adds that "the promise of the forgiveness of sins and justification is a gift, and further that the promise can be accepted only by faith" (84), since only the gift of "faith can accept a promise" (50, 264).

Melanchthon finds that "the promise is involved even in the word 'redeem.' It signifies that the forgiveness of sins is possible, that sins can be redeemed, that the obligation or debt can be removed, that the wrath of God can be stilled" (264). But this is not a mere possibility; it is a certainty. "Let us remember that the Gospel promises the forgiveness of sins with certainty. It would clearly be an abolition of the Gospel if we were to deny that the forgiveness of sins must surely be given by a promise" (264). For Melanchthon "we are justified by promise, in which reconciliation, righteousness, and eternal life are assured to us for

Christ's sake" (297), and "faith alone accepts the forgiveness of sins, justifies, and regenerates" (292).

2. THE GRACE OF GOD

The second aspect of the basis of justifying faith is "the fact that the promise is free" (53). Melanchthon says that "the promise . . . offers mercy gratis" (339) and that this "mercy toward us" is "God's grace" (381).[23] Grace, therefore, is not "a disposition [*habitus*] by which we love God" (381), as the opponents hold, but it is God's "promise of mercy" (55), "the mercy promised because of Christ" (79). This mercy is not as in the "courts of human judgment," where "mercy is uncertain"; "the judgment of God is another thing altogether. Here mercy has God's clear and certain promise and his command" (345). "So whenever mercy is spoken of, faith in the promise must be added" (346), since "the promised mercy correlatively requires faith and . . . only faith can take hold of this mercy" (324).

When Melanchthon says that "faith is that which grasps God's free mercy because of God's Word" (153), he agrees completely with Luther. Jörg Rothermundt recalls in his "Report on LWF Studies, 1958-1963," that

> the decisive difference between Luther on the one hand and Thomism and mysticism on the other [is]: Only Luther speaks here of the word, only he knows the gospel as the living pronouncement of salvation here and now, and faith as the necessary correlate of the word. The concept of alien righteousness, which in itself could be understood mystically or Thomistically, also receives its Reformation precision only through the statement: This alien righteousness is appropriated through the word, the word which can be heard only in faith.[24]

Here again we recognize Melanchthon as the systematizer of Luther's theology. Melanchthon knows that the free grace of mercy provides a justice which is alien, but which is imputed by the Word of promise through justifying faith. He says that "faith alone justifies," and that "the reconciled are accounted righteous and children of God . . . by mercy on account of Christ, if they grasp this mercy by faith." We are "accounted righteous before God" because faith "receives God's promise that for Christ's sake he wishes to be propitious to believers in Christ" (86).

3. THE BENEFITS OF CHRIST

"The merits of Christ as a price and propitiation" (53) are the third aspect of the basis of justifying faith. Melanchthon affirms against his opponents that "it is not enough to believe that Christ was born, suffered, and was raised unless we add this article, the purpose of the history, 'the forgiveness of sins.' The rest must be integrated with this article, namely, that for Christ's sake [*propter Christum*] and not because of our own merits the forgiveness of sins is bestowed upon us" (51). The "opponents suppose that Christ is the mediator and propitiator because he merited for us the disposition of love" (81), but "it is an error to suppose that he merely merited 'initial grace' and that afterward we please God and merit eternal life by our keeping of the law. Christ remains the mediator" (162, 163). Melanchthon insists that "we must always hold that we are accounted righteous by faith [*per fidem*] for the sake of Christ [*propter Christum*]" (163), since "Christ does not stop being the mediator after our renewal" (162). It is difficult to exaggerate Melanchthon's emphasis on the merits of Christ: "But what is the knowledge of Christ except to know Christ's blessings, the promises which by the Gospel he has spread throughout the world?" (101); Christ is "the price for our sins" (57); the "name of Christ [is] the cause or price on account of which we are saved" (98); he became "a sacrifice for us" (179); by his death "our sins are blotted out"; "God has been reconciled to us because of Christ's suffering"(382).

Although such statements teach or assume what we have come to call "objective justification," it is clear in the Apology that "Christ's suffering benefits us" only "when frightened consciences are consoled by faith and believe," since "Christ is a propitiation, as Paul says, through faith" (382). "Faith alone justifies" (86) as far as the appropriation of justification by the individual is concerned (subjective justification). Therefore, "when a man believes that his sins are forgiven because of Christ, this personal faith obtains the forgiveness of sins and justifies us" (45). And "by freely accepting the forgiveness of sins, faith sets against God's wrath not our merits of love, but Christ the mediator and propitiator. This faith is the true knowledge of Christ" (46).

From the beginning Melanchthon is concerned about the honor and glory of Christ. For this reason he adds that "if somebody doubts that his sins are forgiven, he insults Christ because he thinks that his sin is greater and stronger that the death and promise of Christ" (149). And "if somebody believes that he

obtains the forgiveness of sins because he loves, he insults Christ" (150). "Therefore it must be faith that reconciles and justifies" (150), since the Gospel "compels us to make use of Christ in justification. It teaches that through him we have access to God through faith (Rom. 5:2), and that we should set him, the mediator and propitiator, against the wrath of God" (291).

After we "are saved by trust in the name of Christ" (98) we are invited also to rely on Christ in all other situations of life, for Christ is the "high priest" (165) who intercedes for us. Furthermore, since "he is the end of the law (Rom. 10:4)" (372), "Christ still helps us to keep the law" (299). Melanchthon is very conscious that, even though "the law cannot be satisfied" (166) since "the law always accuses" (38), it is necessary that "the keeping of the law should begin in us and increase more and more" (136). But it is "clear that without the help of Christ we cannot keep the law" (315, 388) and we "cannot correctly keep the law unless by faith we have received the Holy Spirit" (132). Even then all our good works represent only "the reign of Christ" (189), the "battle of Christ," (192) and "battles of God" (191).

B. The Creation of Faith

Melanchthon's affirmation that "one cannot deal with God or grasp him except through the Word" (67) reveals his conviction that the Word is primarily the Gospel, which "is the power of God," through which "justification takes place" (67). This power he knows also to exist in the sacraments (73), especially in Baptism (103). Even "absolution is the spoken Gospel" (271). When Melanchthon affirms that "the forgiveness of sins is a thing promised for Christ's sake" and that "therefore it can be accepted only by faith" (84), it follows that "faith alone justifies because we receive the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit by faith alone" (86). And when he affirms, at the same time, that, according to Luther, "Baptism removes the guilt of original sin" and "that the Holy Spirit, given in Baptism, begins to mortify lust and to create new impulses in man" (Ap. II: 35), it follows that Baptism is part of that Word of God, the Gospel, which is the "power of God" that creates faith. When Melanchthon approvingly adds the affirmation of Ambrose, "He who is righteous has it as a gift because he was justified after being washed" (103), it follows that faith is a gift, a creation of God, in which creation man has no active participation. Man is *pure passive*, as Luther asserts.[25] And since Baptism creates faith, faith cannot be defined "as the conscious acceptance of the grace of God."[26]

This justifying faith is "conceived by the Word" (73), it exists "because of God's Word" (153), it "rests on the Word" (346), and "it is received through the Word" (66). Therefore the Gospel "must be retained in the church" (120). The Gospel creates the church and its unity through the gift of faith. But this faith has to be confessed in concord in order to retain the Gospel which creates the unity. Melanchthon points to this need when he says that "in order to keep the Gospel among men, he [God] visibly pits the witness of the saints against the rule of the devil; in our weakness he displays his strength" (189).

The Gospel is the power of God because it is the Holy Spirit's Word. He gave the Word and he acts through the Word. He is the real cause of the justifying faith. Faith "is a work of the Holy Spirit" (64, 115), there is "a divine power that makes us alive" (250), faith is efficacious "through the power of God" (250), and faith is "a supernatural thing" (303). Melanchthon says that "a faith that truly and wholeheartedly accepts the promise of grace" and "which believes that God cares for us, forgives us, and hears us" is a faith that "does not come without a great battle in the human heart," for "of itself the human mind believes no such things about God" (303). With such words Melanchthon is certainly saying two things: (1.) Faith is "a supernatural thing"; the Holy Spirit has to create in us a new being, effecting the "conversion of the wicked" (65), who resists in his self-righteousness. (2.) This faith created by the Holy Spirit necessarily brings along the Holy Spirit, who "in our hearts battles against such feelings" as distrust, defiance and doubts of the flesh (170). Melanchthon does not say that *man* has to fight "a great battle" before he may receive faith, but that the gift of faith results from the Holy Spirit's battle. This position is again clear when he says that "justification is strictly a gift of God" (362).

C. Faith as the Means of Justification

Melanchthon has many things to say about faith, especially in relation to its fruits. But when he comes to speak of justifying faith — when faith is being considered as the means of the remission of sins — it has no dimension, no degree, no intensity. Justifying faith is, as also in Luther, a mathematical point, or rather, a mathematical line all through life. The non-dimensional reality of faith is clear when Melanchthon says that "the forgiveness of sins is the same and equal to all, as Christ is one, and it is offered to all who believe that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. The forgiveness of sins and justification are received only by faith, not because of works" (195). If works are excluded, then all effort of

man, even his psychological awareness, is excluded. There is only "personal faith" (45), that is, an "I," which Werner Elert calls the "transcendental I,"[27] and "faith," which Melanchthon identifies directly with "righteousness." He says that "faith is righteousness in us by imputation" (307), "faith is truly righteousness" (308), "righteousness is faith in the heart" (263), "faith is the very righteousness by which we are accounted righteous before God" (86), "it is faith, therefore, that God declares to be righteousness" (89), and "faith is the righteousness of the heart" (92).

With this identification Melanchthon wants to emphasize that there is no temporal sequence between faith and justification. It is not necessary first to believe in many things before finally God justifies man. But the moment of the beginning of faith is the moment of the forgiveness of sins and justification. Or, better, the moment the Holy Spirit touches the heart with the Word of promise so that it kindles faith, man is justified. Faith is the human side of justification, while justification is the divine side of faith. It is in this sense that faith has no dimension but exists only as the means of justification. Both faith and justification are gifts of God, promised in the Gospel for the sake of Jesus Christ. For this reason Melanchthon can say that "this faith makes the difference between those who are saved and those who are not. Faith makes the difference between the worthy and the unworthy because eternal life is promised to the justified and it is faith that justifies" (347). Faith is the gift, the "grace that makes us acceptable to God (*gratia gratum faciens*)" (116).

Melanchthon understands that justification and faith form a mathematical line all through our life. Melanchthon says that "it is clear that justification does not mean merely the beginning of our renewal, but the reconciliation by which we are later accepted" (161). This is so because "Christ does not stop being the mediator after our renewal" (162). "Therefore we must always go back to the promise" (165). And if we must always go back to the promise, this righteousness never becomes our inherent righteousness and infused disposition (*habitus*), but it remains an alien righteousness which must always be received through the promise of the Gospel. Melanchthon insists that "we must always hold that we are accounted righteous by faith for the sake of Christ" (163),[28] since "our righteousness is the imputation of someone else's righteousness" (306), namely, the *beneficia Christi* (101).

In summary, then, justification is first the non-imputation of our sins or the "forgiveness of sins" (195) and, secondly, the

imputation of an alien righteousness, namely, "the death and satisfaction of Christ, bestowed upon us to assure us that because of this satisfaction and not because of our keeping of the law we have a gracious God" (178). So "justification is strictly a gift of God; it is a thing promised" (362), and only the gift of "faith can take hold of the promise" (324).

D. Faith as the Power of Sanctification

Melanchthon is well aware that justification and sanctification are absolutely simultaneous, so that there is no justification without sanctification, and there is no sanctification without justification. There is only a logical precedence of justification over santification, not a temporal one. Melanchthon calls attention to this fact when he speaks of a first and of a second — "faith precedes while love follows" (141). He states more fully (293):

> faith is accounted for righteousness before God (Rom. 4:3,5). When the heart is encouraged and quickened by faith in this way, it receives the Holy Spirit. Through his renewal we can keep the law, love God and his Word, obey God in the midst of afflictions, and practice chastity, love toward our neighbor, and so forth. Even though they are a long way from the perfection of the law, these works please God on account of the justifying faith that for Christ's sake we have a gracious God.

Melanchthon, of course, understands that justification is a "forensic" act of God, since " '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" (305).[29] But the faith which is a means of justification is at the same time the power of God in the believer, since it "brings the Holy Spirit" (116), so that man is "led by the Spirit of Christ" (372). Therefore, "since faith brings the Holy Spirit and produces a new life in our hearts, it must also produce spiritual impulses in our hearts" (125). Faith is, then, already "work worthy in itself," but it is not for this reason that faith justifies (86). Any awareness of faith or of justification is already in the area of the effects and therefore in the area of reflexive faith and santification. With respect to the effects of faith and justification three main areas have to be considered: first, the awareness and confession of faith and the expression of confidence and trust through prayer; second, Christian love, in conjunction with the *simul* of flesh and Spirit

and with continual repentance; and third, the Christian hope for final sanctification and eternal life.

1. THE CONFESSION OF FAITH

In the description of justification Melanchthon speaks in an empirical manner when he says that " 'to be justified' means to make unrighteous men righteous or to regenerate them, as well as to be pronounced or accounted righteous. For Scripture speaks both ways" (72, 78, 117). He identifies justification with reconciliation (114, 161, 181), with regeneration (72, 78, 117, 181, 292), with remission of sins (72, 75, 114), with forensic righteousness (72, 305), and with vivification (250).

According to Article Three of the Solid Declaration (18-21), which was partially written by Melanchthon's "devoted disciples" Martin Chemnitz, Nicholas Selnecker and David Chytraeus,[30] who understood Melanchthon's theological terminology, the word "regeneration" is used in the Apology in a limited sense, where it means only "the forgiveness of sins and our adoption as God's children." The same is said about the term "vivification." Melanchthon seems to use the word "regenerate" also in another sense, which the Formula considers the first use, namely, the one which includes "both the forgiveness of sins . . . and the subsequent renewal." This meaning Melanchthon might have in mind when he says that "this personal faith obtains the forgiveness of sins and justifies us. In penitence and the terrors of conscience it consoles and encourages our hearts. Thus it regenerates us and brings us the Holy Spirit" (45). He seems to mean the same thing when he says that to "have spiritual and holy impulses" cannot happen "until, being justified and regenerated, we receive the Holy Spirit" (125, 126). To describe clearly the change *in* man Melanchthon uses expressions like these: "faith brings the Holy Spirit and produces a new life in our hearts" (125); "through his renewal we can keep the law" (293); "this same faith quickens because it brings forth peace, joy, and eternal life in the heart" (100); and "reborn in this way, they bring forth fruits" (263).

Again, Melanchthon sometimes speaks in an empirical manner of faith as including activity which is possible only after justification has taken place. Such is always the case when he uses the expression "to believe that," which presupposes an intellectual activity and a movement of the will which are possible only after God has already given the gift of faith. So also he uses expressions like the following: "this faith brings to God a trust . . .

in the promise of mercy in Christ" (44); "this personal faith obtains the forgiveness of sins and justifies us" (45); "freely accepting the forgiveness," "faith sets against God's wrath . . . Christ," "faith is the true knowledge of Christ" (46); "we can accept this promise only by faith" (43); "to want and to accept the promised offer of forgiveness of sins and justification" (48); "a firm acceptance of the promise" (50); "they received free mercy and the forgiveness of sins by faith" (57); "that we accept his blessings or receive them" (60); "take hold of the name of Christ" (83); "they grasp this mercy by faith" (86); "justification is obtained by faith" (106); "to believe means to think of Christ in this way . . . as the Messiah," "take hold of him" (154); "make use of Christ in justification" (291); "a faith that truly and wholeheartedly accepts the promise of grace" (303); and "therefore we conclude that we are justified before God, reconciled to him, and reborn by a faith that penitently grasps the promised grace, truly enlivens the fearful mind, and is convinced that God is reconciled and propitious to us because of Christ . . . Christians need to understand this faith" (386).

All these expressions refer to the consciousness of faith, as it is normally confessed by the adult Christian. The baptized infant is not yet able to express his faith in this manner, but to do so becomes a necessity for the more mature Christian in view of the consciousness of his sins. For this reason Melanchthon emphasized the fact that in this controversy with the Romanists "consolation" (2) was at stake. The awareness and confession of faith becomes necessary because "in justification our business is with God; his wrath must be stilled and the conscience find peace before him" (224). Sin "terrifies consciences" (979); it terrifies "minds" (115). These "terrors of sin and death" (291, 314) can be overcome only by faith, which is a "work of the Holy Spirit that frees us from death, comforting and quickening terrified minds" (115). For faith sets "against God's wrath . . . Christ the mediator and propitiator" (46). "This is the greatest consolation in all afflictions" (60), and "in penitence and the terrors of conscience it consoles and encourages our hearts" (45), and "it brings forth peace, joy, and eternal life in the heart" (100). As Melanchthon puts it: "There must needs be a proclamation in the church from which the faithful may receive the sure hope of salvation" (119), since "it rests on the Word and commandment of God" (346). "So pious men should not let themselves be diverted from this declaration, that we receive the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake only by faith; here they have a certain and firm consolation

against the terrors of sin, against eternal death, and against all the gates of hell" (85).

Melanchthon makes an important distinction with regard to worship, which can be applied also to prayer as part of our confession of faith. "It is easy to determine the difference between this faith and the righteousness of the law. Faith is that worship which receives God's offered blessings; the righteousness of the law is the worship which offers God our own merits. It is by faith that God wants to be worshipped, namely, that we receive from him what he promises and offers" (49, 310). Faith is, therefore, "an act of worship" because it is "obedience toward God," since faith desires "to receive the offered promise" (228, 308). Prayer also is worship, since "prayer relies upon the mercy of God when we believe that we are heard because of Christ the high priest" (333, 59).

2. CHRISTIAN LOVE

The opponents had contended that love and good works were more important than faith, since they merited forgiveness of sins.[31] Melanchthon knows that love and good works are very important, so that they even merit reward, but they do not merit the forgiveness of sins. "We teach that rewards have been offered and promised to the works of the faithful. We teach that good works are meritorious — not for the forgiveness of sins, grace, or justification (for we obtain these only by faith) but for other physical and spiritual rewards in this life and in that which is to come, as Paul says (I Cor. 3:8), 'Each shall receive his wages according to his labor.' Therefore there will be different rewards for different labors" (194). And he adds that "works merit other bodily and spiritual rewards because they please God through faith" (355). This is the same as to say that God rewards His own work, since faith is a gift of God (356).

The giving or retaining of rewards is God's exercise of Christians: "Yet God exercises his saints in different ways and often puts off the rewards for the righteousness of works. Thus they learn not to trust in their own righteousness, but seek the will of God rather than the rewards, as is evident in Job, in Christ, and in other saints. Many Psalms teach us this as they console us against the good fortune of the wicked" (198). He understands that "such praise undoubtedly moves the faithful to good works" (199), especially since "we also grant that alms merit many divine blessings, lighten our punishments, and merit a defense for us in the perils of sin and death, as we said earlier about penitence in general" (278).

When speaking of penitence, Melanchthon admits that "the punishments that chasten us are lightened by our prayers and good works, indeed by our complete penitence" (268). For the faithful "the degree of the reward is evidently commensurate with the degree of the work" (367), but this "is not an incentive to work for their own advantage, since they should work for the glory of God" (364). For "the crown is owed to the justified because of the promise" (363), and "justification is strictly a gift of God" (362).

Melanchthon understands that "reward properly belongs to the law," but the "keeping of the law would not please God unless we had been accepted because of faith. Since men are accepted because of faith, this incipient keeping of the law pleases God and has its reward, both here and hereafter" (368). The point is that "justification is not the approval of a particular act but of the total person" (222). Only after the person himself is accepted by God in mercy can his works please God too. This truth being understood, Melanchthon can make the following affirmations: "Christ frequently connects the promise of forgiveness of sins with good works" in order to warn hypocrites and to console the faithful (275). "In penitence we must consider faith and fruits together" (278). In this sense, "it is the whole newness of life which saves" (278).

Although Melanchthon clearly knows that "it is impossible to separate faith from love for God," he makes it equally clear that "faith precedes while love follows" (141, 111). "Faith alone accepts the forgiveness of sins, justifies, and regenerates. Then love and other good fruits follow" (292). Indeed, "love must necessarily follow" (114), since Paul speaks of "faith working through love" (111). Melanchthon thus shows good works to be "good fruits" which follow faith by intrinsic necessity. But good works are also commanded, especially in view of the necessity to "exercise our faith." "Good works should be done because God has commanded them and in order to exercise our faith, to give testimony, and to render thanks. For these reasons good works must necessarily be done" (189). This "exercise of faith" is necessary in view of the "flesh that is partly unregenerate and hinders what the Holy Spirit motivates, fouling it with its impurity" (189).

Like Luther, Melanchthon is very clear about the *simul*. On the one hand, he knows that "faith brings the Holy Spirit and produces a new life in our hearts" so that "it must also produce spiritual impulses in our hearts" (125). These spiritual "impulses agree with God's law" (175). (When Melanchthon here speaks of

the law he wants to be understood as speaking "of the Decalogue, the law that deals with the thoughts of the heart," (124.) It is true that "the law always accuses" (38), so that the regenerate must confess with Jerome that "we are righteous . . . when we confess that we are sinners" (173), and with Melanchthon that the "confession that our works are worthless is the very voice of faith" (337). This concept is similar to Luther's *accusatio sui*[32] which leads to a continual penitence and does not permit an *opinio legis* (265, 266), so that we can only reach the "Christian and spiritual perfection if penitence and faith amid penitence grow together" (353). But it is also true for Melanchthon that certain passages of Scripture "assert that we should begin to keep the law ever more and more." He learned from Luther the third use of the law, explained in very simple terms in the two Catechisms, published two years before. Melanchthon's explanation of the work of the Holy Spirit in us sounds like Luther's explanation of the first and the second table, especially of the First Commandment: "After we have been justified and regenerated by faith, therefore, we begin to fear and love God, to pray and expect help from him, to thank and praise him, and to submit to him in our afflictions. Then we also begin to love our neighbor because our hearts have spiritual and holy impulses" (125).

On the other hand, Melanchthon knows that we "receive the Holy Spirit, that this new life might have . . . hatred of lust" (349). The Holy Spirit "mortifies our lust [mortificat concupiscentiam]" (45). This concupiscence or lust is what remains of the original sin even after regeneration has taken place, since "our unspiritual nature continually brings forth evil desires, though the Spirit in us resists them" (146). Melanchthon knows that "sin still sticks to your flesh" (179), that the flesh "hinders what the Holy Spirit motivates, fouling it with its impurity" (189). "The flesh distrusts God and trusts in temporal things; in trouble it looks to men for help; it even defies God's will and runs away from afflictions that it ought to bear because of God's command; and it doubts God's mercy. The Holy Spirit in our hearts battles against such feelings in order to suppress and destroy them and to give us new spiritual impulses" (170).

In view of this *simul* Melanchthon argues that "faith arises in penitence and ought to grow continually in penitence" (353). Faith "has its existence in penitence. It ought to grow and become firmer amid good works as well as temptations and dangers, so that we become ever stronger in the conviction that God cares for us, and hears us for Christ's sake. No one learns this without many

severe struggles. How often our aroused conscience tempts us to despair when it shows our old and new sins or the uncleanness of our nature! This handwriting is not erased without a great conflict in which experience testifies how difficult a thing faith is" (350).

Melanchthon speaks of two elements in the keeping of the law, "namely, the inward spiritual impulses and the outward good works" (136). The outward good works which we do when "we begin to love our neighbor because our hearts have spiritual and holy impulses" (125) can be only "acts and signs of faith" (155), but never the fulfilling of the law, since "love has infinite external duties to men" (226). These "infinite external duties to men" should keep us humble, since "even a weak and feeble keeping of the law is rare, even among saints" (290). And "in the Lord's Prayer the saints pray for the forgiveness of sins; therefore saints have sins, too" (328).

Finally, Melanchthon lays down a general rule concerning the "law and works" (185): "The law cannot be kept without Christ, and . . . if civil works are done without Christ they do not please God. In commending works, therefore, we must add that faith is necessary, and that they are commended because of faith as its fruit or testimony" (184).

3. THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

Melanchthon distinguishes between faith and hope: "the object of hope is properly a future event, while faith deals with both future and present things" (312). Faith deals with "future and present things" because "this faith produces a sure hope" (346). It "makes the difference between those who are saved and those who are not. Faith makes the difference between the worthy and the unworthy because eternal life is promised to the justified and it is faith that justifies" (347). A man's rebirth through faith is already "the beginning of eternal life" (352).

Eternal life is granted as a gift to faith. Melanchthon explains how we have to understand the affirmation that eternal life is also granted to works. He says, first, that "we have shown above that justification is strictly a gift of God; it is a thing promised. To this gift the promise of eternal life has been added" (362). He then applies the rule by which "all passages on works can be interpreted," namely, "Whenever law and works are mentioned, we must know that Christ, the mediator, should not be excluded. He is the end of the law. Therefore, when eternal life is granted to works, it is granted to the justified. None can do good works except the justified, who are led by the Spirit of Christ; nor can

good works please God without the mediator Christ and faith" (372).

Melanchthon admits that "there will be distinctions in the glory of the saints" (355), since "works merit other bodily and spiritual rewards because they please God through faith" (355). He emphasizes, however, that, in spite of these distinctions, all is purely the gift of God: "Paul calls eternal life a 'gift' (Rom. 6:23) because the righteousness bestowed on us for Christ's sake at the same time makes us sons of God and fellow heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17), as John says (John 3:36), 'He who believes in the Son has eternal life.' Augustine says, as do many later writers, 'God crowns his gifts in us' " (356). Only in eternal life will our sanctification be perfect, since "beholding the glory of the Lord, we are changed into his likeness" (351).

Conclusion

Article Four of the Apology is almost a summary of Christian dogmatics. Since the article on justification by faith is of such central importance, it relates to almost all other articles of the Christ faith. Melanchthon was certainly at his best when he worked on this theological treatise. He was an exact and a hard worker. Bente recalls an incident, recorded by Mathesius and others, which happened at Spalatin's house at Altenburg, while Luther and Melanchthon were returning from Coburg after the Diet. Melanchthon went to work on the Apology there even on a Sunday and during meal time. Then Luther went to Melanchthon and "plucked the pen from his hand," saying, "God can be honored not only by work, but also by rest and recreation; for that reason He has given the Third Commandment and commanded the Sabbath."[33]

Melanchthon's theological position, as we find it in the Apology, is still valid and correct. It is not without reason that the Apology became an official confession of the Lutheran Church to which we still subscribe. It is amazing that Melanchthon was able to speak a theological language so similar to Luther's that at times it is difficult to determine whether it was the one or the other who enunciated a concept first. One might, however, venture to say that, while Luther provided the essence, Melanchthon provided the form for the theology that became standard for the Reformation. Melanchthon's logic is extremely clear, and once one has laid hold of his train of thought, it is easy to follow his argument and even to expect his conclusions. It is appropriate, therefore, to let Melanchthon himself conclude this study: "We conclude that we are justified before God, reconciled to him, and

reborn by a faith that penitently grasps the promise of grace, truly enlivens the fearful mind, and is convinced that God is reconciled and propitious to us because of Christ. Through this faith, Peter says (I Pet. 1:5), we are 'guarded for a salvation ready to be revealed.' Christians need to understand this faith, for it brings the *fullest comfort* in all afflictions and shows us the *work of Christ*" (386, 387).

FOOTNOTES

1. C.F.W. Walther, "That the Evangelical Lutheran Church Alone Has Been Entrusted with the Pure Doctrine of Justification," *Synodal-Bericht*, 1859, p. 18, as cited in Carl S. Meyer, "Scripture, Confession, Justification," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, XLII (April 1971), p. 201.
2. Bente, "Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books," *Concordia Triglotta* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1921), p. 42. H. Lietzmann, ed., *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 4th edition, 1959), p. xxiii. Unless otherwise stated, the citations of Apology IV will be taken from the Tappert edition of the Book of Concord. Only the usual paragraph number will be added in parentheses. The *Concordia Triglotta* uses two series of paragraph numbers: 1-121 are called Article IV (II), and 122-400 (1-279) are called Article III. To find the appropriate paragraph in the second section one has to deduct 121 from the number cited in this essay.
3. A.C. Piepkorn, "Melanchthon the Confessor," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, XXXI (Sept. 1960), p. 541.
4. Bente, 42.
5. Michael Rogness, *Philip Melanchthon, Reformer Without Honor* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1969), p. 65.
6. Rogness, pp. 7, 65.
7. Apology II: 35-45, especially 43.
8. Rogness, p. 114.
9. C.L. Manschreck, *Melanchthon, The Quiet Reformer* (Nashville and New York: Abingdon, 1958), p. 210.
10. Rogness, pp. 105, 113, 160.
11. Peter Fraenkel und Martin Greschat, *Zwanzig Jahre Melanchthonstudium, Sechs Literaturberichte* (1945-1965) (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1967), p. 119: "Melanchthons von Luther gutgeheissene Entwicklung ist in erster Linie am Interesse fur Ethik und Wissenschaft, d.h. am Gebrauch der Vernunft im Dienste Gottes, orientiert".
12. Rogness, p. 106.
13. Bengt Hägglund, *History of Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1968), p. 251: "... he altered to some extent the basic ideas which we find in Luther"; "... something of the richness of Luther's point of view had been lost."
14. Otto W. Heick, "The Just Shall Live by Faith," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, XLIII (Oct. 1972), p. 579: "This imputation doctrine came under attack as a Melanchthonian perversion of Luther's own view of justification. The attack was spearheaded by Karl Holl . . . ." Heick defends Uuras Saarnivaara's position and points to Luther's declaration in the "Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther's Latin writings (1545)" (*Luther's Works*, 34, p. 337), where Luther criticizes Augustine's *The Spirit and the Letter* and says that there "he did not explain all things concerning imputation clearly." This statement proves that Luther and Melanchthon agree on imputation.

15. Heick, p. 581.
16. Fraenkel, p. 119: "Manschreck meint, wie Engelland, man durfe nicht von Synergismus reden: Fur Melanchthon bleibt Gott allein Urheber des Heils." John M. Drickamer, "Did Melanchthon Become a Synergist?" *Springfielder*, XL (Sept. 76), p. 100: "He did become a synergist."
17. Wilhelm Maurer, *Der junge Melanchthon zwischen Humanismus und Reformation*, Band 2: *Der Theologe*. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1969), p. 239: "Christum erkennen heisst also das Heil erbitten.. ." "Melanchthon, der Anselms Frage: *Cur Deus homo?* aufgreift, beantwortet sie nur soweit, als sie auf die Heilstaten Christi Bezug nimmt.. ."
18. Ph. Melanchthon, *Loci Communes* (1521), as cited in Lietzmann, p. 181.
19. Jörg Rothermundt, "The Meaning of Justification," *Justification Today* (Supplement to *Lutheran World*, 1965), p. 37.
20. Bernardo Bartmann, *Teologia Dogmatica* (Sao Paulo: Edicoes Paulinas, 1964), II, pp. 298ff.
21. Bartmann, p. 299.
22. Bartmann, p. 299.
23. The Latin reads: "Cur non exponunt hic gratiam misericordiam Dei erga nos?" The *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 223, translates: "Why do they not here set forth the grace, the mercy of God toward us?" Tappert says: "God's grace and mercy," following Henry E. Jacobs, *The Book of Concord*, I, p. 158: "Why do they not here set forth God's love *and* mercy toward us?"
24. Rothermundt, p. 38.
25. Martin Luther, *WA*, 18, p. 697. FC-SD, II: 89. Robert D. Preus, "The Significance of Luther's Term *Pure Passive* as Quoted in Article II of the Formula of Concord," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, XXIX (1958), pp. 561-570.
26. F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1951), II, p. 444.
27. W. Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1962), p. 79.
28. See also Apology IV: 69, 72, 89, 114, 179, 212, 293, 296.
29. The other use of "forensic" (252), cited by F. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1951), II, p. 403, and H. Schmidt, *Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961), p. 427, is not speaking of justification by faith, but to James' (2:24) use of the term "justify."
30. Piepkorn, 544.
31. Jacobs, II, pp. 209ff. The *Confutatio Pontificia*, VI:5 states: "On this account their frequent ascription of justification to faith is not admitted, since it pertains to grace and love." Article XX, 1: " . . . concerning good works, that they do not merit the remission of sins, which as it has been rejected and disapproved before, is also rejected and disapproved now."
32. Elert, p. 85.
33. Bente, p.42.

Justification as a Doctrine of the Old Testament: A Comparative Study in Confessional and Biblical Theology

Raymond F. Surburg

Biblical theology as a separate discipline of theological studies has been dated back by some to 1787 when J.P. Gabler in an inaugural university address made the distinction between biblical and dogmatic theology.[1] In his address Gabler insisted that biblical theology should confine itself to a description of the religion of the Bible and refrain from passing any normative judgments which would involve trespassing into the domain of dogmatic theology. According to this position, Old Testament theology was to limit itself to the evidence of the Old Testament itself and the teachings of the Old Testament were not to be criticized on the basis of the New Testament or any relationship established between the two testaments.

Porteous claimed that:

> Gabler's distinction was a useful one, since it did much to break the stranglehold of dogmatic theology upon the study of the O.T. and so left scholars free to look at it without preconceived ideas as to what they should find. The result was an increase of interest in O.T. and religion and a growing appreciation of the extraordinary variety of points of view to be found in the O.T.[2]

However, as time passed scholars who were engaged in writing Old Testament theologies became more and more interested in history and development, and this interest was pursued with presuppositions based on the historical-critical method. The views of Wellhausen and later of Gunkel dominated the interpretation of the Old Testament, and this in turn determined how Old Testament theologies were written.[3]

Dentan has given a good history of the variegated history through which Old Testament theology has passed in the last two hundred and some years.[4] As time went on scholars became less and less interested in the theological contents of the Old Testament and instead centered on religious experience and religious psychology. Concurrent with this interest in religious

experience was the intensive study of the literature of the Old Testament, which occupied itself with the finding of sources carved out of the Biblical text itself, and relating these to each other. A great deal of effort was devoted to showing the composite character of Old Testament books. This interest, in turn, was followed after 1900 with a form-critical study of various types of literary genre and the life-situations which were held to determine their character.

Hasel recently claimed that the field of Old Testament theology has reached a point where there is little agreement on anything.[5] By the year 1922 Old Testament theology was theologically bankrupt. Then during the 1930's the "bibical theology" movement sprang up, which influenced the presentations of the authors who wrote biblical theologies for both the Old and New Testaments. There came a new emphasis upon the Bible as a source for the contents of biblical theology. This was a tremendous improvement over the period of historicism, which dominated from 1870 to 1930.[6]

An examination of the Old Testament theologies written by Eichrodt, Knight, von Rad, Koehler, Jacobs, Vriezen, and others will reveal that the teaching of justification by faith apart from works played no part at all in their organization and understanding of the Old Testament. Connected with this omission was also the place assigned to the teachings about the Messiah in Old Testament books. The only work from this period which was an exception was the uncompleted work of Vischer, *Das Christuszeugnis des Alten Testament*, which was severely criticized by scholars committed to the historical-critical method.[7]

One of the results of the application of historical criticism to Old Testament biblical theology was the discrediting of systematic or dogmatic theology.[8] Since the days of the Enlightenment the gap has widened between biblical and systematic or confessional theology. Biblical theologians were deemed to follow a strictly scientific and uncommitted line of thought, while systematic theologians were considered to be spinning an unscientific approach out of their heads. Confessional theology is constructed along the same lines as dogmatic.[9]

Justification by Faith: An Old Testament Doctrine

Justification by faith is not only a New Testament doctrine, but one also taught by the Old Testament. When Melanchthon quoted passages from the Old Testament, he was following St.

Paul and other New Testament writers, who claimed that the Gospel was known during Old Testament times. Paul asserted that Abraham and David were justified by faith which was imputed to them. Faulkner, in his discussion of justification in the New Testament wrote: "All the N.T. writers built on the O.T. That there should be a cleft or contradiction between the O.T. and what we call the N.T. would have been to them inconceivable. But they realized that there was the early dawn, while they lived in the light of the day."[10]

Since both the Lutheran Confessions and the New Testament find the Gospel — Christ as Redeemer and Savior and justification by faith without the works of the law — in the Old Testament, how does it come about that most modern Old Testament theologies find neither Christ nor justification by faith in the Old Testament? The answer to this query is that, as a result of the adoption of the historical-critical method (with its various components, such as a radical kind of literary criticism, form criticism, content criticism, and tradition and redaction criticisms), writers of biblical theologies have repudiated the hermeneutics utilized by Luther and the Reformers as reflected in the Lutheran Confessions.[11] Consequently a new view of the central teaching of the Old Testament has been proposed which is radically different from the scriptural understanding arrived at by the hermeneutics in vogue among Protestants before the Age of Rationalism (the so-called Enlightenment).

