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Justification and the Office of the Holy Ministry

The first five articles in this issue were originally papers presented at the 35th Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions held in Fort Wayne on January 18–20, 2012 under the theme “Justification in a Contemporary Context.” The final two articles, by Joel Elowsky and Roland Ziegler, were first delivered as the plenary papers of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Theology Professors Conference that met at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, on May 29 to June 1, 2012, under the theme “To Obtain Such Faith . . . The Ministry of Teaching the Gospel” (AC V). It has been the practice of the two seminary journals to alternate in publishing plenary papers from this bi-annual conference in order that these studies may be shared with the wider church.

The Editors

Justification: Jesus vs. Paul

David P. Scaer

Inspiration for this topic came from an article featured on the front cover of the December 20, 2010, issue of *Christianity Today* by Scott McKnight reflecting on the debate in New Testament studies on differences between Jesus and Paul. For Jesus, preaching the kingdom of God was important; for Paul, it was justification.¹ An even more recent publication, *Jesus Have I Loved, but Paul?* by J.R. Daniel Kirk, suggests a similar theme.² A seminary student called my attention to *Did St Paul Get Jesus Right? The Gospel According to Paul* by David Wenham.³ Wenham addresses Paul's relationship to Jesus in the matter of justification. Some things are in perpetual opposition to each other. Men *are* from Mars, women *are* from Venus. *Viva la difference!*

One cannot serve God and mammon; for some, Jesus and Paul saw things differently. Gospels in the forefront of the canon followed by the epistles set the stage for pitting Jesus against Paul—or was it the other way around? In any event, it began when the church was hardly off the ground. Ebionites favored Matthew's more Jewish Jesus, and Marcion constructed Christianity out of Paul's letters. Another fork in the road came at the Reformation when Roman Catholics took the road leading to the Gospels with James as a guide and Lutherans took the Pauline option. Eighteenth-century rationalists favored the Gospels' simple moral teachings over Paul's complex dogmatic theology.⁴ Nineteenth-century classical liberalism followed suit, as did the Social Gospel by abridging Jesus' message to loving God and the neighbor.

Choosing Jesus over Paul in retrieving authentic Christianity faces an obstacle in the scholarly consensus that Paul died before the Gospels were written (A.D. 68–100).⁵ This means that the evangelists were either

¹ Scott McKnight, "Jesus vs. Paul," *Christianity Today* 54 (December 2010): 26.

² J.R. Daniel Kirk, *Jesus Have I Loved, But Paul? A Narrative Approach to the Problem of Pauline Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2012).

³ David Wenham, *Did St Paul Get Jesus Right? The Gospel According to Paul* (Oxford, UK: Lion Hudson, 2010).

⁴ Wenham goes into the specifics of the differences between Jesus and Paul in his chapter "Was Paul the Inventor of Christian Doctrines?" in *Did St. Paul Get Jesus Right?* 81–96.

⁵ See David C. Sim, "Matthew and the Pauline Corpus: A Preliminary Intertextual Study,"

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unaware of Paul's epistles, ignored them, or constructed their Gospels out of other sources (e.g., the Q document and the Hebrew Matthew, oral tradition, and their own creative imaginations).⁶ With this scenario, it can hardly be said that Paul reacted to Jesus; rather, Matthew reacted to Paul's antinomianism.⁷ If the Gospels preserved the authentic simple religion of Jesus, as preserved in Q, it should be explained why Paul, who defined his life as Christ's life, did not absorb more of it into his epistles. Before his conversion, he was resident in Jerusalem and made several visits afterwards. Left unexplained is how the apostles remaining in Jerusalem left Paul's newer theology, if indeed this is what it was, unanswered. Though both Gospels and Epistles were read in the worship of early churches, apparently no one recognized any discrepancies.

In having to choose between Jesus and Paul, Lutherans have come down on the side of Paul's definition of justification in setting the terms for reading and interpreting the Gospels. The law condemns and the gospel provides salvation. Francis Pieper, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod's premier dogmatician, held that justification "is the apex of all Christian teaching" and "that all other doctrines which he [Paul] preached stand in close relation to the central truth that men are saved without any merit of their own, by faith in the crucified Christ." Pieper then adds, "Thus Christology serves merely as the *substructure* of the doctrine of justification."⁸ This would sound better without the word "merely." If I read this correctly, justification is ranked higher than Christology, at which point we may want to pause. Ranking one doctrine, whichever one it is, as superior to others has consequences, especially when it is imposed on passages that speak of other matters.⁹ With their commitment to the Pauline doctrine of justification, Lutherans have had difficulty in coming

Journal for the Study of the New Testament 31 (2009): 405.

⁶ So posits M. Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006). In a review of this commentary, Darrell L. Bock notes, "By far the most important feature of this commentary is its consistent presentation of Mark as the creative Evangelist telling a story with his eye far more on his community than on historical concerns about Jesus." *Review of Biblical Literature* (<http://www.bookreviews.org> [accessed November 29, 2012]) 2007.

⁷ Sim, "Matthew and the Pauline Corpus," 401–422.

⁸ Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 3 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950–1953), 3:512–515. Cf. Francis Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatik*, 3 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1920–1924), 2: 619. "So is nach der Schrift die ganze Christologie (L[atin] *de persona et de officio Christi*) lediglich *Unterbau* für die Lehre der Rechtfertigung." Emphasis in original.

⁹ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Recovering the Unity of the Bible: One Continuous Story, Plan and Purpose* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009).

to terms with James and, more seriously, with the Sermon on the Mount and its supposedly impossible requirements and subsequent penalties. Relief is then provided by Paul, who is assigned the enviable role of the purveyor of the sweet gospel. Thus, preachers looking for a passage on the law's impossible demands find it in Jesus' command to be perfect (Matt 5:48), an impossibility resolved by Paul's doctrine that we are justified by grace without the works of the law—a close call indeed if one only had to rely on Jesus.

This bifurcation between Jesus and Paul leads to a new kind of *homologomena* and *antilegomena* division of the canon, with Lutherans following the reformer in favoring Romans, Galatians, 1 Peter, and John and with Roman Catholics leaning towards the Gospels—especially Matthew—and James. This does not mean that either faith community uses only its favored books, but each picks and chooses isolated passages from its less-favored books to support views derived from the favored ones. A case in point: in 2010, Roman Catholics commemorated the bimillennial of Paul's birth at St. Peter's Cathedral in Scranton, PA. Lay members read selections from Paul's epistles that dealt with the indwelling of Christ. Noticeably absent were those passages that Lutherans use for their understanding of justification. Not heard was Rom 1:17, "The righteous man shall live by faith alone."¹⁰ This may have been coincidental, or perhaps not. Each faith community has its favorites.

An internal challenge to the traditional Lutheran or Protestant position has arisen in the New Perspective on Paul. The New Perspective dismisses the typical Lutheran view that God declares the sinner justified, known as the synthetic view, which holds God responsible for the action, and sees justification as God recognizing the believer as justified by his or her inclusion in the covenant, the analytical view. So, in the dogmatic sequence, justification is relegated to ecclesiology (where do we belong?) and not to soteriology (how we are saved?).¹¹ For the New Perspective, first-century Judaism was a religion of grace and not works. Its error was not allowing a

¹⁰ My translation. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scriptural references are from the Revised Standard Version.

¹¹ The November 2010 annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Atlanta, GA, took up the topic of the New Perspective, with one of its leading proponents, N. T. Wright, as one presenter. A critical essay was given by Thomas Schreiner, "Justification: The Saving Righteousness of God in Christ," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 54 no. 1 (March 2011): 19–34. For Wright, "Justification is not how someone *becomes* a Christian. It is the declaration that they *have become* Christian," *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 125; emphasis in original. See N.T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996) 3–144. Emphasis in original.

place for Gentiles in the covenant.¹² Thus, Paul's main task was to reconcile Jews and Gentiles, and the proclamation of justification was a program to resolve ethnic tensions. However, if this was the case, then the Matthean Jesus faced the same issue in a more subtle way. His sayings are superficially favorable to the Jews (e.g., "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," Matt 15:24), but the exemplary believers are Gentiles, beginning with the magi who worship Jesus as God (Matt 2:11) and concluding with the soldiers on Golgotha who confessed, "Truly this was the Son of God!" (Matt 27:54). This tension between what Jesus says and does is resolved in Matthew's conclusion where the command to make disciples out of all the Gentiles makes no mention of the Jews (Matt 28:20). Israel has lost its exclusive claim to divine favor. Luke takes a separate but equal approach in letting each group live side by side. No integration here. Jesus is "a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel" (Luke 2:32), and the disciples will be "witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Jews are Jews, and Gentiles are Gentiles.

Another challenge to the traditional Pauline-Lutheran view of justification comes from the Finnish School's proposal that, for Luther, justification is God's indwelling in the believer, a fundamental doctrine in Eastern Orthodoxy now promoted by some Roman Catholic theologians under the code words *theosis*, divinization, or deification.¹³ Roman Catholic scholars have shown a greater appreciation for Luther,¹⁴ but without surrendering the role ascribed to merit in making the believer acceptable to God.¹⁵ Whatever differences Lutherans and Roman Catholics have over justification, Pope Benedict XVI agrees with Luther that the fundamental question of human existence is the search for a gracious God.¹⁶

¹² Taking the New Perspective School one step further is the "radical new perspective." See John C. Olson, "Pauline Gentile Praying Among Jews," *Pro Ecclesia* 20 (Fall 2011): 411–431. Olson sees justification in terms of reconciliation of Jews and Gentiles as equal, but holds "that Paul remained within Judaism and observed the Torah, but opposed full Torah observance for the Gentiles," 431. A Messianic synagogue was one that would welcome Gentiles without requiring full observance and thus become "the multiethnic bridge that the first century Jewish *ekklesia* was," 430.

¹³ Michael J. Gorman, "Romans: The First Christian Treatise on Theosis," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 5 no. 1 (Spring 2011): 13–34, and Stephen Finlan, "Deification in Jesus' Teaching" in *Theosis: Deification in Christian Theology*, vol. 2, ed. Vladimir Kharlamov (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011): 21–41.

¹⁴ Johann Heinz, *Justification and Merit: Luther vs. Catholicism* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981), 251–330.

¹⁵ For a recent defense of merits in the Roman Catholic system, see Gary A. Anderson, "The Biblical Purgatory," *First Things* 217 (November 2011): 39–44.

¹⁶ Appended at the end of this essay is the address that Pope Benedict XVI gave on

Every community of faith singles out one doctrine as its center—what Lutherans call the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*. For Catholicism, it is recognizing the pope as the final arbiter of doctrine and practice, along with the practice of the Mass. Reformed theology gives center stage to God's sovereignty and the covenant. Feminist theology gives this honor to sexual equality, so that even its trinitarian understanding of God is compromised. Pentecostalism focuses on tongue-speaking. Evangelicalism is marked by defining faith as a decision for Jesus and allegiance to biblical authority. Each faith community regards outsiders as "separated brethren," to borrow a Roman Catholic phrase, and not apostates. Deviations from core beliefs can be found in every community, but if those beliefs are set aside completely, the fiber knitting the group together unravels. Since the Lutheran eggs are in the Pauline justification basket, we have the larger stake in the New Perspective¹⁷ than do the Reformed, who see God's sovereignty at the center.

The New Perspective sees justification horizontally in that the sinner is justified and finds salvation by inclusion in the covenant, the analytical view.¹⁸ Lutherans, like Roman Catholics, traditionally view justification vertically as God's acceptance of the sinner, though each provides a different way of achieving this. While Lutherans speak of justification by faith, faith is not a factor in one's acceptability to God. This point separates them from Evangelicals. Justification is a prior reality in Christ (*extra nos*) and precedes faith (1 Cor 1:30). When viewed from God's perspective, it is either called objective justification because it occurred once and for all in Christ's resurrection (Rom 4:25), eliminating any possibility of human contribution, or it is called universal justification, to indicate that all

September 23, 2011, behind closed doors to representatives of Germany's Evangelical Church.

¹⁷ In making alliances with faith communities that do not place justification as the core doctrine, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) has already sacrificed its Lutheran identity; however, all this may have already happened at the 1963 Lutheran World Federation conference in Helsinki, when its member churches could not agree on a formula for justification. Though determined to maintain a Lutheran identity, the North American Lutheran Church (NALC), a recent breakaway church from the ELCA, incorporates this fatal weakness into its program. Though current proposals for redefining Paul's doctrine of justification are hardly confined to Lutheran scholars, alleged and real differences between Jesus and Paul on justification have greater consequences for Lutherans.

¹⁸ N.T. Wright, "Justification: Yesterday, Today and Forever," *Journal of the Evangelical Society* 54 no. 1 (March 2011): 49–63, "I have said enough to remind you that the major context of Paul's major 'justification' passages is not individual search for a gracious God but the question of how you know who belongs to God's people." And again, "My main point, then, about the context of Paul's justification-language is that the question of justification is always bound up with the question of Israel, of the coming together of Jews and Gentiles in the Messiah," 55.

humanity condemned in Adam is justified in the greater Adam, Jesus Christ. Here, it is better to speak of justification in the singular and not the plural. Justification of individuals, however, takes place only by faith.¹⁹ Hans Küng called this general and personal justification and adds, “[B]oth must be seen as the two sides of a single truth: *All* men are justified in Jesus Christ and only the *faithful* are justified in Jesus Christ.”²⁰

One reason Roland Ziegler offers for why Eduard Preuss, an Old Testament professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, joined the Roman Catholic Church was that on the basis of the Sermon on the Mount he thought that works of mercy and not simply a confession of Jesus were required. He sided with Jesus and James.²¹ This was simply the reverse side of Luther’s argument in siding with Paul against James, severing the latter from the canon. Lutherans allow for canonical abridgment, but rarely exercise the privilege. James is retained by imposing a Pauline template on the controverted epistle. This is not really playing according to Hoyle, but replacing a rusty bolt in an embarrassing epistle is easier than readjusting the overarching construct.

Essential for any theological system is leaving the central article intact, but readjustments come with the price of damaging a writer’s intentions. McKnight observes that Evangelicals fit the theology of Jesus and Paul into each other,²² though we have all been doing this since the apostolic era. He notes that while the preaching of Jesus is riddled with kingdom language, Paul has less than fifteen references to the kingdom. The pro-Jesus side identifies the gospel with the kingdom, and Paul’s supporters see the gospel as synonymous with justification by faith. McKnight resolves these differences by saying that both approaches rest on a christological foundation, a position with which we can resonate at least for the moment. “The gospel is first and foremost about Jesus. Or, to put it theologically, it’s about Christology.”²³ This means that Jesus preached about himself, as did Paul and other apostles. As much as McKnight’s understanding of theol-

¹⁹ According to Karl Holl, “Luther envisions the event [of justification] from above as an act of God, the other from below as the experience of the human being.” *Die Rechtfertigungslehre in Licht der Geschichte des Protestantismus* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1906), 8, quoted in Gregory Walter, “Karl Holl (1866–1926) and the Recovery of Promise in Luther,” *Lutheran Quarterly* 25 (Winter 2011): 400–401.

²⁰ Hans Küng, *Justification: The Doctrine of Karl Barth* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), 223; emphasis in original.

²¹ Roland Ziegler, “Eduard Preuss and C.F.W. Walther,” *CTQ* 75 (July/October 2011): 294.

²² McKnight, “Jesus vs. Paul,” 26.

²³ McKnight, “Jesus vs. Paul,” 28.

ogy as christology is commendable, he includes not only Christ in his concept of what the kingdom is, but also the people and territory of Israel and the Torah by which the people are governed.²⁴ For Lutherans, kingdom is Jesus' self-referent, or at least it should be understood this way. He is the preacher, the sermon, and the content. All this is very Luther-like and a position Pope Benedict XVI supports,²⁵ but several problems remain. Even if the gospel is foundational for both Jesus and Paul, in Paul it is present only in outline and it in no way matches the quantitative, historically detailed magnificence of the Gospels. McKnight does not make it clear that the source of the gospel for Paul was even in some small way the written Gospels. That is a question for critical studies; our question is whether Jesus taught Paul's doctrine of justification, a position that Pieper held.²⁶

Apart from traditional Lutheran and Roman Catholic differences, justification for both is forensic in that it implies a trial of the accused in a courtroom with the hope that the judge will render a favorable verdict. A secular version of this kind of justification, based on the evidence, may be detected in how Steve Jobs viewed his accomplishments. He did not seem to believe in a personal God, but hoped that his extraordinary talents would vindicate him for at least the next fifty years. Accordingly, it may be argued that forensic justification is not foreign to the human experience. Our task is now locating a doctrine of justification in the synoptic Gospels, especially Matthew, for whom God has already come, is coming now, and will come again in judgment.

The Creed's "and he will come again to judge the living and the dead" implies that, even as we look toward the future, a judgment has already taken place in the past. This can be extracted from Matthew's genealogy with its four references to Babylon (Matt 1:11-12, 17), the place where Israel lost her national identity. This theme is immediately repeated in Matthew's account of the slaughter of the boy children over whom Rachel weeps as Israel is taken away into Babylon (Matt 2:18). John the Baptist continues the theme of a present justification as judgment in the metaphor of the ax laid against the roots (Matt 3:10). In the place of Israel, God raises stones, the Gentiles, as Abraham's children. Status as God's people can only be retained by bringing forth fruits of repentance (3:7-8; i.e., Israel

²⁴ McKnight, "Jesus vs. Paul," 27.

²⁵ See the pope's *Address to the Evangelical Clergy*, appended to this essay.

²⁶ "When Jesus declares that the Son of Man is come to give His life a ransom for many, that He shed His blood for the remission of sin (Matt 20:28; 26:28), He makes the 'Pauline doctrine of justification' the center of His teaching and leaves no room for a justification based on the 'morality of man,'" *Christian Dogmatics*, 3:513; cf. *Christliche Dogmatik* 3:618.

acknowledges her sins, believes in Jesus, and demonstrates a change of heart by her actions). Faith is crucial in receiving John's Baptism, but the justification at the Jordan requires some evidence of faith. John the Baptist plays the role of Elijah the prosecutor, laying out God's accusations against Israel. To his chagrin, the divine judge himself appears disguised as a defendant to be baptized with sinners and before whom John presents himself as a defendant (Matt 3:11, 14).

Nothing here resembles Paul's doctrine of justification in which works are not a factor. Rather, for the Baptist justification requires that one present the evidences of faith to the judge. Jesus makes his formal appearance as the new Moses, the new lawgiver, in the Sermon on the Mount, in which he sets down the terms of the kingdom (Matt 5:1–8:1). He also assumes the role of judge, sentencing to exclusion from the Father's kingdom those who have not done his will (Matt 5:21–23). In the more elaborate trial towards the end of the Gospel, Jesus examines the works of the sheep and the goats, pronounces a verdict, and issues appropriate sentences—all very judicial, all very forensic (Matt 25:31–48).

In his epistle, James describes Jesus in this double role as “the one lawgiver and judge, he who is able to save and to destroy” (εἷς ἐστὶν νομοθέτης καὶ κριτὴς ὁ δυνάμενος σῶσαι καὶ ἀπολέσαι, Jas 4:12), words that echo Jesus' own words, “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt 10:28). Though commentators see this as a reference to God, within the terms of Matthew, the judge is Jesus himself. The intervening second, third, and fourth discourses develop the terms of the Sermon on the Mount and present those who have met or failed the standards with appropriate rewards and penalties. By self-inclusion in the Beatitudes, Jesus makes himself the standard for the kingdom and the final judgment, in which sheep and goats learn of their sentences. The works by which they are judged are the works Christ does. This is not a private but a public trial in which the judge lets himself be questioned by those whom he sentences about the justice of his verdicts. Jesus steps into the witness box to be questioned by those whom he finds innocent and acceptable. Here we can interject McKnight's observation: “We can't find much in the Gospel that shows Jesus thinking in terms of justification by faith.”²⁷

Clouding matters for Lutherans is a law-gospel paradigm in which the law condemns and the gospel saves. For Matthew, however, law means

²⁷ McKnight, “Jesus vs. Paul,” 28.

the Old Testament, while gospel means the account of the life Jesus. As Matthew nears the end of his account, he sees what he has written as the gospel itself (Matt 24:14, 26:13), though scholars might even be more hesitant to concede this point. Jesus is lawgiver in the sense that he sets down terms for the kingdom. Though this might sound strange in Lutheran ears, these terms are the gospel. While some passages might be interpreted in the Pauline sense that Jesus came to fulfill the law in our place, they are his self-descriptions as the Messiah who had come to fulfill the Old Testament. For example, "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished" (Matt 5:17-18).

Acknowledging Jesus as God is necessary for inclusion in the kingdom, but this confession is not enough. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt 7:27). In theological parlance, repentance is regarded as a synonym for sorrow, but in the gospels its chief component is faith. Matthew's "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 3:2) is clarified by Mark, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel" (Matt 1:15). The "and" is an exegetical *καί*. Verdicts are rendered on the evidences of what the believers have done (i.e., their works). Relief is found in John's baptism, but God requires faith in the judge who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and with fire and "whose winnowing fork is in his hand, and [who] will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire" (Matt 3:11-12), language reminiscent of the Apocalypse where Jesus' "eyes were like a flame of fire" (Rev 1:14). More than any other New Testament book, Matthew's apocalypticism most closely resembles the terror of the Book of Revelation, the apocalypse of God's judgment.

Justification as judgment is an event that appears at the conclusion of periods in the history of salvation when that salvation is rejected. Judgment punctuates each of Matthew's first four discourses, highlighting how God has already carried out a judgment from which no escape is again provided. Thus, in the first discourse, those who do not take seriously Jesus' words of the Sermon in the Mount are like a house destroyed by floods, a scene reminiscent of the Noahic flood (Matt 7:24-28). Jesus picks up this theme in the pericope of the unknown hour of his death, designating it as a world judgment (Matt 24:37-38; cf. 27:45). Despising the apostolic proclamation, the subject of the second discourse,

brings about a fiery fate worse than Sodom and Gomorrah's (Matt 7:15). Bad fish, like tares, are consumed by fire (Matt 13:30; 49-50). In the fourth discourse, eternal incarceration awaits the unforgiving servant (Matt 18:34). In the fifth and final discourse, sheep find safety at Jesus' right hand, but goats head off to everlasting fire (Matt 25:34, 41). Judgment as justification comes to a climax in Jesus' death and resurrection, historical events accompanied by the apocalyptic ones of the rending of the temple curtain, earthquakes, tombs yielding their dead, and a bright angel descending from heaven (Matt 27:51-54; 28:2-4). Judgment is no longer an event distant in time, but one that has begun to take place. These pericopes individually or collectively do not yield Paul's doctrine of finding a gracious in God in faith, but a justification in which God is gracious to those who have been gracious to others and passes judgment on those who are not. This is an analytical justification (i.e., God looks at the evidences and renders the sentence). N.T. Wright may be right that justification consists in belonging to the right group.

Our argument about justification in the preaching of Jesus will center on three pericopes in Matthew: wisdom being justified by her works (Matt 11:19), the rich young man sorrowing over the challenge of Jesus to sell all his possessions to give to the poor and failing to do so (Matt 19:16-22), and the judgment of the sheep and the goats (Matt 25:31-46). The latter two are best understood against the background of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:1-8:1). Matthew 11:19 sounds Pauline, "The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds" (καὶ ἐνδικαιώθη ἡ σοφία ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῆς).

In view here is the justification not of the sinner but of Jesus, whose enemies use his alleged public gluttony and inebriation in the company of society's outcasts as evidences that he is not God's prophet. Jesus turns the table on his opponents by showing the inconsistency of their belief that John's abstention is evidence he had a demon (Matt 11:18). Jesus does not question the integrity of the evidences against him, but proves he is the God who is happily found in the company of sinners. One might call it the doctrine of objective justification in practice. God loves the sinners and so associates with them. In keeping company with sinners, Jesus is justified. His actions show who he really is. Similar is Abraham's justification by his willingness to sacrifice Isaac, and Rahab putting her life on the line to save the lives of the spies (Jas 2:23-25). The RSV and the ESV translation of τῶν ἔργων as "deeds," as in "Wisdom is justified by her deeds," and not "works" weakens the theological import that works do count. John's fruits

of repentance correspond to the works done by Abraham, Rahab, and Jesus. Their works are the norm and standard for ours, what our confessions call the 'third use of the law' (FC SD VI). Luke's parallel, "Yet wisdom is justified by all her children (καὶ ἐνδικαιώθη ἡ σοφία ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν τέκνων αὐτῆς, 7:35), is intriguing in that he substitutes "children" for "works," suggesting Christians are evidences of who Jesus really is as God. Clearly the deity of Jesus is in view in Matt 11:49, "Therefore also the Wisdom of God said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute.'"

Imposing a Pauline template onto the account of the rich young man (Matt 19:16–22; Luke 18:18–23; Mark 10:17–22) results in a conclusion that no one can really do what Jesus wants, an approach often taken with the Sermon on the Mount. Only the gospel will redeem the poor fellow. Matthew (19:16–17) and Luke (18:18–19) introduce their accounts with Jesus discoursing on the young man's address of him as good, a greeting that implies that he recognizes that in some way Jesus is God. Jesus then tries to develop this idea by asking, "Why do you ask me about what is good? One there is who is good" (Matt 19:17). In asking how to inherit eternal life, Jesus directs him to the commandments and commends him for keeping them. The final step to eternal life is perfection, which is attained by selling his possessions and giving to the poor. Then he will find treasure in heaven. Apart from the context, the preacher is tempted to intervene with the gospel so that the congregation and perhaps eventually the young man himself can have the assurance that their faith will save them from not taking the challenge seriously. However, Matthew goes in the opposite direction by pursuing the idea that works deserve rewards. In reflecting on the encounter, Jesus' disciples remind him that what the young man could not do in giving up his possessions they have done and, accordingly, ask for remuneration. Jesus responds that they will be rewarded with thrones next to his (Matt 19:27–30), though what he gives with one hand he takes away with the other.²⁸ Those with proximity to Jesus will receive no greater rewards than those who come later (Matt 19:30–20:16). "The first shall be last and the last shall be first."

Since the young man asks about inheriting eternal life, the account has to do with justification at the judgment, a theme that underlies the entire

²⁸ Huub van de Sandt sees 19:16–22, 23–26, and 27–30 as subsections of one account. See "Eternal Life as a Reward for Choosing the Right Way: The Story of the Rich Young Man (Matt 19:16–30)," in *Life Beyond Death in Matthew's Gospel: Religious Metaphor or Bodily Reality?*, ed. Wim Weren, Huub van de Sandt, and Joseph Verheyden (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 105. I would add that the parable of the workers in the vineyard is a homiletical reflection on the section that begins with the account of the rich young man.

Gospel of Matthew. He is caught between the two incompatible alternatives of serving God and mammon, a theme Jesus introduces in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 6:24). Also at play is the choice of the individual between the way that leads to eternal life and the way that leads to death (Matt 7:13-24). The former is recognized by good deeds and the latter by evil deeds.²⁹ More is in view than refraining from what is prohibited in the Ten Commandments. His assertion that he has kept the commands, τηρήσων τὰς ἐντολάς, corresponds to Matt 28:20, where Jesus requires that his disciples teach the Gentiles to keep or treasure all he has commanded, τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμεν ὑμῖν.

The Beatitudes introduce the Sermon on the Mount by setting forth positive behaviors as the standards (e.g., Jesus' words, "those hungering for righteousness shall be filled," which are echoed later in the parable concerning the trial of the sheep and the goats³⁰). The rich young man's reply that he has kept the commandments is not quite a confession, but at least he knows the teachings of Jesus. He is on the brink of faith. His hesitancy to commit himself is anticipated in the parable of the two houses, one representing those who only hear the words of Jesus and do nothing, and the other representing those who hear, believe, and do something. He thinks he has passed the first part of the exam for discipleship, but Jesus adds this requirement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 19:19). These words, which summarize the second table of the law, are carried out in giving to the poor. Refusing to do this, he shows he does not really love neighbor, the same reason for which the goats are condemned (Matt 25:41-25).

A theological exposition of the account of the young man is provided in Jesus' response to the question of the great commandment:

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" [ποία ἐντολὴ μεγάλη ἐν τῷ νόμῳ;] And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 22:36-39).

Loving the neighbor shares in the importance of loving God, an issue implied in the account of the young man. Who the young man thinks Jesus is belongs to his reach for perfection. Setting the goal of perfection before

²⁹ van de Sandt, "Eternal Life as a Reward," 108.

³⁰ David Wenham, "The Sevenfold Form of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew's Gospel," *The Expository Times* 121 (May 2010), 378.

the man might provide the opportunity for the intrusion of the Pauline doctrine of the law's impossible demands, but the three uses of τέλειος ("perfect") in Matthew have something else in view. In the Sermon on the Mount, the perfection required of believers is modeled after the perfection of the heavenly Father, who shows his love for his enemies by providing for them (Matt 5:48). Because the man is required to give his treasures to the poor, in a strange way he may have come to see them as his enemies, thieves who will take away what he sees as rightfully his own. In loving and providing for his enemies, God makes himself subject to the command to love the neighbor. Or, to put it another way, the command to love the neighbor tells us about the God who is love. Strange as it seems, God's enemies become his neighbors for whom he provides (Matt 5:45). Indiscriminate love is required for inclusion in the kingdom.

The account of the rich young man serves as a commentary on the Sermon on the Mount and anticipates the judgment of the sheep and the goats. It also serves as christological commentary in reverse. This is not poverty for the sake of poverty, but poverty for the sake of assisting those who have nothing, a thought that might be behind Paul's description of Jesus' humiliation: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor 8:9). Applying the imagery of the rich young man to Jesus is the counter-reflection of the rich young man who could not divest himself of his riches. Held before the man is not impossible law but the christological model, the *homo factus est*, the emptying of God for the enrichment of the world, a concept that properly belongs in the Lutheran understanding of the third use of the law.

Jesus' teachings in Matthew are bracketed by the opening words in the first of the formal discourses, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:3), and the parallel and final phrases in the fifth and last discourse, "'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me. . . . Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt 25:45-46). We have come full circle. He who is poor in spirit is found in the poverty of the sick, hungry, naked, and imprisoned, but he is also present in those who in helping the poor are unaware that their good deeds have been done to Christ. God's verdict of justification is rewarding eternal life to those who are unaware of the good they have done and sentencing to the eternal fire those who have attended to their own needs but not those of others. Within the context of Jesus' teachings, the conclusion of the

Athanasian Creed is not so striking.

At his coming all human beings will rise with their bodies and will give and account of their own deeds. Those who have done good things will enter into eternal life, and those who have done evil things into eternal fire. This is the catholic faith; a person cannot be saved without believing this firmly and faithfully.³¹

As much as Lutherans side with Paul, their confessional allegiance brings them face to face with another reality.

Lutherans and other pro-Paul Protestants will never cease in trying to make Jesus look like Paul. John Piper finds a point of entry for the Pauline doctrine of justification into the Gospels in Luke 18:14, where the Pharisee is not justified but the tax collector is: "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified."³² According to the Pauline perspective, the tax collector was justified by faith in contrast to the Pharisee's attempt to justify himself by works. A simple and attractive solution, but it was the tax collector's poverty of spirit that showed him to be just in God's eyes. This comports with Luke's portraits of Zechariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1:6) and Simeon (Luke 2:25), who in having nothing are righteous before God. It almost seems that Luke's Gospel with its accumulation of poor people from the shepherds to the thief on the cross is an exposition of Matthew's first beatitude, "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens"—all of whom were found righteous in God's eyes.

At the beginning of this essay, we posited the solution for differences between Jesus and Paul by suggesting that each is looking at humanity's legal accountability to God at different places in the courtroom trial. Works, especially when we admire our own, can never be the assurance of salvation, a program that Pietism offered with the addendum that we keep track of our self-improvement. Justification at the end time comes through works that identify us with the Father, who does good because he is good. Jesus was sinless and was not confronted with seeking justification through being assured his sins were forgiven. He was confronted with having to justify himself before the world; and in the end God justified him by raising him from the dead. Jesus offered a different perspective on

³¹ Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, tr. Charles Arand, et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 25.

³² "At one pastor's [*sic*] conference, Piper asked a simple question: Did Jesus preach Paul's gospel? To answer this question, Piper probed the one and only time the word *justified* in a Pauline sense appears in the Gospels," McKnight, "Jesus vs. Paul," 27; emphasis in original.

justification from what Paul, and for that matter Luther, offered because throughout all of his life and in his preaching he was, as James says, the lawgiver in setting down the terms of salvation and the judge. This was realized eschatology in spades.

Appendix

Here follows the full address that pope Benedict XVI gave on September 23, 2011, behind closed doors to representatives of Germany's Evangelical Church.³³ He recalled the question once asked by Martin Luther, which gave rise to Lutheranism: "What is God's position towards me? Where do I stand before God?" The pope went on to say that this question is still relevant, and one that each person must ask and finally confront.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I begin to speak, I would like first of all to thank you for this opportunity to come together with you. I am particularly grateful to Pastor Schneider for greeting me and welcoming me into your midst with his kind words. At the same time I want to express my thanks for the particularly gracious gesture that our meeting can be held in this historic location.

As the Bishop of Rome, it is deeply moving for me to be meeting representatives of the Council of the Lutheran Church of Germany here in the ancient Augustinian convent in Erfurt. This is where Luther studied theology. This is where he was ordained a priest in 1507. Against his father's wishes, he did not continue the study of law, but instead he studied theology and set off on the path towards priesthood in the Order of Saint Augustine. On this path, he was not simply concerned with this or that. What constantly exercised him was the question of God, the deep passion and driving force of his whole life's journey. "How do I receive the grace of God?" This question struck him in the heart and lay at the foundation of all his theological searching and inner struggle. For him theology was no mere academic pursuit, but the struggle for oneself, which in turn was a struggle for and with God.

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<http://www.romereports.com/palio/popes-speech-in-lutheran-church-salvation-comes-with-a-faith-thats-lived-out-english-4974.html#.UlmjjWfGW-o> (accessed October 25, 2012). Translator unknown.