Bultmann once asked the question: Can one approach biblical interpretation without presuppositions? Honest scholars have answered in the negative. A Bible-believer, who is conformed to the mind of Christ, will come to the interpretation of God's word, the Bible, with certain confessed principles. These are as follows: (1) The unity of the canonical Scriptures (which do not include the Apocrypha). As Ramm stated in the first edition of his *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, "The Bible is the Word of God and therefore it must contain only one system of theology."[12] (2) The transcendence of Holy Writ. Berkhof has called attention to this principle when he wrote: "Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the prophets occasionally transcended their historical and dispensational limitations and spoke in forms that pointed to... the future."[13] Peter would seem to support this position in 1 Peter 1: 10-12. (3) The analogy of Scripture. This analogy is a principle which Jesus, Paul, Peter, John, James, and the author of Hebrews utilized. To reject these basic hermeneutical principles is to disagree with Christ, the Son of God, and His inspired apostles.[14]

There should not be any real conflict between biblical theology and systematic or dogmatic theology, of which confessional theology is a branch. A sound confessional theology which is true to the teachings of the entire Scriptures will have no problem in finding justification by faith without the works of the law in the Old Testament. The literature of Lutheranism that deals with the doctrine of justification by faith usually limits itself to the New Testament. The passages usually cited are mostly from the writings of St. Paul. The New Testament, of course, is the place where the doctrine of justification shines forth in its brightest light. Most presentations do not discuss the doctrine as found in the Old Testament except to refer to the passages which Paul used from the Old Testament. The Lutheran Confessions in their discussion of justification refer to verses from Genesis, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Habakkuk.[15] In the vast literature dealing with justification the monographs dealing with the Old Testament doctrine of justification are not numerous. Many doctrinal books briefly refer to the fact that the doctrine is found in the Old Testament but dismiss their treatment of it with a sentence or two. Some discussions of justification do not even acknowledge that the doctrine was revealed to the saints who lived prior to Christ's incarnation, vicarious death, and resurrection.

However, there is acknowledgement by both Lutherans and Reformed (Calvinists and Arminians) that justification is taught by the Old Testament writers.[16] Thus R. F. Weidner wrote: "The Old Testament presents in its facts the New Testament doctrine of justification. From the beginning of the history of man, faith in God's promise was the condition of acceptance with God and the bond of man's entire fellowship with God (Abel, Enoch and Abraham, Heb. 11)."[17] Joseph Stump devoted one page out of thirteen to justification in the Old Testament.[18] Franz Pieper asserted in his Christian Dogmatics: "In the Old Testament all prophets taught the article of justification by faith, and all children of God believed in it."[19] J. T. Mueller in his discussion of "The Doctrine of Justification the Central Doctrine of the Christian Religion" asserted: "All its teachings [i.e., of the Bible] either point forward to it (*articuli antecedentes*), Luke 24: 25-27, or back to it (*articuli consequentes*), Rev. 5: 9-14. It is the paramount theme of the Old Testament, Is. 53: 4-6, and of the New Testament, 2 Cor. 5: 19-21."[20] Those who believe that the Old Testament did teach justification by faith give as proof Peter's statement in the house of Cornelius: "To him give all the prophets witness that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall

receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:32). Paul also in explaining and proving the doctrine of justification to the people in Rome and to the congregations in the Roman province of Galatia advanced arguments and proofs from Genesis 15:6 and Psalm 32. According to Melanchthon the Old Testament also knows of no other way of salvation, of being justified before God, than through faith in the atoning death of Christ. Melanchthon's definition of the Gospel in the Old Testament as the promise of justification for the sake of the coming Messiah makes this very clear (Ap. IV, 5). Further on in the Apology the same reformer wrote (Ap. XII, 53):

> As repeated continually throughout Scripture; first it was given to Adam, later to the patriarchs, then illumined by the prophets, and finally proclaimed and revealed by Christ among the Jews and spread by the apostles throughout the world.

Again in the Apology Melanchthon asserted that there has been only one way for man to be justified before God (Ap. XXIV, 55):

> In the Old Testament as in the New, the saints had to be justified by faith in the promises of the forgiveness of sins given for Christ's sake. Since the beginning of the world, all the saints have had to believe that Christ would be an offering and the satisfaction for sin, as Is. 53: 10 teaches, "When He makes Himself an offering for sin.

In a number of passages in the Apology Melanchthon used Acts 10: 43: "To Him all the prophets bear witness," because it is the New Testament's witness to the Christological content of the Old Testament (cf. Ap. IV, 83, 273; Apol. XII, 65-71; Apol. XX, 2).

The Doctrine of Justification as Found in the Old Testament Itself

If by justification we mean "man's acceptance with God, or being regarded and treated as righteous in His sight — as the object of His favour, and not of His wrath, and not of His curse,"[21] then this truth is exhibited in the Old Testament. It is a truth, to be sure, more clearly and fully revealed in the New Testament. In this sense one might agree with Lewis Chafer when he wrote "that the doctrine of justification is anticipated in the Old Testament, but more fully revealed in the New Testament,"[22] or agree with Leon Morris' assertion that "first of all we must notice that there is no formal statement of the doctrine in the Old Testament, and if we look for a complete enunciation of this truth we shall be disappointed . . . . But the essence of the doctrine is

there nevertheless."[23] The Biblical doctrine of justification is taught both indirectly and directly. If the doctrine of justification were not the heart and center of the Old Testament, the implication would have to be that there is a different plan of salvation in the Old Testament than in the New. The New Testament doctrine of salvation is impossible apart from the vicarious suffering of Christ (2 Cor. 5: 18-21).

If Christ and His atoning death are not revealed or predicted in the Old Testament, then the doctrine of justification by faith cannot be the central teaching of the Old Testament. Franz Delitzsch would be an example of a scholar who did not find the Messiah the center of the Old Testament. Thus he wrote:

> In order to estimate this, we must free ourselves from the prejudice that the center of the Old Testament proclamation lies in the prophecy of the Messiah. Is the Messiah, then, anywhere set forth as the Redeemer of the world? The Redeemer of the world is Yahweh; the Parousia of Yahweh is the center of the Old Testament proclamation of salvation.[24]

The church historian Karl Holl has asserted that Luther read the Pauline Gospel into the Psalms and that the Reformer did violence to the Old Testament by reading his Christological views into the Old Testament, whose center Holl claimed was the preaching of righteousness.[25] Holl, therefore, cannot find justification in the Old Testament. Delitzsch and Holl are just two of a host of Biblical scholars who cannot find Christ in the Old Testament or reinterpret the significant Old Testament Messianic passages so as to remove the Messianic hope from much of Old Testament revelation.[26] Those who deny Christ in the Old Testament and with it the doctrine of justification are contradicting the New Testament; they contravene Christ, Paul, Peter, John, Stephen and the writer of Hebrews. Many scholars who have adopted the historical-critical method charge those who find Christ predicted in the Old Testament with lacking a historical understanding of Old Testament revelation and with exegetical obtuseness.

Christology as the Foundation of Justification

Kinder has correctly emphasized the importance of Christology for justification. Thus he wrote to show how Article IV of the Augsburg Confession was dependent on Article III: "It is for today's Lutheran theology important to make clear again, how the Lutheran doctrine of justification can only be properly understood from Christology."[27] The doctrine of justification of

sinners had its origin immediately after the fall of Eve and Adam. By heeding Satan and disobeying God's will, they became subject to death in all of its forms; spiritual, temporal and eternal. By one act of disobedience they forfeited God's divine favor and incurred God's wrath. The relationship between Eve and Adam and God was changed. Not only were mankind's first parents ashamed but they were afraid of God. They dreaded the penalty because it would be a manifestation of God's displeasure and God's wrath.

When Adam and Eve were summoned before God as Judge, they expected to hear that the justice and holiness of God would require their Creator to pronounce condemnation. But in Eden God, while He pronounced a curse on the Serpent and his seed, showed His great mercy and grace by announcing the ultimate deliverance of mankind in Genesis 3:15: "And I will put emnity between you and the woman, between your seed and her Seed. He will crush your head and you shall bruise His heal." Critical scholarship interprets "the seed of the woman" as referring simply to Eve's descendants, thus translating the Hebrew word *zerah* (which can be either a singular, Gen. 4:25, or a collective) as a plural.[28]

Genesis 3:15, "the Protevangelium," was the hope of cursed mankind, which was to be redeemed from the curse of the law and restored to the favor of God.[29] Westermann's objection that Genesis 3:15 cannot announce the Gospel because it appears in a series of curses, simply reflects the bias of an anti-Scriptural form-criticism; one of its major accomplishments has been to discredit Holy Writ.[30] No, Genesis 3:15 was an announcement of God's mercy and, while it was made in general terms and later Messianic prophecies would give more and more specific information on many points, "yet it contained enough to lay a solid foundation for faith and hope towards God, and it was the first beam of Gospel light which dawned on a fallen world."[31] A reading of Luther reveals that the reformer would not grant any difference whatever between Adam and Eve's faith and that of New Testament Christians with regard to the way of salvation. Walther, Pieper, and others followed Luther's interpretation of the Protogospel. C.F.W. Walther wrote: "This Protevangelium, this First Gospel in Genesis, was the fountain from which the believers of the Old Testament drew their comfort. It was important for them to know: "there is one coming who will not only tell us what we must do to get to heaven. No, the Messiah will do all Himself to bring us there."[32] Quenstedt took the same position as Luther, as may be seen from the following quotation:

> Substantially the same Gospel which today is preached in the whole world stood in full vigor and freshness and was promulgated also in the Old Testament, and indeed from the earliest times of the fallen human family, through which the grace of God, the remission of sins, and one and the same salvation in Christ, the Redeemer of the world, was announced and offered to all; and all in the Old Testament, as many as were justified and saved, were justified and saved by faith in the merit of Christ, which benefited before it existed [*quod profuit, antiquam fuit*].[33]

That the Gospel was made know to man's first parents, that Law and Gospel began in the garden of Eden and that the patriarchs comforted themselves by the promise given Eve, Article V of the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord declares.[34] Luther expressed the view that Eve understood the nature of the protoevangelium, because when she gave birth to Cain, she exclaimed: "I have begotten a man, the LORD," and thus she expressed her faith that the Redeemer was to be not only man but God also.[35]

The object of faith in the earliest times of the human race was the same as now, namely, God in His revealed character "as just and the justifier of him that believeth," with this difference, that the Savior was then promised as coming but since the incarnation as having come. In Hebrews 1-10 the superiority of Christ is emphasized. Faith in Christ is absolutely necessary for salvation. Old Testament worthies are then mentioned in chapter 11 who had true saving faith. Abel is cited first by the writer of Hebrews. "By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice," and through it he was attested as being righteous. Kretzmann contends that Abel's sacrifice was accepted by God, not because of the material of his sacrifice, but because he had faith, because he believed in the coming of the Messiah. It was on account of this faith, also, that God testified of him that he was righteous (Gen. 4:3-5; Matt. 23: 35).[36] Some have held that Abel's offering of an animal, which was killed and thus was a type of the sacrifice of Christ, is what made Abel's sacrifice acceptable.[37] Neither the Old or New Testament gives direct support to this interpretation.

Enoch by faith was translated to heaven so that he did not see death, and he was not found because God took him. But before his translation, Enoch was given the testimony that he was well-pleasing to God. Very little is said about Enoch in Holy Writ (cf. Gen. 5:22-24; Jude 14-15). Since the earliest days the descendants of Adam trusted in the promise given Eve in Genesis 3:15. They trusted in the mercy of the coming Messiah, and Adam and Eve

taught the promise to their offspring. Thus Enoch had learned the true way of salvation, had come to a faith which was accepted by God, and Enoch was considered righteous.

Noah is the third antediluvian mentioned in Hebrews 11 as having been justified by faith. Of Noah it is reported that he found grace in the eyes of the Lord, that he was a preacher of righteousness, and that he became an heir of righteousness (Gen. 6:8,9; 2 Peter 2:5; Heb. 11:7).

In the Patriarchal Age Scripture cites the case of Abraham. Abraham is specifically referred to by Paul in Romans and Galatians as a patriarch who believed what God had promised him, especially the promise that through him the nations of the earth were to be blessed. Relative to Genesis 12:3, critical scholarship has removed the specific Messianic promise by translating the verse, "In thee all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves," rendering the niphal (*nibreku*), normally the passive in Hebrew, as a reflexive.[38] It is significant to note that the Septuagint, the Peshitta, and the Vulgate render the Hebrew *nibreku* as a passive ("be blessed"). In Galatians 3:16 Paul states categorically that the word "seed" (in Hebrew *zerah*) is not used in its collective sense but refers to one individual, namely, Christ. Jesus said of Abraham: "He rejoiced to see My day and he saw it" (John 8:56). Thus Abraham knew about Christ, and because of his faith in Christ, God declared him righteous. His faith, says Moses in Genesis 15:6, "was accounted to him for righteousness." From what the Scripture in Genesis, Galatians, and Hebrews teaches about Abraham, a number of important truths about the doctrine of justification may be asserted: (1) Abraham and each Old Testament saint who had the same faith had something placed to his account which he did not possess before, namely, the righteousness needed to be accepted before God and not condemned eternally. (2) The imputing of the righteousness (*tsedekah*) that Abraham needed was credited to him long before he was circumcized or the Jewish law was given at Mt. Sinai. (3) Abraham was justified through faith, because justification was bestowed upon him through a simple trust in God's promise of the Messiah through whom the nations were to be blessed. (4) Abraham's faith in Yahweh's promise moved the patriarch to leave Ur of the Chaldees and head for a land God would show him.[39] Abraham's son Isaac and the latter's son Jacob were given the same promises that were given the "Father of the Hebrews." Jacob gave evidence of his faith in his blessing to Judah in Genesis 49:8-12, where Shiloh is spoken of as the Ruler to whom the nations would render obedience.

After the patriarchal period the next era in the history of the doctrine of justification in the Old Testament was the period that began with Moses and continued until the death and resurrection of Christ. With Moses a new economy began, which was characterized by two facts: First, the Mosaic economy consisted of a system of religion and government, designed especially for the Hebrews till the coming of Christ. Secondly, God intended the ceremonial and political laws as a preparation of a better economy, which began with God the Father sending His Son Jesus in the fullness of time. During the economy given by Moses the descendants of Abraham were placed under tutors and governors until the time appointed by God. The Law was a schoolmaster to bring the people of the Old Testament era to Christ, that they might be justified by faith. The Law was added to the Promise, which was given at least four hundred years before the Law.

The moral law, promulgated amid the thunderings of Sinai, impressed the Hebrews with a sense of Yahweh's holiness and justice. There was no hope for any Jew to be just before God, for the Law thundered: "Cursed is every person who does not continue to do all things written in the Law." The Law was given to be obeyed and when failure to keep its requirements occurred, the Law could only accuse. The Law can only bring about the conviction of sin. That the Law could not justify Paul proclaimed to the Jews in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:39).

However, Yahweh at the same time as He gave many new laws made provision for the forgiveness of sins by the institution of the sacrificial system, according to which innocent animals had to give their lives for sins of omission as well as commission. Without the shedding of blood there was no remission of sins for the Hebrews. The yearly passover lamb symbolically pointed forward to the Lamb of God (1 Cor. 5:6) "slain from before the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). The ceremonial law thus became a schoolmaster (*paidogogos*) to bring the Old Testament people to Christ. The sin offerings, trespass offerings, and burnt offerings were of a propitiatory character. The offering of these was no longer necessary when Christ fulfilled the Law and suffered the punishment people before and after Calvary had deserved. The offerings of the Old Testament brought daily were types of the great sacrifice of Christ, a sacrifice by which He has forever sanctified those who are sanctified. But though the sin offerings of the Old Testament only typified the sacrifice of Christ, they thereby actually pointed to the objective expiation of

sins to be wrought by Christ. These Old Testament sacrifices were "prophetic acts" which foretold the reconciliation of the world to be effected by Christ.[40] Quenstedt has pointed out a double usage of the Old Testament sacrifices. They had an *usus legalis*, reminding the people of their sin, and an *usus evangelicus*, prefiguring the sacrifice of Christ.[41]

In addition to Abraham, Paul also gave the example of David as an outstanding case of a person who was justified by faith. Paul appealed to the penitential Psalm 32, and used its opening verses to show that Israel's greatest king was justified because Yahweh forgave David his great sins of adultery and murder. When Nathan by telling a parable convinced David of his terrible sins and David sincerely repented and threw himself upon God's mercy, God forgave him his sins. Having confessed his iniquities and having received forgiveness, David could exclaim: "Oh, the blessings of the man to whom the Lord does not imput his sins, whose sins are forgiven." Here David speaks of non-imputation of sin as a parallel to the forgiveness of sins.

The teachings of Psalm 32:1-2 agree entirely with Genesis 15:6. The felicitations of that man who does not trust in his own efforts to fulfill the demands of the Law, but relies upon the imputation of God's righteousness are described in Psalm 32. In this Davidic psalm the righteousness of God is represented as the object of God's imputation, which is identical with the imputation by faith of righteousness. David brings out clearly and effectively the thought that all merit is absent as a cause of God forgiving his sins. So it may be asserted that, just as at the beginning of Hebrew history one way of salvation is taught, so during the golden age of the Hebrew nation the same say of salvation was explicated which is not proclaimed through the Gospel. The essential features of the doctrine of justification are found in embryo in various psalm verses, especially the seven penitential psalms, in selected passages in Isaiah, and in numerous Messianic promises which helped to make clearer and clearer, as time passed on, the nature of the sacrifice which the innocent Lamb of God, the Messiah, would offer for the sins of mankind.

The Doctrine of Justification in Isaiah

In Isaiah 1:16 Yahweh called upon the gross sinners of Judah and Jerusalem: "Wash yourselves! Purify yourselves. Remove the wickedness of your doings from before mine eyes." In the Law God taught: "Cursed is everyone who does not do all the things contained in the law." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Despite

serious violations of the law, Yahweh made this gracious statement: "Oh come, let us reason with one another, says the LORD. Though your sins have become scarlet cloth, they will turn white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they will become white as wool" (Is. 1:18, Beck). Such was the remarkable announcement of God to His people; though they are laden with guilt and therefore subject to punishment, He is willing to forgive them and impute to them a righteousness not their own.[42] While the word "justify" does not occur in this passage, the concept of justification is there; for Yahweh declares the guilty innocent, clean, holy, and righteous in His sight. Paul in Romans 4:5 reflects the theological view of Isaiah. The Old Testament believers were declared righteous and their sins forgiven by virtue of what the Lamb of God was to achieve for them and all mankind. The forgiveness of sins results in salvation when people repent of their sins and put their faith in what Christ suffered for them and accomplished on their behalf. Isaiah 1:16-22 is used in the Apology to stress the necessity that the repentance produced by the preaching of the Law be followed by faith in the Messiah (144; 258).

Isaiah, who is sometimes called the Evangelist of the Old Testament and whose book is sometimes called the Fifth Gospel, contributed many important prophecies to the collection which in the course of time gave a detailed description of the person and activities of God's Messiah. Isaiah 52:13-53:12 contains the remarkable "Fourth Servant Song." While it is true that God chose Israel as "His servant" to carry out a great mission on His behalf, namely, as a light in the darkness of the polytheistic and idolatrous Near Eastern world, Israel failed in its mission. However, it was foretold in four different passages that another Servant of God, a person, the Messiah would carry out Yahweh's purposes for mankind. In the four Servant Songs the Messiah's work as prophet and priest is depicted. The fourth song especially contains a description of the substitutionary work of the Messiah. Verse 12 of Isaiah 53 is one of the clearest Old Testament texts with regard to justification by faith. The rendering of the Revised Standard Version is significant: "He shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities." The substitutionary death of Christ is stressed in a number of verses of Isaiah 53.[43] It is difficult to see how these words could apply to any other person, whether the Jewish people or any Old Testament worthy, except Christ,

the God-man, Immanuel. The New Testament clearly identifies the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 with Jesus of Nazareth. Melanchthon wrote in the Apology: "There is no need for proofs to anyone who knows that Christ was given to us to be a propitiation for our sins.Isaiah expressed (53:6), 'The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all' " (Apol XX: 5). Isaiah 53 says of all men, Jew and Gentile: "We have all gone stray like lost sheep." Because of this straying from God's required path as set forth in the law, Yahweh placed on the Messiah the iniquities of all men. By the Suffering Servant's substitutionary suffering and death, the ungodly are declared righteous. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to all sinners. This imputation is known as objective or general or world justification.

The Apology in the article on the mass speaks of the propitiatory sacrificial death of Christ, of which there has been only one (Article XXIV). Quoting Hebrews 10:10, "By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all," Melanchthon then wrote: "Isaiah interprets the law to mean that the death of Christ is a real satisfaction for our sins, as the ceremonies of the law were not; therefore he says (53:10), "When he makes himself an offering for sins, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days" (XXIV, 23). The word used here (*'asam*) means a victim sacrificed for transgression. In the Old Testament this meant that a victim was to be offered to reconcile God and make satisfaction for our sins, so that men might know that God does not want our own righteousness but the merits of another (namely, of Christ) to reconcile him to us." A little further on Melanchthon states: "Isaiah and Paul mean that Christ became a sacrificial victim or trespass offering to reconcile God by his merits instead of ours" (XXIV, 23).

Justification by Faith in Jeremiah

A hundred year's after Isaiah's time lived the prophet Jeremiah. One of the more remarkable Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament is Jeremiah 23:5-6, where the Messiah is described as a "righteous King." Jeremiah predicted: "Behold, the days are coming, saith the Lord, that I will raise up unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and he shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved and Israel dwell safely. And this is His name whereby He shall be called, "The Lord is Our Righteousness." Jeremiah here has the spiritual Israel in view. The Messiah, also called the Branch in other prophetic passages (Is. 4:2; 11:1; Zech. 3:8; 6:12), is the

Messiah who would exercise a rule that would be characterized by spiritual justice; and He would exercise righteousness according to unquestionable standards, although this might appear unusual in the eyes of men.

The Messiah, as announced to Judah by Jeremiah, would bring salvation to Judah and permit Israel to dwell securely — both Judah and Israel referring to the true people of God. It is no wonder that this righteous Ruler would be called "Yahweh Is Our Righteousness." He is so named because, through His atonement, His righteousness is bestowed on all true believers.[44] The righteous King of this prophecy will execute judgment and justice. The verb "execute" in connection with "judgment" occurs seven times in Jeremiah (5:1; 7:5; 9:24; 22:3, 15; 33:15); in every one of these verses the word "established" might be substituted in the opinion of Laetsch.[45] Furthermore, Laetsch argued, the prophet does not merely repeat what he had said before, that the King is to be a righteous ruler personally in His actions, but rather a new thought is added. As King, the Messiah will make, create, and establish a new norm, a new righteousness, because of which He is called "Our Righteousness."[46] This righteousness is not to be identified with the righteousness of the law, which asserts: "Do this, and you shall live. Fail to do it, and you shall die!" It is the righteousness which the Messiah earned by his vicarious suffering and death, as described in Isaiah 53:11. By fulfilling the demands of the mandatory and punitive justice of God, the Messiah became our righteousness.[47]

Since God calls the righteous Branch "Yahweh Is Our Righteousness," it is a righteousness procured for all times by the Righteous Branch. According to Hebrew 9:15, the one sacrifice of Christ has sanctified all who are to be saved. Hebrews declares: "And he is the mediator of a new covenant. By dying He paid the ransom to free people from the sins under the first covenant, and those who are to get the everlasting inheritance promised to them" (Beck). Because of the righteousness which the Messiah was to earn and which Christ did earn, the word "salvation" is often linked up with the word "righteousness" (cf. Ps. 71:15; 132:9; Is. 45:8; 51:5-6, 8; 59:16-17; Zech. 9:9). Article III of the Epitome of the Formula of Concord quotes Jeremiah 23:6 as well as 1 Corinthians 1:30 and 2 Corinthians 5:21 as Scriptural proofs for the truth "that poor sinners are justified before God and saved solely by faith in Christ so that Christ alone is our righteousness."[48]

The Relationship of Habakkuk 2:4 to Justification by Faith

Another sixth century prophet who has a text that has been understood as associated with justification by faith is Habakkuk 2:4, where the statement is found: "Look at the puffed-up fellow whose life is preserved. But the righteous man shall live by his faith" (Beck). This verse is quoted by Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and Hebrews 10:37-38. A number of Old Testament scholars, both critical and conservative, have claimed that Paul put more into the second half of the verse than he should have.[49] The New English Bible renders Habakkuk 2:4: "The reckless will be unsure of himself, while the righteous man will live by being faithful." The Berkeley Version translates 2:4: "the righteous shall live by his faith." In a footnote it justifies rendering the Hebrew *'emunah* not by "faithfulness," but by "faith," on the ground that Paul understood it that way when he cited the verse. An examination of the following translations will show that they render *'emunah* as "faith": JPSA, King James, Luther, New American Standard, NIV, American Standard, Beck, Swedish (1900), Danish, Norwegian, Dutch, Spanish, Italian. In commenting on this verse P.E. Kretzmann wrote: " 'The just shall live by his faith,' that is, he who believes in God's merciful promises in the Gospel would, and does, by his confidence, receive eternal life as a gift of God."[50] In his comments on Romans 1:18 Arndt remarked: "This passage [Habakkuk 2:4] strongly asserts that it is through faith that one obtains life."[51]

Habakkuk 2:4 is quoted three times in the Lutheran Confessions. In the Apology the verse is used in Article IV, "Justification," between a New Testament text (Acts 15:9) and another Old Testament passage (Is. 53:11) as a scripture which teaches justification by faith. Concerning Habakkuk 2:4 Melanchthon wrote: "Here the writer says first that men are righteous by the faith that believes that God is propitious; and he adds that his faith quickens because it brings forth peace, joy, and eternal life" (Apol. 121, 100). In Article XII, "Penitence," Melanchthon asserted, "there are therefore two parts here, contrition and faith. Because there is no peace for the conscience except by faith, therefore faith alone quickens, according to the word (Hab. 2:4), "The righteous shall live by his faith" (Article XII, 47).[52] Speaking of Christ's righteousness as availing before God and being revealed in the Gospel, the Formula of Concord cites as proof for this belief the following scriptures: Romans 5:19; 1 John 1:7; and Habakkuk 2:4 (Article III, "Righteousness," 57).

The Prophecy of the Seventy Heptads

One of the most remarkable and also most difficult Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament is Daniel 9:24-27. Although conservative scholars differ as to how these four verses are to be understood, they all agree that it is a prophecy about the Messiah, the Anointed One. Verse 24 contains statements which are significant for the doctrine of justification. Leupold renders verse 24: "Seventy heptads are determined over the people and over the holy city, to restrain the transgression and to seal up sin and to make reconciliation for iniquity; to bring in everlasting righteousness and seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy."[52] In this remarkable prophecy Gabriel was announcing to Daniel the ushering in of the Messianic kingdom. The righteousness which the Messiah was to bring in was to be produced by covering up sin and by making reconciliation for sin. Leupold believes that Daniel speaks the language of St. Paul in 9:24: "This righteousness, or the Messiah who accomplishes it, was the treasure above all treasures that was most eagerly longed for by the Old Testaments saints."[54]

Conclusion

In Psalm 143:2 the psalmist prayed: "Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man be justified." Here we come face to face with the ultimate question in religion, and the conclusion is that it is impossible for any man to have confidence in his standing before God on the ground of his own deeds. The only satisfactory solution to man's problem of sin is justification by faith, a doctrine taught in both the Old and New Testaments.

FOOTNOTES

1. John Philip Gabler, "Concerning the Correct Distinction between Biblical and Dogmatic Theology." Concerning this address cf. J. Barton Payne, *The Theology of the Older Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1962), p.27.
2. Alan Richardson, *A Dictionary of Christian Thought* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), p. 237. Quoted from the article by Norman Porteous, "Old Testament Theology."
3. *Ibid.*
4. Robert C. Dentan, *Preface to Old Testament Theology* (New York: Seabury Press, 1963), pp. 24-83. Cf. also Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), pp. 13-90.
5. Gerhard Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (revised edition; Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), p. 9.

6. Payne, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.
7. Wilhelm Vischer, *Das Christuszeugnis des Alten Testaments* (Zuerich: Evangelisher Verlag, 1943, 2 volumes).
8. "Dogmatics, Dogmatic Theology," Richardson, *op. cit.*, p 98.
9. *Ibid.*
10. John Alfred Faulkner, "Justification," in James Orr, general editor, *The International Standard Biblical Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1939), III, 1786.
11. Richard R. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1976), pp. 26-28.
12. Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Wild and Company, 1956), p. 91.
13. L. Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1950), p. 152.
14. C.F.W. Walther, *Die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche: Die wahre sichtbare Kirche Gottes auf Erden* (St. Louis: Concordia Verlag, 1891), pp. 100-104.
15. Cf. Theodore Tappert, *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), pp. 639-641.
16. James Buchanan, *The Doctrine of Justification. An Outline of Its History in the Church and of Its Exposition from Scripture* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1867), pp. 17-45, deals with Old Testament doctrine.
17. Revere Franklin Weidner, *Pneumatology or The Doctrine of the Work of the Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1915), p. 147.
18. Joseph Stump, *The Christian Faith* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), pp. 230-231.
19. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics.* Translated by Walter F. Albrecht (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), II, p. 516.
20. John Theodore Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), pp. 372-373.
21. Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
22. Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947), II, p. 273.
23. Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), p. 238.
24. Franz Delitzsch, *Biblischer Kommentar ueber die Psalmen* (Leipzig: Dorffling und Francke, 1867), pp. 451-452.
25. Karl Holl, *Gesammelte Aufsaetze zur Kirchengeschichte* (Tuebingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1948), II, pp. 549ff. Reference is to the 7th edition.
26. Claus Westermann, *The Old Testament and Jesus Christ* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1968), pp. 9-19. Rudolph Bultmann, "Prophecy and Fulfillment," Claus Westermann, editor, *Essays in Old Testament Hermeneutics* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963), pp. 50-73.
27. Ernst Kindner, "Christus und die Rechtfertigungsglaube," *Evangelish-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung*, (January, 1952), p. 17. For a similar view cf. Pieper, *op. cit.*, II, p. 514.
28. Cf. the following translations: *The New English Bible* (Oxford and Cambridge University Presses, 1970), p. 4 (Gen. 3:15); Theophile Meek, *The Bible. An American Translation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931), p. 7 (Gen. 3:15).
29. Cf. C.F.W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1929), p. 70.

30. Claus Westermann, *Genesis Accounts of Creation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), p. 33.
31. Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
32. Walther, *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel*, p. 70.
33. Johann Andreas Quenstedt, *Theologia Didactico-Polemica sive Systema Theologicum*, II, p. 1013, as translated by Pieper, *op. cit.*, III, p. 214.
34. Theodore Tappert, *The Book of Concord*, p. 562.
35. Martin Luther, *Die Bibel oder die ganze Heilige Schrift des alten und neuen Testaments* (New York: Amerikanische Bibel-Gesellschaft, 1906), p. 4.
36. P.E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, no date), *New Testament*, II. p. 480.
37. Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
38. Ephraim Speiser, *The Anchor Bible, Genesis* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1960).
39. L.M. Pedersen, "Justification," in Merril C. Tenney, general editor, *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), III, 769-770.
40. Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics, op. cit.*, II, pp. 378-379.
41. Quenstedt, *op. cit.*, II, p. 943f. Quoted also in Joh. Gulielmus Baier, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, curavit C. Walther (St. Louis: Concordia Verlag, 1869), III, p. 108.
42. Walter A. Maier, "Vagaries of Tendential Exegesis as Illustrated by the Interpretation of Is. 1, 18," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, 3 (March, 1932), 175-179.
43. Ed. Preuss, *Die Rechtfertigung des Suenders vor Gott* (Berlin: Verlag von Gustav Schlawitz, 1871), p. 23.
44. Theo. Laetsch, *Bible Commentary, Jeremiah* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952), p. 191.
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Ibid.*
48. Tappert, p. 472.
49. David Kerr, "Habakkuk," in *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1962), pp. 876-877.
50. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary, Old Testament*, p. 691.
51. William Arndt, *Notes on Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Mimeo Company, no date), p. 5.
52. Tappert, p. 188.
53. H.C. Leupold, *Exposition of Daniel* (Columbus: The Wartburg Press, 1949), p. 410.
54. Leupold, *op. cit.*, p. 414.

The Clarity of Scripture and Hermeneutical Principles in the Lutheran Confessions

Erling T. Teigen

One luxury in which the Confessions do not indulge themselves is methodological self-reflection. The Confessions are an exegesis or exposition of the Scriptures, and they simply practice an exegesis which can be called Lutheran because it is the exegetical principle which was developed by Luther in his writings. Luther, on the other hand, does, on occasion, permit himself that luxury of self-reflection, in adjectival form, by way of excursus, or in polemical attack. Luther's utterances on the clarity of Scripture are extensive. There is much simple reference to the matter in passing as he does his exegesis; but there is also a great deal of such discussion in more explicit, systematic form. It is especially in his polemical attacks on the methodology of his opponents that Luther presents a view on the clarity of Scripture which is systematically expressed, lends itself to close analysis, and is most accessible.

The latter loci are of two kinds. One the one hand, Luther is often led to attack the Roman hermeneutic because it assumes an obsurity which can only be penetrated by an allegorical or analogical interpretation by the initiate of the external church and her clergy. A clear understanding of Scripture is dependent upon the schoolmen and the ordained, upon professional skill in the allegorical method (which suggests some interesting observations about the historical-critical method). On the other hand, Luther's assertions of a clear, accessible Scripture are directed even more vehemently against the radical reformers, especially Zwingli, Oecolampadius, and Karlstadt, for in their view, Luther thinks, whenever Scripture presents a doctrine which is at odds with empirical reality or reason, such as the doctrine of the Real Presence, another interpretation must be sought which is in accord with reality. Here we should note some interesting parallels in modern Protestantism, Lutheran Pietism, and Fundamentalism. While Luther harshly attacks the Roman church for arrogating to itself as an external church the office of interpreting an obscure Scripture, he polemicizes against the radical reformers for indulging in private interpretation which

ignores the general consensus of the church, good grammar, and logic, to say nothing of the testimony of Scripture itself.

Luther's idea of a clear and certain Scripture, which needs neither the help of the external church nor the private interpretation of the enthusiasts, is simply imported into the Confessions. Throughout the writings of Melanchthon, Luther, and the Formula of Concord,[1] there was a simple dependence on the clear word of Scripture which can be formulated in concise, comprehensible statements.[2] It will be our task in this paper to show not so much that Luther believed the Scriptures to be massively clear by an exhaustive compilation of his utterances on the subject, but to show, through a few especially systematic passages, what he meant by that assertion. There are several loci in Luther to which one might appeal in order to understand Luther's theses on the clarity or the perspicuity of Scripture. We will examine two writings directed against the Roman Church and three directed against other Reformation figures.

The earliest work in which Luther explicitly refers to the clarity of Scripture is *Against Latomus* (1521). Against Latomus' persistent appeal to the fathers, Luther says: "Shall we be perpetually enslaved and never breathe in Christian liberty, nor sigh from out of this Babylon for our Scriptures and our home? Yet you say they were saints and illuminated the Scripture. Who has shown that they made the Scriptures clearer — what if they obscured them? . . . But doesn't obscure Scripture require explanation? Set aside the obscure and cling to the clear. Further, who has proved that the fathers are not obscure? . . . The Scriptures are common to all, and are clear enough in respect to what is necessary for salvation, and are also obscure enough for inquiring minds."[3] The latter idea, that Scripture is clear to the believer and obscure for the skeptic, is further developed in the form of Scripture's internal clarity in *De Servo Arbitrio* later. Latomus, Luther believes, has elevated the fathers to the position of being the ultimate interpreters of an obscure Scripture. But, he says, "what did the fathers do except seek and present the clear and open testimonies of Scripture?"[4]

Luther also understands at this early date that the clarity of Scripture is a necessary corollary of revelation: "The integrity of Scripture must be guarded, and a man ought not presume that he speaks more safely and clearly with his mouth than God spoke with his mouth. He who does not understand the Word of God when it speaks of the things of God, ought not believe that he understands the words of a man speaking of things strange to him.

No one speaks better than he who best understands, but who understands the things of God better than God himself? Indeed, how much does a man really understand of the things of God?"[5]. Those who attempt to clarify an obscure Scripture in fact obscure it; the Scripture is in itself clear.

Perhaps the best known locus in Luther on the clarity of Scripture is in *De Servo Arbitrio — The Bondage of the Will* — of 1525, written against Erasmus.[6] There Luther vehemently objects to Erasmus' idea that some of Scripture is obscure. Here and in the previously mentioned treatise Luther seems to think that the key misunderstanding in Roman theology is its assertion that the Scripture is unclear and obscure. Because of this assumption the Roman theologians have appealed to the fathers, to the councils, and the Pope as the final arbiter of what Scripture really says. Luther thinks that Erasmus makes two mistakes: (1) he mistakes the *Deus absconditus*, the hidden God, and the profundity of the things of God for obscurity, and (2) he fails to distinguish between the internal clarity of Scripture and its external clarity. On the former they agree, Luther may say ironically, but certainly not on the latter.