"How do I receive the grace of God?" The fact that this question was the driving force of his whole life never ceases to make an impression on me. For who is actually concerned about this today—even among Christians? What does the question of God mean in our lives? In our preaching? Most people today, even Christians, set out from the presupposition that God is not fundamentally interested in our sins and virtues. He knows that we are all mere flesh. Insofar as people today believe in an afterlife and a divine judgement at all, nearly everyone presumes for all practical purposes that God is bound to be magnanimous and that ultimately he mercifully overlooks our small failings. But are they really so small, our failings? Is not the world laid waste through the corruption of the great, but also of the small, who think only of their own advantage? Is it not laid waste through the power of drugs, which thrives on the one hand on greed and avarice, and on the other hand on the craving for pleasure of those who become addicted? Is the world not threatened by the growing readiness to use violence, frequently masking itself with claims to religious motivation? Could hunger and poverty so devastate parts of the world if love for God and godly love of neighbor—of his creatures, of men and women—were more alive in us? I could go on.

No, evil is no small matter. Were we truly to place God at the centre of our lives, it could not be so powerful. The question, "What is God's position towards me, where do I stand before God?"—this burning question of Martin Luther must once more, doubtless in a new form, become our question, too. In my view, this is the first summons we should attend to in our encounter with Martin Luther.

Another important point: God, the one God, creator of heaven and earth, is no mere philosophical hypothesis regarding the origins of the universe. This God has a face, and he has spoken to us. He became one of us in the man Jesus Christ—who is both true God and true man. Luther's thinking, his whole spirituality, was thoroughly Christocentric: "What promotes Christ's cause" was for Luther the decisive hermeneutical criterion for the exegesis of sacred Scripture. This presupposes, however, that Christ is at the heart of our spirituality and that love for him, living in communion with him, is what guides our life.

Now perhaps you will say: all well and good, but what has this to do with our ecumenical situation? Could this just be an attempt to talk our way past the urgent problems that are still waiting for practical progress, for concrete results? I would respond by saying that the first and most important thing for ecumenism is that we keep in view just how much we have in common, not losing sight of it amid the pressure towards secularization—everything that makes us Christian in the first place and continues to be our gift and our task. It was the error of the Reformation period that for the most part we could only see what divided us and we failed to grasp existentially what we have in common in terms of the great deposit of sacred Scripture and the early Christian creeds. The great ecumenical step forward of recent decades is that we have become aware of all this common ground and that we acknowledge it as we pray and sing together, as we make our joint commitment to the Christian ethos in our dealings with the world, as we bear common witness to the God of Jesus Christ in this world as our undying foundation.

The risk of losing this, sadly, is not unreal. I would like to make two points here. The geography of Christianity has changed dramatically in recent times, and is in the process of changing further. Faced with a new form of Christianity, which is spreading with overpowering missionary dynamism, sometimes in frightening ways, the mainstream Christian denominations often seem at a loss. This is a form of Christianity with little institutional depth, little rationality and even less dogmatic content, and with little stability. This worldwide phenomenon poses a question to us all: what is this new form of Christianity saying to us, for better and for worse? In any event, it raises afresh the question about what has enduring validity and what can or must be changed—the question of our fundamental faith choice.

The Doctrine of Justification in the 19th Century: A Look at Schleiermacher's *Der christliche Glaube*

Naomichi Masaki

For Lutherans, the 19th century was the time of confessional revival and liturgical renewal. The vitality of the gospel was once again confessed and lived out, and what had been restored moved from Germany to the Nordic countries, North and Latin America, Australia, and other parts of the world. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is an heir of this remarkable confessional revival, shaped to a greater or lesser degree by some of the leaders of that movement, including C.F.W. Walther (1811–1887), Wilhelm Löhe (1808–1872), and Theodor Kliefoth (1810–1895).

In the wider ecclesiastical and academic context, the importance of 19th-century theology is enormous. It seems that all the theological trends that went beforehand were merged by some of the key theologians of the 19th century. In turn, the various forms and expressions which developed afterward sprang out of them.¹ At the center of the intellectual landscape of the century were three academic giants, all German: Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), G.W.F. Hegel (1770–1831), and Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834). Whether agreeing with them or not, theologians of the 19th century could not escape interacting with them. Arguably, the most influential among them for the life of the church was Schleiermacher. He dominated the theological scene for at least the first third of the century.²

¹ For example, Helmut Thielicke observes, “[W]e have to confess that the whole tree of the 19th and 20th centuries is present in seed-form in him [Schleiermacher] so far as the link between theological and intellectual history is concerned.” Helmut Thielicke, tr. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *Modern Faith and Thought* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 160.

² Claude Welch divided the 19th century into three segments: 1799–1835, 1835–1870, and 1870–1914. He observes that Schleiermacher dominated the first period as the major theologian, as Albrecht Ritschl did during the third. The second third of the century, when the confessional revival and liturgical renewal took place among the Lutherans, is designated simply as the time “between Schleiermacher and Ritschl.” Politically, the first period is characterized by the French Revolution followed by the Napoleonic wars and the Restoration, the second by the era of revolution, and the third by growing industrialism and urbanization. Claude Welch, *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 1, 1799–1870 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 1–8.

Karl Barth, in his famous *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, maintained that only Schleiermacher may be said to have given birth to an epoch.³ Werner Elert entitled his major work on the 19th-century theology, *Der Kampf um das Christentum . . . seit Schleiermacher*.⁴

Instead of examining the doctrine of justification in the entire 19th century, I will, for several reasons, engage mainly Schleiermacher's doctrine. First, the entire century is simply too expansive. I seriously considered presenting at least two prominent men, Schleiermacher and Ritschl, but, as the saying goes, "if you run after two hares, you will catch neither." Second, since Schleiermacher is usually called "the father of modern theology," knowledge of this theological giant will help us understand the whole stream of the 19th century in terms of direction and connection. We know that Francis Pieper labeled him "the worst heretic" of the 19th century and passionately complained that even some of the confessional Lutherans had followed his footsteps.⁵ By such remarks, he fostered a common opinion within our circles that Schleiermacher is a bad influence. But, as it is often the case, such labeling is dangerous and unscholarly. Before adopting the view of Pieper or of any other secondary source on Schleiermacher, we should actually read him.⁶ Third, while Schleiermacher has been known in our dogmatic tradition for years, he is a late comer in the English speaking world and in its scholarly interests. According to Terrence N. Tice in *The Cambridge Companion to Friedrich Schleiermacher*, the "Schleiermacher renaissance" took place in America as late as in 1964 through Richard R. Niebuhr's book *Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion*.⁷ In the 1980s, significant international dialogue and research on Schleiermacher began.⁸ Today, we witness a growing stream of translations and a

³ Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century: Its Background and History*, New Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 640.

⁴ Werner Elert, *Der Kampf um das Christentum: Geschichte der Beziehungen zwischen dem evangelischen Christentum in Deutschland und dem allgemeinen Denken seit Schleiermacher und Hegel* (München: C. H. Beck, 1921).

⁵ Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 3 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1950–53) 1: 114, 120, 128; 2: 117, 364.

⁶ David P. Scaer, for example, has demonstrated such a scholarly engagement with Schleiermacher in many of his writings, including his latest book, *Infant Baptism in Nineteenth Century Lutheran Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2011), 35–51.

⁷ Richard R. Niebuhr, *Schleiermacher on Christ and Religion: A New Introduction* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964).

⁸ The International Congress was held in Berlin on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Schleiermacher's death in 1984, and the International Schleiermacher Society was also organized around that time.

huge body of articles and essays on Schleiermacher.⁹ This continuing growth in Schleiermacher scholarship indicates that many find his theology to be helpful and relevant in church and academia. Here, I will first introduce Schleiermacher and his time, and then examine his *opus magnum*, *Der christliche Glaube* (*The Christian Faith*) of 1830/31 (the revised edition).¹⁰

I. Schleiermacher's Roots

Schleiermacher's loyalty to Prussia as a state seems to be related to the fact that, in his youth, he directly witnessed the power unleashed by the French revolution. It is not hard to imagine that he wanted to see the German people united and German culture preserved.¹¹ Schleiermacher is known as a translator of Plato, hermeneutics theorist, philosopher of religion, political activist, religious and cultural leader of Germany, a founding member of the University of Berlin faculty, and one of the greatest preachers of the day. When he was asked why his church, *Dreifaltigkeitskirche* in Berlin where he preached from 1808 to 1834, was always full, he said, "It is mainly students, young ladies, and military officers who come. The students come because I am a member of the examining board, the young ladies come because of the students, and the officers come in order to see the girls."¹² Perhaps this was a show of his modesty.

Schleiermacher came from a devout Reformed pastor's family and grew up under the influence of a lively Herrnhut pietism. As a young man, Schleiermacher already began to doubt some of the most fundamental doctrines, such as the vicarious atonement of Christ, his two natures, and

⁹ Terrence N. Tice, "Schleiermacher yesterday, today, and tomorrow," in *The Cambridge Companion to Friedrich Schleiermacher*, ed. Jacqueline Marina (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 307–317.

¹⁰ In this essay, the following texts are used: Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche*, 2nd edition of 1830 (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1861); *The Christian Faith*, tr. from 2nd edition, H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1989). Richard Crouter discusses the difference between the first and the second editions of *Der christliche Glaube* (1822–1822 and 1830–1831) in his *Friedrich Schleiermacher: Between Enlightenment and Romanticism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 226–47.

¹¹ Crouter, *Friedrich Schleiermacher*, 15, 83. Schleiermacher briefly taught at the University of Halle until the city was invaded by Napoleon and the University closed by force.

¹² "Es sind vor allem Studenten, junge Damen und Offiziere, die zu mir kommen. Die Studenten kommen, weil ich zur Prüfungskommission gehöre, die Damen kommen wegen der Studenten und die Offiziere wegen der Damen." I am indebted to Cornelia Schulz for providing this quote. Cf. *Der Korrespondent* 7 (May 1900): 120. This is a well-known anecdote in Germany.

the Trinity. Against the wishes of his father, he proceeded to the University of Halle, which had already abandoned the old pietism and had turned to rationalism in the spirit of Christian Wolff (1679–1754) and Johann Semler (1725–1791). There he fell in love with Plato and Kant.

In his first major theological work, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* (1799),¹³ we hear what would later become foundational in his *opus magnum*, *Der christliche Glaube*. In the Second Speech, he considers religion not from the theoretical point of view as a certain mode of *thinking* or from the practical point of view as a certain mode of *acting*.¹⁴ Rather, religion is primarily a *feeling* (*ein Gefühl*), a sentiment, an intuition. It is to be sought neither in books nor traditions, neither in the ceremonies nor dogmatic systems, but in the human heart. Religion is not concerned about what is true or false, or about who is right or wrong. All religious feeling is true, and the necessity of toleration is inherent in religion. Quarrels and persecutions do not come from religion, but from the spirit or system with which men have confounded it. By explaining religion in this way, Schleiermacher urged his audience not to despise religion, but to descend into the inmost sanctuary of their hearts.¹⁵

It is obvious that Schleiermacher had the metaphysics of Kant and Hegel in mind. Schleiermacher had not totally abandoned his pietistic upbringing which, by then, had been blended together with romantic influence. However, his point of departure was not the words of Christ but the human heart, so that whatever did not fit with the feeling of the heart was cut off from consideration. This may explain why Schleiermacher's view of religion is still favorably received in today's churches. The internalization of religion, religious tolerance, freedom from doctrine, and the direct encounter with the divine in one's heart—all of which Schleiermacher promoted—are still valued by people in these post-modern times.

¹³ Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion: Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern* (Berlin: Johann Friedrich Unger, 1799); translated by Richard Crouter as, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

¹⁴ If religion has to do with knowing, then it becomes all about an investigation of the relationships among the finite objects. If religion is concerned about morality, it will need to investigate the relations of various actions.

¹⁵ Schleiermacher, *Über die Religion*, 27–84; *On Religion*, 96–140.

II. Schleiermacher's Context: From the Thirty Years' War to Albrecht Ritschl

A series of military conflicts culminating in the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648) had devastated Europe in the early part of the 17th century. Because rival confessions were associated with the war, there was a widespread questioning of the legitimacy of doctrinal disputes. The period of theological orthodoxy was over. Pietism and rationalism both contributed to doctrinal indifference that fed a broad-minded ecumenism and religious tolerance.¹⁶ In pietism, the focus of attention shifted away from the *externum verbum*, from the *pro nobis* to the *in nobis*. Although the approach varied among the Enlightenment thinkers on the continent and in England, they all wanted to be convinced that what they believed was reasonable.¹⁷

Critiques of rationalism came from within in the latter part of the 18th century. David Hume (1711–1776), for example, showed that reason was not as “reasonable” as the Deists and other empiricists like John Locke (1632–1704) had believed. By explaining that all we know are perceptions, and that only through a habit of the mind we can imagine a certain relation between cause and effect—a relation that we do not actually exper-

¹⁶ Walter H. Conser, Jr., *Church and Confession: Conservative Theologians in Germany, England, and America 1815–1866* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 3–10. We may observe that while in England Methodism followed the period dominated by rationalism, in Germany, by contrast, rationalism followed the rise of pietism.

¹⁷ Philip Spener (1635–1705), on the one hand, did not criticize the church's dogma as such. By emphasizing conversion and the life of sanctification, however, the vitality of doctrine receded behind a pious attitude of living faith. The focus of attention shifted from *externum verbum* and *pro me* to *in nobis*. According to Luther, all heresy is an assertion of Christ and something more: See *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols., ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1986), 26:52, *Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe* [Schriften], 65 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–1993), 40:112, 26–28; AE 34: 208 (WA 50:267, 17–18). In pietism, that “something more” was added under the guise of sincerity of heart and the transformation of the whole person. We may trace a similar trend in August Francke (1663–1727), Nicolaus von Zinzendorf (1700–1760), John Wesley (1703–1791), Hans Nielsen Hauge (1771–1824), and Jonathan Edwards (1803–1858). In Enlightenment theology, on the other hand, the way in which doctrine was downplayed or rejected for the sake of ethics and morality was very different. The new methodologies of René Descartes (1596–1650) in philosophy and Galileo (1564–1642) in science were applied to theology. Although the approach varied among the Enlightenment thinkers in the Continent and in England, they equally wanted to be convinced that what they believed was reasonable. The religion of reason was set forth to replace the religion of divine revelation. As in pietism, so also in rationalism, life was upheld over against doctrine.

ience—Hume stimulated people toward skepticism, if not toward a total abandonment of the religion of reason.

Hume awakened Immanuel Kant from his own “dogmatic slumber.” Kant proposed a hypothesis that the mind is active in the knowing process. Over against empiricism, which viewed knowledge as coming from sense experience alone to a passive mind, he argued that the senses merely supply the raw data, and that the mind organizes these data by using certain categories already present in the mind. In this way, Kant limited what *pure reason* can do and left a more secure place for religion in *practical reason*. Basic to Kant was his conviction that man is a moral being and that human moral experience is universal. This universal human moral experience is controlled by a sense of “ought,” his famous “categorical imperative,” which focuses less on specific actions and more on the motivation behind them. There must be a god who rewards man with a future for his moral living. Christianity is considered good because there is one historical exemplar of the ideal of morally perfect humankind, Jesus.

While Kant sought to overcome the Enlightenment by shifting the focus of religion from *pure reason* to *practical reason*, Hegel attempted to do the same by elevating Christianity as *the* revealed religion. For Hegel, truth was the reasoning process itself.¹⁸ Through the ongoing dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, history reveals the gradual unfolding of the truth. Hegel was concerned about the self-actualization of God that he found in the historical process of God in himself, creation, and reconciliation. For Hegel, because of his presupposition that the goal of religion was the unity of God and man, the incarnation of Jesus was the most significant event of “reconciliation.” Hegel was critical of Schleiermacher’s approach. He maintained that if religion is defined as the feeling of absolute dependence, “a dog would be the best Christian for it possesses this in the highest degree and lives mainly in this feeling.”¹⁹ Despite Hegel’s critique, Schleiermacher did not lose his influence. His students emphasized either human experience or evaluative thinking.²⁰ Although the direction was

¹⁸ Like Kant, Hegel denied that sense experience was the only basis for knowledge. In its place, he proposed a complex understanding of reality that is not static and complete, but active and developing.

¹⁹ *Beyond Epistemology: New Studies in the Philosophy of Hegel*, ed. F.G. Weiss, tr. A.V. Miller (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 238, as quoted by Crouter, *Friedrich Schleiermacher*, 4, 91. Though Schleiermacher voted to call Hegel to the Berlin professorship, he was motivated by the desire to block another candidate. Crouter, 70–97.

²⁰ Johann Christian Konrad von Hofmann (1810–1877), F.H.R. von Frank (1827–1894), and others picked up on Schleiermacher’s emphasis on human experience. David Strauss (1808–1874), Albrecht Ritschl, and company advanced Schleiermacher’s critical

different, they all shared one thing in common: the point of departure was man instead of Jesus and his words.²¹

In Albrecht Ritschl, we find the anthropocentric understanding of the doctrine of justification. He revived the Kantian emphasis on practical reason and moral judgment when the Hegelian speculative idealism declined during the second half of the century.²² Ritschl was a theological positivist. Like Kant, he secured the place of religious knowledge, which involved a value judgment of how things ought to be, by separating it from scientific knowledge, which speaks of the way things are. Also, in working with the history of dogma, he attempted to show how speculative metaphysics had encroached upon Christianity from the middle of the second century onward. The original religion of Jesus and Paul was replaced by medieval Roman Catholicism, with its legalistic approach to sin, its authoritarianism, and its monastic enmity to the world.²³ The “original line” of Luther was better, too, which he found in the reformer prior to his struggles against Rome and the enthusiasts. For Ritschl, the discovery of the gospel meant freedom for Christians in terms of free spontaneous activity by the community of believers for the kingdom of God. Ritschl defined sin as selfishness. Justification removes sin, so that collectively believers may make a value judgment (*Werturteil*) about Jesus, as the ethical teacher and moral example, and about the kingdom of God, which was progressively realized in human history. In Ritschl’s theology, we observe a certain influence of Kant, Schleiermacher, and Hegel.²⁴ Norman Nagel observes that when Lutherans lose the gospel they slip back to where they were before. In Ritschl, we find the

and evaluative thinking. Cf. Carl Fr. Wisløff, *Short History of Modern Theology* (Tokyo: Word of Life, 1975), 23–32.

²¹ Thielicke considered Schleiermacher’s fundamental question to be, “How do I make Christian faith my own?” Thielicke, *Modern Faith and Thought*, 162. Theologians who were influenced by Schleiermacher seemed to have inherited that point of inquiry.

²² Albrecht Ritschl, *Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und der Versöhnung*, 3 vols (1870–1874). See the English translation of volume 1: *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, tr. John S. Black (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872) and volume 3: *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation: The Positive Development of the Doctrine*, tr. H. R. Mackintosh and A. B. Macaulay (Clifton, NJ: Reference Book Publishers, 1966).

²³ James M. Stayer, *Martin Luther, German Saviour: German Evangelical Theological Factions and the Interpretation of Luther, 1917–1933* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000), 3–17.

²⁴ Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *Twentieth Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 25.

Augustinian tradition with justification embraced—and thus taken over—by sanctification.²⁵

III. Schleiermacher's *Der christliche Glaube*

Schleiermacher's *Der christliche Glaube* is composed of 172 propositions (*die christliche Glaubenssätze*) and their explanations. Rather than treating his doctrine of justification in isolation, I will attempt to explain it in the its broader context. The structure of the book appears as follows (I have added the bold for emphasis):

Introduction—The Definition and Method of Dogmatics

Part I: The Religious Self-Consciousness That is Presupposed

A. The Religious Self-Consciousness

- a. **Creation**
- b. Preservation

²⁵ Ritschl's anthropocentric doctrine of justification was not left unchallenged. Theodosius Harnack (1816/7–1889) criticized Ritschl for having overlooked some of the key teaching of Luther, such as the doctrine of the wrath of God, the proper distinction between law and gospel, and the question of the hiddenness of God. See Theodosius Harnack, *Luthers Theologie mit besonderer Beziehung auf seine Versöhnungs- und Erlösungslehre*, 2 vols. (Erlangen: Theodor Blaesing, 1862, 1886). According to Harnack's assessment, Ritschl simply did not understand either Luther or the doctrine of justification. Werner Elert observes that Ritschl "wanted to banish this concept [the wrath of God] entirely from Christian dogmatics." Werner Elert, *Morphologie des Luthertums*, vol 1: *Theologie und Weltanschauung des Luthertums hauptsächlich im 16. Und 17. Jahrhundert* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1931), 37; cf. *The Structure of Lutheranism: The Theology and Philosophy of Life of Lutheranism, especially in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1962), 42. Paul Althaus comments that Harnack's *Luthers Theologie* "remains the best presentation of Luther's doctrine of the wrath of God." Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 169. Ironically, a generation later, Theodosius' own son, Adolf (1851–1930), sided with Ritschl instead of his father and radicalized Ritschl's project. Karl Holl (1866–1926), in his attempt to harmonize Ritschl and Theodosius Harnack on the doctrine of justification, also favored Ritschl's position. Holl interpreted Luther's doctrine of justification to teach both a declaration and a transformation; it was Melancthon who narrowed justification to a mere forensic declaration. Holl maintained that the righteousness that we possess is the reason God declares us justified. There were many Lutheran theologians who did not accept Holl's reading of Luther. They republished Theodosius Harnack's *Luthers Theologie* in 1927 to confess forensic justification over against the views of Ritschl and Holl. At the Fourth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in Helsinki in 1963, Holl's views on justification were pitted against those of Theodosius Harnack, see Carl E. Braaten, *Justification: The Article by Which the Church Stands or Falls* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 10–15.

- B. The Divine Attributes That are Related to the Religious Self-Consciousness—God as Eternal, Omnipresent, Omnipotent, and Omniscient
- C. The World
 - c. Original Perfection of the World
 - d. Original Perfection of Man

Part II: The Religious Self-Consciousness That is Determined by Pleasure and Pain

- B. The Consciousness of Sin
 - a. **Sin** (Original and Actual)
 - b. The World in Relation to Sin
 - c. The Divine Attributes That are Related to the Consciousness of Sin—God as Holy and Just
- C. The Consciousness of Grace
 - a. The State of Christian
 - i. **Christ** (Person and Work)
 - ii. Fellowship with the Redeemer
 - 1. Regeneration—Conversion and **Justification**
 - 2. **Sanctification**—Sins and Good Works of the Regenerate
 - b. The World in Relation to Redemption
 - i. The Origin of **the Church**
 - 1. Election
 - 2. The Communication of the Holy Spirit
 - ii. The Substance of the Church
 - 1. The Essential Features of the Church
 - a) **Holy Scripture**
 - b) **The Ministry of the Word**
 - c) **Baptism**
 - d) **The Lord's Supper**
 - e) **The Office of the Keys**
 - f) **Prayer** in the Name of Jesus
 - 2. The Mutable Element of the Church—Church as **Visible and Invisible**
 - iii. **The Consummation** of the Church
 - 1. The Return of Christ
 - 2. The Resurrection of the Flesh
 - 3. The Last Judgment
 - 4. Eternal Blessedness
 - c. The Divine Attributes That Related to Redemption—God as Love and Wisdom
 - d. Conclusion—**Trinity**

The Structure

Schleiermacher's outline looks different from what Lutherans are accustomed to in Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics*. It does not begin with the Holy Scripture. The Trinity as such is included in the conclusion and as an appendix. All the major portions of his presentation are systematically divided into three divisions of (1) man, (2) God, and (3) the world (§30).²⁶ The doctrine of justification is found under the category of fellowship with the Redeemer, which indicates that, for Schleiermacher, justification is not about forgiveness of sins but about fellowship with Christ. Schleiermacher uses the language of "the ministry of the word" and avoids the expression of the office (*Predigtamt, Gnadenmittelamt*). Finally, the church is described as "visible and invisible."

Introduction

Schleiermacher's introduction is not without significance. First, as in his earlier book, *On Religion*, he maintains that piety (*die Frömmigkeit*) is neither a *knowing* (*ein Wissen*) nor a *doing* (*ein Thun*) but a *feeling* (*ein Gefühl*), which he also now defines as immediate self-consciousness (*ein unmittelbares Selbstbewußtsein*) (§3). None of the three major thinkers in the 19th century begin their presentation of Christianity with Scripture, but with something universal in man. Kant found this universal in the categorical imperative. Hegel runs with a progression of man toward the unity with God. For Schleiermacher, it was the consciousness of absolute dependence on God (§4).

Second, the reader of Schleiermacher must be aware that, while he retains the familiar dogmatic language of the church, he revises the meaning of almost every term. For example, when he states that the only way of obtaining participation in the Christian community is through faith in Jesus Christ (§14), "faith" here does not mean a saving faith that receives the forgiveness of sins, but it is the certainty concerning the feeling of absolute dependence that does not have prior knowledge of God (§4.4). Another example is his use of the term "doctrine." For us, doctrine is the Lord's; when it is sound, it delivers his gifts. Doctrine itself is a gift from the Lord. Not so with Schleiermacher. For him, doctrine is a description of Christian piety in the heart, an account of Christian religious feeling (§15).

²⁶ Rather than referencing *Der christliche Glaube* by page numbers in the original German or in English translations, the pertinent propositions in the book are noted in parentheses in this paper. For the sake of consistency and ease of reference, I have used the symbol § to stand for "proposition."

Third, we must not forget that Schleiermacher wrote this book for the United Evangelical Church of Prussia.²⁷ He appeals to the evangelical confessional documents (*die evangelischen Bekenntnisschriften*) to prove his points (§27), but he cites not only from the Lutheran Confessions but also from the Reformed. When the Lutheran and Reformed are opposed to each other, he accepts “only that part of the confessional documents in which they all agree” (§27.2). This means that he dismisses what is not held in common as non-essential. A good example is his view of the Lord’s Supper, as we will see later.

Creation and the Devil

Schleiermacher’s understanding of the Creator comes from the absolute dependence on God that all human beings have in common. There has to be an originator of the world (§40). Since Schleiermacher speaks of creation from man’s point of view, he says nothing about *creatio ex nihilo* or a cohesive relationship between creation and justification, baptism, and the Lord’s Supper.²⁸ The angels are not particularly helpful or harmful to the consciousness (§42). When it comes to the devil, Schleiermacher denies his existence, because belief in the devil robs man of joyful consciousness (§44–45). Schleiermacher does not address the reality of *tentatio/Anfechtung*.²⁹

Sin

Schleiermacher’s division of pain (*Unlust*) and pleasure (*Lust*) in the major portion of his book resembles the distinction between law and gospel. But, again, his interest stays in human experiences. Sin is defined as the consciousness of having turned away from God (*die Abwendung von Gott*). Grace, in contrast, is the consciousness of being in fellowship with Him (*die Gemeinschaft mit Gott*) (§63).³⁰ This is different from Luther’s confession of the chief office of the law as killing and the chief office of the gospel as justifying, because Schleiermacher operates with Platonic and Augustinian concepts of distance and unity. As man must move between

²⁷ Crouter, *Friedrich Schleiermacher*, 231.

²⁸ Where the point of departure in theology is something in man, one cannot move from creation to the forgiveness of sins. Luther in his *Lectures on Jonah* observed that natural man knows that a god must exist and he is powerful, but he does not know who this god is and whether or not he is willing to help and save, AE 19:54–55; WA 19,206. 7–207. 13.

²⁹ Schleiermacher does not understand biblical references to the devil literally but symbolically, claiming that Christ and the apostles were merely borrowing the popular notion of the day when they spoke of the devil.

³⁰ Everything that hinders the development of God-consciousness in man is considered sin (§66.1).

two kinds of consciousness, redemption means a process in which man's consciousness is drawn ever closer to God. This happens when man receives and appropriates the influence of the absolute perfection of Jesus (§81.2, §70.2).³¹

Schleiermacher's concept of sin has additional features that will be helpful for our understanding of his view of justification. First of all, he takes original sin to be originating sin, so that after the appearance of actual sins, original sin ceases to exist (§71.1). Second, Adam and Eve had original sin even before the Fall, so that there was no change in human nature before and after. This does not contradict the original perfection of man for Schleiermacher, because for him sin exists only in so far as there is a consciousness of it (§68.2). Third, since original sin is a common possession of all men, man is a sinner not because he sins but because he belongs to the corporate community of sinners (§71.2, §72). Schleiermacher also dismisses the idea of the penalties for sin (§71.4). Fourth, man does not gain his knowledge of sin from the law, because the law is insufficient, but from the absolute sinlessness and perfection of Jesus (§68.3). And fifth, God is the author of sin, because unless man attains the consciousness of sin he will not realize the need for redemption (§71.1).³²

Christ

What controls Schleiermacher's Christology is the work of Jesus (*seine Wirksamkeit*) in redemption and reconciliation (§91, §92.3). Once again, readers of Schleiermacher must not be deceived by the familiar language he uses. By redemption, Schleiermacher means that Jesus takes believers into the power of his God-consciousness (§100), and by reconciliation he means that believers gain the corporate feeling of blessedness in their hearts (§101, §86, §88.4). These works of Jesus are explained by a generic term, "influence" (§87, §88). Jesus influences people only in the community

³¹ It is true that Schleiermacher does not consider sin at the levels of knowing or doing. However, since for him doctrine is descriptive of human experiences, even though he talks about the pain of consciousness, he is not able to confess the *bottomlessness* of our sinful nature as Luther expounds on it in the Smalcald Articles (SA III II 4). According to Luther, we are never able to know how sinful we really are before God in our lifetime, and our degree of self-knowledge is proportional only to the revelation of the Scripture that is believed (SA III I 3). It is impossible to ask that much from Schleiermacher when his point of departure is not God's word but the human heart.

³² Strangely, Schleiermacher appeals to AC XIX, where the expression "as soon as God withdraws His hand" appears in the German edition, to justify his understanding (§81.3). Schleiermacher does not pay attention to the fact that the main point of this article was to dismiss the very idea that God is a cause of sin.

which he founded (§87, §88, §92). In his work of redemption, he first enters into the corporate life of sin in order to begin influencing people with his God-consciousness. In his work of reconciliation, Jesus lives at the center of the believers' life in order to effect both the feeling of the disappearance of the old Adam and the feeling of union with Christ. Both redemption and reconciliation take place only gradually in a movement of growing likeness to the redeemer (§100). It is a process of formation. For this reason, Schleiermacher criticizes the notion of vicarious atonement and forgiveness-talk, because there the work of Christ comes to man only from the outside (*extra nos*).

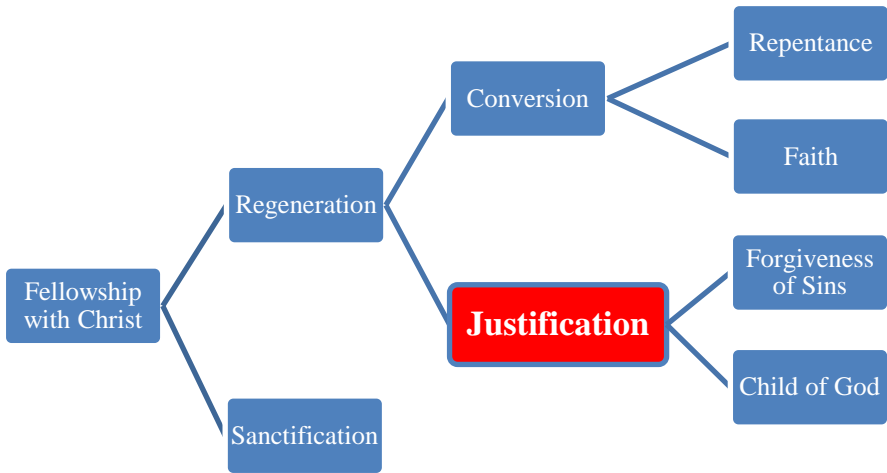
Schleiermacher's departure from the historic understanding of the work of Christ is matched by his revision of both the doctrine of the person of Christ (*seine Würde*) and his three-fold office. The central point of his understanding of Christ's person is that Jesus possesses absolute sinlessness and perfect blessedness in his consciousness.³³ Schleiermacher sees this as necessary for his ability to influence the God-consciousness in believers (§92, §96). Without it, Jesus cannot draw people away from the corporate life of sin (§92).

Schleiermacher relates preaching about Jesus' perfect God-consciousness and absolute sinlessness to his prophetic office and his inward way of controlling the church to his royal office (§103, §105). But most unique, perhaps, is his presentation of the high-priestly office of Jesus. Just as the high priest serves in the divine service of the temple and never departs from it, so Jesus remains constantly with God and does the will of God. This is Schleiermacher's notion of the active obedience of Christ (§104.2-3). The passive obedience is not about his atoning sacrifice but his self-denying love (§101.3, §104.4). In both cases, Schleiermacher dismisses the notion of vicariousness. Rather than putting believers in a passive mode, Schleiermacher wants them to be partners in Christ's obedience.

³³ Schleiermacher dismisses the virgin birth, Jesus' resurrection, ascension, and second coming as unimportant details. These questions, he argues, belong to the doctrine of the Scripture and have nothing to do with the doctrine of Christ (§97.2, §99.2). Schleiermacher rationalizes that the supernatural conception of Jesus can be believed without having to talk about a non-Joseph influence in the Scripture or even a non-Mary influence in the later medieval development. Likewise, he thinks that Jesus' spiritual presence does not have to be mediated by the intermediate steps of his resurrection and ascension (§97.2, §99.1). In these topics, Schleiermacher attempted to find a mediating position between the orthodox dogma and the Enlightenment religion. Theologically, he has moved away from the Lutheran Confessions where, for example, the ascension of our Lord is the key for his ongoing ministry on earth to distribute his forgiveness by using the apostolic ministry. Schleiermacher does not see this. In terms of Jesus' two natures, he again revises it (§96).

Justification

Schleiermacher's exposition of the manner in which the believers experience fellowship with Christ in their consciousness is divided under two headings, regeneration and sanctification (§109.2). Regeneration is described as conversion, which consists of repentance and faith, and justification, which includes the forgiveness of sins and being a child of God.



Conversion marks the beginning of the new life in fellowship with Christ. As mentioned, it does not take place by the preaching of the law and the preaching of the gospel in Schleiermacher's church, but rather by the vision of Christ's perfection, which causes both repentance and faith. It is a gradual movement toward a living fellowship with Christ. But how can believers know whether they are within this fellowship or still outside? Schleiermacher answers: by the steady progress in sanctification, and by active participation in the extension of Christ's kingdom (§108.2). For Schleiermacher, if one is not "missional" and "pious," that person is not even converted!³⁴

³⁴ In Schleiermacher's theology, conversion is known by repentance and faith. Repentance means a combination of regret and change of heart. This is a description of man's conscience when he is in the fellowship of sin. The law is not sufficient to produce

What is justification for Schleiermacher? It is a changed relation to God (§107), which comes only through union with Christ (§107.1). God justifies the one who is converted (§109).³⁵ As Christ influences the believer, his consciousness of sin becomes the consciousness of the forgiveness of sin. When forgiveness of sin is felt, there emerges also a consciousness of being adopted as a child of God (§109.2).