As to the first point, Luther admits that there are many hidden things in God. But he goes on to say, "That in Scripture there are some things abstruse, and everything is not plain — this is an idea put about by the ungodly sophists."[7] This seems to be an unqualified assertion of an absolute clarity in Scripture. Luther then admits that some things *are* unclear, not, however, "because of the majesty of their subject matter, but because of our ignorance of their vocabulary and grammar . . ."[8]. With this Luther seems to have qualified his idea of the clarity of Scripture. Then, however, comes Luther's point which is crucial, I think, to all of his expressions of a clear Scripture: ". . . But these texts in no way hinder a knowledge of all the subject matter of Scripture."[9] "The subject matter of the Scriptures, therefore, is *all* quite accessible, even though some texts are still obscure owing to our ignorance of their terms. Truly it is stupid and impious, when we know that the subject matter of Scripture has all been placed in the clearest light to call it obscure on account of a few obscure words."[10] The clarity of Scripture is relative in regard to words and statements; some are more clear than others. But in regard to the subject matter and propositions of Scripture, that clarity is absolute.

Scripture, for Luther, is God's revelation. By its very nature revelation is that which clarifies the *mysterium*, that which cannot

be perceived and known empirically through the senses or by reason. Only the simple and literal-minded biblicist will condemn the whole as an obscurity or make obscurity a characteristic of that which is in essence clarifying or revealing. Is that which clarifies obscure? A monstrous absurdity, Luther would say.

Yet the clarity of Scripture is not to be confused with simplicity or comprehensibility. Were the subject matter of Scripture, God's revelation of Himself, truly simple, it would not need to be revealed. That which is revealed, the peace of God and all that belongs to the Gospel, transcends human understanding and is profound at the very heart of it. One has a feeling that Luther would be most impatient with modern Lutherans who are preoccupied with a "simple" Gospel and would object to such a misuse of his words. For Luther the Gospel is the highest and most profound majesty. It is *not* simple. But it is clear and can be understood as to its meaning. And a simple, childlike faith believes the profundities of the Scripture, like that enviable seven-year-old child who knows what the church is, even though the church is hidden away and is a profound mystery (SA III: XII). To confuse clarity with simplicity is to be simplistic.

Now what is behind all of this, I think, is this: Luther understands the difference between a proposition and a statement, which distinction I am not so sure very many of us in the twentieth century understand. For example, "It is raining," "Es regnet," and "Il pleut" are three different statements. The first is clear to all of us; the second is clear to a few of us; and the third is clear to hardly any of us. And yet, all three express the very same proposition. The difficulty is in the grammar and vocabulary of the statements, not in their subject matter. Likewise, "It is raining" and "Small droplets of conjoined hydrogen and oxygen formed by condensation due to the conjunction of heat and cold are descending" are two different statements which express the same proposition, and the proposition itself is certainly clear. But one of the statements is clear and other is at best superfluous.

For Luther the statements of Scripture express absolutely clear propositions. As in the Revelation of St. John, not every statement, not every metaphor, is clear and interpretable. But yet the proposition which is revealed is massively clear. If the vocabulary and grammar present problems in one place in Scripture, they are clear enough in another place. The proposition may be profound; it may be paradoxical; it may be incomprehensible. But it is accessible to all and may be clearly understood.

That the Scripture's clarity is not to be confused with simplicity Luther clearly thinks when he says, "Matters of the highest majesty and the profoundest mysteries are no longer hidden away . . ."[12]. They remain the highest majesty and the profoundest mysteries, but in their revelation they are no longer hidden in God's secret counsels. They are revealed clearly and yet as profundities are clearly understood by all. It is, one can see from Luther's preaching, the task of Lutheran preaching to proclaim the pure text of God's Word and the profundities revealed therein — not to drag them down into a quagmire of simplisticness. Perhaps we might wonder aloud here how much twentieth century homiletical style belies this thesis.

For Luther, Erasmus also fails to distinguish between *internal* and *external* clarity. Luther cites the doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity is externally quite clear — the proposition can be understood; its meaning is apparent even to the unbeliever or to the fool of Psalm 14:1. What Luther means here is that all propositions of Scripture — whether they are conveyed by literal language or metaphoric language — are accessible to anyone. Anselm asserts the same thing in the *Proslogion* when he says that the fool understands what the words "that than which a greater cannot be thought" mean.[13] Any doctrine of revelation, therefore, can be said to be absolutely clear as a proposition. This clarity, however, is not to be confused with internal clarity, for internal clarity helps no one else — it is a matter of the heart.

For Luther speech is simply the God-given form of communication. Men must be able to express themselves with a certainty that their words will be understood and will mean the same thing to everyone. Not to believe that there is a consensus of meaning possible would be to condemn each believer to a hopeless solipsism. There is an objective and external clarity of Scripture which can be common to all.

In the first discussion of clarity in *Bondage of the Will*, Luther summarily uses those terms "internal" and "external" clarity. In the second discussion he uses the same terminology in the context of judgment, the testing of the spirits.[14] Commenting on 1 Corinthians 12:15, "the spiritual man judges all things, but himself is judged by no one," Luther says, "This belongs to faith and is necessary for every individual Christian. We have called it above 'the internal clarity of Holy Scripture.' Perhaps this was what those had in mind who gave you to reply that everything must be decided by the judgment of the Spirit. But this judgment helps no one else, and with it we are not concerned, for no one, I

think, doubts its reality."[15]

But the issue for Luther and Erasmus is the external clarity of Scripture. What does Scripture mean? Does God reveal himself in such a way that in an objective, deductive sense anyone, believer or unbeliever, can understand what is said? "If, on the other hand, you speak of the external clarity, nothing at all is left obscure or ambiguous, but everything there is in the Scriptures has been brought out by the word into the most definite light, and published to all the world."[16] "There is, therefore, another, an external judgment, whereby with the greatest certainty we judge the spirits and dogmas of all men, not only for ourselves, but also for others and for their salvation. This judgment belongs to the public ministry of the Word and to the outward office, and is chiefly the concern of leaders and preachers of the Word . . . This is what we earlier called 'the external clarity of Holy Scripture.' "[17]

It would appear that Luther here contradicts his opposition to the claim of the priesthood and the church of the right to *interpret* Scripture. But Luther here clearly refers not to an external church nor to an office of the ministry which is centered in ecclesiastical power and human right. Rather, the office of the ministry is none other than the office of the Means of Grace which proclaims the Gospel on behalf of the believers. The Scriptures are clear and are to be proclaimed as such — not as ambiguous documents, admitting of all sorts of interpretations, and which can only be penetrated by those skilled in the art of allegorical interpretation and Aristotelian-Thomistic categories. The Scriptures are, in fact, the judge, and Luther does not speak of a judgment *upon* Scripture, or of an office which has the sole right of interpretation, but of a judgment which *Scripture* makes over all preaching, teaching, interpretation, and exposition: "Thus we say that all spirits are to be tested in the presence of the church at the bar of Scripture."[18] This is clearly illustrated in Moses: "First, then, Moses says in Deuteronomy 17 [:8ff.] that if any difficult case arises, they are to go to the place which God has chosen for his name and consult the priests there, who must judge it according to the Law of the Lord. 'According to the Law of the Lord,' he says. But how can they judge unless the Law of the Lord is externally quite clear . . .?"[19]

In his polemic against Erasmus, it must be remembered, Luther's point is that the Roman church has arrogated to itself the right to interpret Scripture. He did not change his mind about that either, for in his 1535 commentary on Galatians, commenting

on Galatians 1:9 ("if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed"), he says, "We are presented here with an example that enables us to know for a certainty that it is an accursed lie that the pope is the arbiter of Scripture or that the church has authority over Scripture."[20]

In this connection it should be noted that Luther did not see this sort of a debate as an ivory tower concern. In the same Galatians commentary he says, "Then their consciences would be completely persuaded that Paul's doctrine was the Word of God. Here Paul was dealing with a great and serious issue, namely, that all the churches might be preserved in sound doctrine. In short, the issue in the controversy was a matter of eternal life and death. For once the pure and certain Word is taken away, there remains no consolation, no salvation, no life."[21]

Equally serious for Luther, however, is the obscurantist, spiritualizing bent of the radical reformers, Zwingli, Karlstadt, Oecolampadius and others. Whereas the problem in the papistic and scholastic hermeneutic was a dependence on the initiated priesthood as the arbiter of Scripture, with the Pope and Holy Mother Church as the chief teachers, as well as an over-dependence on the consensus of the theologians, the issue over against the radical reformers was private interpretation (and sometimes analytic and linguistic incompetence). Under the terms of that debate, a different set of presuppositions becomes apparent, and Luther's attack there rises to a higher level of vehemence, not always pleasant reading. But his work in that battle is, I think, more carefully and impeccably worked out with cold, hard exegesis always in the forefront.

The basic premise of Zwingli, Karlstadt, and Oecolampadius was ultimately that the Holy Spirit works otherwise than through the Word alone. Luther's harshest censure is against the Zwinglian and Enthusiast conception of a Holy Spirit who reveals God internally and subjectively, apart from the external Word.[22] Since the Holy Spirit imparts truth to the believer also apart from the external Word, the interpretation of Scripture can take place through visions and subjective, private notions, much in the sense of Descartes' later "clear and certain ideas" which can come only from God. If there is a god, Descartes thought, he would not allow me to be confused. Hence, both Zwingli and Karlstadt can claim spiritual revelations of the true meaning of "This is My body."

It is interesting and not at all coincidental that Luther's most explicit statements on the clarity of Scripture come, in this phase of the hermeneutical struggle, in the discussion of the Lord's

Supper. It is in the exegesis of the Words of Institution that Luther does his most careful exegesis, a step at a time, painstakingly, leaving no issue undiscussed. While Luther may often have been blind to the machinations and duplicity of some of his colleagues, he seems to have had a prophetic notion of the fierce battle which would rage on this issue of the Sacrament after his death. Hence, his work is meticulously detailed and it is finally incorporated into the Formula of Concord: "Since Dr. Luther is rightly to be regarded as the most eminent teacher of the churches which adhere to the Augsburg Confession and as the person whose entire doctrine in sum and content was comprehended in the articles of the aforementioned Augsuburg Confession and delivered to Emperor Charles V, therefore the true meaning and intention of the Augsburg Confession cannot be derived more correctly or better from any other souce than from Dr. Luther's doctrinal and polemical writings" (SD VII, 41).[23] Since Luther's hermeneutical premises are so inextricably included in the works referred to and quoted from, I would suggest that here, quite specifically, the formulators accept Luther's hermeneutics, without any qualification attached.[24]

For Luther it is simple a matter of the clarity and sufficiency of Scripture. Are the words of Scripture clear in themselves or are they not? He will suffer the importation of no philosophical categories, especially the Aristotelian metaphysic, a sin committed, surprisingly, not only by the scholastics, but also by the Zwinglians and fanatics and, after Luther's death, by the Philippists.

What Luther means by a clear word of Scripture is noted in *That These Words of Christ 'This Is My Body,' etc. Still Stand Firm against the Fanatics* (1527): " 'This is my body.' Here is no obscure or ambiguous word, for to make bread into body is distinct, clear, lucid speaking."[25]

But Luther's harshest and sharpest attack on the spiritualized presence posited by other reformers comes in the *Great Confession* of 1528. Luther's idea of the clarity of Scripture is revealed especially in this section, which I think needs to be quoted at length:

> Tell me, who can imagine any sensible man's saying what Oecolampadius says here, viz. that this text, "This is my body," is not clear because the body of Christ is not visibly present in the sacrament, and only believers understand these words, as Augustine allegedly says. Must a text be unclear if a thing is invisible and none but the believer perceives it?

> What part of Scripture then would remain clear? If everything that faith teaches is invisible, then this text cannot be clear, "God created heaven and earth" . . .
>
> We know, however, that these words, "This is my body," etc. are clear and lucid. Whether a Christian or a heathen, a Jew or a Turk hears them, he must acknowledge that they speak of the body of Christ which is in the bread. How otherwise could the heathen and Jews mock us, saying that the Christians eat their God, if they did not understand this text clearly and distinctly? When the believer grasps and the unbeliever despises that which is said, however, this is due not to the obscurity or clarity of the words but to the hearts that hear it.
>
> The poets are most skillful of all at describing, with perfectly clear words, not only invisible but even insignificant things. How many a man is deceived by fair words of liars, the meaning of which he understands perfectly well! How the people are seduced now when the fanatics speak of insignificant things (to say nothing of invisible things), precisely for the reason that they understand the words clearly and perfectly well! Indeed, the words by which men deceive the people and prattle about trivia are often clearer and more distinct than those which they speak in truth. For if they had not understood clearly and distinctly the meaning of the words, they would never have been deceived. As I have said, however, Oecolampadius and this spirit show a deficiency in elementary dialectics by inferring that because the subject matter is obscure or difficult to understand, the meaning of the words is obscure. This is bad distinguishing, in other words, ignorance of the third part of dialectics.[26]

This is precisely Luther's idea of the clarity of Scripture — that it is a deficiency in elementary dialectics (knowing how to analyze, think, and talk) to infer that "because the subject matter is obscure or difficult to understand, the meaning of the words is obscure." An idea, a concept, the subject matter of Scripture may very well be incomprehensible, but the proposition itself is clear and accessible to anyone with a reasonable mind. Luther then asserts of the words "is" and "My body": "Consequently, we must remain content with them as the perfectly clear, certain, sure words of God which can never deceive us or allow us to err."[27] Luther here and elsewhere shows an intolerance for those who refuse to think and analyze. The words of Scripture must be analyzed as to their language and meaning. He is also intolerant

of those who argue against him by simply saying, "I disagree; I think it means this," without analytically, dialectically demonstrating the basis for their assertions.

In *Against the Heavenly Prophets* (1525) Luther sees another kind of obfuscation of the clear word of Scripture: "[Karlstadt has not derived] his interpretation from but outside of Scripture, [and] wants to bring this kind of notion to Scripture, bending, forcing, and torturing it according to his own conceit instead of letting his stupid mind be changed and directed by the Word and Scripture of God."[28] According to Luther, "Dr. Karlstadt's error reveals itself in his attitude toward faith and the Word of God, namely that reason readily and willingly accepts it, while in reality reason balks at the Word of God and the articles of faith."[29] The accusation is essentially the same as that leveled against Thomas in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* — of harmonizing articles of revelation with empirical "reality" and reason. And yet for Luther that which cannot be grasped by reason and that which is not in accord with the visible is the subject of revelation and is clear and distinct in its meaning.

It is interesting here, we would add parenthetically, that the issue which is dealt with here also arose in the Philippistic controversies of the 1550's and 1560's. There the issues were intra-Lutheran, not so much directly involving Catholicism, Zwinglianism, or Calvinism.The Gnesio-Lutherans were at heart fighting against the Philippistic habit of introducing Aristotelian categories into the interpretation of Scripture in order to harmonize or reconcile empirical reality with revelation. For one thing, an axiom of the physical world, the "finitum non capax infiniti," was made by both Thomas and the radical reformers a normative axiom with which articles of faith had to agree. And that application particularly affected the doctrines of the Real Presence, Christology, and Incarnation. Luther realizes the paradox of it all — the same error produced what often seem to us to be contrary doctrines — the transubstantiation of Rome and the spiritualized presence of Zwinglianism and Calvinism. Thomas has an edge, however, and never draws nearly so much venom from Luther's pen. He sees, at least, that the words "This is my body" must be taken in their clear, distinct, literal sense; but forgetting to do an exegesis of *touto*, Thomas contorts the Aristotelian doctrine of substance and accident in such a way as to rid the Sacrament of the finite so that the infinite can exist in its place. At least, Luther might allow, Thomas permits the body and blood to be there. The radical reformers, however, in their efforts

to harmonize revelation with empirical notions, rid the Sacrament of the infinite, the true body and blood of Christ.

In the later Philippistic battles, it was again the importation of such philosophical categories which was the bone of contention. In the synergistic controversy, it was Melanchthon's introduction of the notion of concurrent causes in conversion (the Word, the Spirit, and the will) which was rejected finally by Article II of the Formula. Scripture teaches conversion from God's view, not, primarily, from man's. But Melanchthon and others felt compelled, out of ethical interests, to depart from the Bible's theocentric model and discuss conversion also from an anthropocentric view, thus importing a foreign element into what is in reality a clear and distinct Scripture.

And in the Lord's Supper controversy, Melanchthon, beginning in a far more sophisticated way than Zwingli and Karlstadt, seems to have felt the need to harmonize empirical reality with clear and distinct revelation and thought that the presence of Christ's body and blood is parallel to the bread and wine, but not in the bread and wine, as Scripture clearly teaches. For, Melanchthon, it was sufficient to believe that Christ in His omnipresence, present at the sacramental action, is received only under this rubric: "It becomes a sacrament only when all causes are brought together and the intended purpose of the Savior for which it is instituted is carried out . . . Therefore it is only a sacrament when the eating is undertaken."[30] Since, (1) the material cause is that which is changed (the elements of bread and wine), (2) the formal cause is, in this case, the action of consecrating, distributing and receiving, (3) the efficient cause is the power of Christ and His Word, and (4) the final cause is the appropriation of the elements for the forgiveness of sins; there can be no Real Presence until all of those causes are carried out. But the Formula of Concord dropped David Chytraeus' use of that terminology as it had appeared in the Swabian-Saxon Concord in an article on the Sacrament written by him, which may very well have contributed to his pique: "Accordingly, I cannot be reckoned among its authors but only among its subscribers."[31] Also implicityly rejected by the Formula was the Melanchthonian syllogism: "The form of the supper gives the thing its essence; the form of the supper is the complete *actio*. Therefore the complete *actio* gives the thing its essence."[32] The Aristotelian doctrine of potentiality (nothing is actual but only potential until it has been instantiated with particular attributes) was also inherent in Bucer's receptionism, and is rejected by the Formula (SD VII, 74).

It is that importation of philosophical and empirical categories which is rejected by Luther in his writings against the Roman theologians to a degree, but particularly in those against the spiritualizers and by the Gnesio-Lutherans against the Philippists. The assertion of a clear and distinct Scripture is directed, for both Luther and the later confessors, primarily against the importation of any foreign categories at all, other than the rules of normal grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. The task of Luther's exegesis and the exegesis of the Formula is never to make revelation's content or subject matter consistent with man's empirical world view. For Luther the subject matter of revelation is believed by faith and is not necessarily comprehensible to reason or consistent with empirical reality. What is clear about Scripture and what is accessible to the human mind is the meaning of the propositions which are revealed. Not always is every sentence or image clear, but what the whole proposition of Scripture and every individual proposition means — that is perfectly "clear and distinct." It is accessible to all men, externally clear, through the normal use of grammar and vocabulary.

That, for one thing, is Luther's understanding of the clarity of Scripture in his diatribe against Karlstadt in *Against the Heavenly Prophets:* "They [sincere hearts] want the Word of God and say 'Why should I care for Karlstadt's dreams, sneers, and slanders? I see the clear, distinct, and powerful words of God which compel me to confess that the body and blood of Christ are in the sacrament . . . How Christ is brought into the bread or strikes up the tune we demand, I do not know. But I do know full well that the Word of God cannot lie, and it says that the body and blood of Christ are in the Sacrament."[33]

Another aspect of Luther's idea of the clarity of Scripture is enunciated in this treatise. For Luther the Scriptures are clear externally, without any mystical, internal, or subjective revelations by which they might be interpreted. Both Karlstadt and Zwingli, Luther thought, were interpreting on the basis of dreams, visions and other revelations of the Spirit, apart from the external Word. Zwingli purportedly had arrived at his *significat* through a dream in which an angel refered him to Exodus 12:11.[34] Karlstadt too operated with such an internal revelation: "Should you ask how one gains access to this same lofty spirit, they do not refer you to the outward Gospel. but to some imaginary realm, saying: Remain in 'self-abstraction' where I now am and you will have the same experience. A heavenly voice will come, and God himself will speak to you. If you inquire further as to the nature of

this 'self-abstraction' you will find that they know as much about it as Dr. Karlstadt knows of Greek and Hebrew."[35] "If you ask who directs them to teach and act in this way, they point upward and reply, 'Ah, God tells me so, and the spirit says so.' Indeed, all idle dreams are nothing but God's word."[36]

It is equally against such notions of inward revelation by which the externally clear Word is to be interpreted that Luther protests. Scripture is of no private interpretation: "We do not believe anyone who presents his own explanation and interpretation of Scripture. For no correct understanding can be arrived at by one's own interpretation."[37] In the Smalcald Articles, Luther is certainly thinking of such revelations when he says, "Enthusiasm clings to Adam and his descendents from the beginning to the end of the world. It is a poison implanted and inoculated in man by the old dragon, and it is the source, strength, and power of all heresy, including that of the papacy and Mohammedanism. Accordingly, we should and must constantly maintain that God will not deal with us except through his external Word and sacrament. Whatever is attributed to the Spirit apart from such Word and sacrament is of the devil" (SA III: VIII, 9-10).[38]

For Luther and the Confessions, it is, then, from this rubric of a clear Scripture, a biblical revelation which by its very nature is clarifying and which interprets itself, that all other principles of an historical, contextual, grammatical exegesis emanate. All other principles of Luther's hermeneutics are simple recognitions of the nature of revelation, that the hidden God, in human language, reveals the profundities of His nature and will. Revelation is to make clear that which is hidden. Hence to posit any obscurity or ambiguity at all is to negate the very definition of revelation. To assume the necessity of any human agency, empirical reason, or ecclesiastical authority as arbiter over the substance of the Word is to detract from the work of the Spirit who Himself clarifies through the word of Scripture.

The interpreter of Scripture is thus to import no foreign categories into the translation or interpretation of Scripture. Those foreign categories which are excluded range from mystic vision or internal revelation, which are uncertain, to inherent reason and an empirical world view. To attempt to reconcile any article of revelation with empirical reason or world view, from creation by divine fiat to the reality of Christ's presence in the Sacrament is to import a metaphysic which stands outside of the clear Word. The perspicuous Word stands, for Luther and the Confessions, all by itself.

There is, for Luther, a necessary corollary to the perspicuous Word, which corollary is essential to an understanding of the hermeneutical principles of Luther and the Confessions — the power of the Word, the Word's efficaciousness. That by which the mighty God reveals Himself with abundant clarity is also His effective power. His immutable will is revealed in it and condemns sin; His Gospel reveals what in His hidden counsels, in eternity, He has purposed to do; and by His *mandata* to the church, He reveals in clear propositions and clear commands how He wills to carry out His eternal election of grace. For Luther that Scripture is not only the revelation of God; through it He also effectively works. The word of the Gospel is the very power by which God works; by it the Holy Spirit works — "He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth" (SC II).[39]

Not only the Gospel in the narrow sense, but any *mandatum Dei* is effective — it accomplishes what God wills. God's Word, for Luther, that which God speaks through any mouth He chooses, has *Kraft und Macht*. The world is created by the sheer power of God's Word. And the incarnation, the beginning of the new creation, is by the power of the same Word. "How did his mother Mary become pregnant? . . . The angel Gabriel brings the word: 'Behold you will conceive and bear a son, etc.' With these words, Christ comes not only into her heart, but also into her womb as she hears, grasps and believes it. No one can say otherwise, than that the power comes through the Word. As one cannot deny the fact that she thus becomes pregnant through the Word, and no one knows how it comes about, so it is in the sacrament also. For as soon as Christ says, 'This is my body,' his body is present through the Word and power of the Holy Spirit."[40] From creation to incarnation to consecration — it is, for Luther, the effective power of the external Word by which God deals with man. The same language in incorporated into the Confessions, when the Solid Declaration (VII:78) quotes from the *Great Confession*, from Luther's brilliant treatment of *Thaetelwort* and *Heisselwort*: "Here too, if I were to say over all the bread there is, 'This is the body of Christ,' nothing would happen, but when we follow his institution and command in the Supper and say, 'This is my body,' then it is his body, not because of our speaking or our declarative word [*Thaetelwort*], but because of his command in which he has told us so to speak and to do and has attached his own command and deed to our speaking."[41]

This concept of the power of the Word of God, the word of the Gospel, and the *mandata Dei* given to the church is certainly not generally accepted in Reformed, Holiness, or Fundamentalistic theology. It is a far cry from Jonathan Edwards' exposition in "A Divine and Supernatural Light": "When it is said that this light is given immediately by God and not obtained by natural means, hereby is intended that it is given by God without making use of any means that operate by their own power or natural force. God makes use of means; but it is not as mediate causes to produce this effect . . . The word of God is not proper cause of this effect, but is made use of only to convey to the mind the subject matter of this saving instruction; . . . it is the cause of a notion of them in our heads, but not of the sense of their divine excellency in our hearts . . . That due sense of the heart, wherein this light formally consists, is immediately by the Spirit of God."[42]

Much could and really should be said on this point, but let us limit ourselves here to a relatively brief digression. For quite a number of years some of our friends in Lutheran circles who do not accept the verbal inspiration and infallibility of Scripture have in derision called us "Fundamentalists." To believe such things about Scripture makes one a Fundamentalist, it is thought. I think, however, that there are some other characteristics of Fundamentalism which are worth noting. For one thing, most painfully absent from Fundamentalism's doctrine of Scripture is this very power and efficacy of Scripture which for Luther is so important. The absence of any notion of the power of the Word and the notion of a *mandatum Dei* which is effective through the Word, of course, entails an absence of any concept of sacramental efficacy. The Confessional belief in an inspired and inerrant Scripture which is inherently powerful as the means through which the Holy Spirit works is, in fact, the very antithesis of Fundamentalism. Now, in the ecumenical Lutheran literature that I read, I find precious little discussion or recognition of the power of God's Word. And when one sees Lutherans signing agreements with the Reformed in which the best that can be said about the Real Presence is that it coincides with the omnipresence of Christ, but which at worst completely spiritualizes or denies His actual presence, I start to wonder who the Fundamentalists really are.

Furthermore, another essential of Fundamentalism, I think, is the notion that there are simply some fundamental doctrines of Scripture, variously numbered, on which there must be agreement before there can be outward or inward fellowship. Luther,

however, in commenting on Galatians 2:9 ["The right hand of fellowship"] says, "They [the Galatians] said: 'Paul, we preach the Gospel in unanimous consensus with you. There we are companions in doctrine and have fellowship in it; that is, we have the same doctrine. For we preach one Gospel, one Baptism, one Christ, and one faith. Therefore we cannot teach or command anything so far as you are concerned, for we are completely agreed in everything. For we do not teach anything different from what you teach . . .' "[43]

On the other hand, there may be some truth in the charge of "Fundamentalism" laid against "conservative" Lutheranism. In the battle which raged in the church for an inspired, inerrant Scripture, the Lutherans often found their allies among the Evangelicals and Reformed where precious little attention was paid to the inherent power of the Word of God. Hence, a couple of generations of conservative Lutheran pastors have been raised and are still being raised on literature which does not know that power of the Word and which is not sacramentally oriented. In that sense, the charges of "Fundamentalism" may be more correct than we would wish.

There is also the modern apologetic movement which has likewise proceded from generally Reformed presuppositions. One can sympathize with the desire to show that one does not check his intellect at the church door or leave it in the sacristy, and in that sense the apologetic movement has been valuable. It has also been valuable in showing the intellectual bankruptcy of skepticism. However, insofar as modern apologetics attempts to validate the Gospel and revelation along the lines of empirical reality and to appropriate "scientific certainty" to the Gospel, it has imported a world view and metaphysic into the interpretation of Scripture which is, in fact, foreign to Scripture. Our modern age has elevated "the scientific method" to a level of certainty and clarity which it has never had, which it never can have, and which it does not deserve. That elusive scientific certainty, however, is then supposed to be duplicated in the reading of revelation, and both the higher critical method and the modern apologetic movement, it seems to me, seek a clarity and certainty of Scripture which is more akin to empiricism and Logical Positivism than to a straightforward reading of propositional revelation.

There is a further corollary to the Lutheran doctrine of a clear Scripture. Paradoxically, the clear revelation of God in the external Word demands a dogmatical examination of the words of Scripture and an outward confession of what the words mean.

To believe that the Scriptures are clear is meaningless without such a confession. The task of exegesis for Luther and the Confessions is to ask "What does it mean?" of any Scripture. It is enthusiasm and biblicism to answer the question with "whatever it means, I believe," much less with any kind of relativistic answer, with a retreat behind vague generalities, or with a refusal to refute error analytically, on the basis of Scripture. Luther's idea of the clarity of Scripture admits no flight into vagueness, ambiguity, or subjective interpretation. For example, in his letter to the Christians at Frankfurt am Main, the pastors there are taken to task for not clearly confessing the meaning of the words in the Sacrament.[44] At a time of confession, it is not sufficient to let the words of Scripture stand without a clear expression of their true meaning, for at Frankfurt the pastors were satisfied to let each think as he would of the words "This is My body." Zwinglian and Lutheran could partake side by side. If asked what the words meant, the answer simply was, " 'This is My body' means what Christ means." The council is told by Luther that only Zwinglianism hides behind such "double-tongued" expressions, and for such dishonesty Luther has only ridicule: "So, where such preachers are found, they have it very good, and have found an easy way to preach and do not need to study and preach any more. For in everything, they can say this to the people: Dear people, be content in this — believe what Christ means; that is enough. Who couldn't preach then? Who wouldn't want to be one of their disciples? If we should be tired of preaching and teaching and the pain of all of Christ's commands and speaking, then we can just say I believe what Christ believes, or, much better, I let Christ believe for me and he will take care of what I should believe. Oh, that would be for me the finest Christian and the richest brother. And then the papists could say that they believe what the church believes. And the Pope could say I believe what my King believes. Why not? How could there be a better faith than this which has so little pain and sorrow? They tell about how a doctor met a collier on the bridge at Prague. Noting that he was a poor layman, the doctor asked, 'Dear man, what do you believe?' The collier answered, 'What the church believes.' The doctor: 'What does the church believe?' The collier: 'What I believe.' Later, when the doctor was about to die, the devil greatly troubled him because of his faith and he did not know where to turn and had no peace until he said, 'I believe what the collier believes.' "[45]

For Luther an equivocal confession of what the clear Word teaches is first of all a flight from the cross which is laid on the

believer. The flight from dogmatical, analytic statements which exclude all wrong interpretations is for Luther not only lazy, but dishonest. And likewise, to simplify the content of the Word of God behind vague expressions is to destroy the sharpness and the clarity of the Scripture.

It becomes a paradoxical fact that simply to repeat the words of Scripture, without clearly expressing their meaning, is to fail to assert a clear Scripture. But nevertheless, for Luther and the Confessions, the *mandatum Dei*, the command of God, to confess the truth (Romans 10:9-10) necessitates saying in however many words are needed precisely what the Scripture means. Such confession excludes pious opinion, private interpretation, and a reliance on the tradition of the church, popes, councils, or synods. And in our own day it excludes the ever-present majority opinion, where doctrine is determined by straw vote or a desire to hold the outward church together. The meaning of Scripture is to be unequivocally stated, whatever the cost; should such unequivocal confession cause disruption in the outward church, that is the cross the Christian must bear. The Confessions themselves practice precisely that exegesis. A clear Scripture is expounded and explained. Any proposition of Scripture can be expressed in different words, and the clarity of Scripture is not compromised. That is exegesis, and it is done under the rubric of clear Scripture.

Latter day Lutherans, among others, have had a tendency to make too great a distinction between dogmatics and exegesis. Were Luther and Chemnitz to enter into a debate with us about the relative merits of systematics and exegesis (which comes first, etc.), I suspect that they would be appalled and might say, "Whatever distinction can you be thinking about? All dogmatics must be exegesis; and all exegesis must be systematic and dogmatic. Our work, our confession, *is* exegesis. This is our confession of the clear Word of God." Part of being Lutheran is a disciplined approach to Scripture — both homiletically and dogmatically.

All of the foregoing, I think, emanates precisely from the rubric of "Claritas Scripturae." No hermeneutical system can be sensible which does not start from a perspicuous Word of God. Any that does not start from that point will lapse into a reborn scholasticism of destructive criticism or fanciful enthusiasm. Any hermeneutic worthy of the name must be simply a public accounting of how we treat the sacred writings. Luther was not afraid to account for his method, nor were the confessors bashful about practicing that exegesis.

FOOTNOTES

1. The discussion in the Formula of Concord at this point was guided especially by Chemnitz, who also commented extensively on the clarity of Scripture in *Examination of the Council of Trent*, I, trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), Topic I. Compare also Eugene F. Klug, *From Luther to Chemnitz* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing House, 1971), pp. 210ff., and Ralph Bohlmann, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), pp. 57ff.
2. Compare Bohlmann, *ibid.*, p.60.
3. *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann (55 vol. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House and Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955-), 32, p. 217.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, p. 244.
6. *Luther's Works*, 33, pp. 24ff. and 89ff.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
11. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. and trans. Theodore G. Tappert *et.al.* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 315.
12. *LW*, 33, p. 26.
13. Anselm of Canterbury, "Proslogion," in *Anselm of Canterbury, ed. and trans. Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson (Toronto: Edwin Mellen Press, 1974), pp.93-94.*
13. Anselm of Canterbury, "Proslogion," in *Anselm of Canterbury*, ed. and trans. Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson (Toronto: Edwin Mellen Press, 1974), pp. 93-94.
14. *LW*, 33, pp. 89ff.
15. *Ibid*, p. 90.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 90f.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *LW*, 26, p. 57.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
22. Cf. Smalcald Articles, Part III, Article 8, (Tappert, p. 313), where Luther also refers to the pope and Mohammed as enthusiasts.
23. Tappert, p. 576.
24. Bohlmann, pp. 60-64.
25. *Luther's Works*, 37, p. 109.
26. *Luther's Works*, 37, pp. 271ff.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 308.
28. *Luther's Works*, 40, p. 153.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Philipp Melanchthon, "De Transubstantiatione" in *Corpus Reformatorum*, ed. Carolus Gottlieb Bretschneider, IV (Halle: C.A. Schwetschke, 1837), p. 264.
31. Cited in Theodore Jungkuntz, *Formulators of the Formula of Concord* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1977), p. 83.

32. Cited in Tom G.A. Hardt, *Venerabilis et Adorabilis Eucharistia: En studie i den Lutherska nattvardsläran under 1500-talet* (Upsala: Ljungbergs Boktryckeri, 1971), p. 261, note 269.
33. *L W*, 40, p. 176.
34. Cited in Herman Sasse, *This Is My Body* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1959) p. 133, note 21; rev. ed. (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1977), p. 105, note 21.
35. *LW*, 40, p. 147.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 148.
37. "Sermons on the Second Epistle of Peter", *LW*, 30, p. 167.
38. Tappert, p. 313.
39. Tappert, p. 345. Cf. LCII: 40-42 (Tappert, p. 416); SA III: VIII: 10 (Tappert, p. 313).
40. "The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ — Against the Fanatics," *Luther's Works*, 36, p. 341.
41. *LW*, 37, p. 184; Tappert, pp. 583-584.
42. Jonathan Edwards, "A Divine and Supernatural Light, Immediately Imparted to the Soul by the Spirit of God, Shown to Be Both a Scriptural and Rational Doctrine," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1974), II, p. 13.
43. "Lectures on Galations", *Luther's Works*, 26, p. 104.
44. *Sämmtliche Schriften*, XVII (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), pp. 2008ff. This letter is unfortunately not translated in *Luther's Works*.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 2013 (my translation).

Evangelical Hermeneutics: Restatement, Advance or Retreat from the Reformation?

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.

There can be little doubt left in the minds of most leaders in the church of the last half of the twentieth century that we are now going through a hermeneutical crisis perhaps as significant in its importance and outcome as that of the Reformation. This is not to say that the subject of hermeneutics played no role in the discussions and formulation of doctrine prior to 1950; the fact of the matter is that every doctrinal advance in the history of the church exhibits some key hermeneutical decisions even though these stances usually involve a host of other considerations.

I. Introduction

The crisis upon us at the moment is the result of the Kantian and neo-Kantian climate produced by such writers as Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976), and Hans Georg Gadamer (b. 1900). Now, instead of defining hermeneutics as Johann August Ernesti (1707-1781) did, namely, "the science which teaches [us] to find . . . the meaning of an author, and appropriately to explain it to others,"[1] in Gadamer the hermeneutics of the reformers and the writers of the seventeenth century (such as William Ames,[2]) and eighteenth century (like Johann Ernesti) have been turned 180 degrees.

For many who have tasted the heady wine of modernity in Hans Gadamer (and to a lesser degree in Paul Ricoeur, b. 1915), the meaning of a text lies in its subject matter, rather than in what an author meant by that text. In fact, the meaning of a text *always* goes beyond what any author had intended in his affirmations and that sense is an unending process which can never by exhausted or captured by an infinite line of interpreters. The process of exegesis of a text is no longer linear but circular — one in which the interpreter affects his text as much as the text (in its subject matter) somehow affects the interpreter as well. Clearly, there is a confusion of ontology with epistemology, the subject with the object, the "thereness" of the propositions of the text with the total cultural and interpretive "baggage" of the interpreter.

Pitted against this revolutionary reversal in Gadamer of the traditional role, aims, and procedures of hermeneutics are the lonely voices of Emilio Betti,[3] an Italian historian of law, and E.D. Hirsch, Jr.,[4] an English professor at the University of Virginia. At the heart of their case is the distinction between "meaning" or interpretation and "significance" or application. "Meaning," they rightfully contend, is that which is represented by a text, its grammar, and the author's truth-intentions as indicated by his use of words, while "significance" denotes a *relationship between* (note well — it must be linked) that meaning and another person(s), time, situation, or idea (s). Meaning, they added, was unchanging once the writer committed himself to words, while significance did and had to change since the interpreter or reader usually found himself or herself in other times, interests, questions, and situations.