Once a man is converted and justified, the fellowship with Christ in his heart must steadily grow. This is the state of sanctification (§110.1), in which fellowship with Christ always means fellowship with him in his mission to the world (§111.4). Though the believer still sins, he carries with him the forgiveness of sin and so does not lose his redemption. However, once he is in the state of sanctification, no new sin can develop (§111.1).

In his articulation of justification, Schleiermacher amazingly has no use for Christ's atoning death on the cross. He completely ignores the means of grace, together with the means of grace office (*Gnadenmittelamt*). Certainty of being justified is known only empirically in a quantitative way and by looking at one's own heart and work.

the consciousness of regret because it is external and because it evokes regret only about particular things (§108.2, §112.5). Only the vision of the perfection of Christ brings about a consciousness of true conversion-regret. But since the same vision of Christ is at the same time his self-impartment of perfection, it is also recognized as the dawn of faith, which Schleiermacher defines as the appropriation of the perfection and blessedness of Christ. As we did not clearly hear from Schleiermacher how Christ communicates his perfection, which results in both regret and faith in the previous section on Christology, in this section on regeneration the reader of Schleiermacher stays uninformed. Schleiermacher repeats the language of "influence" of the Redeemer (§106.1, §109.3, etc.). He does not speak of preaching and the sacraments as the means through which Christ works. He is also opposed to the idea of having to designate a particular time and place of man's conversion (§108.3). How, then, can a believer know whether or not he is received into a living fellowship with Christ? As conversion and justification take place only gradually because they have to do with one's union with Christ, the only way to recognize one's progression is by seeing the fruits of conversion: a steady progress in sanctification, and active participation in the extension of Christ's kingdom (§108.2). Schleiermacher thinks it impossible that a man who is received into unity of life with Christ can go on in his living without actively providing himself as an instrument of Christ's redeeming activity.

³⁵ Since conversion consists of repentance and faith, justification comes after the beginning of faith (§109.4). Faith comes by being subject to Christ's influence. Such influence must be accepted by man, and the ability to accept it has not been lost by original sin for Schleiermacher. Repentance (in conversion) corresponds to forgiveness of sin (in justification), just as faith (in conversion) is related to being a child of God (in justification). Repentance and forgiveness have to do with the end of the old state as faith and being a child of God express the character of the new (§109.2).

Church

Schleiermacher's proposition §115 summarizes his understanding of the church. He wrote: "The Christian church is formed when the reborn individuals come together for the purpose of working on each other and for working with each other in an orderly manner."³⁶ Such a definition of the church sounds strange to Lutheran ears because there is no mention of the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments. But in Schleiermacher's system this statement makes sense, because Schleiermacher is not confessing the church from the word of God but is giving his assertions about the life of the church from below. Believers are those who have been received into a living fellowship with Christ through his influence. By participating in Christ's mission to extend his kingdom, they will know that they are indeed brought into this fellowship.

His statement that believers work "on each other" and "with each other" in the church comes from his conviction that Jesus no longer has any direct influence on the church (§116.3). Christ is no longer present, because Schleiermacher does not hold the biblical teaching on the ascension, the means of grace, and the office that serves them as instituted by Christ. But Schleiermacher does not take the fact of Christ's absence negatively. In fact, he even rejoices about it, because he observes in the New Testament that, so long as Christ was there with his disciples they depended on him. Only when Jesus departed did they begin to influence each other actively and spontaneously rather than remaining mere receivers (§122.2-3). Here, Schleiermacher speaks of the Holy Spirit as the common spirit of the community. In the absence of Christ, Schleiermacher still wants to keep "something divine" in the church (§116.3). That is the Holy Spirit as the common spirit who keeps the believers in unity (§121.2).

Did not Schleiermacher say, however, that *Christ* was the one who redeems and reconciles men? Was it not by *his* work that men are taken into the living fellowship with himself? How, then, are we to understand his assertion that it is the common spirit who influences believers in the church? The answer lies in his conviction that there is no *Gnadenmittelamt* in the church (§122.3). When the office is denied, believers are left with no certainty as to how the crucified and risen Lord might still come to forgive and enliven his people. So, in the absence of any office through which Christ bestows his gifts, Schleiermacher establishes a wonderful system in

³⁶ The German original is as follows: "Die christliche Kirche bildet sich durch das Zusammentreten der einzelnen Wiedergeborenen zu einem geordneten Aufeinanderwirken und Miteinanderwirken."

which believers reciprocally influence each other (§121.1, 3). Mutual influence takes the place of an external means of grace office.

The “Marks of the Church”

Lastly, we should briefly mention Schleiermacher’s version of the “marks of the church” because of their relation to his concept of justification. He identifies six marks: (1) Holy Scripture, (2) the ministry of the Word, (3) baptism, (4) the Lord’s Supper, (5) the office of the keys, and (6) prayer in the name of Christ. The first two are for the witness to Christ (the prophetic activity of Christ), the third and fourth are for the formation and maintenance of living fellowship with Christ (the high-priestly activity of Christ), and the last two are for the reciprocal influence among the believers (the royal activity of Christ). Schleiermacher also considers the first three (Holy Scripture, the ministry of the Word, baptism) to be Christ’s redemptive activity, and the last three (the Lord’s Supper, the office of the keys, prayer in the name of Jesus) to be Christ’s reconciling activity. His desire to systematize doctrine is manifest here again.

In this part of *Der christliche Glaube*, Schleiermacher repeatedly claims that our Christianity should be the same as that of the Apostles (§127.2), and that the grounds of faith must be the same for us as they were for the first Christians (§128.2). What this means for Schleiermacher’s concept of justification is that, just as Jesus was making his disciples in his earthly ministry by dwelling among them in fellowship, so also Jesus makes his disciples in our day through the common spirit working within the community of believers. In Schleiermacher’s system there is no place for proclamation, baptism, and the Lord’s Supper.

What about these “marks of the church”? For Schleiermacher, the New Testament is a record of the piety of the first Christians (§129.1). The ministry of the Word is possessed by every Christian. Schleiermacher still recognizes the pastoral work as public ministry, but the authority of the pastor is an authority derived from the church by way of transfer (§134. 1–2). When a pastor absolves a congregation, he does so by the authority of the church (§145.2). One of the rationales behind this assertion is his understanding that when Christ commissioned his apostles to make disciples, the commission was chiefly directed to those outside the church. Within the church, believers are to teach and care for each other.

When it comes to Baptism, Schleiermacher again reveals his neo-Platonic tendency to divide what is external from what is internal. Baptism is still viewed as the channel of God’s justifying action (§137.3). However, since Baptism itself gives nothing because it is external, he speaks of the effects of Baptism with reference only to that which had been effected

internally prior to Baptism. The most important point of Baptism is the intention of the church to baptize (§137.1). Once welcomed into the fellowship, the church starts to influence the newly baptized so that he or she may receive forgiveness of sins.

For Schleiermacher, the Lord's Supper consists of bodily participation (bread and wine) and the spiritual effect (strengthening of the spiritual life) (§140). Again, the Lord's Supper gives nothing because it is external. But just as confirmation exists as the consummation of baptism, so the Lord's Supper exists as the assurance of the forgiveness of sins announced earlier in the communion service. On the other hand, Schleiermacher does not completely divest the Lord's Supper of all meaning. It is actually quite important for him, and he considers it to be the highest point of worship (§139.2), because in this particular "action" believers receive in their consciousness the confirmation of their fellowship with Christ as well as their union with each other (§141.1).

IV. Conclusion

Schleiermacher proposed a very different view not only of justification but also of all parts of theology, both in terms of methodology and content. He spoke a foreign language that has attracted many to adopt his new views. Though he emphasized a religion of the heart, consciousness, and experience, he was really a theologian of reason, having Zwingli before him and Ritschl after him.

For confessional Lutherans, theological enquiry must ever confess only what the Lord has given us to confess, because any correction or addition that we might wish to make would only weaken the doctrine. This kind of faithfulness does not mean that we must isolate ourselves from those whose theology is foreign to us. We should listen carefully and engage with them fruitfully, but we must never stop confessing. Justification is all about Jesus who *bears* our sin. It is the joyous proclamation that our sins are now located on our Savior Jesus. Justification is essentially all about our sins having been answered for by Jesus, who continues with his Spirit to deliver the forgiveness of our sins through Baptism, absolution, and the Lord's Supper. As our excursion into the theology of Schleiermacher has reminded us, when you visit a foreign country, you appreciate your homeland anew.

Evangelicals and Lutherans on Justification: Similarities and Differences

Scott R. Murray

Speaking about justification in Evangelicalism and Lutheranism is a perilous task. Identifying both Lutherans and Evangelicals is a significant challenge, especially for the Evangelicals. The moniker has been applied to many varied theological varieties since it was taken up by Carl F. H. Henry just after World War II.¹ There are at least three commonly accepted definitions of “Evangelicalism.” On the one hand, British historian, David Bebbington, defines Evangelicalism by four broad characteristics.

1. Conversionism, the belief that lives need to be changed;
2. Activism, the expression of the gospel in effort;
3. Biblicism, a particular regard for the Bible; and
4. “Crucicentrism,” a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.²

On the other hand, historian George M. Marsden listed five characteristics marking Evangelicalism.

1. The authority of the Bible.
2. The historicity of God’s saving work recorded in Scripture.
3. Salvation to eternal life based on the redemptive work of Christ.
4. Importance of evangelism and mission.
5. The importance of a spiritually transformed life.³

Finally, “Evangelical” can refer to a style as much as a set of beliefs. Therefore, Dutch Reformed Churches, Mennonites, Pentecostals, Catholic charismatics, and Southern Baptists might all consider themselves Evangelicals, or be considered Evangelicals by others. Evangelicalism can refer to the reaction against the anti-intellectual, separatistic nature of the

¹ Carl F. H. Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947).

² David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism : Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700–1990*, ed. Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington, George A. Rawlyk (New York : Oxford University Press, 1994), 180–181.

³ George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 4–5.

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fundamentalist movement in the 1920s and 1930s. Importantly, its core personalities, like Carl F. H. Henry, and institutions like Moody Bible Institute, Wheaton College, and Fuller Theological Seminary have played a pivotal role in giving the wider movement a sense of unity that extends into the broader culture.⁴

Given any one of these three definitions, it remains quite difficult to define who is an evangelical and who is not. It is like the old arguments about public indecency laws: "I have trouble defining what indecency is, but I know it when I see it." Similarly, I have trouble defining "Evangelicalism," but I know it when I see it. That being said, it remains true that Evangelicals are all over the landscape on justification. The scope of this paper will not permit me to give any detail on the specific positions held by this or that evangelical or evangelical group. While there are many definitions of what it means to be Lutheran, I am settling on a self-consciously confessional Lutheranism, while tied to church, not tied to a denomination.

I am considering the meaning of, and theological fallout from, the New Perspective on Paul debate as a prism through which we might consider the doctrine of justification. Right now many Evangelicals are intensely involved in the ongoing "New Perspectives on Paul" debate, both for and against. I would like to look again at this debate from the perspective of what it means for the article of justification among Lutherans and Evangelicals.⁵

When E.P. Sanders' *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* was published in 1977, the game was on. Sanders did not present a radically different interpretation from those that had been offered by some scholars of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including the iconic Albert Schweitzer and William Wrede, both of whom were nominally Lutheran. This is ironic, given that both men proposed an interpretation of Paul that militated against what would become known as the "Lutheran" interpretation of

⁴ Consider, for example, the identification of the "evangelical vote" with the Republican Party. Larry Eskridge, "Defining the Term in Contemporary Times," <http://isaie.wheaton.edu/defining-Evangelicalism/defining-the-term-in-contemporary-times/>, 2011 (accessed 9 January 2012).

⁵ For an introduction to this debate, see Charles A. Gieschen, "Paul and the Law: Was Luther Right?" in *The Law in Holy Scripture*, ed. Charles A. Gieschen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004), 113–147.

Paul. Their views gained only little traction, until E.P. Sanders popularized and refined them.⁶

In 1977, a revisionist view of Paul was an idea whose time had come. Concern about the outcome of Jewish-Christian dialogues drove a desire to rethink Paul's relationship to Palestinian Judaism. N.T. Wright pointed out: "History, theology and exegesis are always done—not only sometimes and not only by preachers—with at least half an eye to the results that may be experienced in the scholar's own world."⁷ Perhaps Wright is more correct than he knows. To what degree do the questions drive the answers, as though the tail is wagging the dog? The Holocaust's near memory and the false guilt connected to it drove theologians to flee at almost any cost the slightest odor of anti-Semitism, whether real or imagined. To this day, everyone in the midst of the New Perspective on Paul debate must establish their support for the Jews by offering obligatory anti-anti-Semitic remarks in the literature.⁸ But perhaps there were older currents rising to the surface in this effort to reread Paul in a way that distanced him from the so-called Lutheran understanding.

James D.G. Dunn labeled the results of E.P. Sanders work "the New Perspective on Paul." However, it may not be so new. First, the New Perspective has clear antecedents in the views of earlier theologians like Schweitzer and Wrede. Second, the view has roots in Arminianism and semi-Pelagianism. Third, the claim being made for the New Perspective is that it is Paul's own perspective based on understanding his rabbinic and

⁶ In 1963, Krister Stendahl's groundbreaking article, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," *Harvard Theological Review* 56 (1963): 199–215, revived interest in a rereading of Paul. Stendahl argued that Luther's interpretation of Paul in terms of the justification of the person burdened by the law-wounded conscience simply read Luther's own agony of conscience back into Paul. According to Stendahl, such a self-reflective pattern of salvation would not have occurred to Paul, but began in the work of Augustine of Hippo, as evidenced by his painfully self-reflective *Confessions*. Here was the beginning of the introspective conscience of the West. It did not begin with Paul.

⁷ N.T. Wright, *Paul* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 15.

⁸ Theologians are asking publicly, "How can I avoid the charge of anti-Semitism?" For example, when Donald Hagner argued for a supercessionist view of Christianity centered in the superiority of Christ over the old covenant, he felt compelled to offer this disclaimer: "Those who agree with Paul here, I hasten to add, must oppose anti-Semitism with all the strength available to them." And this from one who is no supporter of the New Perspective! See "Paul and Judaism: Testing the New Perspective," chapter 4 of Peter Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul's Doctrine of Justification: A Challenge to the New Perspective* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 103.

pharisaic context. Ultimately, that makes it a first-century view, not so new at all. One of the leading proponents of the "New Perspective," N.T. Wright does not think that this is a perspective at all, but the view of the apostle himself. He titled one of his books *What St. Paul Really Said*.⁹ So this cannot be let pass as though it were a tolerable influence on Christian theology. Nor may it be rejected just because it is new. In fact, it is nothing of the sort. Like all theological disputes, this one may merely be a recycling of old arguments under new wrappings; arguments that have had a long history among confessional groups over the centuries.

The rereading of Paul in light of the understanding that first century Judaism also included a doctrine of grace was called "covenantal nomism" by Sanders. This rereading meant that justification could no longer stand as the center of Paul's theology, to say nothing of the New Testament as a whole. This is certainly in keeping with Schweitzer's view.¹⁰ Justification becomes just one emphasis among many, and perhaps not a very important one. This had already been the presupposed position of many American Evangelicals long before Sanders. One can easily see how this would have been introduced into the thought-pattern of American Evangelicalism. Evangelical theological method is one that attempts to draw upon a number of influences, weighing them, counterbalancing them, and then attempting some kind of *mélange*, often without considering how the various parts fit together into the larger whole. There is something of an inability to consider theology as single body, a doctrinal corpus.

Evangelical theology, unburdened by any written confessional commitments, becomes something like the blind men's elephant; it looks like a tree, a snake, a leaf, and a wall, but there is no sense how the parts interrelate. More anecdotally, I became aware of this in the course of my doctoral studies among Southern Baptists when I realized that they tried to give proper due to Calvinism and Arminianism at the same time. When I said I was having difficulty understanding their larger theological commitments, and asked if Southern Baptists were attempting to mix Calvinism and Arminianism, the wry reply was, "Why, you have understood us exactly."

⁹ N.T. Wright, *What Paul Really Said* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

¹⁰ "The doctrine of righteousness by faith is a subsidiary crater, which has formed within the rim of the main crater, the mystical doctrine of redemption through the being-in-Christ." Albert Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1930), 220, cited in Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul's Doctrine*, 29.

Here we cannot recount all the details of the ongoing “new” Paul versus “old” Paul debate; the theologically adept are familiar with it. This study will attempt to consider some of the ways in which the rereading of Paul has made an impact on theology under four headings by asking what happens when justification is no longer the center of Christian theology? Under each of these headings, we will include some remarks about how Lutherans and Evangelicals are similar and different on the doctrine of justification.

It is quite difficult to pin down to a similar universe of theological meaning those who identify themselves as Evangelicals. In fact, we can find those who would identify themselves as Evangelicals on opposite sides of the arguments coalescing around justification. Of course, misunderstanding abounds on all sides. Unfortunately, generalizations must suffice. Perhaps names such as “Evangelical” (and maybe “Lutheran”¹¹) have become meaningless. So it is perhaps better to speak of theological differences on the doctrine of justification. I would like to look at four ways that Evangelicalism and Lutheranism diverge in their views of justification: 1) Faith and *Pure Passive*, 2) The Bound Will and Justification, 3) The Christological Ground of Justification, and 4) The Theological Centrality of Justification.

I. Faith and *Pure Passive*

The doctrine of faith alone is a corollary of justification. Faith is the receiving hand, but faith is never reduced to a human work or a meritorious act of the will. “This is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Eph 2:8–9). Once faith has become a work, by being reduced to obedience or commitment, then it becomes a meritorious act on the part of the human actor. Os Guinness states this in the boldest terms possible, saying that faith is “a reasonable decision after rational reflection.”¹² No wonder that Donald Bloesch can say, “An undercurrent of semi-Pelagianism is certainly present in circles of evangelical revivalism where it is assumed that man is free to decide for salvation on his own, though he needs the assistance of grace to

¹¹ The members of my congregation regularly ask me why confessional Lutherans cannot sue the ELCA to get exclusive right to the name Lutheran. They consider its use by liberal churches to be an infringement of trademark and false advertising.

¹² Quoted in Donald Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), 1:113.

carry through his decision.”¹³ Faith, then, becomes a fundamentally human act of the will. So it is for the proponents of the New Perspective on Paul. While the person is brought into the covenant relationship by grace, he remains in it by obedience to the law. Grace gives the kingdom; the law keeps the Israelite in it. At best, this is Semi-Pelagian.

Richard B. Hays has attempted to preserve human autonomy in the act of faith by suggesting a radically different understanding of the Pauline phrase “the faith of Jesus Christ” (ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δοθῇ τοῖς πιστευουσιν, Gal 3:22) as an objective genitive. This means then that Paul is attributing the promise of the gospel to the believing of Christ. Hays says, “If this is correct, Galatians 3:22 must not be interpreted to mean that believers receive the promise by the subjective act of placing their faith in Jesus Christ; instead, it must mean that Jesus Christ, by the power of faith, has performed an act which allows believers to receive the promise.”¹⁴ At first, such language delights Lutheran ears. The objectivity of the gospel and the work of Christ for the world guarantee the grace of God to a world full of sinners. However, there are a number of problems with this view. Faith, for example, is never attributed to Christ by any other text of the New Testament.¹⁵ While knowing certainly resides together with believing, “Christ’s believing” is not the language of the New Testament.¹⁶

Hays has presumed, furthermore, that Bultmann was correct, that subjective faith is a human act of the will. There are problems with this presumption as well. The New Perspective battles Bultmann, but Bultmann hardly represents the confessional Lutheran position on faith as a receiving instrument and as a gift of God.

The New Testament does not portray subjective faith as a self-generated act but rather as a gift of God (Eph 2:9). It is truly a mystery that our faith can be a gift. Perhaps it could be conceived this way: the gifts I

¹³ Bloesch, *Evangelical Theology*, 1:113.

¹⁴ Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11*, 2nd ed., Biblical Resource Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 115–116.

¹⁵ If we accept the communication of attributes in the personal union, what would the faith of the eternal Son of the Father look like? How would attributing faith to Christ square with the perfect fellowship of the Son with the Father and the Spirit and his claim to know all things (John 16:30) and therefore that he will be able to disclose the fullness of the Father’s will to us (John 1:18; 14:9)? This is dogmatically tenuous.

¹⁶ For a helpful summary of the uses of faith in Paul, see Roy A. Harrisville III, “PISTIS CRISTOU and the New Perspective on Paul,” *Logia* (Eastertide 2010), 23–28.

received from gracious givers at Christmas are always described as “mine,” and this in no way implies that they are any less completely free gifts of grace. So it is for faith being mine subjectively; it still remains a gift. So the Formula of Concord says, “Faith is a gift of God whereby we rightly learn to know Christ as our redeemer in the Word of the Gospel and to trust in him, that solely for the sake of his obedience we have forgiveness of sins by grace, are accounted righteous and holy by God the Father, and are saved forever” (SD III, 11).¹⁷ And Luther: “This is why we continually teach that the knowledge of Christ and of faith is not a human work but utterly a divine gift; as God creates faith, so He preserves us in it.”¹⁸

Subjective faith is a receiving hand that is no way meritorious. For example, if a starving man comes to your door seeking food and you set before him a table full of food and rescue him from imminent death, would the starving man pride himself on the ability to bring the food to his mouth and then boast of saving himself from starvation? If asked what saved him from death, would he contend that it is by his eating, rather than by the food that was freely given by you? Scripture attributes subjective faith or believing to the work of the Holy Spirit. Luther said: Faith is “nothing but the work exclusively peculiar to the Divine Majesty; for it is not the work of man or of angel first to promise this and then to create faith in the human heart. St. Paul declares (Eph. 2:8) that such faith ‘is the gift of God,’ effected and bestowed by the Holy Spirit.”¹⁹

Roy A. Harrisville III points out that there would be no desire to argue for an objective genitive in Gal 3:22, if faith were not conceived of as a work of the believer. “That were it not for an emphasis on faith as a human work, the new rendering of πιστις Χριστου would lose much of its allure. There would be little or no theological impetus to stress any supposed faith of Christ if faith in Christ were understood as a gift in the first place.”²⁰

In the New Perspective, faith is an act of the human will. In the covenantal nomism of Sanders, the Jewish believer is part of the people of God through the election of Israel into the covenant. Obedience to the law

¹⁷ Theodore G. Tappert, *The Book of Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 541. All quotations hereafter from the Tappert edition.

¹⁸ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols., ed Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1986), 26:64.

¹⁹ AE 15:277.

²⁰ Harrisville, “PISTIS CRISTOU,” 22.

is the way in which those who are the people of God stay in the covenant. However, the data are not as unified as the New Perspective people would have us think.

The material collected by Paul Billerbeck and Hermann Strack in their *Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Midrash*, offers a strong defense of the legalism of first-century Judaism. These data cannot be ignored. The Qumran literature, for example, provides counter examples from a minority Jewish community. It is unsurprising that Jewish theology was not unified. Already the New Testament alerts us to various theological strains among the Jews: Pharisees, Sadducees, the people as distinguished from the leaders (John), and perhaps the Zealots and the Herodians (who were political groups that undoubtedly had theological commitments). The rabbis were able to speak of God's grace, because the Old Testament certainly did. But they were often unable to speak of God's grace to Israel without reemphasizing human works, especially in the face of the final judgment. As Peter Stuhlmacher pointed out: "There are also serious comments about the endtime [*sic*] significance of (a treasure of) good works, which the faithful should store during their lives."²¹ Such language smacks of the very thing about which Luther was critical in the medieval church: the "treasury of human merits." Perhaps the first century was not so far from the 16th century after all.

The judgment of Jesus against his contemporaries must not be ignored, nor the Christologically-centered statements made by Jesus over against the Old Testament tradition, including his supersession of Abraham, David, and Moses. Jesus hardly seems to accept the Pharisees as sharing his emphasis on grace, rather he excoriated them in the most uncompromising terms on many occasions. His judgment of first-century Pharisaism should have priority in the consideration of the Christian who is trying to understand first-century rabbinic tradition.

At least we are required to see that the rabbis had an understanding of grace that admitted the necessity of works for the ultimate judgment in the presence of God. References to the covenant of grace do not stand alone without legalistic elements in rabbinic literature and the literature of Qumran. Therefore, we cannot call the religion of the rabbis a religion of grace.

Nor can the definition of a gracious religion be reduced to one in which grace is one element or an occasional resource. Everything the

²¹ Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul's Doctrine*, 41.

church teaches about Christ, justification, our standing *coram Deo*, the sacraments, the bound will, and law and gospel must be seen within the context of grace. Mere use of the word “grace” does not guarantee that the truth about grace will be the operative theological principal. Grace cannot be a power of occasional use to the believer or merely the source of good works. Nor is it a mere vocable as it is used in Lutheran theology. When the Lutheran confessions and Lutheran theologians use the term, they are thinking of a broad semantic domain that encompasses mercy, loving-kindness, favor, and divine benevolence. Robert Preus said: “Contextualizing the concept within the framework of the work of Christ and soteriology (justification), Luther and the reformers present the grace of God as God’s favor—His benevolent and good disposition and intention toward fallen mankind.”²²

Unfortunately, the view of Sanders that grace was a resource to keep the Jew in the covenantal relationship is exactly the sort of Arminian redefinition of grace, which if true, proves not that first-century Judaism was a religion of grace, but the exact opposite. Sanders has redefined grace in a non-biblical way to make the claim that Judaism was a religion of grace.²³ This contradicts the *sola gratia*. We are placed in a gracious relationship with God and stay in that fellowship by grace. The exclusivity of grace lives in the universe of all the solas. The solas are required by justification and also serve to clarify its theological function.

And this is St. Paul’s intention when in this article he so earnestly and diligently stresses such exclusive terms (that is, terms that exclude works from the article of justification by faith) as ‘without works,’ ‘without the law,’ ‘freely,’ ‘not of works,’ all of which exclusive terms may be summarized in the assertion that we are justified before God and saved ‘through faith alone’ (SD III, 36).

For Lutherans, justification is always justification *coram Deo*. Justification is that verdict that will stand in the presence of the holy God when we appear before his judgment throne on the last day. Lutheranism sees that divine judgment impending over the world at all times, certainly with temporal outcroppings of divine wrath pointing to the final consummation, but also with the proclaimed law still and always bringing us before the divine judge. The law’s little judgments come every day as

²² Robert Preus, *Justification and Rome* (St. Louis: Concordia Academic Press, 1997), 48.

²³ Given his roots in Methodism, it is hardly surprising to see him using an Arminian viewpoint.

we face the word of God that brings the wrath of God upon us (Rom 11:19). The eschatological threat shadows the church until that threat is expended fully at last. The classic expression of this eschatological wrath against unbelief is in Romans 1:18. Paul expresses the life of the believer established in the divine verdict of justification and yet follows with a clear reference to the divine wrath against all ungodliness (Rom 1:17-18). We need the perpetual justification of Christ so that we are able to live under (not in) this wrath and divine judgment through the law.

Justification cannot be an occasional resource. It must be intensively complete. Justification is complete in that it is a full remission of sins and a conferral of all the divine promises upon poor sinners. There are no partial measures with God. This verdict will stand up in the face of every divine judgment, because it is God's own work applied to us by faith.

Justification must also be extensively complete. Justification is a divine verdict that has no "best before date" like a jug of milk. In other words, it does not begin a process of salvation, but is a full and complete salvation upon which the believer is able to stand today, tomorrow, and at the final consummation. John's Gospel hints at this: "Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God" (John 3:18).

Dunn and Sanders simply avoid the question of final judgment. Given that the first section of Romans is entirely committed to placing all people under the divine judgment, whether Jew or Gentile, this is a fairly large oversight. Justification places the person in the presence of the holy God to stand upon a righteousness that is not his own. That righteousness obtains as much under the judgment of the preaching of the law as it does under the ultimate judgment before Christ in the final consummation. The apostolic preaching is always set in the context of the final judgment and imminent return of Christ to judge the living and the dead.²⁴ If we accept the goal of covenantal nomism to be primarily about the cultic inclusion of Israel as the people of God, it easily ignores the threat of final judgment. Peter Stuhlmacher, in an understatement, says, "The Pauline doctrine of justification is distorted to the extent that this end-time perspective is faded out."²⁵

²⁴ Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul's Doctrine*, 48.

²⁵ Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul's Doctrine*, 42. I don't want to read too much into this, but I wonder if temporal and institutional church goals, such as membership numbers and other church growth targets don't arise out of an emphasis that fails to present the wrath of God and his judgment against sin to people. If the New Perspective

Classic Evangelical theology sees justification as one theological emphasis among many. It cannot be the doctrine of the standing and falling of the church or the chief article, as in the Smalcald Articles. For example, Dale Moody's *The Word of Truth* speaks of justification only as a corollary of regeneration. Of course, for many Evangelicals the ruling salvation theme is "regeneration," or what some scholars call "conversionism." In any case, the emphasis is on the getting in rather than on the staying in. It is also activist in that salvation depends on human action or the human will. Unfortunately, faith also becomes redefined as obedience or a way of life. So Moody described the faith of Rom 1:6, "The right relation to God is one of obedience to the covenant from the beginning to end."²⁶ This sounds a great deal like the covenantal nomism espoused by Sanders, although Moody certainly comes to this description of faith completely without being influenced by Sanders.²⁷ However, they come from the same general American evangelical stream, even though Moody was a Southern Baptist and Sanders had roots in Methodism.²⁸ Moody puts an exclamation mark on his readjustment of the meaning of faith when he says, "The biblical theology of the 20th century finally discarded the bondage of legalism for the dynamic view of righteousness as the obedience of faith."²⁹ In a theme often repeated by so-called Lutherans,³⁰ the forensic doctrine of justification by faith is described as

on Paul emphasizes the ways in which the believer is in the cultic community at the expense of the reality of the divine judgment, then this-worldly emphases will easily overwhelm law and gospel preaching. Community harmony becomes paramount, replacing the proclamation of the divine truth in the community. Unnumbered examples of evangelical practice, even among those who think of themselves as Lutheran, come readily to mind. The status within the community of those brought into it must not keep us from preaching God's wrath against sinners and the divine verdict of not guilty to those same sinners.

²⁶ Dale Moody, *The Word of Truth: A Summary of Christian Doctrine Based on Biblical Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 327.

²⁷ "The right relation to God is faithfulness, obedience to the covenant relation," Moody, *Word of Truth*, 327.

²⁸ Sanders graduated from Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, Dallas (1959–1962).

²⁹ Moody, *Word of Truth*, 328.

³⁰ See my *Law, Life, and the Living God* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001), 46–52. The complaint against the Lutheran Orthodox position on the law was that the Orthodox defined the gospel by using law terms, making the church's teaching susceptible to legalism. The problem which justification resolves is identified by the law. The divine judgment against must be resolved by an equally legal divine commutation of the sentence that stands against us.

“the bondage of legalism.” That which frees from legalism is now called that which causes bondage to it. For Evangelicalism, justification is merely the entrance to the kingdom and this given by a faith that is a subjective effort or offering of obedience.

II. The Bound Will and Justification

No matter what one thinks of Luther’s classic reply to Erasmus in *De Servo Arbitrio*, Luther’s judgment that free will was the central issue in the theological debate between them was absolutely correct. Erasmus, by hitting upon it, had Luther by the throat (*cardinem rerum vidisti et ipsum jugulum petisti*). There can be no Lutheran doctrine of justification without a bound will, and vice versa. Where there is any hint of human accomplishment toward salvation, the will cannot be described as bound.

Erasmian indeterminacy will always handicap the uniqueness and urgency of the work of God and re-enthroned the human will as the source (whether partial or entire) of salvation. If we unbind the will, we will bind justification. You cannot have it both ways in matters spiritual. Ultimately, this approaches the first commandment, for if the person is freeing himself, then he has become his own God. Luther says,

If the natural powers are unimpaired, what need is there of Christ? If by nature man has good will; if he has true understanding to which, as they say, the will can naturally conform itself; what is it, then, that was lost in Paradise through sin and that had to be restored through the Son of God alone? Yet in our day, men who seem to be masters of theology defend the statement that the natural powers are unimpaired, that is, that the will is good. Even though through malice it occasionally wills and thinks something besides what is right and good, they attribute this to the malice of men, not to the will as it is in itself. The mind must be fortified against these dangerous opinions, lest the knowledge of grace be obscured; this cannot remain sound and right if we believe this way about the nature of man. Nor can this scholastic teaching be tolerated in the church: that man can keep the Law according to the substance of the act.³¹

Though he despised the medieval scholastics, Erasmus followed in their train, even if he did not employ their method.

The degree to which theologians reject the bound human will in our status *coram Deo* is the degree to which they are bound to reject the biblical doctrine of justification. Of course, the free-will-ism of many American

³¹ AE 12:308.

Evangelicals is well known. Evangelicals will easily confuse freedom in external things (AC 18) with freedom in spiritual matters.³² In Lutheranism, justification frees us to attempt the proximate goods of life and face our failures with equanimity and our successes without pride. We will become entirely focused on the neighbor's need. In that way, Lutheranism is truly humanistic, in that good works are done, not for God, but for the neighbor. Evangelicalism is too busy working unto the glory of God to be truly humanistic in its worldly labor. As Werner Elert says, "For all Lutheranism it is of constitutive significance that in Calvin's 'everything to the glory of God' it did not yet find anything specifically Christian or even specifically evangelical, since this glory is not given to the God revealed in Christ."³³ But all this begins with a truncated view of justification.

Even the Jewish scholar, Israel Abrahams, recognizes the convergence between first-century Judaism and the doctrine of Erasmus. He refers to the Jewish doctrine as "something like the *synergism* of Erasmus, which, as his opponents saw, was radically opposed to the Pauline theory of grace."³⁴ Where grace is only partial and the will is only partially bound, Erasmus is correct, and the article of justification must recede into the background.