Very few, if any, in the contemporary church have been left untouched by this hermeneutical crisis. The evangelical community has also been severely affected by this debate even though it has spent most of its energies up to this point on the issues of the authority and inerrancy of Scripture. "It would be the ultimate irony," I compiained in a 1979 *Christianity Today* article, "if our generation were to be noted as the generation that contested most earnestly for the sole authority and inerrancy of Scripture as its confessional stand, but which generation also effectively denied that stance by its own hermeneutical practice and method of interpretation. This in itself . . . is reason enough to call the evangelical community throughout Christendom to a whole new hermeneutical reformation."[5]

A. Who are the Evangelicals?

But who are the evangelicals? Certainly their presence was significant enough for *Newsweek* magazine to declare 1976 "the year of the evangelicals" and for several of the largest publishing houses of religious books like Harper and Row, Westminster, and Abingdon openly to court evangelical titles in response to this burgeoning market. Yet for all this public exposure, the exact identity of the evangelicals remains elusive.

Gerald T. Sheppard[6] dared to suggest a simple solution to this problem of identity. After he had briefly surveyed five successful books written or edited by evangelicals as self-portraits of the group,[7] Sheppard contends that evangelicalism has made of Biblical hermeneutics a social contract thus overcoming the necessity of defending point by point the five items listed in the

older fundamentals of the faith: the plenary inspiration of Scripture, Christ's deity, His virgin birth, His bodily resurrection, and His second coming. He stated it this way:

> In theory, the burden of proof for individualistic doctrines could be almost entirely relieved simply by finding and defending *the one correct view of biblical hermeneutics* which would be sufficient to guarantee an orthodox reading of Scripture at every point. By heavily investing in these more efficient formulae concerning the authority of Scripture, the advocates of evangelicalism have minimized other "secondary" matters of doctrinal debate so that a large number of rather diverse denominations have found a single confessional identity over against the rest of Christendom. The major weakness in this strategy, however, lies in the inflexibility of evangelical hermeneutics, since a question about these formulations is at once a challenge to the social contract at the heart of the evangelical identity.[8]

Interestingly enough, Sheppard's suggestion is countered in a footnote citation from Benjamin B. Warfield, probably the single most influential writer of the last generation on the doctrine of Scripture. Warfield certainly did not rest the distinctiveness of his brand of Christianity on the doctrine of Scripture even though he found that doctrine to be extremely important for consistent theologizing. He warned:

> Let it not be said that thus we found the whole Christian system upon the doctrine of plenary inspiration. We found the whole Christian system on the doctrine of plenary inspiration as little as we found it upon the doctrine of angelic existences. Were there no such things as inspiration, Christianity would still be true, and all its essential doctrines would be credibly witnessed to us in the general trustworthy reports of the teaching of our Lord . . . Inspiration is not the most fundamental of Christian doctrines.[9]

An evangelical, then, is one whose personal faith is centered on the evangel or good news about the person and work of Jesus Christ. But what of the issue of Scripture? Can a believer be an evangelical if he or she does not believe in inerrancy? Kenneth S. Kantzer, editor of *Christianity Today*, boldly asserts that "Inerrancy, the most sensitive of all issues to be dealt with in the years immediately ahead, should not be made a test for Christian fellowship in the body of Christ. The evangelical watchword is 'Believers only, but all believers.' "[10] Kantzer recognizes several distinct meanings for the word "evangelical": (1) " . . . in its

broadest sense [it] refers to all people who hold to the essential Good News that sinful men are saved solely by the grace of God, . . . [focused on] Jesus Christ, the divine-human Lord and Saviour of man";[11] (2) " . . . in its narrower sense [it] denote(s) all who remain fully committed to Protestant orthodoxy";[12] and (3) it " . . . sometimes refers merely to historical churches and movements originally characterized by orthodox Protestant or evangelical theology, irrespective of whether the body continues to adhere to traditional evangelical doctrine."[13] It is the first two senses that concern us in this essay.

Where then does all the concern for Scripture fit into the evangelical agenda? Only at the point where *consistency* and concern for *full* orthodoxy are involved, where officers of denominations and institutions, teachers of the churches' educational institutions and her ordained ministry are involved. Kenneth Kantzer phrased it this way:

> Although the doctrine of inerrancy should not be made a test for Christian fellowship and cannot be included in the term evangelical as sometimes used, inerrancy, nevertheless, is important. It is essential for *consistent* evangelicalism and for a full Protestant orthodoxy . . . to fail to require belief in the inerrancy of Scripture on the part of [the church's] leadership would be to jeopardize the evangelical heritage of a strict orthodoxy.[14]

Sheppard correctly senses the *value* evangelicals place on a correct view of Scripture, but he is overly dramatic when he fabricates a social contract out of correct biblical hermeneutics. In fact, as we will argue later on, evangelicals (yes, even among those who belong to the "Northern establishment") are woefully divided on hermeneutical systems. More often than not, they tend to mimic many of the systems already existing in the non-evangelical world without always reflecting critically on that usage. Evangelicals in this century have often been occupied with many other issues, usually not of their own choosing, so that in-depth discussion on issues, especially in the area of general hermeneutics have, unfortunately, been missing from their discussions.[15]

B. How Broad is "Hermeneutics"?

Traditionally, "exegesis" involves the process of explaining the meaning of a text which its writer conveyed by means of his own distinctive grammar, syntax, and context; while "hermeneutics" deals with the principles the interpreter employed in that exegesis.

Now, however, the word "hermeneutics" has assumed a broad semantic field embracing the various forms of literary criticism as well as both ends of the interpretive spectrum involving the text and the reader. Indeed, the reader, his times, culture, psychology, and "pre-understandings" are now as much the object of the hermeneutical process as is the text itself.

This is not in itself all bad; but interpreters must not presume that the literary tools upgraded to hermeneutical principles will unfailingly point us to the real matters of the text as if discussions about the process by which the text was formed are equivalent or tantamount to interpreting that text. When such overconfidence in critical methodologies supplants what formerly was the humble desire to learn what the text meant and then to apply it to one's personal life and society, then the role assigned to hermeneutics has overextended itself. Likewise, the opposite concern is important: the impact that a text makes on its listener-reader. But hermeneutics has moved from its epistemological search for meaning and become instead an ontology and a statement of being or existence when hermeneutics focuses mainly on the listener-reader instead of the text.

The most valuable contribution that Gadamer and the school of the new hermeneutic brings is that application finally receives the attention it so richly deserves as an important concluding step in the interpretive process. The unfortunate aspect is that "the necessary grounding of application in understanding what the author meant by his use of his words is now swallowed up [by the reader setting the agenda for the text]."[16] When that happens, hermeneutics has become unmanageable and communication itself is threatened.

II. Significant Reformation Principles Affecting Interpretation

A. Sola Scriptura

The Reformers of the Protestant Reformation steadfastly maintained that the Bible *alone* contained all that was necessary for our salvation and manner of living. The Bible *alone*, the Bible without the *Glossa ordinaria* (a uniformity of interpretation maintained for several ages by the Church of Rome on doctrine and discipline) was the supreme and final authority. Moreover, the Scriptures, not the church fathers or the Church of Rome, were sufficient in and of themselves to set doctrine and discipline. The Bible alone was more than adequate and sufficient in itself as the fountain of religious truth.

The turning point for Luther had come in his debate with Eck in 1519. From then on, no longer did religious authority have a dual source nor did interpretation of the Scriptures follow the lines laid down by church tradition. Scripture by itself was (1) a supreme and final authority and (2) sufficient apart from any other controls, guides, or sources of truth.

B. The Single Meaning of a Text

A second important step was taken by the Reformers when they overthrew the wearisome fiction of the fourfold sense of Scripture. Luther was as incisive as usual: "The literal sense of Scripture alone is the whole essence of faith and of Christian theology."[17] As Luther analyzed the situation, the problem of his day was this:

> In the schools of theologians it is a well-known rule that Scripture is to be understood in four ways, literal, allegoric, moral, anagogic. But if we wish to handle Scripture aright, our one effort will be to obtain *unum, simplicem, germanum, et certum sensum literalem.* Each passage has one clear, definite and true sense of its own. All others are but doubtful and uncertain opinions.[18]

Again, Luther affirmed:

> Only the single, proper, original sense, the sense which is written, makes good theologians. Therefore [the Holy Spirit's] words can have no more than a singular and simple sense which we call the written or literally spoken sense.[19]

This principle of a single meaning to the text is second only to the principle of *sola Scriptura.* Yet, no principle in the whole area of hermeneutics is in more doubt and debate among evangelicals and the descendants of the Reformers. Nothing threatens the work and heritage of Luther and others more in the last half of the twentieth century than the contest over a single or polyvalent meaning for any given text of Scripture.

C. The Analogy of Faith

The *analogia fidei,* or proportion of faith, though first employed by Origen,[20] who innocently borrowed the words of Romans 12:6 ("according to the analogy of faith"), became one of the watchwords of the Reformation. In practical usage, it is often confused with the rule that "Scripture interprets Scripture." But in the hands of its best exponents, it forbade interpreters from taking an isolated passage and distorting it into an authoritative contradiction to the whole tenor of Scriptural teaching. The analogy of faith was never intended by the Reformers to be an

exegetical tool, otherwise, they would only have exchanged Rome's *Glossa ordinaria* and *regula fidei* ("rule of faith") for a new one of their own! In that case, *sola Scriptura* would have been dissolved.

On the contrary, in the hands of the Reformation's best exegetes, the analogy of faith was a *relative* expression aimed at the tyrannical demands of church tradition. "It was intended," commented Herbert Marsh,[21] "solely to deny that tradition was the interpreter of the Bible; it was designed to rescue the interpretation of the Bible from an authoritative rule..." Accordingly, it did not intend to set forth that Scripture was everywhere announced with equal clarity or that a trained ministry along with the use of grammars, commentaries, and other aids were unnecessary at best. It only argued that one of the confirming signs that a person had properly understood and expounded a Biblical passage could be seen in the fact that that interpretation would not countermand or contradict anything written anywhere else in Scripture. Thus, after one's exegesis was complete, it was possible for one to collect all the exegeses of all passages on the same subject and bring that teaching together in such a way as to show the proportionality and total sum of the teaching of Scripture on that aspect of doctrine of discipline.

These three lodestars, then, set the course for the Reformation: *sola Scriptura*, single meaning of the text, and the analogy of faith. Evangelicalism would be well advised to remember her roots and these three guiding principles if she is to build on that heritage and make a lasting contribution.

III. An Evangelical Agenda for the Future

There are four areas that call for a restatement of the Reformation principles for our generation and signal an advance in the hermeneutical debate which rages in our day.

A. Critical Use of Criticism

The current debate over the use of the historical-critical methods is the first challenge. Since it is becoming fashionable to label the studies engendered by the literary criticisms as "hermeneutical questions,"[22] evangelicalism must face something the reformers were, in large measure, spared.

Much of the current confusion over the legitimate application of criticism to the interpretive task revolves around the ambiguity of definition of the word "criticism," the starting point of critical studies, and the methodologies employed. If by "critical" we only

meant that any interpretation of Scripture ought to provide adequate grounds for that meaning and those grounds could be contextual, syntactical, philological, historical, grammatical, geographical, or cultural, then there would be little debate. But when the interpreter must first pay his dues to modernity and state in advance what he is prepared to accept based on the interpreter's own rational processes and world-life view, then the price for acceptance by the academy is placed too high and the invitation to subscribe to a "canon within a canon" must be turned down. Views which demand allegiance in advance to a closed universe with such a heavy economy on miracles as effectively to deny all miracles suggest a starting point which is already in need of criticism itself. Nor will the easy retort that all of us carry presuppositions to the task of interpretation be sufficient. Of course, we do; but they too are subject to critical analysis.

Furthermore, *hypothetical* sources proffered as the true origins for the present text of Scripture must yield their place to real sources mentioned in the text (Chronicles lists some seventy such sources!) or discovered in the epigraphic materials of archaeology. Since the method for "uncovering" these hypothetical sources admittedly is deductive, they must never be raised to the level of a new induction. Instead, the "truth" discovered is already present in the major premise allowed.

Especially significant is the fact that when many of the current critical methods are applied wholesale to non-biblical epigraphic materials rescued from the sands of antiquity, they often yield some ludicrous results since the historical provenance of the text usually can be dated. A two-source theory for the third millennium Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic, exhibiting as it does such close affinities at points with the Genesis flood story, is altogether inappropriate since the text of Gilgamesh antedates the alleged dual sources by many centuries and millennia.[23]

More to the point, however, is the fact that our primary concern in hermeneutics is not to investigate the so-called prehistory of the text, but to explain the meaning of the present text. Very seldom does even an awareness of real sources mentioned in the text help us in this process. To see how some text might have changed from its original usage may not be as helpful as some imagine since only its Scriptural use claims to be inspired in the use to which it is put.

Evangelicals do, however, profit from and have employed various aspects of form criticism, redaction criticism and

rhetorical criticism.[24] They are no more afraid to submit their learning and reason to the authority of the Word and the legitimate canons of scholarly investigation in the areas of higher criticism than they are to do so in lower criticism with the highly regarded field of textual criticism.[25] They just insist on objective criteria, non-prejudicial commitments of the scholar, and an obligation for the scholar to stay with the interpretive process beyond mere investigations into the so-called pre-history of the text or even a cold descriptive task. As a document of the church, the academy must continue its work into applying the text and dealing with the question of the normative expectations legitimately made of this generation given the proper understanding of the text.

B. A Reaffirmation of the Single Meaning of the Text

Evangelicals must be reticent to adopt any theory of multiple meanings of a text. As an illustration of the diversity among evangelicals on this issue, I would point to the contribution of Vern Poythress[26] of Westminster Theological Seminary. Sadly, Poythress concludes that a passage may have as many as ten levels of meaning. The real problem in this whole thesis is admitted by Poythress: "Distinguishing different types of meaning can therefore be useful. But by itself, it will not tell us *which* meaning or meanings are to be treated as 'canonical'."[27]

The tragic results of such argumentation were not long in coming, for Lloyd Bailey, writing in Abingdon's "Interpreting Biblical Texts" series on *The Pentateuch* cited Poythress with appreciation and discovered these levels of meaning in the Pentateuch:

Level I: What the author actually said
Level II: What the author meant to say
Level III: What the author intended to accomplish
Level IV: What the audience understood
Level V: What the editor (redactor) meant
Level VI: What later generations within the Old Testament understood
Level VII: New Testament reinterpretation
Level VIII: Traditional understandings in other than canonical literature
Level IX: What the text means to the modern reader — "What it means to me"[28]

What is all of this but a return to the four-fold (now ten-fold) meaning of the text? We have argued elsewhere against similar

options which fall into the same trap such as *sensus plenior*,[29] a double-author theory in which the author writes better than he knows because his word is inspired,[30] and the New Testament's use of Old Testament prophetic texts.[31]

Interpretation must, as Betti and Hirsch argue, be grounded in the single meaning of the text as the words, grammar, syntax, context, and culture of the author demands. The price for ignoring the clear distinction between "meaning" and "significance" will be (1) a loss of validating any one "meaning" against any and all other aspirants, and (2) a loss of communication itself. The price is too high.

C. A Readjustment of the Analogy of Faith As an Exegetical Principle

Since the reformers never intended the analogy of faith to be a hermeneutical or exegetical tool, and since it was only a *relative* expression aimed at the imposition of claims prior to or competing with Scripture, we would propose that evangelicals adopt another tool for doing theological analysis of a text. However, we would strictly limit the purview of this tool solely to those theological constructs already in existence at the time when the target text being examined was written.

Moreover, we would require that this antecedent theology be made an issue in the exegesis of a passage only when the target text specifically quoted, clearly alluded to, or openly utilized that theological principle from an earlier text as an illustration or in some other overt manner. We agree with those who complain that the interests of responsible exegesis are violated when a later New Testament text is pulled in to loose the interpretation of an earlier text. Even when we are dealing with a true verbal parallel passage or a topical parallel passage, we must not prematurely introduce these passages from *later* texts *until* we have established the meaning of the target passage on other grounds.

Some prefer to call this method, with John Bright, "informing theology." But whatever it is called, it is most important that our exegesis does include a legitimate form of theologizing which does not level-out the whole Bible so that every passage says basically the same thing. We must also go beyond a mere descriptive exegesis and theologizing and continue into the more difficult work of normative considerations.[32]

The analogy of faith should be reserved for summarizing a section of a Biblical exposition or for relating a particular

passage, once expounded, to the concerns and teaching of the whole canon on any given aspect of that passage embraced by all of Scripture, for we cannot pretend that we are without the entirety of the Old and New Testaments or that the Christian era has not come.

D. A Reappraisal of the Process of Applying Biblical Texts to Contemporary Men and Women

Gadamer justifiably insists that every interpretation also must involve an application to the present moment and reader-listener. Of course, he would not put it in just that form. The goal, as he would view it, is one of sharing the horizon of the interpreter and the horizon of the text. Meaning, in his terms, is something that happens and takes place; it is not an objective meaning of the text. However, in spite of the refusal of the new hermeneutics to adopt the crucial distinctions between "meaning" and "significance" as pointed out by Betti and Hirsch, it has performed a great service in asking us also to concentrate on the horizon of reader-listener. Very little has been written on this, the most crucial step in the interpretive process.

In our textbook entitled *Toward an Exegetical Theology*[33] we have tried to develop a method to which we gave the coined name "principlizing." "To 'principlize' is to state the author's propositions, arguments, narrations, and illustrations in timeless abiding truths with special application of those truths to the current needs of the Church." What is to be discovered, however, is not some new idealism or some over-arching Platonic form of reality. Instead, we should only seek to extract the particularity, uniqueness, and individuality of the text once we have gained an understanding of the contribution which its historical setting makes to its interpretation. Our purpose, now, is to ask why this word of the text was preserved for the community of faith and what is the author commanding, summoning, encouraging, rebuking, challenging some or all of the new believing community to do in light of what the writer has said in this text — in spite of its admittedly particularistic setting? If evangelicalism is weak at this point, it shares that weakness with many others. The gap that exists between the abilities and interests of the departments of Bible and homiletics in almost every theological institution easily illustrates the gap that exists in most theological students' education. It is the most reprehensible of all the wrongs in current theological education and we must move quickly to repair it.

IV. Conclusion

Evangelicals face many of the same issues that the Reformers faced; in these they stand united with these gallant men of the sixteenth century. There is no word of retreat. But there are a large number of new issues and some which the Reformers left for more detailed definition. One of these is the meaning of "meaning." Perhaps G.B. Caird's[34] distinctions will help us most. He distinguishes between meaning R (referent — identifies a person or thing named), meaning S (sense — what is said about a person or thing), meaning V (value — "this means more to me than anything else"), meaning E (entailment — "this means war"), and meaning I (intention — the truth intention of the author). Too frequently interpreters have used "meaning" in a very slippery way. It has been our contention in this essay that meaning must be the focus of the hermeneutical process. Only then may we "relate" that single meaning to other "meanings." But the most important fact of all, given the proclivities of our generation (evangelical *et. al.*), is exactly where Caird left the issue:

> A fortiori, we have no access to the Word of God in the Bible except through the words and the minds of those who claim to speak in his name. We may disbelieve them, that is our right; but if we try, without evidence, to penetrate to a meaning more ultimate than the one the author intended, that is our meaning, not theirs or God's.[35]

FOOTNOTES

1. Johann A. Ernesti, *Elements of Interpretation*, 2nd ed., trans. Moses Stuart (Andover: Flagg and Gould, 1824), p. 2. See Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), pp. 24-27, for a description and generous sample of Ernesti's definitions.
2. William Ames (1576-1633) wrote the text most frequently used by seventeenth century American Puritans, *The Marrow of Theology*, ed. and trans. John D. Eusdey (Boston: Pilgrim, 1968).
3. Emilio Betti, *Die Hermeneutik als Allgemeine Methodik der Geisteswissenschaften* (Tubingen: Mohr, 1962). See a description of his thought in Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Scheiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger and Gadamer* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University, 1969), pp. 54-60.
4. E.D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1967).
5. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "Meanings from God's Message: Matters for Interpretation," *Christianity Today* 22 (October 5, 1979), p. 33.
6. Gerald T. Sheppard, "Biblical Hermeneutics: The Academic Language of Evangelical Identity," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 32 (1977), pp. 81-4.

7. These books included Richard Quebedeaux, *The Young Evangelicals* (Harper and Row Publisher, 1974); *The Evangelicals: What They Believe, Who They Are, Where They Are Changing*, edited by David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975); Harold Lindsell, *The Battle For the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976); Donald Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976); and Carl F.H. Henry, *Evangelicals in Search of Identity* (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1976).
8. Gerald T. Sheppard, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
9. Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Authority and Inspiration of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1948), p. 210.
10. Kenneth S. Kantzer, "Evangelicals and the Inerrancy Question," *Christianity Today*, 22 (April 21, 1978), p. 18.
11. *Op. cit.*, p. 19.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. We tried to make this point in our essay entitled "Legitimate Hermeneutics," in *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman L. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), pp. 117-47, 457-60.
16. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, pp. 30-31.
17. As cited by Frederic W. Farrar, *History of Interpretation*, Bampton Lectures, 1885 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1961), p. 327.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Martin Luther, *Works* (1897), vii, p. 650.
20. Origen, *De principiis*, 4.26.
21. Herbert Marsh, *A Course of Lectures Containing a Description and Systematic Arrangement of the Several Branches of Divinity* (Boston: Cummings and Hilliard, 1815), 3:16.
22. See *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods*, ed. I. Howard Marshall (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), p. 11.
23. No one has addressed this point more courageously than Cyrus H. Gordon, e.g., "Critics and the Forbidden Fruit," *Christianity Today*, 4 (Nov. 23, 1959), pp. 3-6; and Kenneth Kitchen, *The Bible and the Ancient Orient* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1966).
24. See Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Present State of O.T. Studies," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 18 (1975), pp. 69-78, especially pp. 77-78.
25. Contrary to complaints of Harry R. Boer, *The Bible and Higher Criticism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981).
26. Vern S. Poythress, "Analyzing a Biblical Text: Some Important Linguistic Distinctions," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 32 (1979), p. 113.
27. Poythress, *op. cit.*, p. 137.
28. Lloyd R. Bailey, *The Pentateuch* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), chapter three, "Levels of Meaning in the Text," pp. 95-124.
29. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, pp. 109-110.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-36.
31. For example, W.C. Kaiser, "The Davidic Promise and the Inclusion of the Gentiles (Amos 9:9-15 and Acts 15:13-18): A Test Passage for Theological Systems," *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 20 (1977), pp. 97-111; *idem*, "The Current Crisis in Exegesis and the Apostolic Use of

Deuteronomy 25:4 in I Corinthians 9:8-10," *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 21 (1978) pp. 3-18; *idem*, "The Promise of David in Psalm 16 and Its Application in Acts 2:25-33 and 13:32-37," *Journal of Evangelical Theological Society* 23 (1980), pp. 219-29.

32. We have addressed these concerns extensively elsewhere. See *Toward an Exegetical Theology*, pp. 125-27; 134-40.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 149-63; especially p. 152.
34. G.B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), pp. 37-40.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., is Academic Dean and Professor of Old Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.

Are Law and Gospel a Valid Hermeneutical Principle?

Horace Hummel

I. Definitions

Lutherans bandy the phrase "law and Gospel" about so much that to bother to define the terms in a context like this might appear to be a classical case of "carrying coals to Newcastle." Among theologically trained Lutherans this is undoubtedly true, but among laymen comprehension of the jargon often falls off very sharply. Even among pastors it is not always self-evident that the language has really been internalized. Such generalizations are probably even more true in non-Missourian Lutheranism, where talk about "law and Gospel" usually does not enjoy nearly the currency or priority which it gets in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Furthermore, outside of Lutheranism the terminology is often totally unfamiliar — sometimes because of a substantially different theology, sometimes merely because of semantic differences.

When Lutherans say "law" without further qualification, and especially when the word is contrasted with "Gospel," it is usually taken for granted that it is the so-called "second" use of the law which is being referred to (*usus elenchthicus*). Unless otherwise specified, that will be true of this paper too. By that "second" use we mean, of course, God's absolute, holy demand of man, which man, however, can never satisfy. Thus he is disabused of the notion that he can in any way prepare for or contribute to his salvation, and the ground is cleared for the "Gospel" of Christ's vicarious satisfaction, for *sola gratia, solo Christo, sola fide.*

This primacy of the "second" use of the law has always been a sort of litmus test for traditional, confessional Lutheranism. Wherever that usage is current and readily understood, it is a safe bet that the rest of traditional Lutheran orientation is reasonably alive and well too. Conversely, among "Lutherans" where there is no ready resonance to that vocabulary (and where sometimes it is even scorned as part of the "scholastic" or "confessionalistic" baggage which we can or should jettison), it is a good guess that other confessional principles have also become attenuated or lost altogether.

In contrast to that Lutheran usage, Reformed tradition has tended to be more comfortable with a "Gospel-law" formulation. Karl Barth has in recent times championed that formula, and in a way not essentially different from other heirs of John Calvin. Here, when "law" is spoken of without further specification, it is more often the "third" use of the law which is in mind, that is, God's guidance for the life of sanctification consequent upon the gift of salvation.

Sometimes, as a result, Lutheran "law-Gospel" talk is scarcely understood in those circles, just as the "Gospel-law" sequence tends to raise red flags for Lutherans. And sometimes, no doubt, the differences are little more than semantic. Classical Lutheranism, at least, certainly does not deny a "third" use of the law; an entire article (VI) in the Formula of Concord is devoted to its defense and proper exposition. Neither do Calvin and his heirs deny in theory a "second" use, although I think it is safe to say that in those circles the word "law" is used and heard in that sense much less frequently.

At the same time, I think only the "ecumenist" who is interested in sweeping differences under the rug will try to deny that the different expressions are often pointers toward considerably different styles and accents in both theology and practice. Not by accident are there some hyper-Lutherans who not only deny the third use of the law, but are ready to denounce almost everything besides "law-Gospel" as "Reformed," "legalistic," etc. If Lutherans have often appeared antinomian and insufficiently concerned with the fruits of faith to the Reformed, Lutherans have returned the compliment by often judging Calvinism moralistic and guilty of inordinate accent on rules for living, even, allegedly, to the point of subverting grace. Lutherans, for example, tend to have a hard time not hearing the Reformed accent on "covenant" as at least *crypto*-legalistic, a problem which they themselves tend to solve by avoiding the common biblical term almost entirely.

The different orientations are especially apparent in the public sector. What is often called the "quietism" of the Lutheran "two-kingdom" principle (itself only a restatement of the Law-gospel distinction) stands in obvious contrast to the "activism" of the Reformed tradition, beginning already with Calvin's own attempts to establish a "Christian state" in Geneva, and continuing to the present day in a variety of both traditional and liberal ("prophetic") manifestations.

We need not discuss the "first" use of the law here (i.e., God's rule outside the church through properly constituted authority). Not that there are no theological issues under this rubric (especially when it comes to "natural law" or "general revelation"), but they lie outside our present purview. Neither does it serve our purposes to trace the varying Protestant accents (e.g., Anabaptist, Arminian, Pentecostal, etc.), nor even to detail the original Reformation antithesis in medieval Catholicism. But, of course, we dare not forget that the Reformer's basic complaint was that "our opponents select the law and by it they seek forgiveness of sins and justification" (*Apology* III, 7).[1]

Before we proceed, we must also note that similar differences in vocabulary and accent appear not only in the various confessional traditions, but also within the Scriptures themselves. What one does with those differences depends on presuppositions, of course, and to that point we shall return later. In fact, Article V (5 and 6) of the Formula of Concord on the topic of "law and Gospel" notes that difference in biblical usage "was the original occasion of the controversy." Then it goes on to clarify that when "Gospel" is used in the broader sense

> it is correct to say or write that the Gospel is a proclamation both of repentance and of forgiveness of sins. But when law and Gospel are opposed to each other . . ., then, we believe, teach, and confess that the Gospel is not a proclamation of contrition and reproof, but is, strictly speaking, precisely a comforting and joyful message which . . . comforts consciences that are frightened by the law . . . .

Although the confessional writings do not mention it, the Bible contains broader and narrower uses of the word "law" just as much as of "Gospel." In this case, the contrast is more between the Old Testament's "*torah*" and the New Testament's "*nomos*," or, in some respects, simply between St. Paul's use of *nomos* and that of the rest of the Bible. Here the Lutheran dogmatic tradition is especially dependent upon Paul's narrower usage, and hence it is especially urgent for Lutherans to remember that *exegetically* the "dynamic equivalent" of "*torah*" is more nearly "Gospel" than "law." But we shall speak more of this later too.

Finally, on the matter of semantics, we should consider whether the hyphenated expression, "law-Gospel" is an acceptable substitute for "law *and* Gospel." Words and idioms meaning what we understand them to mean, it must be stated first that there is no *a priori* reason why that sort of shorthand should not

be employed, and we shall, in fact, often do so throughout this paper. Furthermore, the hyphenated phrase may even be useful to indicate that, precisely because man remains *simul iustus et peccator* throughout this life, both law and Gospel continue to have their claim on him. At the same time, however, if philosophical *a priori* statements take precedence over Scripture, there is the danger that the hyphenated phrase may imply a real "dialectic," almost a dualism of two equal but also opposing antitheses within God's Word. Plainly, however, both Bible and Confessions wish to stress the *triumph* of God's love in the Gospel (in the narrow sense) for those who believe, and, in a way, the whole point of specifying "law and Gospel" is to highlight the magnitude of God's grace in achieving vicarious satisfaction through the gift of His Son.[2] And for this reason we too follow the common convention of usually capitalizing "Gospel" while leaving "law" in the lower case.

II. Dogmatics versus Hermeneutics

Our topic, however, is the hermeneutics of "law-Gospel," not dogmatics as such. The two subjects are closely related, however. Hermeneutics has to do with valid method, with epistemological presuppositions. If Scripture really interprets Scripture, then both method and results, while not coterminous, will nevertheless overlap in their common rootage in the same inspired source. The divorce of the two is one of the major causes of the chaotic malaise in both dogmatics and exegesis in liberal circles. Even in conservative circles, where "law-Gospel" is common dogmatic usage, it is often not thought of in hermeneutical light.

One does not have to read the Lutheran confessions too closely, however, to discover that discussions of law and Gospel there are often hermeneutical in nature. For example, in Apology IV (5-6), Melanchthon is very direct (and reduces the discussion to the most basic applications):

> All Scripture should be divided into these two chief doctrines, the law and the promises. In some places, it presents the law. In others it presents the promise of Christ; this is does either when it promises that the Messiah will come and promises forgiveness of sins, justification, and eternal life. By "law" in this discussion we mean the commandments of the Decalogue, wherever they appear in the Scriptures.

On the surface, such a statement is very "dogmatic", but it patently is hermeneutical as well. That one "should" divide *all* of

Scripture into these *two* doctrines plainly implies a hermeneutical master key.

Other confessional statements on the subject of law and Gospel are even more explicitly hermeneutical. For example, Solid Declaration V (1) states: "The distinction between law and Gospel is an especially brilliant light which *serves the purpose* that the Word of God may be rightly divided and the writings of the holy apostles may be explained and understood correctly." (Parenthetically, we cannot help but note — although it certainly is not without hermeneutical significance either — that in this quotation "Word of God" and "writings of the holy apostles" are paralleled; the context is preeminently soteriological, to be sure, but it is not accident that the Scriptures and a proper method for expounding them are mentioned in the same breath.)

Also clearly hermeneutical in implication is the later assertion (FC-SD, V:23-24) that a law-Gospel orientation toward Scripture is no Lutheran idiosyncracy, but that

> Since the beginning of the world these two proclamations have continually been set forth side by side in the church of God with the proper distinction. The descendants of the holy patriarchs, like the patriarchs themselves, constantly reminded themselves of these two doctrines, which must be urged constantly and diligently in the church of God until the end of the world, but with the due distinction . . .

Such an assertion, of course, is not so much one of hermeneutical theory as a statement of the result of such hermeneutics in Old Testament interpretation (essentially, the golden thread of "Messianic prophecy"), but again one notes the parallelism of method and doctrinal result.

III. Indispensability

These few quotations are, in a real sense, only samplings of what pervades the entire Book of Concord. The overriding concern throughout is the proper understanding and proclamation of the Gospel on the basis of Scripture. Precisely the same ultimate concern is often articulated in terms of "justification by faith," and it scarcely need be pointed out here that Lutheranism has always considered that doctrine the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae.* But if so indispensable a doctrine is derived from Scripture, then it must also define the indispensable key for comprehending those Scriptures. As it must be more than merely one doctrine among many, so it must be more than merely one hermeneutical canon among many.

That is, by Lutheran confession, "justification by faith" or "law-Gospel" is a pivot on which all turns, a perspective without which neither "Gospel" nor Scriptures will ever be understood correctly. Both church history and the contemporary scene are studded with examples, both exegetical and homiletical, of how one may formally be very "biblical," yet ultimately not be "biblical" at all as far as substance is concerned, that is, in expounding the Gospel.

IV. No Gospel-Scripture Dichotomy

Nevertheless, the indispensability of "law-Gospel" as a hermeneutical principle can be asserted onesidedly. We in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod have become painfully aware of that fact, because it lay at the very heart of the bitter theological dispute from which we have just emerged and whose scars are still often very visible. There can be no doubt (and, now that the battle is over, I think few would even bother to deny it) that the hidden agenda of much of the so-called "moderate" appeal to "law-Gospel" was a false dichotomy of Gospel and Scripture.

A "canon within the canon" was commonly championed, not merely in the sense of a material viewpoint by which all must be ordered, but as a means of determining what was really inspired word of God and what was not. Hence, the designation "Gospel-reductionism" came into popular usage; it was commonly argued that "law-Gospel" or "justification by faith" was all that really counted in Bible and theology (and sometimes, it would seem, only "Gospel" in its narrow sense — or "Gospel" in whatever sense). Everything else, allegedly, was dispensable. To argue otherwise was a "Reformed" aberration, or maybe even a quite recent "fundamentalistic" caricature.

Now, of course, that kind of talk is not unique to liberal Lutheranism. One may confidently assert that essentially the same dichotomy is virtually synonymous with theological liberalism as a whole. Outside of Lutheranism one is perhaps more likely to hear what is worth keeping described merely as "Gospel" rather than "law and Gospel," but otherwise it often takes a microscope to tell the difference (if any).

To demonstrate that the different phraseologies have a common ancestry, one probably harks back best to Johann Semler, often regarded as one of the "fathers" of modern biblical study. In his seminal work, *Abhandlung von freier Untersuchung des Canons* (1791), Semler made two main points which have long since become virtual dogma in liberal circles: (1) The Bible merely

contains the word of God. (2) "Treat the Bible like any other book."

Hence one is not surprised to note how easily those who championed that type of reductionistic "law-Gospel" hermeneutics identified with the reductionistic, least common denominator "ecumenism" of the liberal Protestant establishment — no doubt, a major part of the agenda all along. We have no doubt that there are some "ecumenical" Lutherans who retain some uneasiness about the company they keep, and who, at least privately, entertain the hope that if they have anything to contribute to the ecumenical church, it is "law-Gospel" or "justification by faith." Even those of us who cannot share that vision of a valid ecumenism may wish them well, but when one looks at the distaste for almost any kind of doctrinal discipline and the resulting rampant pluralism (often even explicit glorying in it) that seems almost inevitably to accompany that posture, it is hard to see how even that minimal bit of Lutheran "tradition" can ever have a serious impact upon Christendom at large.

Nor is it coincidental that Semler's work concentrated on the *canon.* A fundamentally different *Schriftprinzip* is at the heart of the shift. "Canon" continues to be used as a historical term, of course, but no longer with the same hermeneutical weight. The extent to which canonics continues to be pivotal is currently illustrated by the typical reaction to Brevard Child's accent on canonical interpretation.[3] Among the kinder things he is being called is a "sophisticated fundamentalist." Some critics will acknowledge that they have shortchanged the final (canonical) stage of the history of biblical (re)interpretation and have concentrated onesidedly on the alledged *ipsissima verba* or earlier layers of tradition as centers of authority. But if there is anything they are not about to give up, it is their "right" to continue to dissect the "tradition" and to champion whatever layer happens to appeal.

To suggest that the process stops with or is limited to the final canonical form is obviously anathema. As the popular phrase summarizes it, the modern preacher or theologian may be just as "inspired" as the canonical writer. In technical terms, "special" inspiration is simply denied. It is no longer "*sola Scriptura,*" but at best *prima Scriptura* — or maybe *prima semi-Scriptura,* that is, whatever part of it impresses me most. The Bible becomes merely the earliest religious "interpretation" of certain historical events, a classical "witness" to some "encounter" with the numinous. That kind of jargon well illustrates the extent to which much of the

Lutheran "law-Gospel" movement was often little more than an expression in traditional Lutheran categories of the existentialism (and often universalism) of the current academic theological establishment. (Nor has the more recent popularity in some circles of some version of "process" immanentalism contributed to evangelical and confessional clarity or identity.)

"Law" and "Gospel" sometimes became simply "bad news" and "good news" for the human situation of almost any type, with the Bible only a major source of paradigms and models. And since the "law" component easily got lost, "Gospel" was frequently assimilated to various liberationist currents, especially to romantic and humanistic notions of individual "freedom" and self-expression, that is, to an antinomianism that was often simply antipodal to all that "law and Gospel" traditionally implied. Or, when politicized as it commonly was, that "other Gospel" easily allied itself with the left-leaning activisms of the liberal establishment. Each church convention ("Lutheran" or not) passed essentially the same laundry list of social and political resolutions, which were usually no more self-evidently related to an authentic "Gospel" than the opposite type of clamor from the religio-political right.

There is something inherently contradictory about that kind of "law-Gospel" claim to genuine Lutheranism which shows such disregard for the two-kingdom doctrine. For precisely because the doctrine of two kingdoms is only a restatement of and application of the "law-Gospel" principle to the public sector, it is indeed of the very essence of confessional Lutheranism. One cannot have his cake and eat it too — or eternally go limping between two opinions, to use a more biblical metaphor. On its face, there is something suspicious about *official* ecclesiastical groups (I underscore the "official") which are almost infinitely latitudinarian in doctrine, but who seem to know precisely what God's infallible will is for San Salvador, Namibia, "peace," or whatever the current cause.

V. "Gospel": Central to Hermeneutics, but Not Exclusive

Hence, we argue that to loosen "law-Gospel" from its Scriptural anchorage, or to try to define "Gospel" by an appeal to "Gospel" without firm anchorage in an infallible Bible is simply to beg the question. One may argue logically or deductively, as well as inductively from the chaotic results.

First of all, logic (the *ministerial* use of reason, that is) excludes the circular argument of using "Gospel" to determine what

"Gospel" is. An indeterminate is not determined by another indeterminate; X times X yields only X^2. Unless we know what "X," that is, the "Gospel," is on some external basis, we get only confusion confounded by applying that formula. Now this, of course, assumes that "Gospel" has definite cognitive content, which may be clearly expressed discursively or propositionally. "Faith" in the classical definition is *assensus* and *fiducia* as well as *notitia*, but it emphatically includes *notitia*, and with definite perimeters. Such an argument, to be sure, has its own circularity, or rests on its own "hermeneutical circle," to which we shall return shortly.

But the point here is that a "law-Gospel" hermeneutics independent of Scripture inevitably tends in more mystical or subjectivistic directions. When "Gospel" is no longer normed by a closed canon with an inerrant text, final authority inevitably devolves upon each individual interpreter. The content of faith is swallowed up by the act of faith, the *fides quae* by the *fides qua*. So much accent is put on the experiential and relational that what one should experience or relate to falls between the cracks. Programmatically, hermeneutical space is left for input from modern post-Enlightenment experience, especially from the so-called social "sciences." The so-called "new heremeneutics," somewhat as a reaction to the arid historicism of classical historical-critical method, even attempts to make a virtue out of a sort of text-interpreter dialectic. Alternatively, the "quest" or the "journey" becomes such an end in itself that not only the sufficiency of Scripture but the finality of Christ is condemned as "triumphalistic" and a "theology of glory" — that is, about as great a caricature of Luther's use of such language as is imaginable.

Hence, we argue not only on the basis of reason, but on the basis of *our* experience, if you will, of what happens when "law-Gospel" is accented reductionistically. "By their fruits shall you know them." Its impossibility is amply demonstrated by the latitudinarian subjectivity of liberal definitions and applications. Down that road lies only theological confusion and confessional dissolution. Perhaps the best one can say for such hermeneutics is that, while beginning with something very nearly *uniquely* Lutheran, by turning the unique into the totality, it often loses even the unique. I submit that such one-sided accent on one doctrine, or one hermeneutical axiom, even when it is so central a one as "law and Gospel" is of the very essence of heresy (a vocable which understandably then is usually expunged from the vocabulary of the heresiarchs).

Hence, one is not surprised to discover that such "law-Gospel reductionism" is not the hermeneutical method of the Lutheran confessions either. Since their overriding concern is with soteriology (and specifically salvation through the Gospel, not by works of law), that criterion is indeed prominently employed in interpreting texts dealing with the relationship of faith and works (justification and sanctification).

But the main point to be made here is that the confessions address *other* questions to the Scriptures as well, propositional or doctrinal as well as relational. Even "law-Gospel" then emerges as an "I-It" as well as an "I-Thou" matter. The "authority" of the Scripture is not limited to God's claim on people's lives, or their destiny depending on their relationship to Him.[4]

A major example would be the various sacramentological issues which the Symbols consider. In one sense, because it deals with "means of grace," sacramentology is certainly a "law-Gospel" issue too. But a purely personalistic or functionalistic posture would scarcely have delivered the emphatic emphasis upon the real presence in the Eucharist or upon the baptismal realism which is so integral to the Lutheran confession (and, of course, in this case more against Calvinistic and Anabaptist than against Catholic positions). Other examples, which we need not detail here, would be the confessional discussions about the descent into hell, about monasticism, about obedience to civil government, and so on.

If this were not the procedure, the confessors (and Lutherans who share their confession) might well be charged with imposing alien meanings on biblical texts — a charge against dogmatics and confessional exegesis which has generally accompanied higher criticism and even much "biblical theology" from their inception. But the exegetical method of the confessions throughout is not one of reading "law-Gospel" (or any other doctrine for that matter) into biblical texts, of some arbitrary proof-texting to buttress conclusions which have really been reached on some other basis. The best known instance is again Luther's insistence upon the literal meaning of "is" in the Words of Institution. Another good example is Melanchthon's interpretation of James 2:24 in Apology IV (244ff.). The argumentation is not deductive, from some law-Gospel apriorism, but inductive, from "what James meant." Many other examples could be cited, of course.

VI. A Valid Hermeneutical Principle, but Not the Only One

Hence, this paper's main thesis is that "Law and Gospel" is,

indeed, *a* valid (even indispensable) hermeneutical principle, but not *the* solely valid one (presuming that is meant, as we have seen it tends to be, in some exclusivistic or reductionistic sense). In terms of the scholastic jargon with which we in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod have become very familiar again in recent years, both the "formal" and "material" principles of the Reformation must be upheld. The "material" of the Bible, its heart, core, hub, pivot, center is "law-Gospel," the power of God through the Holy Spirit to put to death the old Adam and to raise up in baptism a new man. Yet its "form," its structure, means for defining it, saying what it is and is not, like that of the whole *corpus doctrinae*, is an objective entity, true *extra nos* whether we know it and accept it or not, namely, the Holy Scriptures, the "inscripturated Word of God."

Now this is not the place for a detailed disquisition on the relationship between these so-called "formal" and "material" principles. Like other scholastic distinctions, those of us who have not abandoned the "correspondence theory" of truth (that is, that words cannot mean whatever anyone wishes them to mean) often find them extremely helpful, if not well-nigh indispensable. But we must remain aware that they easily distinguish too much, and end up divorcing rather than merely distinguishing. Then we become guilty of a "reductionism" of sorts ourselves, at least of a caricaturing compartmentalization of our own. But, short of that extreme, the fact that those two principles cannot ultimately be separated is precisely the point. "Gospel" (or "law-Gospel") and "Scripture" are two sides of one coin. The Gospel is the material of the Scriptures, and the Scriptures are the "form," the means by which "Gospel" is defined. The Gospel is the *power* of God unto salvation, but not a mystical, contentless one; the words of Scripture are not magical incantations, effective apart from the Word incarnate, but they do give form and shape to that Word which entered our world of words.

We argue that maintenance of both "Gospel" and "Scripture" in their proper relationship is of the essence of genuinely "confessional" Lutheranism. One would not care to run it through a computer, but I think the record down to the present day speaks for itself. Precisely because they are two sides of one coin, one ends up with something counterfeit or ungenuine if both sides are not clearly minted. Both principles become skewed if they are not held together in what I might venture to call a real sort of "dialectical relationship."

If, on the one hand, the Scripture pole is weakened (as it is in the

historical-critical method, that is, with a fundamentally different hermeneutics), or "Gospel" becomes a sort of free-floating entity divorced from the sacred text, the inevitable result is some type of subjectivism or relativism, of which there have been and still are many varieties. If the Bible no longer defines "Gospel," then other philosophies or ideologies will rush in to fill the vacuum. The extent to which today "Gospel" commonly becomes a cloak for various countercultural programs makes the problem very clear. If what we have traditionally known as the Gospel of "Word and Sacrament" is not simply denied (as, by any measure, it clearly is sometimes), then at best it is put on the back burner and the church devotes the bulk of its talk and action to psychological, sociological, or political schemes. As "Gospel" gets allegorized or spiritualized into human idealism, even the sacramental realism, which we have always regarded as one of *the* marks of the church, no longer finds a place to stand.

And if, on the other hand, the "law-Gospel" thrust ebbs, then we run the opposite risk — and it is just as real a one — of what can *rightly* be called "biblicism" or "fundamentalism." It goes without saying that we reject the popular use of these terms by liberals to denigrate precisely what we are defending. If it were just a matter of playing with labels, we could even own the terms as laudable: "Biblicism" has an honorable history (and is still occasionally so used in Catholicism) of meaning simply specialization in biblical studies or giving the Bible its due. "Fundamentalism," as is well known, received its name because of concern about the fundamentals of the Christian faith, many of which were — and still are — under attack. But, of course, that is no longer the way the terms are used.

But, all polemics aside, there is no doubt that confessional Lutheranism needs to protect its right flank as well as its left. Precisely because, in the polemical situation, we share a belief in the verbal inspiration and objective authority of Scripture with others on the "right," we must be aware of our vulnerability to undue assimilation to attitudes characteristic of "evangelicalism," but scarcely compatible with Lutheranism.

The proper relation between "Gospel" (or "law-Gospel") and Scripture thus remains a high-priority item. Over against the "right" we stress that we do not and cannot first convert people to the Bible and then move on to the Gospel. Because the Bible is Spirit-breathed, it is also Christ-given, and without prior knowledge of enlightenment by Christ and His Spirit, the veil forever remains unlifted (2 Cor. 3:14 contains St. Paul's words about

the proper reading of the Old Testament versus Jewish biblicists of his day). Similarly, evangelical Protestantism's tendency toward a moralistic reading of the Bible, the tendency to pervert to Gospel into a *nova lex*, and the tendency to read the Sermon on the Mount or the theocratic prescriptions of the Old Testament as codes for a Christian commonwealth today belong to a different ethos.

That is, in a hundred and one ways it is very possible to be very visibly "biblical" and yet to turn the Bible into an instrument purely of law, not of Gospel. Already the Reformers were painfully aware of that fact. An undercurrent of such skirmishing is especially prominent in Apology IV, where Melanchthon is countering Roman Catholic arguments. In the preface, he observes that "our opponents brag that they have refuted our Confessions from the Scriptures." Of course, the *Schwaermer* and Zwinglians knew how to appeal to Scripture too.[5]

Hence, there is a constant Reformation accent that the Bible can be made to mean almost anything if the proper key to its vast variety of expression and accent is not in hand. And it is in that light that we must hear Luther's typically picturesque and hyperbolic words, such as: "If my opponents quote Scripture against Christ and the Gospel, I fight back with Christ against the Scriptures." Even better known (partly because so often misquoted and misapplied) are his characterizations of the core of Scripture as "*was Christum treibt*," of James as a "strawy epistle," and so on. If Luther interprets Luther, it is plain that he is not erecting some canon within the canon, but simply summarizing the hermeneutical principle toward which all exegetical detail must be oriented.

VII. General versus Special Hermeneutics

Because our topic is a hermeneutical one, it may be useful to note the partial congruence of "formal" and "material" principles with another time-honored distinction, namely, that between "general" and "special" hermeneutics. "General" hermeneutics, one might say, has to do with the externals, the "form" of the Bible, with the Bible as literature. "Special" hermeneutics, by contrast, concerns itself with what is unique in the Bible, with what it does not have in common with any other literature.

"General" hermeneutics is surely the easier of the two, because no particular faith-stance is involved. The "method" is primarily philological, not theological. Hence, the major criterion is simply whether or not one has done a good job. To a large extent, liberals

and conservatives (or those who are neither of the above, that is, who are not believers at all) can and sometimes do join hands in common labors. Whether one believes that the Bible is God's word or simply a record of man's search for God, there are still such reasonable "objective" or "scientific" pursuits as the original languages, text-criticism, geography, biblical archaeology, etc. Even "history" may — and must — be included, because there is no disagreement, as such, that the Bible is a "historical" book, in a sense a product of history, shaped by the personalities and circumstances of its various writers. That is why we label our method *historical*-grammatical, even if not historical-*critical.* The only question is of the nature and limits of the historical categories applicable to the Bible. Theoretically and traditionally, that type of general-hermeneutical investigation should lay the foundation for subsequent study of the theological *propria* of the Bible. But theory and practice are two different matters. And I fear that *both* liberals and conservatives in their own ways tend to divorce the two, liberals often by design or basic hermeneutical theory, but conservatives often too by oversight.

As is often the case, the liberal divorce is of various types. The more liberal the person is, the easier it is *simply* to "treat the Bible like any other book." Philology and various types of criticism may flourish, but "special hermeneutics" is *a priori* virtually impossible. That means also an almost total *de facto* divorce of systematics and exegesis, with each charting its own path. A more "moderate" position tends to be characterized by the dichotomy of faith and fact or of "what it meant" and "what it means" that we have already described. There is usually a "special hermeneutics" of sorts here, but very vulnerable to trendiness, and tending also to be alienated from systematics, unless both have succumbed to the same trend. A major symptom of the divorce is in the area of the biblical languages; these may well be available on an elective basis to students who have such recondite interests, but, in general, it is no accident at all that mainline seminaries do not require them.

The problem emerges for different reasons in conservative quarters. Here one fears that special hermeneutics (and specifically "law-Gospel," our topic) is easily left to the dogmaticians and not really integrated with or applied to exegetical particulars. Hermeneutical instruction itself spends so much time on literary matters (the nature of a parable, poetry versus prose, etc.) that somehow the law-Gospel, Christological heart of the matter receives remarkably short shrift. Curiously, one ends up with a

de facto (even if not a theoretical) dichotomy of systematics and exegesis almost as total as in liberalism.

Sometimes I think our preparation of exegetical teachers has contributed to the problem. Partly, no doubt, out of concern to spare them from fruitless sparring with those of an incompatible theological persuasion, future teachers are often encouraged to major in philology rather than theology. That choice certainly has its pluses, but on the minus side is the tendency at times to continue to major in philology in subsequent teaching and never really to bring theological hermeutical theory to bear.

Hence, it behooves us to concede that there *is* such a thing as "triumphalism." We are all aware that this is another favorite spitball in the liberal arsenal, and self-evidently we reject its application there to virtually any confessional certitude ("law-Gospel" certainly not excluded) in favor of an "ecumenical" pluralism and sometimes the crassest universalism. Nor do we forget how triumphalistic liberalism readily becomes too, a better example of which can hardly be found than the intolerance currently manifested in some quarters toward those who cannot in conscience accept the novelty of the ordination of women. But conservatism must also confess its tendency toward self-satisfaction with past achievements, and specifically with traditional articulations, sometimes spilling over into that fractiousness toward others who do not dot i's and cross t's in precisely the same way. It is probably even salutary in that connection to recall that the Book of Concord, as its name indicates, was a product of precisely that type of situation, perhaps classically represented in the Majoristic controversy, where one extreme taught that good works were "harmful" to salvation, the other that they were "necessary."

VIII. Hermeneutical Circle

It is especially in the area of special hermeneutics that the idea of the "hermeneutical circle" is helpful (though, of course, general hermeneutics will not remain unaffected by one's theological prepossessions). Some liberal theoreticians have urged this idea in recent years in the sense of a necessary interaction of a given text and the interpreter's subjectivity, of "exegeting the exegete as much as the text." The only merit in that accent is its recognition of the fact that there is no such thing as presuppositionless exegesis, no way to "prove scientifically" to the uninvolved observer that one faith stance is correct and another wrong.

Various people, with various confessions, may well read the texts differently (the major example perhaps being Jewish versus Christian readings of the Old Testament), and if we wait for the historians and grammarians to decide definitely what the texts mean, we will without doubt wait until the parousia.

But the conservative does not proceed from that situation to an exaltation of subjectivity or a relativization of the truth. Our hermeneutical circle is traditionally expressed in terms of "Scripture as its own interpreter." We believe, teach, and confess that the truth revealed there is objectively true, even if only the Holy Spirit can demonstrate it. Sometimes we say we have "no official exegesis," and, indeed, when it comes to the welter of particulars, that is true enough, even up to a point of the exegesis of passages cited in the Confessions. And, of course, there is the matter of new discoveries in modern times, which we shall certainly not disregard. But beyond certain perimeters, different exegesis simply means a different confession, a different hermeneutics, at fundamental variance from Lutheranism's official self-definition.

While we commonly underscore one half of our hermeneutical circle, namely, that our doctrines are based on Scripture, the other half often fails to receive equal stress, namely, that they all double back as hermeneutical guides to the proper understanding of relevant biblical texts. A major part of both halves of that circle will be, as already stated, the "formal" and "material" principles. If both principles are legitimately derived from the Bible, then together they form the major *clavis* by which alone, in turn, we can ever hope to expound the sacred texts rightly. The formal principle is an overarching one, God's own assurance that His word will not lead us astray, either factually nor soteriologically. But the substance, the *materia* of that soteriology and of which all the facts are ultimately an integral part, is *evangelium* (or "law-Gospel"), not *lex Christi* or *philosophia coelestis*, but *promissio*, as Melanchthon argues already in his *Loci Communes*.

The purpose of the "law" component is to force us to ask the right questions, the real, the ultimate questions of Scripture (as of ourselves), not those penultimate ones of personal quests and contemporary culture, which so easily obtrude. "Law" emphatically squelches any notion of the "world writing the church's agenda" (hermeneutical or otherwise). Of course, there is always the matter of contemporary and personal application, but the two must not be confused, as characteristically happens in

liberalism. God's answer to the right questions is the Gospel, and the "formal principle" is His own assurance that we have the right source to learn that answer.

That is, as already argued, "law-Gospel," because of its centrality in the Christian faith, will always be preeminent among those principles derived from Scripture and, hence, in turn, indispensable for expounding Scripture. But there will be many others also, as we have already noted; there were in the confessional writings too. Not only is there the doctrine of Scripture as basic prolegomenon, but, in a way, all the other *loci* as well. If these have been validly derived from the Bible to begin with, we cannot basically contradict them when we turn to parts of the Bible relevant to those *loci*, without expressing a different confession.

A good example of those others which cannot be developed in detail here is sacramentology. If both "Word" and "Sacrament" are equal means of grace, as we profess, this cannot help but color our exegesis at many points. Theoretically, this is one of the major divergencies between confessional Lutherans and conservative "evangelicals." Yet it seems obvious to me, at least, that not only in piety, but also in exegesis, excessive anti-Roman Catholic reaction has usually tended to push us in a sub-Lutheran direction that is often barely distinguishable from other conservative Protestants. In Old Testament studies a major application would be to the Old Testament cult, an area where, however, we appear to be even less at home than most "evangelicals." Of course, "law-Gospel" will provide major guidelines to be brought to bear upon that subject too.

Once, however, the path of those who formulated the doctrines out of Scripture to begin with has been retraced, and we have appropriated the fruit of the labors of those who preceded us in making the ancient words become the *viva vox*, or, propositionally put, in helping us release revealed information, all the parts must be related to the whole. That is, the soteriological or "law-Gospel" center must be brought to bear upon every doctrine, every text, every *word* (in part also because we simultaneously confess *verbal* inspiration). That was the element of truth in the "moderate" accent in recent Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod history that there is only *one* "doctrine," the Gospel. We cannot say that in quite the reductionistic sense they did, as though many or even most other doctrines were optional. We insist that in another sense there are many doctrines or "articles of faith" (so, most obviously, in the heading of the Formula of Concord, both

in its Epitome and Solid Declaration). But in a comprehensive sense it remains profoundly true that the church has *no* other message but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Precisely for conservatives with their concern for *all* the facets of the faith, the danger of an atomistic, intellectualistic, and hence ultimately *legalistic* caricaturing is always at hand. If that is not exactly a *fides historica*, it is a *fides doctrinalis* (to coin a term), ultimately just as deficient. Just as it is possible to be very "biblical," yet not really so, it is also possible to have all the "pure doctrine" in the world, and yet be only "a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal" (1 Cor. 13:1).

IX. Corollaries

As there are many doctrines fanning out from the evangelical center, so there are also many hermeneutical correlaries. This is not the place to attempt to detail, or even list, all of them. But two at least appear to deserve passing attention. First of all, we will underscore the corollary of the unity of Scripture. Again, that unity will be both formal and material. It simultaneously involves the confession of the ultimate relatability of every detail to the cross (that is, to "law-Gospel") as well as that of the total reliability of the Bible. Used in that way, "law-Gospel" is again seen as a fundamental part of our hermeneutics. But as urged by some, it emerges again as reductionistic, resulting in what in any ordinary sense can only be called the *dis*unity of Scripture. Then the "law-Gospel" emphasis easily fades away into the general liberal blur too. Now, when we say "unity," we do not mean "uniformity." There was a time in the history of the church when dogmatic prooftexting easily eclipsed nearly all historical variety and human individuality, thus "reading into" passages meanings which were not exegetically supportable. And, no doubt, if one looks long enough under all the back pews, we can still find remnants of that tradition.

But one fights windmills if he imagines that the enemy is amassing his major forces on that front today. The *lack* of unity in the Bible, yes, the contradictoriness of the Bible (in any ordinary sense of those terms) has long since been virtual dogma in establishment circles. Even the most tentative efforts to harmonize different accents and idioms are immediately suspect as "fundamentalistic." Following Enlightenment canons, conservative exegetes are often even charged with "dishonesty" in their readings.[6] Obviously, then, if the biblical canon is itself a product of politically and philosophically inspired harmonizations, that

is, if one cannot go home again because there is no canonical home-base in any traditional sense, it follows unarguably that contemporary pluralism and "ecumenism" is not only to be approved, but applauded. And both logic and experience indicate that "law-Gospel" itself, even in its reductionistic sense, will not long be able to sustain itself, except perhaps as one glob in the stew, and it certainly cannot be hermeneutically defended except on the basis of some Lutheran "tradition" — on its face, of course, as un-Lutheran a hermeneutics as is imaginable.

Somewhat similar points can be made about *unus sensus literalis*. Again, it is not simply a formal philological rule (and basically a rule of all language), but also a Christological or law-Gospel rule. But that is just the point: as already stressed, the Word made flesh becomes indistinct apart from the "*words* made flesh," if you will — that is, inscripturated in the ordinary units of human communication. The ancient usages, applying "Torah" or "Gospel" to literary units as well as to their contents, spoke more truly than they realized. And various liturgical customs honoring the holy book are, indeed, idolatrous if the book does not represent, indeed, sacramentalize Christ, as the Sacraments in the strict sense also do in parallel fashion.

The original antithesis of *unus sensus literalis*, of course, was allegory. And while virtually no one can be found today to defend either literalism or allegorism, both are demonstrably alive and well today in that allegedly "scientific" exegesis, which knows neither formal nor material principles. I have long argued that there is no one so literal*istic* as the liberal on the make, magnifying every minor variation into different theologies and disparate traditions, almost anything to demonstrate that he is no "fundy" (and, hence, there is no good reason why we should not return with interest the common charge of literalism regularly hurled at conservatives).

Furthermore, *unus sensus* assumes that meaning is to be found *in* the sacred text, not behind it or under it — any more than above it, as allegory attempted. Meaning adheres to words in their normal *usus loquendi* in the original historico-theological context. Hermeneutically, I fail to see much ultimate difference between, on the one hand, the higher-critical game of ferreting out all sorts of early layers of tradition (usually accorded more authority than the canonical level), and, on the other hand, the artificial spiritualizations of formal allegory or of officially pneumatic exegesis.

X. Applications

As far as specific applications go, we have time to consider only a few critical cases. First of all, a major area where both "law-Gospel" and "verbal inspiration" principles must be brought to bear are the many passages in both testaments which speak in terms of "reward," or which seem to condition God's gifts upon human behavior. As noted earlier, this problem figured prominently already in the Reformation. If Scripture ultimately has no common Author, then there is no ultimate hermeneutical problem either; there may well then be a fundamental contradiction at the very *heart* of Scripture, and we simply erect our own canon on the alternative that suits. But, then, neither does Lutheranism have any *biblical* basis for insisting upon even "law-Gospel" or "justification by faith" as a minimum precondition for ecclesiastical unity. But if it is axiomatic that the Bible does not contradict itself, and if that non-contradiction may be summarized under the caption of "law-Gospel," then it is no great trick to harmonize the two accents, any more than it is to fit James and Paul together. God, indeed, "rewards" but according to His grace, essentially in the realm of sanctification rather than of justification. We cannot earn our "reward," but we can forfeit it. We are saved by grace through faith alone, but faith is not alone (to repeat some tried and tested formulae).

In the Old Testament a major bloc of material requiring that kind of treatment is the Wisdom literature. Not only in moralistic popular piety, but explicitly and hermeneutically in most critical literature, Proverbs (to cite the major example) is commonly treated as an alien element in the canon. Even the flurry of attention to Wisdom in the past decade has scarcely confronted the question of its canonical meaning. Here, then, "law-Gospel" is indispensable. We believe, teach, and confess that Wisdom is not an alien universalism and humanism at odds with much of the rest of the canon, but an alternate expression of an application to more private, personal circumstances of the "third use of the law," essentially parallel to the "legal" formulations of the Pentateuch. Hence, the moral aspects of both are assumed and restated in the New Testament; both Torah and Wisdom are embodied in Christ.

A second major example concerns Lutheran interpretation of the prophets. Liberal activism characteristically wraps itself in a cloak of the "prophetic." The prophets' challenge to the establishment of that day becomes a major model of what church life, yes, even the "Gospel," is all about. Never mind, of course, that the New Testament does not so quote and use the prophets. Never

mind that the prophets spoke to a theocracy or union of "church" and state, which otherwise the ACLU and ADA would be most vigorous in opposing in any modern dress. Never mind even that the so-called "prophetic" often retains only the most tenuous substantial connection with the Bible, but becomes a universalistic, sociological term, in practice often filled with leftist, even Marxist, content, which is defended "biblically" on the basis of the flimsiest of analogies. Obviously, neither verbal inspiration *nor* "law-Gospel" is being upheld.

For a full-orbed Reformation hermeneutics, such a posture is impossible. From the formal standpoint of inspiration, it simply will not do to highlight the prophetic canon read historicistically and literalistically apart from the whole canon of both testaments. A distinction between the "two kingdoms" defines "church," the "Israel according to the Spirit," in a way which was not true of ancient Israel. To confuse the two again is not only subversive ecclesiologically, but implies a renunciation of the finality and *ephapax* quality of the revelation of Christ.

The doctrine of the "two kingdoms" thus becomes a prime example of a formulation derived from Scripture in turn becoming indispensable hermeneutics for "rightly dividing the Word of truth." And if one recalls again that the doctrine of the "two kingdoms" is little more than a variant of "Law-Gospel," it becomes apparent also from the material standpoint of Reformation hermeneutics, that *ein anderer Geist* pervades the common Protestant notion of the "prophetic." Political and social action under such auspices has nothing to do with the coming of God's kingdom. Now, in all fairness, we must also stress that the alternative is not the privatism and quietism of much traditional Protestantism, including much classical Lutheranism. In terms of individual or group initiatives, it must also be stressed that the believer still exists in the "kingdom of power" on God's "left-hand," and political "activism," like the life of sanctification in general, in that context has much to learn from prophetic examples.

XI. Symbolics versus Dogmatics

Finally, we need to explore the difference between symbolics and dogmatics, or, somewhat similarly, between dogmatic theology and "biblical" - exegetical theology. As noted earlier, a persistent charge of critical hermeneutics against traditional exegesis has been that it imposes dogmatic meanings on Scripture. "Law-Gospel" would, of course, be a major example,

wherever the Bible itself does not express itself in that terminology. Hence, a major plank in the critical program has always been to "free" the Bible to be heard "on its own terms." We have already sketched the two different universes of hermeneutical discourse which often makes communication itself across the canyon difficult, if not impossible, and we need not repeat. And, as we have tried to illustrate, "Law-Gospel" is also a particularly good illustration of the confessional convictions that it is not a matter of artificially harmonizing or of imposing anything upon Scriptures, but of a modality which enables all the voices in the choir to sing in harmony.

But confessionalists easily protest too much or too soon. First, it needs to be emphasized that our Symbols pretend to offer neither a comprehensive exposition of dogma nor a complete hermeneutical handbook. What they do provide for those who subscribe to them is chart and compass for exegetical labors, a major symbolic system by which one "does theology." The specific issues they address are largely those which were in dispute at the time — but these, of course, were largely ones involving the very essence of the Christian message. Furthermore, the Symbols speak largely in proto-dogmatic terms upon which the later systems build, not exegetical ones as such. However, the faithfulness of a subsequent doctrinal system to the primary symbol system cannot be measured mechanically by use of the same language, any more than whether a theology is truly "biblical" can be determined merely by how much actual biblical language is employed.

The necessary distinction between symbolics and systematics overlaps somewhat with that between symbolics-systematics, on the one hand, and biblical-exegetical theology, on the other. "Biblical theology" (in the academic sense) arose in the early years of historical-critical approaches as a more or less explicit protest against what was regarded as the dogmatic-ecclesiastical tyranny over the ancient texts, which needed to be freed and heard in their original accents. If it were not for the fundamentally different hermeneutics involved, it might have been a trend hard to buck. Yet the subsequent history of the "biblical theology" movement itself amply illustrates the fact that, when you throw away keys and chase after a will-of-the-wisp notion of "freedom," the results inevitably are about as variegated and often mutually contradictory as could possibly be. The movement has always had a hard time distinguishing itself from a study of the "history of Israel's religion," thus faithfully reproducing the presuppositions

and limitations of its historical-critical parents. For a time neo-Orthodoxy gave it a sense of purpose and unity, and often nudged it in relatively traditional directions. But the old nemesis of the unity of Scripture (certainly not of both testaments, and often not even of either testament by itself) continued to haunt it, and eventually the ship broke up precisely on that reef of the "center" (or lack of it) in Scripture. Today, if the movement is not simply dead, as many pronounce it, it is undeniably moribund.

Confessional movements made various efforts to tune into the biblical-theology movement, perhaps even to claim it, but, at best, the alliance was very uneasy. At the risk of gross oversimplification, one may assert that the Lutheran wing (Eissfeldt, Bultmann, etc.) tended in the more existentialist direction of a dichotomy of faith and fact, while those with a Reformed background found more congenial some version of their historic accent on the covenant (Eichrodt, Vos, and much of the *Heilsgeschichte* accent).[7]

"Exegetical theology," of course, is a much older term. Since it never was, as such, caught up in the ebb and flow of academic fashions, it appears to have weathered the storms quite well and still to be a very serviceable term. In fact, we can and should even thank historical-critical efforts for often providing raw materials and insights for exegesis which presumably would never have been available otherwise. A fair amount of sifting and culling is usually necessary to determine whether or not the results are really compatible with our confessional stance. But as our very term "*historical*-grammatical" indicates (over against the Reformation's merely "grammatical"approach), not even the most conservative exegete is able to do exegesis as was possible in the pre-critical world. While maintaining the unity of Scripture, we are much more aware of the variety, and surely the richer for it. The "historical" inevitably bulks much larger in our consciousness, but, of course, the question of what "historical" means and does not mean remains in many ways *the* question. The whole environment requires constant attention to boundary patrol or fence-mending if confessional identity is to be maintained.

The other side of that coin is overprotection of one's tradition. Recent Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod history, as everyone knows, has been characterized by reinstatement of the centrality of our confessional and dogmatic traditions, both their "formal" and "material" principles. Since the "historical-critical" method lay at the heart of the dispute, it is no accident that the exegetical departments were at the eye of the storm. As I have indicated

elsewhere, I believe that, although the theoretical principle has been established, the implementation of our *sola Scriptura* and *sola gratia* principles on the exegetical (and probably also homiletical) level has not been resuscitated to the same degree. Our recent graduates, by and large, know their confessional and dogmatic principles as well as can reasonably be expected. But a comparable familiarity with the Bible, with "exegetical theology," is far from having been achieved. Hence, confessional Lutherans, somewhat like other conservatives, often operate (curiously) more on the basis of a confessional *tradition* than a *sola Scriptura.*

A good share of the problem is simple unfamiliarity with biblical vocabulary and idiom, or with the variety of biblical "theologies" (in the sense of varying formulations and accents, which on the surface, no doubt, sometimes appear mutually contradictory or appear to contradict the dogmatic dicta). Either the biblical usages are confused with the dogmatic ones, or the preacher exhibits simple helplessness when the familiar dogmatic terms and distinctions do not appear in his text. The upshot is that either he preaches a sermon which is magnificently "textual" but which contains no "law-Gospel" (i.e., moralistic, legalistic "inspirational" diatribes of various sorts) or, as one of my students recently observed sagely, no matter what the text, the sermon simply proclaims, "You are a sinner, but God has forgiven your sin" (i.e., law-Gospel, but quite innocent of any grappling with the particulars of the text).

At every point the Old Testament suffers much more than the New, and, especially in this respect, it remains to be demonstrated that the church is really serious about its confession of the Old Testament writers "ut limpidissimos purissimosque Israelis fontes." The common unwillingness or inability to preach on the Old Testament at all is one of the major symptoms of the malaise. And here especially our very accent on "law-Gospel" is, undoubtedly, often a major hurdle. "Law" and "Gospel" provide parade examples of the different usages of dogmatic and exegetical theology: "Gospel" scarcely appears in the Old Testament at all, and until the demon of hearing the Old Testament's *Torah* as a simple synonym of the Pauline *nomos* is exorcised, we shall never do more than spin our wheels. Perhaps not unrelated is the traditional tendency to employ the criterion of "Messianic prophecy," not as, in effect, an indispensable "law-Gospel" center but *de facto* in a sort of "Gospel reductionistic" fashion (i.e., the only part of the Old Testament deemed worthy of

much attention). Add to that the budding dogmatician's unfamiliarity with the theological import of key words like "covenant," "righteousness," "justice," "glory," "name," and sometimes even with a functional "law-Gospel" hermeneutics to add to his subscription to "inerrancy," and the practical dimensions of the two sides of the "law-Gospel" hermeneutical issue which this paper has addressed comes into bold relief.

Before I close, let me append yet an observation that the extent to which familiarity with dogmatic-confessional usages tends to outdistance that with biblical-exegetical ones finds a close parallel in our problems with liturgical (and hymnological) language, as some of our controversies in connection with the new hymnal have illustrated again. Especially our traditional liturgies are often but mosaics of biblical quotations. Properly used, as a pedagogical tool (among other things) they may be as close to the actual world of the Bible as most worshippers ever come. Apparently the shape of our recent controversy has fixed in the minds of many a sort of "liturgical-liberal" association. But that association forgets the extent to which liturgical revival and confessional revival have often gone hand in glove in the history of the church, perhaps most notably that in Germany some one hundred and fifty years ago, of which the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is a direct beneficiary.

As I have argued elsewhere, the suspicion of "high-church" ceremonial is, in my judgment, inseparable from our *de facto* subordination of the Sacraments to the "Word." "Word" or "law-Gospel" then tends to be defined sub-biblically in a verbalistic, fideistic, intellectualistic, almost "Gospel-reductionistic" fashion. The inevitable sequel of that stance is an unguardedness toward non-sacramental or sub-sacramental practices and mentalities for which "Reformed" might well be the kindest label. Here, too, if we had space, we could explore the failure to integrate law-Gospel with our sacramentology and our sacramentology with "law-Gospel."

But, of course, the real antithesis in all of this is the specter of Roman Catholic associations, that is, a confusion of the "law-Gospel" heart of the Reformation struggle with what explicitly were labelled "adiaphora." To the extent that the *Sitz im Leben* of the adiaphoristic controversy (cf. FC, X) still holds, we might be justified on confessional grounds to continue rejecting practices with false associations. But since, in the main, our antitheses are different, I believe, it is our hermeneutical imperative to "search the Scriptures" also for the "catholic" elements which are very

prominent there (especially the lengthy cultic sections of the Old Testament) as well as to recall the high regard for catholicity and patristic tradition everywhere exhibited in our symbolical writings.

This is to say, in conclusion, the task of claiming and proclaiming the "law-Gospel" heart of the biblical message, as well as appropriating all the other facets of a total hermeneutics and properly integrating them with "law-Gospel," is an ongoing, perennial challenge to the church.[8] In fact, it is a task of such consummate urgency that it cannot be left to any one department, or even to all of them working in isolation. If all, dogmaticians, exegetes, historians, specialists in the confessions, liturgists, homileticians (even administrators), maintain the common vision, then, by God's grace, St. Paul's predicate may become true for us, namely, that we are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, fitly framed together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2:20-22).