III. The Christological Ground of Justification

The lack of Christological grounding is pronounced in the proponents of covenantal nomism. If justification was only the polemical tool of Paul to distinguish the Gentile and the Jew, then the watershed of the incarnation and death of God's Son is being overlooked. Peter Stuhlmacher has identified the importance of the Christology of Isaiah's suffering servant song as the basis for Paul's basic confession in 1 Cor 15:3-5 and the resource it offers to make the forensic statements of Paul's doctrinal corpus:

³² For example, when seeking work, Evangelicals will say, "The Lord found me my new job." When they speak of their becoming Christians they will say, "I have found the Lord." If the implications of this difference hold, they are bound in external things and free in spiritual things. And all this despite the free-willism espoused by such self-help gurus like Joel Osteen in Houston.

³³ Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism*, trans. Walter A. Hansen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 103.

³⁴ Israel Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, 1st series (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917; reprint, New York: KTAV, 1967), 146.

In this easily learned four-line formula, the death of Jesus is understood from the perspective of Isa 53:10–12 as death “for our sins.” It was probably Jesus himself who provided the impetus for this interpretation of his death on the cross (cf. Mark 10:45 and 14:24). This is especially important for the theology of justification because Isa 53:11 says that God’s servant will justify many through his sufferings. Christology and justification are connected for the apostles, including Paul, especially on the basis of Isa 53:10–12. One can read the same thing in Rom 4:25, where Paul quotes another Christological formula: Jesus our Lord “was handed over to death (by God) for our trespasses and was raised (by God) for our justification.” *Christological statements about justification were thus already given to Paul in the apostolic faith tradition, which he inherited.*³⁵

This is why Stuhlmacher will conclude that the “Pauline doctrine of justification has ecumenical roots.”³⁶ Its Christological basis does not begin with Paul but is fully accepted by him. There can be no separating Christ and what he does. We must always acknowledge the artificiality of the dogmatic distinction between the person and work of Christ, for each constantly feeds into the other. His work remains to justify the sinner.

Christology and justification are centered in each other. The New Perspective tends to separate them or fade out their relationship. Stuhlmacher argued:

The New Perspective fails to allow for any clear relationship between Christology and justification. It only reaffirms the erroneous distinction of justification and Christ mysticism and does not see that this distinction is due to a deficient understanding of the atonement. The shortcomings of this new style of interpretation can therefore no longer be overlooked. It wants to present an alternative to “Lutheran” interpretation, and it has helped us consider more carefully the problem of (hidden) anti-Judaism in Pauline exegesis. Yet it has also truncated Paul’s statements on justification at every step and turn. Things cannot stay that way.”³⁷

The view of Schweitzer and Wrede that distinguished the juridical doctrine of justification from what they thought of as the larger stream of the mystical union with Christ must be rejected as a faulty distinction. This is a kind of Gnostic separation of the person of Christ from the work of Christ. Paul cannot speak of justification without speaking christologically.

³⁵ Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul’s Doctrine*, 21–22 (emphasis in original).

³⁶ Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul’s Doctrine*, 23.

³⁷ Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul’s Doctrine*, 44 (emphasis in original).

Communion with Christ is not something different from being justified by Him. Baptism immerses into Christ and also conveys forgiveness of sins and makes the holy bride of Christ without stain or wrinkle.

The New Perspective fails to see that the incarnation is a cosmic watershed—an inflection point that makes the transition to an entirely new life for the church—a life and hope promised by the Old Testament, but adumbrated there. It can only come to its fruition by the advent of the Messiah and the establishment of his kingdom of the church as the new Zion. The Old Testament is full of this promise of newness (e.g. Psalm 98). The God of the Old Testament is the God of hope, that is, he will only in the future bring to full fruition his promises in the messianic age. This implies a significant break with the past that is only shadowed to the patriarchs and prophets, but in these last days made complete in the Son. “Future expectation for Paul the Jew meant the expectation of the kingdom of God and of his anointed in Zion. After his call to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, Paul learned to see the hope of the Zion-βασιλεία in a new way in the light of his personal encounter with the living Christ Jesus.”³⁸

Paul’s justification statements all come out of a mature Christological structure, some statements of which already predate Paul’s expression of them. For example, Christ is for Paul the mercy seat of promise foreshadowed on every Day of Atonement for more than a millennium. Paul calls him the ἱλαστήριον to be received by faith (Rom 3:25). He fills the Old Testament shadows with reality. He does not merely accept what is or what was. Justification is at the heart of Christology. It is not a mere corollary or mere external attachment (even if it would be necessarily attached). Justification is “a living focal point, which turns the confession of Christ into something that vitally concerns my own existence.”³⁹ Justification tells us what all of the Christian theology means to humans. Justification is not an ethereal doctrine, high and floating, but ties all the assertions about God down to earth. Christological statements are statements about my status in the presence of God. So Luther, describing the union of the Christ, the bridegroom with His bride, the church, said, “She has that righteousness in Christ, her husband, of which she may boast as of her own and which she can confidently display alongside her sins in the face of death and hell and say, ‘If I have sinned, yet my Christ, in whom I

³⁸ Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul’s Doctrine*, 46.

³⁹ Eberhard Jüngel, *Justification: The Heart of the Christian Faith*, trans. Jeffrey F. Cayzer (London: T & T Clark, 2006), 15.

believe, has not sinned, and all his is mine and all mine is his.”⁴⁰ The blessed exchange of Luther has specific Christological content.

Christ’s justifying work rescues the sinner from the final judgment. There is a heavenly and ultimate goal in the activity of Christ. For Paul “the issue in justification is none other than the kingdom of God that Jesus preached. . . . God’s *Basileia* is the content of the Pauline doctrine of justification.”⁴¹ There can be no appropriation of Christ’s kingdom, including its cosmic and end times emphases, without taking seriously the justification of the sinner. The goal of the kingdom is only reached in Christ.

IV. The Theological Centrality of Justification

The theological centrality of justification and its hermeneutical function is closely tied to its Christological content. For Lutherans, the centrality of justification means that whole corpus of doctrine flows into and out from justification in Christ.

Karl Barth’s objection to the centrality of justification must be criticized in the light of the deep connectedness of justification to Christology especially, but also to the rest of the corpus of doctrine. Barth argued that the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae* would not be everywhere and always the doctrine of justification, but rather the confession of Jesus Christ. While Barth cannot be denominated an Evangelical as the term is presently used, still his arguments are more sophisticated antecedents to the position taken by Evangelicals. For Barth, justification is only a presupposition or consequence of Christology, rather than its functional center. Eberhard Jüngel asked if this is the way justification functions in the Smalcald Articles. The question provides its own answer. Without justification at the center, the salvific quality of Christology (or any other article of the faith) would be called into question. “It is appropriate to emphasize that this is precisely the function of the doctrine of justification: to convey the being and work of Jesus Christ for us, to us, and with us. It is only when explained by means of that doctrine that Christology becomes appropriate Christology at all.”⁴² Justification always tilts Christology toward the *pro nobis*. Justification does the work of Christology, carrying its water, so to speak.

⁴⁰ AE 31:352.

⁴¹ Ernst Käsemann, *Paulinische Perspektiven*, p. 133; quoted in Stuhlmacher, 52.

⁴² Jüngel, *Justification*, 28–29.

Here is why the means of grace must figure so prominently in Lutheran practice. The means of grace are intimately tied to the article of justification as among the ways the Lord has tied his person and work to our need. For Evangelicalism, the means of grace are a “preoccupation.”⁴³ Donald Bloesch tries to have it both ways when he says, “As catholic Evangelicals we wish to retain the sacraments but avoid sacramentalism.”⁴⁴ This is something like saying you are for breathing, but you are trying to avoid oxygen. For Evangelicals the sacraments remain signs of something else, empty husks. Justification demands an intense fullness of the sacraments so that the Word is not just “with” us but also “in” us, and for us.

Even the simple Christological statement of Luther’s explanation of the Second Article of the Creed is clearly made under the article of justification: “I believe that Jesus Christ, true God begotten of the Father from eternity and also true man born of the virgin Mary, *is* my Lord.” He is my Lord in the here and now. The first person singular and the present tense raises Christology to the level of justification. This is not a statement of historical faith, so rightly excoriated by the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, but rather a statement of the present value of the Lordship of Christ for me. Thus justification does not function as a theological Occam’s razor to eliminate doctrines thought to be peripheral. There is a long heritage for statements such as “all you have to do is believe that Jesus is Lord.” I hear it all the time in pastoral care. The biblical statement that Jesus is Lord does not separate the lordship of Christ (Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 12:3) from the rest of the corpus of doctrine, but draws the corpus into it. The direction is centripetal, not centrifugal. The article of justification leads not to a reduction of so-called fundamental articles, but to an enrichment of the theological substance delivered by the church’s proclamation. There is not less, but more, much more, if justification is the indispensable criterion for theological meaning.⁴⁵ Justification’s exclusivity is enriching, not im-

⁴³ Bloesch, *Evangelical Theology*, 1:9.

⁴⁴ Bloesch, *Evangelical Theology*, 211.

⁴⁵ James Nestingen stated that Erasmus was the reductionist, who, doubtful of the gospel, was doubtful of everything except himself, the authoritative subject. “Erasmus assumes sufficient detachment from Scripture and the authoritative traditions of the church to choose skepticism as an available alternative. He is the agent, surveying the range of claims before him, discerning their relative value. Having taken such a position for granted, Erasmus’ goal is to preserve his options. Just as he picks and chooses among truths presented to him, in his own mind he will preserve his alternatives before

poverishing. Only when there is no boasting in men is it true that “all are things yours” (1 Cor 3:21). When your boast is in Christ alone, then all things come into your possession. Theologically, it reminds of C.S. Lewis’s phrase hinting at eschatological abundance, “further up and further in,” from *The Last Battle*.⁴⁶ There is an eschatological fullness in the article of justification: the deeper we go the more connected we become with the whole doctrinal corpus.

Just as *perichoresis* (or interpenetration) hints at inter-Trinitarian fullness, so justification points to a theological inter-penetration of the articles of the faith. The narrowing exclusivity to justification is an expansion of the faith. Jüngel can say that justification “is theological knowledge as a category of reality in one.”⁴⁷ Perhaps this could be likened to a black hole in reverse. The more narrowly we strain theology through the article of justification, the more completely it expands, creating a universe full of theological meaning.

Justification implies that legal arguments are being made in the disputation that goes on between God and man. The argument aims at a verdict of peace after the arguments are all made.⁴⁸ Justification gives a verdict for the truth of the divine righteousness apart from human striving. But it also speaks a verdict of condemnation against all falsehood. The verdict is divine wrath against all ungodliness, the worst of which is the theological error that leads to self-righteousness. Here the boundary is between the gospel and not-the-gospel, not a boundary to divide doctrine from the gospel. Because justification is always inclined to the need of the sinner, it commands and controls the proclamation. It may not be a sterile set of theological propositions, but a real proclamation, a way of opening heaven to the sinner. So Luther here shows how justification functions without ever using the term:

It is clear enough that among the papists the knowledge of Christ, faith, and the gospel are altogether unknown, and at present even damned. When faith is lacking and Christ is ignored, it is impossible to see what is and is not sin before God. For the blindness of unbelief forces them to call evil good and good evil, and to lose their way altogether. If we do not know the difference between sin and good works we cannot loose or bind. So if we want to speak and feel as

God.” In this Erasmus is anticipating Cartesian rationalism. “Biblical Clarity and Ambiguity in *The Bondage of the Will*,” *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* (forthcoming).

⁴⁶ C. S. Lewis, *The Last Battle* (New York: Collier Books, 1978), 175.

⁴⁷ Jüngel, *Justification*, 48.

⁴⁸ Jüngel, *Justification*, 50.

followers of Christ, we must hold that the papists and the shorn sacrificers, as long as they persist in their contention, cannot possess the function of binding and loosing or even be priests, much less be the only ones who have this office or who confer it on anyone by their ordinations. What will you bind when you do not know what should be bound? So their blindness leads them on in their fury. They close heaven and open hell to themselves and theirs. By their binding they despise the gospel and by their loosing they exalt their own traditions. They have lost both the authority and the use of the keys by their perverse and impious abuse.⁴⁹

Such a use of justification clarifies the meaning of office, good and evil, and the delivery of holy absolution to sinners. Here judgment is right at hand; heaven is closed and hell opened to a feast. Justification shows papal practice to be false. There can be no temporizing where justification is at stake. Papal practice must be labeled for what it is.⁵⁰

The person and work of Christ, the bound will, and Christology must all hang together or they will hang separately. The Holy Spirit is no skeptic. Justification is that binding. Dogmatic *perichoresis* (interpenetration) stands out as an absolute methodological requirement at the meeting point of Christology and the righteousness of God. Nor is this a methodological add-on, as though this were a Lutheran theological quirk. It is demanded by the theological relationships within the *corpus doctrinae*. It is impossible to dispense with one article of the faith without damaging all of them, because such a dispensation will separate it from justification.⁵¹

⁴⁹ AE 40:28.

⁵⁰ What we now call "mission" must be shaped by justification. Proclamation is inseparable from justification. It demands to be proclaimed to those who are living in darkness and the shadow of death, so that their bonds would be smashed (Ps 107:10–14). There can be no mission apart from this proclamation. No technique can ever replace it, but mere technique must be criticized as not-the-gospel. There can be no reduction of the proclamation to "Jesus is Lord," as though such reduction would not kill the church's proclamation of the whole gospel. Alan Hirsch suggests that with the simple confession "Jesus is Lord!" various mission movements changed the world. Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways* (Waco: Brazos Press, 2009), 24.

⁵¹ From my "Depravity, Christology, Revelation, and Justification All Hang Together," which will appear in an upcoming issue of LOGIA.

V. Conclusion

While many evangelicals can confess quite narrowly the article of justification by faith without works of the law, such as Donald Hagner of Fuller Theological Seminary, many of them still struggle to be clear about the teaching that faith is purely passive and is truly a gift of grace. While they may even be able to express the concept of gracious giftedness and in that way are similar to Lutheranism, many are unable to confess the bound will as a corollary of justification, which is a wide divergence from a Lutheran perspective. The New Perspective, insofar as it affects Evangelical theology, is working with a legalistic redefinition of grace—namely, grace as help toward the good works necessary to remain within the covenant. For Lutherans, this definition of grace is unacceptable.

Evangelical theology will often disconnect Christology from justification, making it truly a legalistic enterprise because it is ripped from its Christological swaddling clothes. Evangelical theology is not organized by justification, which does not play a pivotal role in their dogmatic method. While we can identify these weaknesses in much of Evangelicalism, it must still be said that insofar as Lutherans are influenced by the pervasive evangelical culture, there is much to repent of among us. For to lose justification is to lose everything.

The Finnish School of Luther Interpretation: Responses and Trajectories

Gordon L. Isaac

Since the 1970s, a new approach to Luther studies has been undertaken that has its roots in the Scandinavian tradition of Luther research. Tuomo Mannermaa, professor emeritus at the University of Helsinki, and his students have charted a new course in Luther research that has shown promise in ecumenical discussions and has challenged certain long-held convictions regarding the Wittenberg reformer. The surprising starting point for the Finnish School of Luther interpretation is the idea that Luther's formulation of justification and the Eastern church's doctrine of *theosis* constitute a theological intersection of the two traditions. The testing of this proposal came about during the dialogue between the Finnish Lutheran and Russian Orthodox churches in Kiev in 1977. At those talks, *theosis* served as the point of departure. Never before had *theosis* been a common theme between the Orthodox and the Lutherans.

In the aftermath of those important first talks, a great deal of research has emerged. Going back to the sources to verify Luther's assertions regarding justification, participation, presence, and union with Christ has been the occupation of the Finnish school. As a result, there is an emerging new paradigm for Luther research. In his article, "Theosis as a Subject of Finnish Luther Research," Tuomo Mannermaa sets forward *theosis* as a problem of Luther research in three senses.¹

First, *theosis* as a problem of Luther research leads to something of a ground-clearing operation. Mannermaa and his school are convinced that the ontological assumptions of Luther research have been held captive by a neo-Kantian body of thought, particularly as it is represented by the German philosopher Herman Lotze (1817–1881). Lotze rejected the idea

¹ Tuomo Mannermaa, "Theosis als Thema der Finnischen Luther Forschung," in *Luther und Theosis*, Veröffentlichungen der Luther-Akademie Ratzeburg, vol. 16 (Erlangen: Martin-Luther Verlag, 1990), 11–26. An English translation by Norman W. Watt is available as "Theosis as a Subject of Finnish Luther Research," *Pro Ecclesia* 4 (Winter 1995): 37–48. References are to this translation.

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that things must exist in themselves before they could participate in relationships. Rather, being is always a matter of relationship. Being is thus what happens in reciprocal actions. As a result, Luther's interpretation of the real presence of Christ has been read in terms of actualism and has had an anti-ontological aspect to it. Renewing of the human being has, in this view, been a matter of renewing the will.

The influential Protestant theologian Albrecht Ritschl (1822–1889) takes up this point of view of Lotze. "In theology, we cannot assume the isolated existence of things. Right theological knowledge is . . . transcendental, in the sense that only God's action in the world, not his being in itself, is accessible to us."² The endeavor of interpreting Luther with this set of presuppositions, according to the Finnish School, makes it quite impossible for the traditional approaches in Luther research to see things clearly.