FOOTNOTES

1. All confessional quotations follow *The Book of Concord*, trans. Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959). It has not been deemed necessary to include page references.
2. Similar points are made by Ralph Bohlmann, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), esp. pp. 72-73, and by Edmund Schlink, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions*, trans. P.F. Koehneke and H.J.A. Bouman (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961), esp. pp. 136-37.
3. Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament As Scripture* (Philadelphia, 1979). In this work Childs draws together and applies to the whole Old Testament a viewpoint he has long been urging in a variety of writings.
4. Cf. the similar arguments of Bohlmann, *op. cit.*, esp. chapter 7, and of Holsten Fagerberg, *A New Look at the Lutheran Confessions*, trans. Gene J. Lund (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House 1972), esp. chapter 1. On this point Schlink (*op. cit.*), however, is less than clear.
5. This point is made emphatically, but with typical "moderate" one-sidedness in Edward H. Schroeder, "Is There a Lutheran Hermeneutics?" pp. 82-97, in M. Bertram, ed., *The Lively Function of the Gospel* (St. Louis, 1966).
6. A recent, unusually offensive presentation of the liberal case in terms of "honesty" is James A. Sanders, "The Bible as Canon," *The Christian Century*, 98: 39 (December 2, 1981), pp. 1250-5. This article makes it crystal clear that Sanders' "canonical criticism" is worlds removed from Childs' method (cf. note 3, above), with which it is often compared, and is really only "classical" higher criticism in new dress. The dilemma which indebtedness to the Enlightenment poses for the liberal is rather classically presented by Van A. Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer* (Philadelphia,

1966, rep. 1981). Significantly, it is subtitled "The Morality of Historical Knowledge and Christian Belief." And just as significantly, after demolishing all the liberal attempts to solve the problem, Harvey really has no solution of his own to offer.

7. A major review of the extent to which classical *Heilsgeschichte* (especially as presented by von Hofmann) was at explicit odds with Orthodoxy's understanding of "law-Gospel" is offered by Gerhard O. Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate* (Minneapolis, 1969).
8. The classic presentation of the imperative, especially in its pastoral dimensions, remains C.F.W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel*, trans. by W.H.T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1928).

The Theology of the Word in John Gerhard

Bengt Hägglund

It was a fundamental principle of seventeenth century Protestantism, inherited from the Reformation, that the word of God as the foundation of the Christian faith was to have its place in the center of academic theology, even as it was central in the life and activity of the church. The idea of Holy Scripture as the "only principle" (*principium unicum*) of theology expressed the main concern of the Reformation in the field of scholarly education.[1] The term "principle" (*principium*) was here used with a strictly scientific meaning. Drawn from Aristotelian science, the term indicated the point of departure of a scientific argument or the foundation upon which the demonstration of the evidence was built..[2]

Holy Scripture as the principle of theology is, however, only one side of the seventeenth century doctrine of the word of God. The other side is the description of the word of God as a means of grace; that is, Scripture and the preaching of the gospel mediate grace through their power to create faith in the heart of man. There is a clear connection between the word as principle of theology and as means of grace, for in both cases the word is correlated to faith. For the understanding of Scripture and its use in theological argument presupposes, in addition to the light of reason, what is called the *illuminatio Spiritus Sancti*, the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. This is an important epistomological principle, radically different from that which springs from the Cartesian and Kantian revolution in philsosphy and which underlies most of modern theology. In his *Tract on the Interpretation of Holy Scripture*,[3] John Gerhard explains what is meant by the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. He uses Aristotelian epistomology; knowledge has its origin in the object from which intelligible notions are received in the mind and apprehended by the intellect. Thus, theological knowledge originates in the enscripturated word of God. But the light of the natural intellect is insufficient to comprehend the truth of the Bible; it must be strengthened through the Spirit's illumination. So the truth of the word of God is comprehended by the human intellect, but an intellect whose capacity is increased through

spiritual enlightenment.[4] This doctrine of spiritual illumination implies that faith is engaged in the interpretation of the Bible; even in the intellectual work of theology the correlation between the word of God and faith is apparent. Here we see an inner connection between the doctrine of Scripture as a principle of theology, with which Gerhard begins his system of dogmatics, and the doctrine of the word as a means of grace, which he discusses in the context of soteriology.

These two perspectives have an additional presupposition in common — in both cases it is implied that the word is efficient. It is not only a means of knowledge, but also has the power to enlighten the inward man. This doctrine of the word was controversial already in Gerhard's time and was by no means obvious to all. Balthasar Meisner, a theologian at Wittenberg and a contemporary of Gerhard, directed some important remarks on this question against the renowned Reformed philosopher, Rudolf Goclenius of Marburg.[5] Goclenius held that the pronounced word must be considered only a sound that dies away. Thus, the word could be called a cause of conversion only when it was apprehended and contemplated. Indeed, it was not then the word as such that was the instrumental cause of the new life and an efficient instrument of the Holy Spirit, but rather the hearing and assimilating of that word.

Meisner finds two false conclusions and two hidden heresies in Goclenius' position. First, like the spiritualist Caspar Schwenckfeldt before him, Goclenius falsely distinguishes between the external and the internal word. The preached word of Scripture is not only a human voice, an inefficient sound, but a living, efficacious, and fruitful word. Secondly, Goclenius regards the hearing and intellectual assimilating of the word to be more than just a *conditio sine qua non*; it is an actual cause of conversion. Against this position, Meisner holds that the word of God is endowed with a supernatural — not a physical or rational — power whereby it is able to convert a man. Meisner discusses this issue with a philosopher, but he is fully aware that it concerns a matter of faith. The basis of his position lies in the numerous biblical propositions which indicate the efficacious power of the word (e.g., Isaiah 55:10-11; Psalm 119:50; Romans 1:16).

This issue became central in the Rahtmannian struggle, a controversy which began in the second decade of the seventeenth century.[6] This debate has a special significance, for it gave the Lutheran theologians an occasion once again to take up the entire doctrine of the word of God and explain it also from some

philosophical perspectives. Gerhard wrote a *Gutachten* (1628) which is outstanding among the many publications in this debate.[7] His account is not only the best analysis of the debate, but also a valuable contribution to the philosophy of language and the theology of the word in Lutheran orthodoxy.

The Rahtmannian debate centered on this question: What is the word which brings about grace and creates faith in the heart of man? Goclenius had answered that it was merely a sound that died away, but this response, as we have seen, was unacceptable to the Lutheran theologians. The question was again addressed in a book written by a Lutheran pastor in Danzig, Hermann Rahtmann. In it he formulates an important question: If the word is efficacious as the Bible says, how can it be that preaching seems so inefficient, that so many hear the word but so few are converted? Rahtmann answers that we must distinguish between the outer word, which is only a sign of an instrument, and the inner word, which, spoken by the Holy Spirit, penetrates into the heart. The Bible, accordingly, gives us only an objective knowledge. It becomes a living word leading to conversion only when completed by an illumination by the Spirit evoked in the inward man:

> For if the word of God, which the apostles and prophets had in themselves and then is pictured externally in the Scripture, is to enlighten the hearts of men yet in our days, then the external word or the Holy Ghost must create it by an enlightenment within the Scripture and outside the Scripture.[8]

Rahtmann explains this position metaphorically: The color on a wall or on a picture cannot be perceived by the eye until it is illuminated by the daylight or another source of light. The color on the wall or the picture has no light in itself. Similarly, the Holy Spirit must shed light into the heart of man if he is to understand and find the right way to life through Scripture.[9] Rahtmann also compares Scripture to a signpost that shows where to go but itself has no power to lead anyone in the right direction and must be illuminated if it is to be seen at all.

Thus, Rahtmann held that Scripture is only an external word which has no power in itself to convert a man. The outer word is simply a witness of the inner word which existed in the souls of the apostles, in the same way as the words of any book express the inner meaning of the author. From this premise Rahtmann draws the conclusion that it must be the illumination of the Holy Spirit —which is previous to, and also simultaneous with, the reading of

the external word — which is the true cause of conversion and regeneration. The external word of Scripture may be an instrument of the Holy Spirit's activity, but the meaning of Scripture, perceived in the inner man, must be completed by the "power and light of God's grace" before the word can have any effect. Rahtmann finds the meaning of Scripture not in the external word, but in the inner man.

In his *Gutachten* Gerhard counters Rahtmann be examining the question of what is meant by the term "Holy Scripture." Rahtmann errs, according to Gerhard, by seeing in Scripture nothing but letters and words on paper. Obviously such letters cannot enter the soul and convert a man; what enters the soul is the meaning and content of the words, and this meaning "is the real form or essence of the Holy Scripture."[10] Gerhard here relies on Aristotelian ontology; everything is composed of form and matter, and the form makes up the essence of the thing. Rahtmann considers the letters and words to be the form of Scripture, but Gerhard and the orthodox theologians, who held that the form or essence of Scripture is its meaning and content, the words and letters being the *materiale* (matter)[11], could thereby also affirm that Scripture is truly the revealed word of God.

Underlying this discussion is Gerhard's view of the connection between form and matter, or content and external sign. A parallel can be seen in the relation between the divine and human natures of Christ. As in Christ there is a unity of the two natures so that the nature of Christ cannot be correctly described with reference only to the divine nature, even so there is in Scripture a unity of inner content and external word so that Scripture cannot be adequately described with reference only to form or only to material. The inner meaning is "in a wonderful way" united with the words. Indeed, herein lies something of the mystery of language.[12] When Rahtmann erroneously separates the inner from the outer word, or the sign from the thing signified, he is left with a Scripture which consists of nothing more than dead letters.

Separating the inner from the outer word of Scripture, Rahtmann must explain how any contemporary listener is able to hear that inner word which existed in the inner man of the prophets and apostles, but is merely designated by the words of Scripture.[13] He argues that the illumination of the Holy Spirit evokes the inner word within the listener immediately, just as that word was immediately inspired in the apostles and prophets. In no way can it be sought in the external word of Scripture. To buttress this position, Rahtmann borrows an illustration from the

spiritualist Schwenckfeldt:

> If one defines Scripture as the meaning and content of what it says, then Scripture should be identical with God, Christ, eternal life, etc. It is impossible to say this, for if a writ says, for example, that Peter owes John one hundred dollars [*Taler*], you cannot then say that the writ is identical with the hundred dollars.

Gerhard shows how this metaphor, and thus the argument, is defective. While he concedes that the writ and the hundred dollars are not identical, he observes that the external words of the writ convey a specific meaning, namely, that Peter owes John one hundred dollars, and therefore the writ, though consisting outwardly only of external words and figures, in fact gives John the right to demand payment of the sum.[14] So also Scripture cannot be identified with the things which the words designate (God, Christ, eternal life, etc.), but rather the essence of Scripture is in fact the content of the doctrine of God, Christ, eternal life, and so forth.

Thus, the contrast between Rahtmann and the orthodox theologians can be seen partly from a philosophical perspective. Rahtmann argues on the assumption of a clear distinction between objective knowledge, which lies in external words or signs, and subjective knowledge in the inner man, where knowledge is assimilated and where the Spirit works. Such a distinction seems intuitively obvious to the modern reader, for it is similar to the distinction which underlies modern empirical thought. Nevertheless, this assumption represents a fundamental break with the Aristotelian epistomology which we find employed in the orthodox theological tradition. According to this theory of knowledge, there is no contrast between subject and object, for the concepts are created in the intellect through the direct influence of the things perceived. Thus, Gerhard can argue against Rahtmann that Scripture has not only a *lumen objecti* ("light of the object"), but also a *lumen subjecti* ("light of the subject"); that is, it has in itself the light that enlightens the intellect. Likewise, Gerhard objects that Rahtmann's illustration of the unlighted signpost is misleading since Scripture, unlike the signpost, has in itself the light that brings clarity and gives life, since Scripture is not merely letters on paper but also the inner meaning of the text and thus the living word of God.[15]

This identification of Scripture with the inner meaning of the text renders the distinction between the external and internal word irrelevant, since the word has the same meaning whether it

exists in the inner man of the prophet, is expressed in his preaching, or is written in a book. It is possible, therefore, according to Gerhard, to speak about the word of God on a number of different levels:

(1) in God the Holy Ghost Himself;
(2) in the inner man of the prophets and apostles insofar as they have received the revelation of God;
(3) in the speech of the prophets and apostles;
(4) in their writings; and
(5) in the inner man of the listener, when he hears the word and meditates upon it.[16]

For Gerhard these are not five different kinds of the word of God, but one and the same word which has the same meaning on all five levels. The word is a unity, identical with its inner meaning, be it spoken, written, or pondered in the mind of the hearer.[17] It is thus impossible to acknowledge the existence of an inner word separate from the external word. Only the external word is the instrument of the Spirit.

It is just this point regarding the instrumentality and power of the external word to convert and sanctify man around which the Rahtmannian controversy raged. Considered from another perspective, the question was whether an operation of the Spirit could be posited outside the word — for example, through a direct influence on the mind. That the word itself has power to convert Gerhard finds an unambiguous doctrine of Scripture, for many texts speak of the word of God as life, light, saving power, and the like (Psalm 119:105; John 5:39, 6:63, 17:20; Romans 1:16, 10:18; Hebrews 4:12; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Peter 1:19).[18] Moreover, Article V of the Augsburg Confession clearly teaches that the word and sacraments are truly instruments through which the Spirit is given and faith created. From this truth Gerhard concludes that the word by virture of divine order has an inner power to convert. The operative principle here is that every effect must come from a power that produces the effect ("actus secundes praesupponet primum, operatio vertutem").[19] The many metaphors in Scripture which speak of the efficacy of the word point in the same direction. There are, for example, the metaphors of the seed (Luke 8:11), of the fire (Luke 24:32; cf. Jeremiah 20:9), of the rain and snow (Isaiah 55:10), and of the light (Psalm 119:105; 2Peter 1:19).

Gerhard rejects as untenable Rahtmann's argument that the word in itself is not efficacious since it does not work conversion in all who hear it. Gerhard stresses instead the distinction between

the power that is in the word and its actual effects. If the word does not work salvation in everyone, it must be that some have resisted the Holy Spirit, not that the word has no power. This is equally true of Baptism, which continues to be a "water of rebirth" even if this is not the actual effect in those individuals who do not believe. Philosophically, this situation is expressed by the following principle: From the lack of the secondary act one cannot deduce the lack of the primary act ("A remotione actus secundi non potest procedi ad remotionem actus primi"). Thus, when we pray that God would give His Spirit and power with His word, Gerhard notes that we are not confessing an activity of the Spirit outside of the word, but rather we are asking that the efficacious word of God would have in us its proper effect.[20]

An oft-criticized statement of the orthodox theologians in the Rahtmannian debate was that the word is efficacious before and outside its use,[21] though this was only the response to a peripheral question. The nature of this question becomes clearer when one considers two comparisons of the word with the sacraments made in the course of the discussion. First, Rahtmann argues that as one cannot say that the sacraments are efficacious outside their use, so one ought not say that the word is efficacious outside its use. But Gerhard notes an important distinction. The use belongs to the essence of the sacraments (their *ratio formalis*), but hearing or reading do not belong to the essence of the word. Gerhard cites an odd example: When all listeners fall asleep during a sermon, so that no one actually hears what is said, one cannot thereby deny that the preacher speaks the word of God.[22] Secondly, Rahtmann argues that the word is only an external sign, which he likens to the bread of Holy Communion. It is only in their use (hearing the word or eating the bread) that both are the bearers of spiritual gifts. According to Gerhard, this comparison is not correct. It is not the bread in itself which is the bearer of eternal life, but the body of Christ that is distributed with the bread. It is the word itself, however, which Scripture calls spirit and life, a saving power.

The arguments in the Rahtmannian debate delved deeply into the philosophy of language and the theology of the word of God and can, therefore, be viewed both from a philosophical and from a theological perspective. Philosophically, it can be objected that Rahtmann overlooks the link between the external word and its internal meaning. One can also object that, when the orthodox theologians ascribe to the word, they do not explain anything, just as when one asserts that the eye has a power to see or a seed a

power to grow, one in no way explains how it is that an eye can see or a seed grow. Gerhard, however, is fully aware that he is dealing with an inexplicable mystery, both when we say that a proposition is a bearer of meaning and when we say that the word of God is an instrument for the salvation of men. It is already inexplicable that we can learn from ancient writings what Aristotle meant. Certainly, therefore, the theologian cannot be bound to explain how God has revealed His will in Scripture. The connection of inner meaning to external word is as much a wonder as is the connection of the body of Christ to the eucharistic bread. It is the same with Scripture's power to illuminate and convert. This power is given to the word in an invisible and hidden way (*mystice et invisibiliter*). It is not identical to the power of human speech to convince; it is parallel to the latter but lies on another level.

From a theological perspective the result of the Rahtmannian debate is easier to explain. When Gerhard and his colleagues so decidedly reject the contrast of an inner word with an external word of Scripture, they do so because they are convinced that such a distinction conceals a kind of synergism. Rahtmann's theories require a salvation that comes from the inner man, and not from the word and sacraments.[23] Orthodoxy's radical limitation of the Spirit's activity to the external word and the sacraments was an inheritance from Luther. Only the context and the terminology were new.

This doctrine of the word of God, clearly a basic principle in the theology of John Gerhard, is far from the basic principles and presuppositions of most of modern theology. When we have discovered just how fundamental those differences are, we shall also be aware that we have much to learn from tradition on this matter. Not only does it enable us to gain a better historical understanding of the main issues in classical theology, but it also better equips us to meet the corresponding theological issues of today.

FOOTNOTES

1. John Gerhard, *Loci Theologici*, ed. Ed. Preuss (Berlin: G. Schlawitz, 1863), locus I, 1a, p. 13. Robert Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), p. 254ff. Bengt Hägglund, *Die Heilige Schrift und ihre Deutung in der Theologie Johann Gerhards* (Lund, 1951), p. 136ff.
2. Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, ed. Academia Regia Borusica (Berlin, 1831), 1013, 14 ff.
3. Gerhard, *op.cit.*, locus I, 42-91, pp. 30-45.
4. *Ibid.*, locus I, 50ff, pp. 32-45.

5. Balthasar Meisner, *Philosophia Sobria* (Giessen, 1615), I, sectio prima, caput III, qu. 1, 99ff. Concerning the work of Meisner see the dissertation of Walter Sparn, *Wiederkehr der Metaphysik* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1976).
6. Preus, p. 367ff. Hägglund, p. 253ff. Heinrich Halverscheid, *Lumen Spiritus Prius Quam Scriptura Intellecta - Hermann Rahtmanns Kritik am Lutherischen Schriftprincip* (Marburg, 1971). R. H. Grutzmacher, *Wort und Geist* (Leipzig, 1902).
7. *Von der Natur, Krafft und Wirchkung des geoffenbarten und geschriebenen Worts Gottes* in *Thesauri Consiliorum et Decisionum Appendix Nova*, ed. George Dedekenn (Jena: Hertel, 1671), pp. 201-274.
8. *Jesu Christi dess Konigs aller Konige und Herrn aller Herren Gnadenreich* (1621) in Dedekenn, p. 202a.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 202a.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 203.
11. Hagglund, p. 77ff.
12. Dedekenn, p. 204a.
13. Halverscheid, p. 154ff.
14. Dedekenn, p. 211ff.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 226ff.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 205ff., 216.
17. "Das geoffenbahrte Wort Gottes ist dem Wesen nach ein einiges Wort, es werde mit dem Munde ausgeredet, oder in ein Buch geschrieben, oder in die Taffel des Hertzens durch den H. Geist geschrieben, Prov. 7,3; Jerem. 31, 33. Es sind zwar unterschiedliche Arten der Mittheilung, aber keine wesentliche unterschiedene species des Gottlichen Worts." *Ibid.*, p. 216a.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 221ff.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 231a, 234b.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 245b.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 267ff.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 272a.
23. Another important argument is borrowed from the Wittenberg philosopher Jacob Werenberg: There is a difference between the logic of Aristotle and theology in their relation to the external word. The former is not bound to the writings of Aristotle, for one can with his own mind discover the principles of logic. The mysteries of faith, however, are unknowable to the human mind unless revealed by the Holy Ghost through the mouth of the prophets and apostles. *Ibid.*, p. 273a.

Luther and Erasmus: Scholastic Humanism and the Reformation

Daniel Preus

It was said by contemporaries of Erasmus and Luther that "Erasmus laid the egg of ecclesiastical reform" and that "Luther hatched it."[1] In a sense, this statement may be considered true, for there is no doubt that both of these men were dismayed by the abuses prevalent in the church of their day and were concerned that the church in some manner be reformed. It is true that Erasmus and Luther had a great deal in common. Both were scholars and both were committed to the advancement of learning. Both criticized obscurantism and the general ignorance of the monks. Both abhorred the immorality and the simony so prominent in the Roman Catholic Church at that time, and both advocated a return to the study of the Scriptures. In studying the relationship between Erasmus and Luther, however, it is probably more crucial for an understanding of their relationship to note the differences which existed between them, differences in personality, in goals, in ideals, and especially in convictions and loyalties. It is appropriate that these differences be studied, for, in spite of all that Erasmus and Luther may have had in common, they were never united in pursuit of the same cause. In spite of all that both friends and enemies could do, Erasmus and Luther would choose different paths.

Arthur McGiffert defines humanism as "the revival of interest in Greek and Roman antiquity" characterized "first and foremost by a new enthusiasm for the classics."[2] Erasmus was a humanist. He had rebelled against the prevailing scholasticism of his day. He had left the monastic life, so poorly suited for one who wished to study. He was disappointed also with the College de Montagu in Paris, where learning was suppressed and scholasticism was the daily fare. Erasmus devoted himself to the study of what he called the *bonae literae*.[3] He was thoroughly educated in Latin and Greek, having taught himself the latter. His letters, books, and pamphlets were written exclusively in Latin. During a great part of his life, Latin was more familiar to him than Dutch, his own native tongue. He did not take the time to learn any modern

languages. Erasmus was interested in the classics and like the other humanists of his day reformed his own Latin according to the classical models. The humanists considered a good Latin style a necessary mark of an educated man, and Erasmus was generally recognized as the most talented stylist of his time. Whatever else Erasmus might have done or been, he always remained a humanist.[4]

But Erasmus also considered himself a "Christian humanist." Along with his concern for a return to the classics went a concern for the return to the simple faith of the apostles and of the early church. Erasmus once stated his whole purpose in life to be twofold: "to stimulate others to cultivate *bonae literae* and to bring the study of *bonae literae* into harmony with theology."[5] Erasmus' goal and purpose in life was to advance the study of Scripture and the knowledge of God.[6] His commitment to the study of Scripture is evident in many of his letters where he condemned the clergy for having obscured the gospel. He was especially critical of the church for having made so many additions to the simple teaching of Christ and the apostles. It would be a mistake, however, in view of all that Erasmus did, to equate humanism with a better understanding of Jesus and Paul or the Scriptures as a whole. Much of medieval theology was closer to the Scriptures than was the humanism of Erasmus.[7]

Nevertheless, there were many who supposed that the peaceful humanism of Erasmus and the sweeping evangelicalism of Luther were compatible. For three years after Luther's posting of the *Ninety-Five Theses,* it was still not an impossibility in the eyes of some that Luther and Erasmus should join forces.[8] It is probable that the attempts of both friends and enemies to place Luther and Erasmus into the same camp were deciding factors in precipitating the clear break which eventually came about between them.

It is difficult to describe the relationship which existed between Luther and Erasmus before Erasmus' diatribe, *On the Freedom of the Will,* and Luther's subsequent publication, *On the Bondage of the Will.* To say the least, it was marked by ambiguity. Erasmus had a great deal of respect for much of what Luther was doing. Luther was criticizing abuses in the church as Erasmus had done. As late as 1523 Erasmus would say, "I have taught almost everything Luther teaches."[9] Erasmus identified closely his cause with that of Luther. At the same time that Erasmus commended Luther, however, he also criticized him. Erasmus was a peace-loving man and thought that no good could come to the church or

to the gospel by stirring up the people and causing a commotion in the church, and Luther was doing just that by his immoderate writing. Luther's polemic always bore the brunt of Erasmus' criticism of him. Thus, Erasmus respected much of *what* Luther said but disapproved of the *way* he said it.

Luther also had a great deal of respect for Erasmus. Even after Luther had received Erasmus' *On the Freedom of the Will,* Melanchthon could say in a letter to Erasmus, "Luther is well disposed toward you," and "Luther reverently salutes you."[10] Luther considered Erasmus a great scholar and defended him against those who scorned scholarship and a good education. Luther appreciated Erasmus' knowledge of Greek and was especially thankful for the publication of a Greek New Testament by Erasmus. On the other hand, Luther was suspicious of Erasmus' doctrine. He believed that Erasmus was more dedicated to his *bonae literae* than he was to the propagation of the truth. Already in October of 1516 Luther had written to Spalatin and told him that he disagreed with Erasmus' interpretation of the righteousness of the law and with his view on original sin.[11] Luther furthermore requested that Spalatin share this opinion with Erasmus.

In spite of these differences, Luther and Erasmus remained on friendly terms with each other. Neither wrote outspokenly against the other. Erasmus, as a matter of fact, found himself defending Luther in much of his correspondence. Two factors account primarily for this defense. In the first place, Erasmus, as a humanist, wished above all that scholarship be allowed to thrive and that education be allowed a free course. The attacks on Luther had often been made by men who had not even read his works. Luther was accused of heresy and his recantation was demanded before he had even been heard. Erasmus was afraid of the oppression of sound learning which would undoubtedly follow Luther's demise. The threat against Luther was also a threat against the humanistic reform program of Erasmus. Erasmus stresses over and over again that, if one is in error, he should be corrected rather than put to death. It is also necessary to understand Luther in order to refute him.[12] Secondly, Erasmus was impressed by the purity of life which he saw in Luther. In many of his letters Erasmus points out the good example which Luther sets by his pious living, especially in contrast to many of his accusers. His respect for Luther's piety is expressed in one of his letters to the Elector Frederick of Saxony:

> No one who knows the man does not approve his life, since he is as far as possible from suspicion of avarice and

> ambition, and blameless morals even among heathen find favor . . . . The best part of Christianity is a life worthy of Christ. When this is found we ought not easily to suspect heresy . . . . Whoever accuses another of heresy, ought himself to show a character worthy of a Christian, charity in admonishing, gentleness in correcting, fairness in judging, mercy in condemning. As none of us is free from error, why should we be so hard on other men's slips? Why should we prefer rather to conquer a man than to heal him, to crush him rather than to teach him? Even he who alone is free from all error does not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax.[13]

In most of the letters in which he refers to Luther, Erasmus defends either Luther's piety or his right to be heard. A slight change of attitude can be seen in Erasmus following the Leipzig Debate in July of 1519. Luther did not defend himself against the charge that he was a Hussite. Erasmus in no way wanted to be connected with the Hussite heresy and becomes more critical of Luther after the Leipzig Debate. He was afraid of the turmoil which Luther would cause in the church with his immoderate tongue.[14] Erasmus does continue to defend Luther, but often in a much more indirect way. In March of 1521 Erasmus wrote, "Certainly I should prefer him corrected than slain . . . . But I do not object if they wish Luther roasted or boiled; the loss of one man is small. And yet we ought to think of the public peace."[15]

Erasmus' defense of Luther was always two-sided, however. He defended the man Luther, but not what he taught. Almost every letter defending Luther's right to be heard or piety of life disclaims any knowledge of his writings. Erasmus saw from the very beginning the dangers imminent in what he termed Luther's immoderation. The opponents of Luther grouped Erasmus together with the cause of Luther. Thus, the more Luther was attacked, the more Erasmus' ambitions were damaged, and Erasmus resented anything which hindered the humanist advance toward wider knowledge.[16] As a result, Erasmus made it well known that he had not read Luther and was not responsible for anything which Luther had written. Peace was a necessity if Erasmus were to carry out his reforms in the church, but Luther was creating an upheaval in the church. At all costs, Erasmus was determined to steer a middle road in order that order, peace, and reform might be brought to the church.

Luther's opinion of Erasmus was changing already before the Leipzig Debate. In a letter to John Lang in 1517 he says:

> I am reading our Erasmus, and my opinion of him becomes daily worse. He pleases me, indeed, for boldly and learnedly convicting and condemning monks and priests of inveterate ignorance, but I fear that he does not sufficiently advance the cause of Christ and God's grace, in which he is much more ignorant than Lefevre d'Etaples, for human considerations weigh more with him than divine . . . . The opinion of him who attributes something to man's will is far different from the opinion of him who knows nothing but grace.[17]

Not only was Erasmus decreasing in the eyes of Luther, but already in 1517 Luther had detected in Erasmus the position on free will that would ultimately bring about the great confrontation between them.

It was inevitable that this confrontation should come. The more the Lutherans attempted to exhibit Erasmus as a supporter of their cause, the more the Roman Church pressured Erasmus to condemn Luther and clear himself of any connection with the Lutheran heretics. Erasmus' enemies, the opponents of humanism, deliberately placed Erasmus into Luther's camp in order to malign the humanistic program and to place on all humanists the suspicion of heresy. Erasmus was pressured on both sides to declare himself.

Luther was not unaware of the pressure being exerted on Erasmus. He certainly must have known that Erasmus had repeatedly refused to write against him, but by April of 1524 Luther feared that Erasmus might give in under the pressure. Accordingly, he wrote Erasmus a letter to warn him not to enter the fray against him. Luther in this letter criticizes Erasmus for his lack of courage. He says that he has never tried to influence Erasmus to side with him or to endanger himself in any way by promoting Luther's cause. He has even restrained some who wanted to write books against Erasmus. He sympathizes with Erasmus because he knows that great hatred and pressure have been directed at him, but he encourages him to remain on the sidelines and not to become involved in the conflict: "I beg that meanwhile, if you can do nothing else, you will remain a spectator of the conflict, and not join our enemies, and especially that you publish no book against me, as I shall write none against you."[18]

Luther's letter apparently did not have the desired effect. Erasmus answered him promptly and for the first time indicated that it might actually be for the good of the gospel if he would take up his pen against Luther. He told Luther that those who were

pressuring him would not allow anyone to be an on-looker of this tragedy. His reluctance to write against Luther was apparent even at this late date. Four months later his *On the Freedom of the Will* would appear.

Early in September of 1524 Erasmus completed his diatribe. On September 6 he wrote letters to Melanchthon and Duke George of Saxony explaining to both why he had published this treatise. To both he insists that he did not write of his own accord, but had been pressured into action by those who would not permit him to remain silent. To both he indicates that Luther's letter to him had necessitated his decision to write against Luther.[19] Luther's warning to Erasmus not to write against him had been interpreted as a secret agreement between them not to write or publish against each other. Erasmus, in order to clear himself of the charge of collusion with Luther, had finally committed himself to the cause of the Church of Rome.

Luther did not answer at once. At the time he was occupied with writing against the "heavenly prophets." He had to make his position concerning the Peasants' Rising clear. He had also married and found that the responsibilities of marriage demanded more of his time.[20] In the meantime, Melanchthon had responded to Erasmus. His diatribe had been received calmly in Wittenberg. He thanked Erasmus for the moderation he had shown in its composition and assured him that Luther's reply would be equally moderate. Fifteen months later Luther replied with *The Bondage of the Will.* The relationship between Luther and Erasmus would be friendly no more.

It was not Luther's desire to engage in battle also with Erasmus. In his last letter to Erasmus, he had said that they should take care not to eat each other up. He had agreed not to write against Erasmus, if Erasmus would also restrain himself. But when Erasmus turned his pen against Luther, Luther replied with more than equal enthusiasm for the debate. The insults and sarcastic statements directed against Erasmus are abundant. Erasmus attacked Luther's position, but refrained from attacking Luther himself. Luther, in attacking Erasmus' position, made Erasmus' intelligence, logic, and motives also the object of his criticism. Nor does Luther hesitate to indicate where Erasmus is not even Christian in his writing and his thinking.

Luther's opinion of Erasmus' *On the Freedom of the Will* is evident already in his introduction. As far as Luther is concerned, Erasmus has accomplished nothing except that he has confirmed Luther in what he already believed:

> For though what you think and write about "free will" is wrong, I owe you no small debt of thanks for making me surer of my own view; as I have been since I saw the case for "free will" argued with all the resources that your brilliant gifts afford you — and to such little purpose that it is now in a worse state than before. That itself is clear proof that "free will" is an utter fallacy. It is like the woman in the Gospel; the more the doctors treat the case, the worse it gets (cf. Mark 5:26). So it will be the highest token of gratitude that I can give you, if I bring conviction to you, as you brought assurance to me.[21]

Luther's intention is clear. He hopes to teach Erasmus, and he intends to destroy the teaching of "free will." The attitude of condescension toward Erasmus evident thoughout the entire *Bondage of the Will* was not caused by animosity toward Erasmus, although Luther does indicate that he was annoyed that Erasmus considered him ignorant enough to employ stupid arguments against him. Luther writes as harshly as he does against Erasmus because he has come to see from Erasmus' own words how far apart they stand in what they believe.

Luther's first quarrel with Erasmus concerns Erasmus' dislike for assertions. Erasmus had stated:

> So far am I from delighting in "assertions" that I would readily take refuge in the opinion of the Skeptics, wherever this is allowed by the inviolable authority of the Holy Scriptures and by the decrees of the Church, to which I everywhere willingly submit by personal feelings, whether I grasp what it prescribes or not.[22]

Luther, on the other hand, responds:

> . . . one must delight in assertions to be a Christian at all . . . . Away, now, with Sceptics and Academics from the company of us Christians; let us have men who will assert, men twice as inflexible as very Stoics! Take the Apostle Paul — how often does he call for 'full assurance' which is, simply, an assertion of conscience, of the highest degree of certainty and conviction. In Rom. 10 he calls it 'confession' — 'with the mouth confession is made unto salvation' (v. 10). Christ says, 'Whosoever confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father' (Matt. 10:32). Peter commands us to give a reason for the hope that is in us (1 Pet. 3:15). And what need is there of a multitude of proofs? Nothing is more familiar or characteristic among Christians than assertion. Take away assertions, and you take away Christianity. Why, the Holy

> Spirit is given to Christians from heaven in order that He may glorify Christ and in them confess Him even unto death — and is this not assertion, to die for what you confess and assert? Again, the Spirit asserts to such purpose that He breaks in upon the whole world and convinces it of sin (cf. John 16:8), as if challenging it to battle. Paul tells Timothy to reprove, and to be instant out of season (2 Tim. 4:2); and what a clown I should think a man to be who did not really believe, nor unwaveringly assert, those things concerning which he reproved others! I think I should send him to Anticyra!
>
> But I am the biggest fool of all for wasting time and words on something that is clearer to see than the sun. What Christian can endure the idea that we should deprecate assertions? That would be denying all religion and piety in one breath — asserting that religion and piety and all dogmas are just nothing at all. Why then do you — you! — assert that you find no satisfaction in assertions and that you prefer an undogmatic temper to any other?[23]

Erasmus believed that it was not always wise to speak the truth. Sometimes it should be withheld for the sake of peace. Luther says, "Doctrinal truth should be preached always, openly, without compromise, and never dissembled or concealed."[24]

The difference between Luther and Erasmus on the necessity of assertions was at the heart of the entire controversy between them. For Erasmus, who thought assertions undesirable, it was not unnatural to conclude that the Scriptures were obscure. But to Luther, who held assertions so dear, it was necessary to maintain the perspicuity of Scripture. Luther reproves Erasmus for his unwillingness to make assertions himself or to allow anyone else the right to do so. He accurately analyzes Erasmus' position in these words: "In a word, what you say comes to this: that you do not think it matters a scrap what anyone believes anywhere, so long as the world is at peace."[25] To Erasmus, the humanist, doctrine meant little. Erasmus emphasized life rather than dogma. For Erasmus, piety consisted in following Christ, and Christ had come to teach us to love. What God wanted to be clear, above all else, were "the precepts for the good life."[26] Thus, Luther and Erasmus disagreed on the meaning of the gospel itself. For Luther, the gospel was the message of God's grace in Christ which proclaims the sinner's pardon without any merit or worthiness on his part (*Begnadigung*). For Erasmus, the gospel was a series of evangelical counsels. With the aid of divine grace man

was able to keep these counsels and to make himself acceptable in God's eyes. Grace was not so much God's favor for Christ's sake as it was a supperadded gift which enabled man to do good works (*Begnadung*).[27]

It was not difficult, therefore, for Erasmus to downgrade the importance of free will. It was not important to know whether or not man's will was free. What was necessary was to follow Christ. Luther, however, believed that nothing could be more important than to determine whether or not man had a free will. Erasmus felt that the effort to establish the freedom or bondage of the will was irreligious, idle, and superfluous. Luther responded:

> If it is "irreligious", "idle", "superfluous"– your words–to know whether or not God foreknows anything contingently; whether our will is in any way active in matters relating to eternal salvation, or whether it is merely the passive subject of the work of grace; whether we do our good and evil deeds of mere necessity — whether, that is, we are not rather passive while they are wrought in us — then may I ask what does constitute godly, serious, useful knowledge? This is weak stuff, Erasmus; it is too much. It is hard to put it down to ignorance on your part, for you are no longer young, you have lived among Christians, and you have long studied the sacred writings; you leave me no room to make excuses for you or to think well of you. And yet the Papists pardon and put up with these outrageous statements, simply because you are writing against Luther.[28]

Luther insists against Erasmus that the human will is in bondage, that man has no ability whatsoever to do anything active in matters which pertain to eternal salvation. He describes man's will as a beast which stands between two riders. "If God rides, it wills and goes where God wills.... If Satan rides, it wills and goes where Satan wills. Nor may it choose to which rider it will run, or which it will seek; but the riders themselves fight to decide who shall have and hold it."[29] Luther emphasizes that he is speaking only of matters which pertain to salvation when he speaks of the bondage of the will. Man has a "free will" in regard to his money and possessions, as Luther says, "in respect, not of what is above him, but of what is below him."[30]

Erasmus argued that if man's will was in bondage and man was thus of necessity compelled to do evil, then God would be unjust to condemn man for the evil which He Himself had brought about in man. But Luther's reply points out Erasmus' faulty view of original sin and the fallen state of man:

> Let none think, when God is said to harden or work evil in us (for hardening is working evil) that he does it by, as it were, creating fresh evil in us, as you might imagine an ill-disposed innkeeper, a bad man himself, pouring and mixing poison into a vessel that was not bad, while the vessel itself does nothing, but is merely the recipient, or passive vehicle, of the mixer's own ill will. When men hear us say that God works both good and evil in us, and that we are subject to God's working by mere passive necessity, they seem to imagine a man who is in himself good and not evil, having an evil work wrought in him by God; for they do not sufficiently bear in mind how incessantly active God is in all his creatures, allowing none of them to keep holiday. He who would understand these matters, however, should think thus: God works evil in us (that is, by means of us) not through God's own fault, but by reason of our own defect. We being evil by nature, and God being good, when he impels us to act by his own acting upon us according to the nature of his omnipotence, good though he is in himself, he cannot but do evil by our evil instrumentality; although, according to his wisdom, he makes good use of this evil for his own glory and for our salvation.[31]

Thus, it is inevitable for man to do evil and to come under the condemnation of God, because God cannot suspend His omnipotence on account of man's perversion and man cannot alter his perversion. All of Luther's subsequent arguments against Erasmus are presented to prove that man's will is in bondage, but at the same time man himself, who is forced to act by the omnipotence of God, willingly chooses to do evil and justly incurs God's condemnation.

Luther argues in this way not to bring man to despair, but to bring man from despair to hope. Only he who realizes that he is lost and helpless and incapable of doing anything to merit his eternal salvation, will look to the free grace of God in Christ as an answer to his dilemma. Erasmus, on the other hand, who sought to give man some free will in order that he might have some hope of saving himself, has only forced man to despair because he cannot perfectly keep the "evangelical counsels" of God.

It was impossible that the relationship between Luther and Erasmus should remain unimpaired after the publication of *The Bondage of the Will.* Too many arguments had been propounded by both men, too many criticisms had been made, too many basic disagreements had become evident. Neither Erasmus

nor Luther would view the other in the same light that he had in previous years. Luther had come to know the spirit and the theology of Erasmus too well, and Erasmus had been exposed too much to the criticism, sarcasm, and "obstinacy" of Luther. Erasmus, in a letter to Luther in April of 1526, reveals his bitterness for the way in which Luther has treated him. "The whole world knows your nature; truly you have so guided your pen that you have written against none more rabidly and (what is more detestable) more maliciously than against me."[32] He says that all of the confusion in the Church is due to Luther's barren genius, which is "not amenable to the counsels of your best friends but easily turned in any direction by the most foolish swindlers."[33] He concludes with the following insult to Luther: "I would wish you a better disposition were you not so marvelously well satisfied with the one you have. Wish me any curse you will except your disposition, unless the Lord change it for you."[34]

Luther's condemnation of Erasmus following their confrontation was also outspoken. In a letter to Justus Jonas in 1527 Luther describes Erasmus as a viper with deadly stings.[35] In another letter to Jonas in the same year, he describes Erasmus as a Judas.[36] In 1529 Luther would still be speaking of the stupidity of Erasmus, "a light-minded man, scoffing at all religion."

The friendly, or at least peaceful, relationship which had existed between the humanist and the reformer had come to an end. Luther and Erasmus would no longer be seen as defenders of the same cause. Their beliefs were different; their ways had parted.

FOOTNOTES

1. Albert Hyma, *Erasmus and the Humanists* (New York: F.S. Crofts and Co., 1930), p. 10.
2. Arthur Cushman McGiffert, *A History of Christian Thought* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), II, 379.
3. Gottfried G. Krodel, "Luther, Erasmus and Henry VIII," *Archiv fur Reformationsgeschichte,* LIII (1962), 74.
4. McGiffert, p. 379.
5. Carl S. Meyer, "Melanchthon as Educator and Humanist," *CTM*, XXXI, 9 (September, 1960), p. 535.
6. P. S. Allen, *The Age of Erasmus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914), p. 134.
7. Albert Hyma, *Renaissance to Reformation* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951), p. 247.
8. J.I. Packer and O.R. Johnston, *The Bondage of the Will* (Fleming H. Revell Company, 1957), p. 25.
9. Preserved Smith, *Luther's Correspondence and Other Contemporary Letters,* 2 vols. (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Publication Society, 1913 - 1918), II, 198.

10. *Ibid.*, II, 255.
11. *Ibid.*, I, 42.
12. *Ibid.*, I, 371.
13. *Ibid.*, I, 179-181.
14. Krodel, p. 72.
15. Smith, I, 494.
16. Allen, p. 163.
17. Smith, I, 54-55.
18. *Ibid.*, II, 228-230.
19. *Ibid.*, II, 249-251.
20. Packer, p. 39.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
22. Gordon Rupp, ed., *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation* ("Library of Christian Classics," XVII; 1969), p. 37.
23. Packer, pp. 66-67.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
26. Rupp, p. 40.
27. F. E. Mayer, "Human Will in Bondage and Freedom: A Study in Luther's Distinction of Law and Gospel," *CTM,* XXII, 10 (October, 1951,) p. 719.
28. Packer, p. 74.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 103-104.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 206.
32. Smith, II, 369.
33. *Ibid.*, II, 370.
34. *Ibid.*, II, 370.
35. *Ibid.*, II, 416.
36. *Ibid.*, II, 420.
37. *Ibid.*, II, 481-482.

Daniel Preus, a 1975 graduate of the seminary, is pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Truman, Minnesota.

"The Word of My Patience" in Revelation 3:10

Theodore Mueller

A Greek text can be translated into English, that is, words can be arranged so as to follow the grammatical rules for a well-formed sentence. But such a transposition of words does not always convey the writer's intended message. What did St. John mean when he wrote in Revelation 3:10, "You have kept the word of my patience" (*eteresas ton logon tes hupomones mou*)? The problem centers around the two genitives *tes hupomones* and *mou*. The latter is usually interpreted as the possessive adjective "My," referring to God, and together with the former is viewed as a single genitive phrase which qualifies *ton logon*: "The word of My patience" (Luther, King James, Vulgate), "My word of patient endurance" (RSV), or "The word of patient expectation."[1] But what is meant when a word is characterized by patience or endurance, which is the interpretation of most translators? Morris calls it "a curious expression. It seems to mean 'the teaching which was exemplified in my steadfastness.' "[2] In general, the commentators view the genitive phrase as indicating the content of the word and attempt several explanations — the patient endurance required of man to keep God's word, particularly in times of tribulation,[3] or the endurance of Christ, who silently suffered reviling and the cross in our stead.[4] While such an interpretation is possible grammatically, ascribing to a word the attributes of patience or endurance is rather strange when compared to other descriptions such as "the word of the cross" (1 Cor. 1:18), "of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19), "of the truth" (2 Cor. 6:7), "of the Gospel" (Col. 1:5), "of Christ" (Col. 3:16), "of faith" (1 Tim. 4:16), qualifiers which emphasize the content of the word. A "word of patience" or "endurance" does not fit into this group of expressions.

The New International Version views the noun *hupomone* as a transformation of the verb *hupomeno* and as an object genitive to *ton logon*: "You have kept My commandment to endure patiently." The New English Bible likewise interprets *hupomene* as a nominal transformation of the corresponding verb and coordinates the underlying verbal phrase with the main verb of the clause: "You kept My commandment and stood fast." These translations try to solve the problem through semantic inter-

pretation, that is, by interpreting the semantic content of each word and reading into the genitive phrase what seems to be a plausible meaning: "God is patient," "Man should exercise patience," or "Christ endured in His tribulations."

The solution proposed in this paper consists of an analysis of the genitive phrase, an analysis of syntactic relationships proposed by the lastest developments in linguistics. The concept of syntactic relationships will first be shown from English examples and then applied to the Greek phrase. In English a noun phrase frequently modifies a subsequent noun — "peace proposal," "car race," "charity ball," "home entertainment," "all-night sale." On the surface every one of these expressions has the same grammatical structure, a modifying noun phrase plus a noun. Every native speaker, however, is aware that at the deeper level a variety of relationships prevails. These expressions can be paraphrased to bring out the differing structures: in a "peace proposal" someone proposes peace - an object relationship; in a "car race" the car is the instrument by which the race is run - an instrumental relationship; in a "charity ball" the ball is held for the purpose of charity - a purpose relationship; "home entertainment" takes place at home - a locative relationship; an "all-night sale" lasts all night - a temporal relationship.

Linguists, therefore, differentiate between the surface structure, that is, the arrangement of the spoken or written words, and the deep structure, that is, the underlying syntactic relationships, such as agent, goal, instrument, source, manner, time, and place. On the surface level the governing nouns of the above examples are modified by a preceding noun phrase without any further indication of how they relate to each other (e.g., "all-night sale"). However, there is also an underlying deep structure of which the native speaker is aware and which can be expressed by a paraphrase (e.g., "selling throughout the night"). Failure to specify the deep structure relationship in these nominal expressions may result in ambiguity; a "truck sale" either sells trucks - an object relationship — or sells things from a truck - a locative relationship. Only the context in which the expression is used can provide the clues needed for the interpretation. A purpose or result relationship is the underlying deep structure of phrases like "peace process," which in interpreted as a process resulting in peace. A "health clinic" is a clinic for the purpose of providing health. A "death march" is a march resulting in death for some participants. Obviously, this particular syntactic relationship is uncommon, yet readily assumed by the native speaker.

The Greek genitive phrase is similar to the English subordinate noun phrase. On the surface level the genitive case indicates a modifying relationship to another noun, that is, a vague qualifying dependence. But the fact that there is a deep-level relationship has always been assumed when grammarians taught the concepts of subjective and objective genitive. The deep structure, however, is much more varied than these two. In *dikaiosune pisteos* (Rom. 4:13) the genitive *pisteos* indicates the means of righteousness - an instrumental relationship; in *ta pathemata tou nun kairou* (Rom. 8:18) the genitive indicates a time relationship — sufferings in the present time. A purpose or result relationship must be inferred in the following genitive phrases: *probata sphages* (Rom. 8:36), "sheep intended for slaughter"; *hodon soterias* (Acts 16:17), "the way resulting in salvation"; *hodous zoes* (Acts 2:28), "the ways resulting in life," a syntactic relationship which is spelled out in Matthew 7:14, *he hodos he apagousa eis zoen.* The *dikaiosune zoes* in Romans 5:18 is parallel to *he entole he eis zoen* (Rom. 7:10), where the relationship is spelled out through the preposition *eis.* Many genitive phrases, however, like the English subordinate noun phrase, become clear only in their context, and some can be interpreted in several ways.

The thought of keeping God's commandments and remaining in His love is expressed through an "if-result" (conditional) clause in John 15:10. Therefore, the result relationship is proposed for the genitive in Revelation 3:10 with this meaning: "You have kept the word with the result of perserverence in Me." The Lord often expresses the relationship between keeping His word and remaining in Him (John 8:31; 15:4-19). Likewise, in 1 John the Apostle repeats this idea: whosoever keeps God's word remains in Christ (2:5-6); whoever keeps His commandments remains in Him (3:24); anyone who confesses Jesus as the Son of God remains in God (4:15). This interpretation also fits the context of Revelation 3: "You have kept the word and thereby remained in Me; I will keep you from the coming temptation."

In accordance with this analysis, the genitive *mou* can no longer be interpreted as a possessive, but must be seen as the object to *hupomone.* The verb from which this noun is derived, *hupomeno*, takes as its complement the prepositional phrase *en* with the dative. In the transformation from a verbal phrase to a noun phrase, the same structure is assumed — *hupomone en*, of which the expression *hupomone en Iesou* is an example (Rev. 1:9). This underlying phrase is then further transformed to a

genitive in *hupomone mou* — a genitive on the surface level, but on the deep level an object relationship to the nominalized verb. Its meaning, of course, is determined by the deep structure — "perseverance in Me."

FOOTNOTES

1. Walter Bauer, *A Greek - English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, edited and translated by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 854.
2. Leon Morris, *The Revelation of St. John* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), p. 80.
3. W. Robertson Nicoll, editor, *The Expositor's Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976). H. Alford, *Alford's Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids: Guardian Press, 1976). Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, II (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1887), p. 466.
4. R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Revelation* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963), pp. 144-145.

Ways of Saving Time and Labor in Parish Administration

Gary C. Genzen

The parish ministry today can be a time-consuming, exhausting calling. The pastor needs to find ways to make the most effective use of time and energy. I made a study of ways of saving time and labor in the parish ministry as a part of a Doctor of Ministry project prepared in 1980. The following article provides a concise list of some ideas which may prove helpful in the administration of a contemporary parish. The ideas have been gleaned from more than a decade of experience in the parish ministry, as well as from the sources listed at the end of the article.

1. Recognize that the larger the size of the parish, the greater will likely be the size of the pastoral workload. This especially applies to the parish staffed by one pastor.

2. Recognize that earthly time is a passing gift of God. Such a recognition should help you to use your time more effectively.

3. Learn to delegate tasks. "Put ten men to work, rather than do the work of ten men" (Dwight L. Moody). Note the example of the apostles in Acts 6:2-7. They delegated their work. Note the results (v.7).

4. In the delegating process be sure to separate pastoral from "other" duties. Hospital visitation, counseling, and preaching are tasks almost exclusively for the pastor. But many other parish tasks can and should be delegated. Secretarial and janitorial tasks, for example, should be delegated to either volunteer or paid help.

5. Counseling appointments should be scheduled at times convenient to the pastor. It is generally futile to run out to someone's home at 3 a.m. to try to intervene in a marital problem situation. Whenever possible schedule counseling sessions at *your* office during the day or evening.

6. Planning the church program, sermons, music, etc. weeks, months, or even a year in advance can save the pastor time, energy, and emotional anguish.

7. Try to plan and prepare, well in advance of outside speaking engagements.

8. Strive for brevity in preaching. People no longer expect the thirty-minute sermon. A fifteen-minute message is usually sufficient.

9. Make a daily work schedule each day for the coming day. List tasks according to the priority in which they need to be accomplished.

10. Take a two-week detailed time inventory to find out how you currently use time, and to detect areas of time-waste.

11. Establish a regular office workday routine — to be interrupted only by emergencies. Maintain regular office hours.

12. Learn to say "no"! You simply cannot accept all the counseling assignments, committee assignments, speaking and social engagements that come your way. The parish pastor needs to be assertive, lest he "burn out" trying to meet all the expectations of others.

13. Set deadlines for accomplishing your work. For example, you may wish to have your sermon prepared by Wednesday or Thursday of each week.

14. Learn how to handle office interruptions. A good church secretary, or a phone answering machine, or both, can save the pastor from unwanted interruptions into his work and study schedule.

15. Work in a well-organized, neat office, with phone, typewriter, files, books, and dictating equipment within easy reach.

16. Establish an adequate and convenient set of church records for each member in the parish, and for prospects.

17. If possible, maintain your office at the church. You will have fewer interruptions, and you will likely establish more regular office hours, getting a more prompt start in the morning.

18. Make sure your church has an intra-office mailbox with slots for church officers, staff, and boards. In this way messages or mail can be more easily forwarded to individuals or groups.

19. Underline or check materials in books and periodicals for later typing, photo-copying, and filing by your secretary.

20. To make most efficient use of time it is essential to have a well-equipped office with adequate lighting, ventilation (air-conditioning), desks, chairs, files, and the necessary office machines. A photo-copy machine can be a tremendous time-saver.

21. The pastor should learn to make use of dictating equipment. Such equipment can save pastor and secretary many hours of work and time each week.

22. Make more use of the telephone. *Many* pastoral calls can be made by telephone. When a face-to-face visit is needed, call ahead to make sure the person will be at home. It will save you time and gasoline.

23. Have adequate telephone directories for the surrounding area. These directories are a time-saver when you need a particular number, product, or service.

24. Use of a telephone answering and paging service — or even of a telephone answering machine — will make sure that you save time and do not miss telephone calls. Such services and devices can also save the pastor from being distrubed at home for "routine" matters.

25. An efficient church secretary can be one of the best time- and energy-savers a pastor can have. No pastor should be without secretarial help (preferably paid secretarial help).

26. Try to answer correspondence in a prompt fashion. When possible, dictate answers to letters soon after they arrive.

27. Utilize form letters (such as letters to visitors) which can be individually typed by the church secretary. The letters look personal, but save you time.

28. Try to keep your letters to one page in length. Efficient business correspondence is best kept brief.

29. Carry a good camera. It can be used to copy chalkboard notes at lectures or even to photograph pages of books.

30. Save your sermon manuscripts for further use. There is no reason why a fine sermon cannot be updated and used again at some future time and place.

31. Funeral sermons can often be revised and used on more than one occasion.

32. When doing pastoral visitations, attempt, when possible, to schedule all visits in the same section of town.

33. Schedule difficult tasks, study, sermon preparation, etc. for those times of the day when you feel your best and can thus work with most efficiency. For *many*, but not all people, the early morning hours are the best hours for work.

34. Starting the work day earlier can help you accomplish more work, and perhaps have more free time. Any number of

famous pastors have begun their work day between 5 and 7 a.m. Note also the Biblical examples of those who rose early and accomplished much: Abraham (Gen. 19:27), Jacob (Gen. 28:18), Moses (Exodus 34:4), and Jesus Himself (Mark 1:35).

35. Strive to keep a neat desk, office, and files. Misplaced items rob one of time.

36. If you purchase a home, try not to live too far from church and office. Much time can be wasted in commuting.

37. When waiting for people to arrive for church meetings, try to be working at other tasks. If they do not appear, you will at least have accomplished something.

38. A mediocre custodian or church secretary, who needs constant guidance, is a time-waster. Try to hire competent employees.

39. When a well-meaning parishioner suggests a visit to a possible prospective member, it is often helpful to indicate that you will not have time to visit that person for a number of weeks, but would appreciate it if the parishioner would make the visit for you.

40. Use a good daily pocket calendar and desk calendar to organize your time.

41. Use spare minutes (waiting in doctors' and dentists' offices, etc.) to read books and articles.

42. Light reading can be accomplished during the lunch hour. Meetings can also sometimes be held over lunch.

43. You can listen to continuing education tapes as you travel in the car. Dictation can also be done while driving, but it may not make for safe driving.

44. Greet as many people as possible before and after weekly worship. Good pastoral work can often be accomplished during these time periods.

45. Be punctual for all meetings and appointments. For all meetings try to arrange set starting and ending points. This is particularly important in the case of counseling sessions. Such sessions should rarely exceed sixty minutes.

46. Refer to others those people who require more counseling time than your schedule will permit.

47. Learn to save time by taking time off. Take one or two days off each week, periodic mini-vacations, and an annual vacation two, three, or four weeks in duration. You cannot work efficiently

if you are always working. Plan coffee-breaks during your work day, and try to get some exercise (jogging, walking, biking, etc.) each day. A brief nap can also provide some refreshment for more productive work.

48. Attempt to schedule several church meetings on the same evening.

49. Return all but emergency telephone calls at a stated time period in the late morning and late afternoon. Making all your telephone calls at once will protect your work day from disturbance. It will also aid you in accomplishing your telephone calls in less time. People are less likely to drag out a conversation before the lunch or dinner hour.

50. Take time each day at the beginning of the day, to *plan* your day's work. Find the task of first priority and, if possible, work at that task until it is completed. Then move on to the next project in order of the priority you have established.

51. Authorize your secretary to sign all but your most important or sensitive correspondence. Your secretary can also be authorized to write some of your less important correspondence. Simply be certain she is aware of the general thoughts you wish to communicate.

The committed, contemporary pastor will want to make each day, each moment, count for his Lord, his flock of parishioners, his family, and himself. By following the suggestions outlined above, the pastor can save time and energy, yet perform his work more effectively and efficiently.

Suggested Reading

Leslie B. Flynn, *How to Save Time in the Ministry* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1966).

James N. McCutcheon, *The Pastoral Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978).

Augustus W. Dowdy, Jr., *Phone Power* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1975).

Edgar Walz, *Church Business Methods* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1970).

Speed B. Leas, *Time Management: A Working Guide for Church Leaders* (Nashville, Abingdon, 1978).

Ted Engstrom and R. Alec MacKenzie, *Managing Your Time* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976).

R. Alec Mackenzie, *The Time Trap* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1975).

Gary C. Genzen is pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, Lorain, Ohio.

Theological Observer

IN MEMORIAM
WILHELM MARTIN OESCH, 1896 - 1982

After a long career as a theologian, Dr. Wilhelm Oesch, emeritus professor of systematic theology of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Oberursel, Germany, passed away during the night of January 18, 1982, at the age of 85. While it is not unusual for Germans to immigrate to the United States, Dr. Oesch was born and educated in America but rose to prominence in Germany. Upon graduation in 1922 from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, he was assigned to Germany and remained there with the exception of a few years during the 1930's spent in England. In 1948 he joined the newly founded seminary of our German sister church at Oberursel. His name became synonomous with the seminary and church there. For twenty-three years he edited the *Lutherische Rundblick* and was widely read. He remained professor until 1968 and editor until 1975. Though his teaching career was behind him, Dr. Oesch remained active as a theologian, addressing church problems. Until the end he remained alert and continued to write. At the time of his death he was urging that a more explicit reference to Scriptural authority be made part of Lutheran confessional subscription.

His chief theological purpose was maintaining a confessional and orthodox understanding of Lutheranism. Brought up in America in the English language, he became an amazingly prolific writer in the German language. Some claimed that this style surpassed that of native German theologians. As an editor from 1953 to 1975, he addressed much of his material to the American church situation, especially the Missouri Synod. After World War II, theological commerce between the German and American churches started up again. Dr. Oesch was a frequent visitor in the United States, especially to St. Louis, where he counselled Missouri Synod leaders. Missouri Synod Lutherans travelling to Germany visited the Oberursel campus. He also directed many personal letters to American church leaders. He came to be a modern-day Lutheran Elijah, who expressed himself freely and openly on issues which he found disturbing in the church. His Elijah role meant that at times his message was often received with less than complete enthusiasm.

In Germany Dr. Oesch became the recognized theological spokesman of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church, to whose establishment he contributed. His dogmatic stamp impressed itself upon the church. He worked to bring together into the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church the Saxon Lutherans, who shared common religious cultural roots with the Missouri Synod's founders, and the Prussian Lutherans, who had resisted the Prussian Union of Lutherans and Reformed in the early nineteenth century. Springing up from the ashes of the war, the church is self-supporting with a highly qualified seminary faculty. Overseas missions are maintained in Africa.

Dr. Oesch did not understand Lutheranism as a provincial or parochial religious activity, but was concerned with its global impact. His ecumenical perspective impelled him to address issues in Lutheranism on both sides of the globe. As recognition of this fact, the Lutheran seminary in Australia awarded

him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. He lived long enough to see a change in a more confessional direction in the Missouri Synod. This change must have brought him great contentment, since he worked so long and hard for it. But he never rested in correcting aberrations from the confessional norm as he saw them. He wanted to be the confessional Elijah to the end. The bulk of his writing will probably continue to remain unknown to the English-speaking Lutherans of America. His typical German theological style provides its own resistance to translation. His rare distinction is that his ideas exercised a great influence through those Americans who read them and shared them with others. His name will be long remembered. He rests in peace, but his battles will still be fought.

David P. Scaer

SHOULD CHILDREN GO TO THE COMMUNION RAIL FOR A BLESSING? A FOLLOW-UP BY HELMUT THIELICKE

A serious theological discussion of children coming to the communion rail for a blessing is offered by the German Lutheran theologian Helmut Thielicke in his recently published *The Evangelical Faith*, III: *The Holy Spirit, The Church, Eschatology* (Eerdmans, 1982, p. 299). Though his discussion is extremely brief, it does lay down the theological principles for his understanding of the practice. For Thielicke, children may receive a blessing of the hands or the bread and wine. In a footnote, he writes:

> This way of relating faith and understanding suggest that children, too, should be allowed to participate. Whether they are given the bread and wine or are simply blessed is a secondary question. Either way, the main motif in infant baptism is here taken up again, namely reception into the fellowship of believers and incorporation into the body of Christ.

Thielicke's understanding that a blessing of the child is on a par with that child's receiving the bread and wine must be interpreted against the backdrop of his doctrinal attitude toward the sacrements. The emeritus Hamburg University theologian, in analyzing the sixteenth century debate over the Lord's Supper, comes down on the side of Calvin against Luther. He speaks of "the real personal presence of Christ in feeding through Word, bread, and wine" and heavily scores as unacceptable Luther's identification of the elements with Christ's body and blood as "ubiquitarianism." The offense against the Lord's body (1 Cor. 11:29) is the selfish disregard for others in the fellowship and not the lacking of awareness of the nature of the sacramental bread. The uniqueness of the Lord's Supper is described as "the gift of fellowship that transcends all traditional, historical, and confessional limits." To be avoided is a real presence "in itself" in favor of a "presence 'for us.' " Benefits of the Supper include "incorporation into Christ's body through the bond of love." Thielicke himself recognizes that this is not Luther's position.

With such a view of the Lord's Supper, the elements of bread and wine become incidental in accomplishing its purpose. The child as part of the worshipping fellowship can share in Christ's body as fellowship either by receiving the bread and wine or simply being there to receive a blessing. The effect is the same.

Following Schleiermacher's lead, Thielicke understands Baptism as an incorporation into the Christian community and coming under the influence of

grace. The infant within the framework of the Christian congregation becomes a target for the preaching of the Word of God. He has no use for Luther's concept of infant faith in connection with Baptism, a thought which he explicitly finds unacceptable.

For Thielicke, as Baptism ushers the child into the community, the Lord's Supper nourishes the child within the community. The focus is not a one-to-one relationship with God, but a relationship with God through the community. The use of elements, water, wine, and bread, as the sacramental rites themselves, are expendable.

Dying infants are not to be baptized, but "they should be given the blessing of the congregation which commends them to this Father" (p.280). Baptism and the Lord's Supper are community activities and not direct divine intervention into the lives of Christians. The dying infant needs no Baptism, since it seems certain that he or she will not participate in the future fellowship of the congregation. On the other hand, the surviving child may go to the altar during the communion distribution to receive either the sacrament itself or a blessing, both of nearly equal benefit, since the child is already sharing in the fellowship of the community.

There is no evidence that Thielicke's devaluation of the sacraments has had any influence in our circles to date. He may, however, be expressing the increasingly influential motif concerning the Lord's Supper that its value lies in giving symbolic expression to the intimate fellowship of the congregation rather than being a real and actual participation in Christ. His view that 1 Corinthians 11:29 warns against offending Christ's body, the church, and not Christ's body present in the sacramental elements, is not without its serious defenders. Such a view removes the difficulty raised when it is asked whether children are cognitively or consciously aware of the sacramental bread; the child would only have to be aware of some sort of friendly relationships within the congregation. Certain arguments favoring infant communion also stress the sacrament as fellowship from which even the younger children should not be excluded. This is not the rationale of the custom in the Eastern churches.

Now is the time for some serious study into the increasingly popular custom of children going to the communion rail for a blessing. Among the supporters and detractors themselves, diverse reasons for their attitudes towards the custom probably exist. Thielicke has offered a theological rationale. Regretfully it is based on a deficient sacramental understanding.

David P. Scaer

Book Reviews

I. Exegetical Studies

HANDBOOK OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM. By Richard N. Soulen. New expanded second edition. John Knox Press, Atlanta, 1981. 239 pages. $9.95.

The first edition of this book appeared in 1975 and contained 191 pages. The second edition is revised and augmented and has 239 pages. Here the reader will find a comprehensive guide for basic terms and concepts. Over 600 terms, phrases, names, explanations of common abbreviations, notes on major methodologies, biographical sketches of key figures in biblical research history, analytical outlines of fundamental critical problems, a list of bibliographic tools, plus a simplified guide for writing an exegetical paper, constitute the contents of this useful and instructive volume.

It is especially a useful handbook for students beginning the critical study of the Bible. Professor Soulen endeavors to be objective in his presentation of the materials. It is a book which can save the Biblical student a great deal of labor in plowing through books and articles written from the historical-critical position. The volume is characterized by conciseness and concreteness. It is written with clarity and precision. Pastors will find it helpful in refreshing what they may have forgotten and acquainting themselves with what constitute recent developments in Biblical studies which are constantly seeking but never seeming to arrive at the truth.

Soulen claims in the preface to this second edition that the "field of Biblical criticism has undergone a change so radical as to be described by one noted New Testament scholar as nothing less than a second revolution, analogous to the introduction of the historico-critical method into Biblical studies two centuries ago" (page 5).

Over forty articles have been added to the first edition, including those on canonical, criticism, semiology, structure, sociological interpretation, reception theory, rhetorical analysis, theological interpretation, Biblical (theology) movement, linguistics. Another forty topics were revised or expanded. Bibliographies for all major articles are new. Serious students of Biblical studies cannot afford to be without this exegetical resource and informative tool.

Raymond F. Surburg

THE RENDERING OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. By Dale Patrick. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1981. 148 pages. $8.95.

This is volume 10 in the Fortress Press series, *Overtures to Biblical Theology*, edited by Walter Brueggeman and John R. Donahue, S.J. The author of volume 10 is Associate Professor of Old Testament and Religious Thought at the Missouri School of Religion in Columbia, Missouri. *Overtures to Biblical Theology* is described by Fortress as "a series of studies in biblical theology designed to explore fresh dimensions of research and to suggest ways in which the biblical heritage may address contemporary culture." In the series forward the two editors, one a Protestant and the other a Roman Catholic, tell the reader that in Old Testament scholarship much remains unsettled: "The certainties of the older biblical theology *in service* of dogmatics, as well as of the more recent theology movement *in lieu* of dogmatics, are no longer present. Nor is there on

the scene anyone of the stature of a von Rad or a Bultmann to offer a synthesis which commends the theological engagement of a generation and summons the church to a new restatement of the biblical message."

Dr. Patrick in this volume is described by the editors as attempting to avoid the temptations of supernaturalism and historicism, which they claimed he has done with consummate skill. Supernaturalism is said to freeze and violate the vitality of the text and, on the other hand, historicism is described as unable to make any meaningful interpretation which can claim any authority. The reader is warned by the editors that the material offered by Patrick in his book "is bold and experimental. Its arguments will not be adapted easily to Old Testament theology, either in the mode of Eichrodt or of von Rad. Indeed, his work is likely to be misunderstood by those who will insist on either of those standard ways" (p. xiv). It is the contention of Patrick that the God of the Old Testament is rendered or set forth as a *dramatis persona* of the biblical story. It is the thesis of this work that the God-language of the Old Testament must be understood as conforming to those principles that govern the mimetic arts. Patrick claims that God is "enacting his identity" in interaction with other human beings. God plays various roles in His dramatic action, and at times he intervenes at critical junctures to effect a satisfactory solution.

The hermeneutics employed in this volume departs radically from the normal rules for Biblical interpretation that have characterized a sound understanding of Scriptures for nearly the past two thousand years. To Christians who take the text seriously, the methodology employed in this book will be totally unacceptable.

Raymond F. Surburg

THE TRANSLATION DEBATE. By Eugene H. Glassman. InterVaristy Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1981. 131 pages. Paper. $4.25.

The main concern of this book might be phrased, "What makes a Bible translation good?" The author of this book dealing with the philosophy or theory of translation to be employed by Bible translators, has since 1974 been on loan from the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. to the United Bible Societies as a translation adviser. In this seven-chapter book Glassman traces the history of translating Scripture, beginning with the Biblical authors themselves, many of whom quoted and translated each other. He utilizes insights obtained from cross-cultural communication and describes what in his opinion constitutes a good translation. The reader will find an excellent discussion of the differences between two divergent schools of Bible translation, namely, the traditional (the formal correspondence method) and the latest, the dynamic equivalence method, employed now by the American Bible Society and the United Bible Societies. Dr. Eugene Nida has devoted much time to Bible translations, has written a number of books dealing with the art of translation, has served as supervisor of those translating for the American Bible Society, and has been the chief advocate of the principle of dynamic equivalence.

The author defends translations that are paraphrases, such as *The Living Bible*, *Good News for Modern Man*, and those translations that employ the dynamic equivalence principle. Glassmann quotes Nida: "For the most part such expressions as literal vs. free, translation vs. paraphrase, and words vs. sense are essentially battle cries for those who wish to defend their own work or criticize the work of others." It is Glassman's contention that the traditional formal correspondence method cannot do justice to many Biblical passages. In chapter 6 he presents his views as to how a combination of both methods can do

justice to what the original language has and what the receptor language requires so as to be properly understood and at the same time to remain faithful to the original author. About 180 different Biblical passages are cited in 15 different Biblical translations and versions. Not only people engaged in Bible translation but pastors rendering the Biblical languages into the vernacular in connection with preaching and Bible class work will find the book useful and suggestive.

Raymond F. Surburg

MATTHEW: A COMMENTARY ON HIS LITERARY AND THEOLOGICAL ART. By Robert H. Gundry. William B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1982. 652 pages. Cloth. $24.95.

Every once in a while there comes along a book whose value is destined to outlast the generation in which it was written. Dr. Gundry may have authored such a book in his commentary on Matthew. His published doctoral dissertation, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel*, a jewel in itself, traced the evangelist's theological motives by contrasting five different ways in which the Old Testament was cited. From that fascinating study, it seemed inevitable that Gundry would be compelled to undertake a more thorough literary analysis of the entire Gospel.

While fully affirming the authority of the divine word, the author places Matthew's Gospel side by side with Mark and Luke in order to detect the evangelist's theology by isolating his unique literary style. The basic conviction is that Mark, or at least the source behind it, is the original base material for the Gospels and that Luke is dependent on both Matthew and Mark. The major aim is not defending Marcan priority, but appreciating the theological contribution of Matthew. I. Howard Marshall has already done this work with Luke and Ralph Martin with Mark. Of the three Gundry is the most thorough, and in a verse by verse analysis very few stones are left unturned. The technical term for this type of study is redaction criticism, a method of which F.F. Bruce says on the book's jacket that "conservative scholars have shown unnecessary timidity." Gundry with full appreciation of historicity and reliability constantly addresses questions of literary form to the Gospel account. His answers are theologically fascinating and stimulating. It might even be said that Gundry is more effective and adept in the use of this method than were the original radical theologians with their anti-historical bias. The commentaries of such prominent scholars as Stendahl and Schweizer are pale in comparison to Gundry's meticulous scholarship, literary lucidness, and theological awareness. Usefulness for pastors especially in their preaching and Bible classes is an extra bonus.

A few examples taken from Gundry should be allowed to speak for themselves. Central for his investigation is 1:21, where the child of Mary is called Jesus and Emmanuel, i.e., God saves and is with us. This theme that Jesus is God and Redeemer is traced throughout the Gospel and is so convincingly presented that the reader can come to no other conclusion than that Matthew, as much as the Fourth Evangelist, had a highly developed theology of Jesus. If the reader has ever wondered why Joseph's genealogy and visitation from the angel in chapter one is followed by a visitation from the wise men in which the divine child's mother is mentioned but not Joseph, Gundry provides an answer. The issue is not that Joseph may have taken sailor's leave, as some have naively suggested, but rather that Jesus is dependent on His mother for His human existence and not on Joseph. Throughout the books tidbits are offered to correct time-honored but nevertheless wrong impressions. The phrase "two years and under"

means in the Hebrew idiom children under one year old. It was commonly held that Jesus was two years old at the time of the flight to Egypt. Such discourses as do not belong to the theological narrative of the book are placed in a slightly smaller print as the author's chief purpose is identifying the evangelist's theological plan and not providing an atomistic commentary with all sorts of detached and frequently useless information. The slaughter of the innocent children is seen as preparatory for Jerusalem's predicted distruction. This in turn is seen as an appearance of the final judgment. (Martin Luther concluded that the untimely death of the innocents was God's punishment against their unbelieving parents.) As Gundry's doctoral dissertation concentrated on Matthew's use of the Old Testament, much of this material is woven into the book's fabric.

One of the great chasms in theology exists between exegesis and systematic theology. The former frequently presents a mass of Biblical data in no recognizable form, and the latter perpetuates conclusions seemingly based on hoary traditions without undergoing the difficult and uncongratulated work of sifting the exegetical evidence. Thus many radical exegetical works fall under the weight of their own obfuscation, and the conclusions of dogmatical works seem light years away from the raw New Testament data. Gundry successfully bridges this chasm. No one can question his exegetical meticulousness. He identifies such Matthean peculiarities as his penchant for using "night" and "teach." At the same time he is theologically observant in that he can see the Satanic temptations of chapter four as an attempt by Satan not to cause Jesus to doubt that He is God's Son, but rather as an attempt to lure Him into misusing that divine sonship confirmed at His baptism. The statement that Jesus "opened up His mouth" in beginning the Sermon on the Mount is connected with Jesus' own words that man shall live by every word that comes from God's mouth. Matthew's reader knew just from his literary style that it was God delivering the sermon's message.

Though Gundry is primarily an exegete, he cannot help but let a slight dogmatical prejudice glimmer through at certain places. His denominational affiliation or origin is not stated, but he seems to have a Reformed-Calvinistic bias. Concerning the words of sacramental institution, the reader is informed that the language is sacrificial without a fuller discussion of the atonement. The sacrament is said to benefit because the believer follows Jesus' command to eat and drink. *Au contraire!* Here the exegesis points to the fact that the believer who participates in the sacrament actually receives the Christ's sacrificial blood. The sacrament and not fulfillment of the command is the source of forgiveness. The concept of Christianity as obligation plays a part in Gundry's book not really demanded by the evangelist, at least not quite in the terms that Gundry sees it. Seeing "Jesus' baptism by John as a model of righteousness" and not as a real inclusion in God's wrath also comes from this same bias. Gundry avoids comparing the children of 19:13-16 to the infants of Luke 18:15-27. The title for this section, "Accepting Young People in the Church," seems an obviously artificial and contrived avoidance of the implications of this pericope for including infants in Christ's kingdom and hence baptism.

Each reader will find himself disagreeing with Gundry in certain places. I for one found myself disagreeing with his inability to find a stronger Christological motif in the Sermon on the Mount and the parables of chapter thirteen. This is, of course, what makes reading Gundry such a challenge and pleasure. At every point he gives you something to chew on. F.F. Bruce, on the book's jacket cited previously, calls this commentary "an epoch-making book in the evangelical study of the New Testament."

David P. Scaer

CHI RHO COMMENTARY ON JAMES, JUDE. By Henry P. Hamann. Lutheran Publishing House, Adelaide, Australia. 104 pages. Paper. No price given.

The Chi Rho Commentary Series provide serious exegetical materials for the lay audience. Dr. Hamann in his commentary on James and Jude does this admirably and thus demonstrates the Reformation principle that no theological issue is so complex that the laity cannot be drawn into the discussion. Both these epistles have a checkered history in the church, and widely varying opinions concerning their dates and authorship have made their interpretation more complex. James, according to Hamann, was written around 50 A.D. for Palestinian and Syrian Christians by a brother of Jesus, i.e., a son of Mary and Joseph. Hamann does not hesitate to present a variety of interpretations before setting forth the option he finds most adequate. For example, in regard to 1:16-18 with its reference to God's creative activity, the view favored is that of regeneration within the wider resurrection context. Hamann adds that such a doctrine shows that the writer of James "is a Christian and is a sign of a far greater amount of Christian content in this letter than Luther was prepared to allow." In the age-old "Paul-James controversy," the author backs away from the time-worn view held still by Dibelius that James was a corrective to Pauline libertine theology. On the contrary, Paul uses James. Hamann might have been slightly more definitive on some issues, i.e., the Lord's raising up the sick man (5:14). No salvific power is attributed to the oil, but the equally important and troublesome issue of whether the Lord heals in every case is not discussed. Jude is authored by the brother of James and Jesus, but no definite date is given, being placed sometime before the writing of 2 Peter.

During his guest lectureship at this seminary in 1979, Dr. Hamann presented much of his materials to the students in his successful seminar on James. Those students will certainly appreciate having his views in print. The price is estimated as being in the vicinity of three dollars. Since the publisher is Australian, orders may perhaps most easily be made through the seminary bookstore. A bibliography will direct pastors to the more detailed commentaries for help with the thornier issues in what must be considered the most controversial book of the New Testament canon.

David P. Scaer

II. Systematic Studies

TRUTH IS TWO-EYED. By John A. T. Robinson. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1979. 161 pages. $6.95.

This book grew out of Robinson's Teape lectures given in 1976 in India. Robinson in these lectures attempted to enter into dialogue with Hinduism using the Christological formulations already set forth in *The Human Face of God* (Westminster Press, 1973). In his earlier work Robinson attempted to set forth in a modern mode the Chalcedonian formulation that Jesus Christ is true God and true man. Roberson criticized the Alexandrian formulation of *enhypostasis* in that the "Logos-flesh" formula does not in reality unite the divinity with a real human being but with flesh. The Antiochene formulation with its hebraisms does not satisfy Robinson either. For this formulation, in an attempt to preserve the divinity of Christ, suffers from the real communication of the divine with the human. This is even more docetic to Robinson than the Alexandrian formulations. Robinson wants to make Jesus Christ fully man and in that

humanity to carry the imprint of the divine. This idea he attempts to expand in his dialogue with Hinduism. Robinson rather than Chalcedon, however, shows the marks of docetism.

Robinson's ontological framework is basically Whiteheadian. That is to say whatever is envisioned by God is not real until it occurs or comes to be. All being is in process. Ontologically speaking in substantive language, we have no absolutes. Thus, the eternity and continuity of the Christ must be viewed in terms of a contemporary model which attempts to appropriate the Einsteinian model of physics rather than the Newtonian (pp. 22-25). However, Einstein's model is really not an enemy to theology if properly understood. It suffices to point out here that Einstein provides a better model to speak of a *creatio ex nihilo*, the preservation of creation, and miracles. His system does not by any means throw everything into question. It humbles scientific absolutism. But what we need to see is Robinson's docetism in his appropriation of Whitehead.

Since in the Whiteheadian model what is real is what occurs and since what occurs carries its own determinacy, how, then, can the Christ, the Logos, be eternal (John 1:1-3)? The Logos for Robinson is what God envisions in order to exemplify his complete eternity in humanity. Thus when the Christ came to be, he exemplified in his total humanity the divinity of the Logos. In this way the Logos is eternal and divine. "Jesus is not just a man doing human things divinely but a man doing divine things humanly" (p. 119). By this formulation Robinson thinks that he has kept the Chalcedonian formulation. The Word is eternal (for he springs forth from God) but totally human (for he is what he is in the world). Christ, in Robinson's reading of St. John and Hebrews, is the perfect Son, who, through his perfect obedience, suffered in conformity to the Father's will. In this way his divinity shone forth. Jesus leads us to live a totally human life (p. 118).

But why does Robinson call the truth two-eyed? In dealing with all forms of religions Robinson perceives two visions of the truth. In the first vision the individual's personality is not dissolved in his unity with the Eternal. In the second, the unity of the personal with the Eternal can only be achieved if the individual can be emptied of his personality. The first viewpoint, according to Robinson, is closer to Christianity and the latter to Eastern religions (pp. 10-11). He attempts to gain from both view-points. Robinson does not want to give up the uniqueness of Christ. Yet he wants to maintain a less personal viewpoint for the individual. This he finds in Jesus. For Robinson what is unique about Jesus is his giving up his ego in service to the personality of the eternal (p. 122). This idea of giving up the self to unify oneself with the eternal Robinson finds more prevalent, however, in Hinduism. But let us see in what kind of tension Robinson places himself.

I would label Robinson's position "docetic humanism." It is humanistic for only in the activity of the human does the Eternal shine forth (p. 100). Jesus' perfection as the exemplified Logos lies only in his willingness to let the Eternal shine forth completely in his humanity. Thus the Logos is human *par excellence* in that he is even subject to sin (p. 100). But does the Logos, the divine second person of the Trinity, take all human frailties, suffering, and sin to himself and affect them? The Logos is only exemplified for us in Robinson's scheme by Jesus accepting completely the Father's will. He did so by taking up all human burdens and sufferings. But how is sin and evil dealt with? How is it affected? It is here that Robinson is a docetist *par excellence*. Robinson at this point senses in the theology of the cross a supreme offense to Hinduism, Buddhism, and other forms of religion (p. 44). In Hinduism the gods never really become active in the flesh nor affect in this reality of the flesh the meaning of the individual. Their "avatars"

(incarnations) do not leave any imprint in history, for they are really not incarnations. If we keep this fact in perspective, we can understand the statement made by Vivekananda, a Hindu theologian, "Christ was God incarnate; they could not kill him. That which was crucified was only a semblance, a mirage" (p. 50). While Robinson wants to maintain the touching of the Eternal in the flesh, he chooses to stress Christ's "avatar" (p. 124). That is, Jesus as the Christ becomes the eternal paradigm whereby we discover how God becomes in a universal manner human. Thus we have a model that does not affect reality *per se* in a complete substantive manner. But this is docetism! The Bible clearly, preaches a Son that not only obeys but also affects reality in His death. The Eastern way is only a way of accepting suffering and through this acceptance overcoming it by moving beyond it (pp. 74, 94). But this says nothing of the very real love of God where the Eternal touches, confronts, and overcomes the power of death in the crucifixion of Jesus, true God and true man.

At one point Robinson refers to a "Christian Arts and Communications Centre" in Madras that espouses some of his directions. He then states: "And this was actually founded by the Missouri Synod, the most conservative wing of the American Lutheran Church, many of whose members would probably be horrified to know what their money is being used for" (p. 135). Indeed, we are horrified, for no docetic Christology can provide a solution to the human condition. Only Christ, the crucified Lord, who rose from the dead, can do so!

Albert L. Garcia

THE EVANGELICAL FAITH. Volume Three. THEOLOGY OF THE SPIRIT. By Helmut Thielicke. Translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1982. Cloth. 484 pages. $22.95.

In a publication statement, the evangelical conservative scholar, Bernard Ramm, notes of Thielicke's second volume that "it is better to read carefully one great treatment of theology than twenty mediocre ones." Now emeritus professor of systematic theology at the University of Hamburg, Thielicke belongs to one of the vanishing breed of theologians who organize their theology into comprehensive systems. He belongs with Emil Brunner, Regin Prenter, Gustav Aulen, and, of course, Karl Barth, who were all part of the rebirth of theology between the two great wars.

Thielicke's third volume was published in German in 1978 and thus it reflects, as much as possible, the current scene. Bromiley is the translator without peer. Thielicke wants to operate within the Lutheran tradition. He is obviously well acquainted with Luther and refers to him frequently. It would have been better if Luther were quoted according to the specific writing, with the date, instead of merely cited according to the Weimar Ausgabe. While Thielicke sincerely thinks of himself as being within the Lutheran tradition, he is best understood as a Lutheran within the neo-orthodox movement. Such a generalization may be fraught with the dangers of unfair judgments, but it does provide a framework in which to place his theology.

It is striking that Thielicke's dogmatics is called *The Evangelical Faith* with no mention of "Lutheran" in a manner not dissimilar to Schleiermacher's *The Christian Faith.* It is striking but not surprising, since this dogmatical treatise is directed to the German situation, where the distinction between Lutheran and Reformed is a historical matter which is not really doctrinally valid anymore. Thielicke accepts the philosophical presuppositions, common in German

theology since the eighteenth century, that history as past event cannot really be known and thus cannot then form the firm and real basis for theological discussion (p. 197). Here the starting point for theology is the same as it is for Barth. But, unlike Barth, Thielicke weaves into theological discussion the Bultmannian exegetical heritage. Always in the background, but nevertheless clearly silhouetted, is the understanding that the historical Jesus remains unavailable to scholarly research. History presents no firm conclusions. The early Christian community with its faith provides the substructure for faith and the historical problem is circumvented.

The theological guide for dogmatics is provided by the Word and Spirit, in a way clearly reminiscent of Barth. The Trinity is not discussed as an eternal, permanent reality, but as the relationship of the Word and Spirit to the world. One wonders whether Thielicke's *Pneuma* is really identical with the church's Holy Spirit. One hesitates to present isolated sentences to demonstrate a point, but the reader can evaluate this reviewer's conclusions for himself: "The Word of God exists only as an attested Word, attested by men." "Third, the Holy Spirit is the power or revelation and appropriation of the Word." The revelatory modalism, so characteristic of Barth, seems to be true also of Thielicke. Just as there is a hesitancy to establish a certain history behind the "Word," so there is no attempt to find anything eternal and permanent behind that same "Word." Thielicke operates with the "Word of God" theology characteristic of Barth, which sees the "Word" active in creation, incarnating itself in Jesus, then in oral tradition, then in the Scriptures, and finally in preaching. The advantage of the Scriptures over subsequent "Word of God" is not qualitative but a matter of closeness to the events in history.

One entire section is given over to the repudiation of verbal inspiration, especially as it is held by the Missouri Synod (pp. 191-4). It is problematical whether the Synod should consider itself honored or amused by this attention. As a paradigm for verbal inspiration Thielicke cites Pieper's *Dogmatics*. It would have been better to have set forth an argument against the sixteenth and seventeenth century Lutheran theologians directly and not against a disciple of two or three centuries later. In addition, it might have been better to cite Robert Preus, who, while sympathetic, is not blindly uncritical of that period's research. It is not difficult to conclude that the author's living sources in this matter may have been less than fully objective in presenting the Synod's theological situation in the 1970's.

A favorite principle for Thielicke is one credited to Melanchthon that Christ is known in His benefits for us. No one can squabble with this, if it is used to describe the life of faith; but as a principle, even as a minor one for theology, it tips the entire theological task into subjectivism. For example, it is applied to the understanding of the Lord's Supper, and Thielicke explicitly distances himself from Luther's teaching of a sacramental presence in the elements. All the plaudits in that section go to Calvin. In the discussion of the end times, the final resurrection is placed into a category of time not known to us now. The resurrection may end the kind of time we experience now, but does it really belong to another time? The question raised is whether it really happens.

Solid comprehensive theology books are infrequently published. Monographs have become the usual means of expression. Thielicke's dogmatics is a welcome addition to the libraries of those who want to do serious theology. Without a training in classical theology (e.g., Pieper, Schmid, Krauth, or any of the classical Lutheran or Reformed dogmaticians), however, much of Thielicke's discussion would miss its intended mark. It can be expected to serve

the standard dogmatics in many of the Lutheran seminaries standing to the left of the Missouri Synod. But unless the standard theology is known, the deviation cannot be fully understood, much less appreciated.

David P. Scaer

III. Historical Studies

THEOLOGIANS IN TRANSITION. Edited By James M. Wall. Introduction by Martin E. Marty. Crossroad, New York, 1981. 207 pages. $14.95.

For the last fifty years *Christian Century* has, every ten years or so, injected a "How My Mind Has Changed" series. This book compiles the twenty-one essays that appeared during 1980 and 1981. Marty, an associate editor of *Christian Century*, provides the introduction, attempting to give some justification for running a series on the changing views of notable (and some not so notable) theologians and then repeating the series within the covers of one book. There is a bit of self-consciousness evidenced by some of the authors, who sense that the whole process might be "an invitation to narcissism" (Peter Berger), or a kind of defense mechanism which explains that it has been a matter of growing rather than mind-changing that has been going on (Langdon Gilkey, James Gustafson), or just plain assertion that there has been no change at all, at least not a conscious one (Schubert Ogden, Jose Miguez-Bonino). One writer feels compelled to state his views in a new credo fitting the times (Robert McAfee Brown).

Now and then there are rather dramatic confessions, like Gilkey's admission that he has begun to lose faith in science and reason as the sources in which to find the answers for man's deepest needs and to turn to the sacred religious sources instead. Even Rosemary Ruether indicates that she has lost some of her strident feminist sharpness. The only admitted conservative, Bible-committed scholar in the group is Carl F. Henry, and he does not appear to have changed much. Could it be that so-called "scientific theology" gropes and stumbles around, in the process of writing and selling books, but actually contributes little, if anything, to man's deepest needs, for it seems to know little about Law and Gospel, the two chief doctrines of the Word of God, and yet purports to be "doing Christian theology"?

E. F. Klug

LUTHER. An Experiment in Biography. By H.G. Haile. Doubleday, New York, 1980. 422 pages. $14.95.

The experiment so-called is to write Luther's biography beginning in the year 1535, when Luther would have been 52 and, in a sense, in the prime of life, but also the time when his years and illness began to weigh him down. Add to this experiment Haile's effort in the first chapters to take a look at Wittenberg in 1535 through the eyes of bright young papal legate, Petro Paolo Vergerio, a Venetian, more than a little impressed with Luther's accomplishments at reform of the church — so much so, in fact, that in some respects he ended up "himself a protestant" (p. 16).

Haile has not written the usual kind of biography of Luther; new sod has been turned up. Himself a professor of German at the University of Illinois, Haile has worked with primary sources, for the most part maintaining scholarly objectivity. That is not to say that Haile does not have his presuppositions which distort Luther's position now and then. For example, he states that Luther's

position on the text of Scripture takes for granted "the human, hence fallible authorship" (p. 332). Haile shows his leanings as well when he treats Luther on the Lord's Supper, especially with his soft touch on Capito and Bucer at the time of the Wittenberg Concord, 1536. Luther is blamed for "oscillation in mood" and being "very much the victim of his momentary emotional state," rather than Bucer for what history has revealed to have been a vacillating, compromising, ambivalent view on the Sacrament (p. 145). The same shortfall happens in the analysis of Luther's confrontation with the shifty Agricola on the antinomian question; the end result is that Agricola comes off looking better than the facts indicate (p. 222ff.). Be these things as they may, Haile sets the pieces of Luther's mature years into excellent perspective. Because Luther fulminated furiously against the Jews, Haile does not fall into the easy trap of Bainton, who concludes that Luther was by this time senile and half-crazy (p. 292). Haile details better than anyone else has ever done the facts concerning Luther's near fatal illness at Smalcald in 1537, opining "that uremia led to neurological complications after Schmalkalden, so that many of his utterances reveal an underlying irritability," but then adding immediately that "Luther can at no time in his life be dismissed as senescent or unaccountable" (p. 296).What Haile might have added with regard to the Jewish question was that for Luther the issue, especially towards the end of his life, was an entirely theological one; at no time can the charge of anti-Semitism be sustained. "Luther knew what he was doing," as Haile says (p. 164). He might have gone on to explain more clearly what it was that Luther knew he was doing.

A review tends to isolate points of variance. This tendency ought not in this case detract from the overall excellence of Haile's work. Without question it is one of the best biographies on Luther to appear for a long time.

E. F. Klug

Book Comments

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA. THE NEW INTERNATIONAL COMMENTARY ON THE OLD TESTAMENT. By M.H. Woudstra. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1981. 396 pages. Cloth. $16.95.

The New International Commentary on the Old Testament is edited by R.K. Harrison. The author of *The Book of Joshua* is Professor of Old Testament Studies at Calvin Theological Seminary, writer of a number of books in the Old Testament field. According to Woudstra the central theme in Joshua, to which everything in the book has been made subordinate, is the fulfillment of God's promise to the patriarchs regarding the promised land. To support the understanding of the book's theme, the author emphasizes the nature of the Hebrew narrative: it is prophetic, offering provisional summaries of events to be taken up later, and programmatic, indicating that the book was written close to actual events. Important for his interpretation of Joshua is Woudstra's understanding of Old Testament historiography. In his Joshua Commentary the author also deals with subordinate themes which include parallels between Joshua and Moses; the tensions between complete and incomplete fulfillment of God's promise regarding the land and the "rest"; the participation of "all Israel"; the people's fear and God's reassurance; God's revelation; commemoration of the "giving" of the land; and the hope and joyful optimism fostered by God's everlasting faithfulness.

The book of Joshua bristles with historical and topographical difficulties. Woudstra avoids none of these in his critical and exegetical remarks and exegesis and takes into account the various views represented by recent scholarship as well as Hebrew usage and text-critical concerns. The commentary is supplimented by an extensive bibliography and six maps depicting topographical features, tribal territories, and significant campaigns.

OLD TESTAMENT COMMENTARY SURVEY. By John Goldingay. With additions and editing by Mark Branson and Robert Hubbard. Theological Student Fellowship (A Division of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship), Madison, Wisconsin, 1981. 61 pages. Paper. $5.95.

This is a publication of Theological Student Fellowship, an organization in the United States and Canada which endeavors to serve students interested in religion, philosophy, and theology at theological seminaries and religion departments of universities. This volume is the second edition of a work which was first published in Great Britain in 1975. Professor Goldingay's work has been supplemented by Robert Hubbard. Goldingay is professor at St. John's College, Bramcote, Nottingham.

The book is organized into seven parts and begins with a helpful discussion about the function of commentaries. Part 2 deals with general resources. Part 3 treats of one-volume commentaries. Parts 4-7, (pp. 14-47) give a listing and characterization of commentaries on the 39 books of the Old Testament. Then comes an appendix giving a supplement up to 1981. On pages 60-61 the authors suggest what in their opinion would constitute good buys. The books and commentaries referred to are of many different theological viewpoints. Goldingay states: "Commentaries are recommended to the reader for their positive value in assisting Old Testament interpretation, although basic

assumptions made by the authors are not necessarily adhered to by the present writer . . ." The reader is advised to examine them critically to determine what possible use he may make of the suggested commentaries. While extreme critical views are rejected by the author, he still appears to favor books written from a generally critical point of view. However, the book can serve as a useful resource for students of the history, interpretation, and theology of the Old Testament.

BASIC CHRISTIAN TEACHINGS. By Rolf Aaseng. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minnesota. 111 pages. Paper.

A popular, readable digest of Christian doctrines is addressed to a church population that is increasingly less doctrinally aware. The fifteen chapters have titles that may be more understandable than the time-worn dogmatic formulas. "Is Anybody Listening?" handles prayer, and "Mary Had a Baby" treats the origins of Jesus. Aaseng's literary style is unquestionably attractive and should be very useful for a generation which finds theological discussion foreign. This book may be profitably placed in the hands of those who are first enquiring about the Christian religion. Distinctive Lutheran positions are presented throughout, but the pastor may want to sharpen the focus in a few areas, especially with the sacraments.

CALLED TO FREEDOM: LIBERATION THEOLOGY AND THE FUTURE OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE. By Daniel L. Migliore. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1980. 130 pages. $5.95.

The author of this book attempts to formulate a Christian view of a theology of liberation. Migliore's attempt is not new. It follows in the Barthian perception already established by Hans Frei in *The Identity of Jesus Christ* (Fortress Press, 1975). This perspective is one where the authority for theology is found through a narrative reading of the biblical text (cf. for instance, pp. 28-29, 35, 48, 52, 66). Scripture in this sense is the Word of God, for it testifies to the living Word of God in Jesus Christ. The authority of the Bible comes to us, then, in that it contains the life-events of Jesus in a particular historical context (cf. Barth in his *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 2: IV, part 2). For this reason the interpreter goes beyond the historico-critical approach. Reading the narrative can evoke in the believer, as well as in the community, an identification with God in Jesus Christ. Because this is always done in the Christian's historical context, Christ can be reinterpreted conceptually as liberator. To Migliore the present context evokes that identity (pp. 44-45). Since Migliore abandons an identification with Jesus through a conceptual framework, he then becomes inconsistent by claiming some objectivity to avoid a rampant commitment to a particular form of liberation (pp. 60-61). My question to Migliore is: How does the teaching of Jesus serve a critical function in an evocative manner? Critical to me demands criterion and content. The Word, to obtain authority, must carry its own conceptual authority. Migliore in this respect becomes blessedly inconsistent, for he appeals to reasonable arguments from special revelation to solve the dilemma.

REASONS SKEPTICS SHOULD CONSIDER CHRISTIANITY. By Josh McDowell and Don Stewart. Here's Life Publishers, San Bernardino, California, 1981. 249 pages. $4.95.

Josh McDowell has become well known in conservative Christian circles as an apologete for the Christian faith. Prior to the appearance of this book, he has

written six others, of which especially the two companion volumes, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* and *More Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, have enjoyed wide popularity. Issues not covered in these two volumes and in *Answers to Tough Questions* are taken up in Section 1, "The Bible" (pp. 13-81).

In Section 2, "The Ark," the authors deal with the question, "Is the ark still resting on Mt. Ararat?" The reader will find an evaluation of the evidence to date on the various expeditions and alleged sighting seen in recent years (pp. 82-103). Section 3 deals with the arguments pro and con evolution. After reading this portion of the book, any honest devotee of the evolutionary theory should experience serious misgivings. If he still decides to accept it, he will be doing it purely on the basis of faith and not because the evidence either supports or demands this acceptance.

Pages 220-249 contain an annotated bibliography of books and journals in the field of Christian apologetics, a field which impinges upon the disciplines of anthropology, comparative religions, ethics, science, philosophy, psychology and the relation of evolution to science. This bibliography would be very helpful for those readers who would further desire to pursue issues discussed in this volume as well as important ones not tackled in this book.

Books Received

WHEN GOD SAYS NO. By Blaine Allen. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee, 1981. 166 pages. Paper, $4.95.

ENCOUNTERING EVIL: Live Options in Theodicy. John Knox Press, Atlanta, Georgia, 1981. 182 pages. Paper, n.p.

A PHILOSOPHY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION. By Edward John Carnell. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1952. 523 pages. Paper, $10.95.

A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF MEN AND THINGS: AN INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY. By Gordon H. Clark. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1952. 325 pages, $8.95.

CHRISTIAN UNITY: An Exposition of Ephesians 4:1-16. By D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1980. 277 pages. Cloth, n.p.

TAKING LEAVE OF GOD. By Don Cupitt. Crossroad Publishing Company, New York, 1981. 174 pages. Cloth, $9.95.

AS THE STARS IN NUMBER. By Carroll Gillis. Exposition Press, Smithtown, New York, 1981. 138 pages. Cloth, $7.50.

CRUCIAL QUESTIONS IN APOLOGETICS. By Mark M. Hanna. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1981. 139 pages. Paper, $5.95.

JESUS AND THE FUTURE. By Richard H. Hiers. John Knox Press, Atlanta, Georgia, 1981. 160 pages. Paper, $9.95.

PIETY AND THE PRINCETON THEOLOGIANS. By W. Andrew Hoffecker. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1981. Paper, $5.95.

THE NICENE CREED. By Geddes MacGregor. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1980. 149 pages. Paper, $7.95.

GOD OR CHRIST. By Jean Milet. Crossroad-Continuum, New York, 1981. 261 pages. Cloth, $12,95.

CHRISTIAN-MARXIST DIALOGUE IN EASTERN EUROPE. By Paul Mojzes. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1981. 336 pages. Paper, n.p.

LUTHERISCHE KIRCHE UND VOLKSKIRCHLICHE STRUKTUREN. By Detlef Lehmann. Oberurseler Hefte, Heft 11. Pharma-Druck Inge Hartman und Sohn, Oberursel, Germany, 1979. 32 pages. Paper, n.p.

ZEUGEN DER ERSTEN STUNDE. By Manfred Roensch. Oberurseler Hefte, Heft 11. Pharma-Druck Inge Hartman und Sohn, Oberursel, Germany, 1980. 29 pages. Paper, n.p.

GOTTES HEILIGES VOLK. By Harmut Gunther. Oberurseler Hefte, Heft 13. Pharma-Druck Inge Hartment und Sohn, Oberursel, Germany, 1981. 44 pages. Paper, n.p.

VOM HEILIGEN ABENDMAHL. By Detlef Lehmann. Oberurseler Hefte, Heft 14. Pharma-Druck Inge Hartman und Sohn, Oberursel, Germany, 1981. 36 pages. Paper, n.p.

THEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS XVII: Jesus, Man and the Church. By Karl Rahner. Crossroad-Continuum, New York, 1981. 260 pages. Cloth, $14.95.

GROWTH IN PARTNERSHIP. By Letty M. Russell. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1981. 185 pages. Paper, n.p.

BIBLICAL CHRISTOLOGY. By John Schaller. Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1981. 287 pages. Cloth, $10.95.

TOWARDS A WORLD THEOLOGY: Faith and the Comparative History of Religion. By Wilfred Cantwell Smith. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1980. 206 pages. Cloth, $18.95.

GOD WHO DARES TO BE MAN: Theology for Prayer and Suffering. By Bonnell Spencer. Seabury Press, New York, 1980. 220 pages. Cloth, $12.95.

THE DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE. By Francis Turretin. Edited and translated by John W. Beardslee III. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1981. 234 pages. Paper, $7.95.

CALVIN AND THE ANABAPTIST RADICALS. By Willem Balke. Translated by William J. Heynen. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1982. 338 pages. Paper, n.p.

AMERICAN LUTHERANS HELP SHAPE WORLD COUNCIL. By Dorris A. Flesner. Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, Dubuque, Iowa, 1981. 330 pages, Paper, n.p.

THE FUNDAMENTALIST MOVEMENT 1930-1956. By Louis Gasper. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1963. 181 pages. Paper, $6.95.

FORERUNNERS OF THE REFORMATION. By Heiko Oberman. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1981. 352 pages. Paper, $11.95.

A HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY. Volume 1: The Early and Medieval Church. Edited by Ray C. Petry. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1962. 561 pages. Paper, $17.95.

A HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY. Volume 2: The Church from the Reformation to the Present. Edited by Clyde L. Manschreck. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1964. 564 pages. Paper, $17.95.

REFORMERS IN THE WINGS. By David C. Steinmetz. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1971. 240 pages. Paper, $7.95.

SELECTED WRITINGS OF C.F.W. WALTHER: LAW AND GOSPEL. Translated by Herbert J.A. Bouman. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1981. 192 pages. Cloth, n.p.

SELECTED WRITINGS OF C.F.W. WALTHER: EDITORIALS FROM "LEHRE UND WEHRE." Translated by Herbert J.A. Boumann. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1981. 191 pages. Cloth, n.p.

SELECTED WRITINGS OF C.F.W. WALTHER: WALTHER ON THE CHURCH. Translated by John M. Drickamer. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1981. 192 pages. Cloth, n.p.

SELECTED WRITINGS OF C.F.W. WALTHER: SELECTED SERMONS. Translated by Henry J. Eggold. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1981. 192 pages. Cloth, n.p.

SELECTED WRITINGS OF C.F.W. WALTHER: SELECTED LETTERS. Translated by Roy A. Suelflow. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1981. 192 pages. Cloth, n.p.

SELECTED WRITINGS OF C.F.W. WALTHER: CONVENTION ESSAYS. Translated by Aug. R. Suelflow, series editor. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1981. 192 pages. Cloth, n.p.

ARCHIVES AND HISTORY: Minutes and Reports of the 15th Archivists' and Historians' Conference. Edited by Aug. R. Suelflow. Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri, 1982. 154 pages. Paper, $5.00

A MIRROR FOR SIMPLE SOULS. Edited by John Griffiths. Crossroad, New York, 1981. 159 pages. Cloth, $9.95.

A LETTER OF PRIVATE DIRECTION. By the Author of the Cloud of Unknowing. Crossroad, New York, 1981. 127 pages. Cloth, $8.95.

THE ALGEBRA OF SUICIDE. By Irving Berent. Human Sciences Press, New York, 1981. 205 pages. Cloth, $19.95.

HOPE FOR THE SEPARATED: WOUNDED MARRIAGES CAN BE HEALED. By Gary Chapman. Moody Press, Chicago, 1982. 119 pages. Paper, n.p.

BOUND TO BE FREE: The Quest for Inner Freedom. By Donald L. Deffner. Morse Press, Seattle, 1981. 164 pages. Paper, n.p.

LAY CAREGIVING. By Diane Detwiller-Zapp and William Caveness Dixon. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 96 pages. Paper, $3.95.

TAKE IT TO THE LORD. By Wendell W. Frerichs. Augsubrg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1982. 79 pages. Paper, $3.95.

AUTHENTIC PREACHING. By Arndt L. Halvorson. Augsuburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1982. 188 pages. Paper, $7.95.

THE CELL OF KNOWLEDGE. Edited By John Griffiths. Crossroads, New York, 1981. 128 pages. Cloth, $8.95.

THE SCANDAL OF LENT. By Robert Kysar. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1982. 111 pages. Paper, $4.50.

ASKING QUESTIONS: A Classroom Model for Teaching the Bible. By D. Bruce Lockerbie. Mott Media, Milford, Michigan, 1980. 157 pages. Paper, $4.95.

A LETTER FROM JESUS CHRIST. By John Lansberg. Crossroads, New York, 1981. 144 pages. Cloth, $8.95.

FURNACE OF RENEWAL: A Vision of the Church. By George Mallone. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1981. 201 pages. Paper, $5.25.

YOU CAN BECOME WHOLE AGAIN. By Jolonda Miller. John Knox Press, Atlanta, Georgia, 1982. 99 pages. Paper, $5.00.

A LOVING GOD AND A SUFFERING WORLD. By Jon Tal Murphree. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1981. 126 pages. Paper, $4.50.

FATHERS. By Ross D. Parke. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1981. 135 pages. Paper, $3.95.

REVITALIZING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY CHURCH. By Lloyd M. Perry and Norman Shawchuch. Moody Press, Chicago, 1982. 188 pages. Cloth, n.p.

WHAT COLOR IS YOUR GOD? By Columbus Salley and Ronald Behm. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1981. 125 pages. Paper, $4.50.

THE AMERICAN POOR. Edited by John A. Schiller. Augsburg Press, Minneapolis, 1982. 220 pages. Paper, $9.95.

MENDER OF BROKEN HEARTS: How Christ Gives Us Courage to Live. By Conrad M. Thompson. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1982. 126 pages. Paper, $4.50.

CHRISTIAN ETHICS. By R.E.O. White. John Knox Press, Atlanta, Georgia, 1981. 442 pages. Paper, $10.95.

THE PRACTICE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD. New Translation by E.M. Blaiklock. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee, 1981. 93 pages. Paper, $3.95.

AUTHORITY AND THE CHURCH. By Gregory G. Bolich. University Press of America, Washington, D.C., 1982. 219 pages. Paper, n.p.

THE REBELLIOUS GALILEAN. By John Bonforte. Philosophical Library, Publishers, New York, 1982. 319 pages. Cloth, $9.95.

WALVOORD: A TRIBUTE. Edited by Donald K. Campbell. Moody Press, Chicago, 1982. 353 pages. Cloth, n.p.

ISRAEL AND THE NEW COVENANT. By Roderick Campbell. Introduction by O. T. Allis. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Phillipsburg, New Jersy, 1954. 350 pages. Cloth, $12.95.

CONFESSING ONE FAITH. Edited by George Wolfgang Forell and James F. McCue. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1982. 344 pages. Paper, n.p.

HANDMAID TO THEOLOGY. An Essay in Philosophical Prolegomena. By Winfried Corduan. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1981. 184 pages. Paper, $7.95.

BLESSED AND BROKEN. An Exploration of the Contemporary Experience of God in Eucharistic Celebration. By Ralph A. Keifer. Michael Glazier, Wilmington, Delaware, 1982. 148 pages. Paper, $6.95.

SIGNPOSTS TO FREEDOM. By Jan Milic Lockman. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1982. 167 pages. Paper, n.p.

GUIDE TO ALBERT SCHWEITZER COLLECTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES. By Albert Schweitzer. Albert Schweitzer Fellowship, New York, 1981. 63 pages. Paper, n.p.

REALITY AND EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY. By T.F. Torrance. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 168 pages. Paper, $8.95.

PSYCHIC HEALING. An Expose of an Occult Phenomenon. By John Weldon and Zola Levitt. Moody Press, Chicago, 1982. 250 pages. Paper, n.p.

PREDIGT UND SOZIALE WIRKLICHKEIT. By Werner Welzig. Daphnis, 1981. 193 pages. Paper, n.p.

BEYOND BUDDHISM. J.Isamu Yamamoto. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1982. 138 pages. Paper, $5.50.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. By Robert Guelich. Word Books Publisher, Waco, Texas, 1982. n.p.

PREPARATION FOR THE GOSPEL. By Eusebius. Translated by Edwin Hamilton Gifford. 2 volumes. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1981. 948 pages. Paper, $24.95.

CHINA THE EMERGING CHALLENGE. A Christian Perspective. By Paul E. Kauffman. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1982. 317 pages. Paper, $8.95.

SEASONABLE REVOLUTIONARY. The Mind of Charles Chauncy. By Charles H. Lippy. Nelson-Hall, Chicago, Illinois, 1981. 179 pages. Cloth, n.p.

DAILY REMEMBRANCES. By James Smith. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1982. 380 pages. Cloth, n.p.

THE CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO DEATH, DYING AND BEREAVEMENT. By Roger Shipley. ETC Publications, Palm Springs, California, 1982. 245 pages. Paper, $7.95.

THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN'S SEARCH FOR SELF-ESTEEM. By W. Peter Blitchington, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1982. 166 pages. Cloth, n.p.

INTRODUCTION TO PASTORAL CARE. By William V. Arnold. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 204 pages. Paper, $10.95.

SIGN OF RECONCILIATION AND CONVERSION. The Sacrament of Penance for Our Times. By Monika K. Hellwig. Michael Glazier, Wilmington, Delaware, 1982. 152 pages. Paper, $6.95.

WITH WANDERING STEPS AND SLOW. Growing toward God. By Joy Hoffman. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 1982. 140 pages. Paper, $4.95.

SPEAKING OF JESUS. Finding the Words for Witness. By Richard Lischer. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 121 pages. Paper, $6.95.

A NEW AMERICAN JUSTICE. By Daniel C. Maguire. Wiston Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1980. 218 pages. Paper, n.p.

STRESS MANAGEMENT FOR MINISTERS. By Charles L. Rassieur. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 168 pages. Paper, $8.95.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. By Charles C. Ryrie. Moody Press, Chicago, 1982. 117 pages. Paper, n.p.

AT YOUR WORD, LORD. How Prayer Releases the Power of God in Your Life. By William L. Vaswig. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1982. 128 pages. Paper, n.p.

THE RISE OF WORLD LUTHERANISM: AN AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE. By E. Clifford Nelson. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1982. 448 pages. Cloth, $24.95.