Especially when one comes to the utterances of Luther regarding the presence of Christ, transcendental categories are inadequate. To interpret Luther's ontological doctrine of the presence of Christ ethically or in terms of an effect assumes that the being of God remains *extra nos*. The "presence of Christ" in Karl Holl, for example, is in its essence neither a mystical nor a substantial union, but a union of wills. According to Mannermaa, the attempt to solve the question of how Christ is present through a transcendental approach renders certain passages in Luther's works absolutely meaningless.³

Second, and foundational, is the fact that Luther employs the language of *theosis*. In harmony with the ancient church, Luther uses terms such as "*deificare*," "*vergotten*," and "*durchgotten*." Mannermaa cites the following passage, stating that it elucidates the core of Luther's doctrine of justification:

Just as the word of God became flesh, so it is certainly also necessary that the flesh become word. For the word becomes flesh precisely so that the flesh may become word. In other words, God becomes man so that man may become God. Thus power becomes powerless so that weakness may become powerful. The logos puts on our form and manner, our image and likeness, so that it may clothe us with its image, its manner, and its likeness. Thus wisdom becomes foolish so that foolishness may become wisdom, and so it is in all other things

² Mannermaa, "Theosis," 41.

³ Mannermaa, "Theosis," 42.

that are in God and in us, to the extent that in all these things he takes what is ours to himself in order to impart what is his to us.⁴

To take this passage seriously and to understand that it reflects a structure found throughout Luther's writings from early to late is Mannermaa's point. The conception of God and man represented here is completely different from the one taught in the tradition of the Luther Renaissance and of dialectical theology.

For Mannermaa and his students, the leading idea is that Christ is present in faith. In other words, Christ, in both his person and work, is present in and through the faith of the Christian as an initial down payment on what will be complete at the Last Day. The concept of the *inhabitatio Dei* is taken by Mannermaa to be analogous to the doctrine of *theosis*. The divine life of Christ, who is really present, is considered to be much more central to Luther's thought than previously imagined. This leading thought is found in the Galatians commentary in a passage where Luther, speaking about true faith, writes, "It [faith] takes hold of Christ in such a way that Christ is the object of faith, or rather not the object, but so to speak, the One who is present in the faith itself. . . . Therefore faith justifies because it takes hold of and possesses this treasure, the present Christ."⁵

Justification and deification mean the participation of the believer in Christ in whom the very image of God is conveyed. Participation is not based on human love but on the agape love of God who seeks and saves the lost. In this way, the Finnish interpreters speak of a "real-ontic" unity between Christ and the believer. Mannermaa is careful to say that the union does not indicate a change of substance. "God does not stop being God and man does not stop being man. Both retain their substances, i.e. they are at all times in the union realities existing in themselves (*ens in se*), i.e., precisely substances."⁶ In any event, the idea of the presence of Christ in a "real-ontic" manner is not just a subjective experience or God's effect on the believer in the manner of German liberalism.

⁴ Martin Luther, *Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe [Schriften]*, 65 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–1993), 1:28,25–32.

⁵ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols., ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton S. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1986), 26:139; WA 40 1:228–29.

⁶ Mannermaa, "Theosis," 43.

Third, *theosis* as a problem of Luther research touches on the matter of the implications of Christ's presence in the believer and what this means for transformation. As Mannermaa puts it, "through faith, in which Christ is a real presence, man begins in accordance with the Golden Rule to love both God and his neighbor. In faith, he considers all that is good, including what he himself has received, as God's property and quality."⁷ Through faith the relationship to God is no longer based on an upward striving through human love. Rather, it is based on the reception of God's love indwelling the believer through the Spirit. As Luther himself would say, "works contribute nothing to justification. Therefore man knows that works which he does by such faith are not his but God's."⁸

"Luther's main thesis is daring: As a result of the presence of Christ, the Christian becomes a 'work of Christ,' and even more a 'Christ' to the neighbor."⁹ In a very real sense, the Christian becomes "Christ's action and instrument." The presence of Christ is not simply a "spiritual" presence that is outside of us but a real presence that is internal to the believer. As Luther says it, "for through faith Christ is in us, indeed, one with us." And again, "Since Christ lives in us through faith so he arouses us to do good works through that living faith in his work, for the works which he does are the fulfillment of the commands of God given us through faith."¹⁰

Mannermaa points out that faith means participation in the being or qualities of God, one of which is love. Because Christ in his essence is God and God is love, so too the believer who exists in communion with God through faith is also moved to love the neighbor for God's sake and begins to love God from the heart. Christ is thus the form of faith. Of tantamount importance in all of this is to see that Mannermaa and the Finnish School see the *telos* of *theosis* not as a process by which one ascends to God, but a

⁷ Mannermaa, "Theosis," 44.

⁸ "Explanations to the Heidelberg Disputation," AE 31:56.

⁹ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *One with God: Salvation as Deification and Justification*, Unitas Books Series (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004), 58. Kärkkäinen, although not a Lutheran theologian, did his doctoral work under Mannermaa and has become something of an interpreter for the movement, if not an evangelist for its views. In his article, "The Holy Spirit and Justification: The Ecumenical Significance of Luther's Doctrine of Salvation," *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 24 (Spring 2002): 26–39, Kärkkäinen emphasizes the new horizons opened up by the Finnish School, especially in the area of pneumatology, while highlighting some of the recent Finnish theologians and their writings. See also his contribution to *Justification: Five Views*, ed. James Bielby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2011).

¹⁰ AE 31:56–57.

(Christ-like) transformation that causes the believer to step out for the sake of love into the position of his neighbor and become "like the poorest of the poor." In this way, the theology of Luther, which is the purest theology of faith (alone), is seen to be a thoroughgoing theology of (God's) love.

At this point it would be well for us to see the polemical side of Mannermaa's position. As he puts it, "Luther does not differentiate, as does subsequent Lutheranism, between the person and the work of Christ. Christ himself, both his person and his work, is the righteousness of man before God. Faith means justification precisely on the basis of Christ's person being present in it: *in ipsa fide Christus adest*; in faith itself Christ himself is present."¹¹ Mannermaa asserts that Luther's view of justification differs from the official position of the Lutheran Confessions. The confessional documents were drafted by other theologians and were crafted in the polemic against the Roman Catholic positions even more so than was Luther's teaching.

In addition, with the strong emphasis on the idea that Christ's person and his work constitute the righteousness of man before God causes the Finnish School to reject the distinction between justification and sanctification as being foreign to Luther's thought. Proceeding from Luther's statements regarding the presence of Christ in faith, the Finnish School insists that it is a much more productive stance to view Luther's understanding of salvation as in harmony with the early church.

This all too brief review of the basic outlines of the Finnish School gives some indication of the overall program of Mannermaa and his students.¹² It is a comprehensive and systematic proposal, including a critique of the methods of Luther study generated in the Luther Renaissance, most especially the neo-Kantian categories of transcendentalism that disallow any discussion of Luther's ontology.¹³ In addition, *theosis* or deification is

¹¹ Mannermaa, "Theosis," 46.

¹² Especially central to the large and growing literature in the field are the Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft and the Luther-Akademie Ratzeburg. Bibliographic information can be found at <http://www.helsinki.fi/~risaarin/luther.html>. See also the fine work of the *Luther Digest: An Annual Abridgment of Luther Studies*, which makes available some of the un-translated works by the Finnish School in English digest form. Especially important are Volume 3 (1995) and Volume 5 (1997), which contain digests from monographs as well as articles in the field.

¹³ In this regard, see Risto Saarinen, *Gottes Wirken auf uns: Die Transzendente Deutung des Gegenwart-Christi-Motivs in der Lutherforschung* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1989); Kari Kopperi et al., ed., *Luther und Ontologie*, (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Society, 1993).

posited as the structural content of Luther's theology.¹⁴ This expresses itself in the two kinds of love: the agape love of God, who seeks and saves sinners, and the resultant love generated in the heart of the believer that works its way out by serving the neighbor for Christ's sake.¹⁵ Further, the comprehensive program of the Finnish School seeks to highlight the way or manner in which Christ is present in and with the believer through faith.¹⁶ The perspective from the center is able to unite the concepts of justification and sanctification in a way that fairly represents the Luther corpus in its varied vocabulary.

If we fast-forward to 2010, the program of the Finnish School is set out once again in updated form by Risto Saarinen. In brisk manner, Saarinen points out the sad fact that Luther's thought is not highly regarded in academic circles today. "If we look at today's theological schools and fashionable discussion topics in the English-speaking world, Luther is either absent or his views are regarded as problematic."¹⁷ From John Milbank and the Radical Orthodoxy movement, to the Communitarians following Alisdair MacIntyre, to Benedict XVI, opinions regarding Luther are as negative as they are misinformed. Saarinen understands that it requires a bold move to claim that Luther's thought is intellectually fascinating and holds promise, but that is precisely what the Finns have set out to do.

¹⁴ Among other works see, S. Peura and A. Raunio, ed., *Luther und Theosis* (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Society, 1987); Simo Peura, *Mehr als ein Mensch? Die Vergöttlichung als Thema der Theologie Martin Luthers von 1513 bis 1519*, Veröffentlichungen des Institut für Europäische Geschichte (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1994), and Tuomo Mannermaa, *Der im Glauben gegenwärtige Christus: Rechtfertigung und Vergottung*, Zum ökumenischen Dialog (Hannover: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1989); English translation, *Christ Present in Faith: Luther's View of Justification* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005).

¹⁵ Anti Raunio, *Die Summe des christlichen Lebens: Die 'Goldene Regel' als Gesetz der Liebe in der Theologie Martin Luthers von 1510 bis 1527*, Systemaattisen teologian litoksen julkisen julkaisu 13 (Universität Helsinki, 1993); forthcoming publication by Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte, Mainz. Tuomo Mannermaa, "Participation and Love in the Theology of Martin Luther," *Philosophical Studies in Religion, Metaphysics and Ethics. Essays in honor of Heikki Kirjavainen*. (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola Society, 1997), 303–311. *Caritas Dei: Beiträge zum Verständnis Luthers und der gegenwärtigen Ökumene*. Festschrift für Tuomo Mannermaa, ed. O. Bayer, R. Jenson, S. Knuuttila (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft, 1997).

¹⁶ Marku Antola, *The Experience of Christ's Real Presence in Faith: An Analysis of the Christ-Presence-Motif in the Lutheran Charismatic Renewal*, Schriften der Luther-Agricola Gesellschaft 43 (Helsinki: 1998).

¹⁷ Risto Saarinen, "Finnish Luther Studies: A Story and a Program," in Olli-Pekka Vainio, ed. *Engaging Luther: A (New) Theological Assessment* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2010), 1.

Saarinen insists that the Finnish quest for a new way of presenting Luther is not “driven by patristic nostalgia or ecumenical opportunism.”¹⁸ Rather, it comes out of the historical context of Finnish Lutheranism in which 80 percent of the population is registered in the Lutheran church, and in which there exists a relaxed attitude toward Roman Catholicism. Further, because the research is done in the context of a modern university, there is a more non-confessional approach.

While the Finnish school is open to a new formulation of Luther, it is critical of several features of modern Protestantism. Saarinen is clear in setting out his conviction that both Modern German Protestantism and confessional traditionalism have remained defective in their understandings of justification.¹⁹ The key doctrine of Lutheranism, when it is interpreted either in purely forensic terms or in terms of existential experience, fails to give a just accounting of the realistic—or, as the Finns like to say, the “real-ontic”—character of salvation. Mannermaa wants to affirm the continuation of the sacramental soteriology of the Reformation in its classic form.

Clearly, the Finnish School of Luther interpretation is much more than a proposal of justification by faith framed in ecumenical terms. It is, rather, a programmatic attempt to set forward the beautiful and fascinating core of Luther’s teaching in today’s context. This implies both the deconstructive work of pointing out what has been wrongly conceived in previous presentations of Luther and engaging in the positive work of setting out a new path for Luther studies in the future. Due to the fact that there are so many factors clustered together, the Finnish approach to Luther studies represents a paradigm shift both for those schooled in the Luther Renaissance approach or for more traditional, confessional approaches to Luther.

I. Reception of the Finnish Interpretation

There is a continuum with regard to the reception of Finnish studies from enthusiastic embrace to outright dismissal. Ulrich Asendorf of the Lutherakademie Ratzeburg is very positive in his assessment of the Finnish School of Luther interpretation. It is not an exaggeration to say that he is convinced that the Finnish line marks a new departure in Luther

¹⁸ Saarinen, “Finnish Luther Studies,” 6.

¹⁹ Saarinen, “Finnish Luther Studies,” 9.

studies.²⁰ But not all are convinced. Martin Hailer, for example, challenges the sharp distinction that the Finns make between the relational and the ontological language that Luther uses. Using the *theopoetic* aspect of Luther's teaching as the key for understanding Luther drives certain insights into the background in a manner that skews the final shape of Luther's theology.²¹ And yet again, according to Risto Saarinen, there are some Germans who will not even deign to make any comments because the Finnish approach is just "too catholic."²²

The responses to the Finnish School that follow below are but a few representative examples available. The first article by Kurt Marquart is a good introduction to some of the concepts in the discussion. The second article by Carl Trueman is a critique from the point of view of method. The third article by Anna Briskina is a critique from the vantage point of eastern orthodoxy.

The article, "Luther and Theosis," by Kurt Marquart represents a more or less positive reception of the Finnish approach. Ostensibly, the effort is meant as a broad and open-ended treatment of some of the subjects related to *theosis*, including a sketch of the concept of deification from biblical and patristic texts, a sampling of Luther texts that touch on the matter, especially from the great Galatians commentary, the Finnish critique of neo-Kantian preconceptions, and finally a brief comment on the distinction that Mannermaa makes between Luther's view of justification and that which one finds in the Formula of Concord. Only in this last section does Marquart give any evidence of disagreement. The article is not an attempt to set forward a particular thesis or assessment of the Finnish approach. "My chief purpose here is simply to let Luther himself speak to us in his own vivid way."²³

Carl Trueman, professor of Church History and Historical Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, has written a critical review article of the collection of essays on the Finnish perspective entitled *Union with*

²⁰ Ulrich Asendorf, "Die Einbettung der Theosis in die Theologie Martin Luthers," in *Luther und Theosis*, Veröffentlichungen der Luther-Akademie Ratzeburg, vol. 16 (Erlangen: Martin-Luther Verlag, 1990), 85–102.

²¹ Martin Hailer, "Rechtfertigung als Vergottung? Eine auseinandersetzung mit der finnischen Luther-Deutung und ihrer systematischen-theologischen Adaption," *Luther-jahrbuch* 77 (2010): 239–267.

²² Saarinen, "Finnish Luther Studies," 11.

²³ Kurt Marquart, "Luther and Theosis," *CTQ* 64 (July 2000): 186.

Christ.²⁴ At the outset, Trueman affirms the desire of the Helsinki circle to offer a Luther who has more potential for ecumenical discussions. And indeed, as he notes, the systematic construction of the Finnish School has achieved precisely that.

Furthermore, Trueman goes on to give praise to the Finns for their contributions to the wider work of Luther interpretation. In particular, he affirms the valid points made with regard to the critique they bring to bear on the methodology of the Luther Renaissance with its anti-ontological bias. As a historian, Trueman is happy to see that the views and approach of Ritschl and Holl and even Ebeling come under “timely and necessary criticism.” Trueman is keenly aware that Luther operated in an intellectual world shaped by late medieval thought forms. To impose Kantian pre-suppositions on the 16th-century Saxon and his wide ranging thought is a formula for skewed results. In the case of Ebeling and his more existentialist approach to Luther, there are abiding problems in appropriating the force of language and the historical and realist stance of Luther. In addressing these excesses, Trueman expresses his appreciation of the Finnish School of Luther interpretation by saying, “the Finnish School stands as a necessary corrective.”²⁵ After these kind and affirming opening remarks, Trueman turns his even-handed but incisive critique to bear on the Finnish School.

First, Trueman observes that the theses of the Finnish School are built on the use of a few select texts. The argument that is presented is purportedly a historical one; however, there is no use of the trajectories and methodologies of modern Luther scholarship. There is no use of the Luther scholarship such as that represented by Oberman, Hagen, or Steinmetz, scholars who are committed to reading the Luther texts against the backdrop of the theological and exegetical traditions to which they relate. This leaves the presentation of the Finns (at least in the volume in question) historiographically very weak. As Trueman puts it, “Ideas of righteousness, gift and favour do not originate in a vacuum, and understanding their historical, intellectual, and exegetical background must form

²⁴ Carl Braaten and Robert Jenson, eds., *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

²⁵ Carl Trueman, “Is the Finnish Line a New Beginning: A Critical Assessment of the Reading of the Luther Offered by the Helsinki Circle.” This article was first published in *The Westminster Theological Journal* 65 (2003): 231–44. It can now be found in *The Wages of Spin: Critical Writings on Historical and Contemporary Evangelicalism* (Fearn, Scotland: 2004), 129–148, cf. especially 130.

a necessary part of understanding how and why Luther is or is not using them.”²⁶

Second, while the Finns raise very important questions about the viability of using the Kantian and post-Kantian methodologies of the Luther Renaissance, they do not ask themselves the equally important question of how to read the Luther corpus as a whole. Strangely missing from the Finnish School is the matter of the historical development of Luther’s theology. That there is significant development and change on certain matters is not given enough attention in this presentation of Luther. Trueman complains that quotations from pre-reformation and Reformation texts are juxtaposed without ever asking the developmental questions, calling into question the methodology of the movement as a whole. A case in point is the Finnish School commitment to separating Luther from the confessional tradition. This highly questionable move is not argued on the basis of the relevant texts, but is merely asserted without the supporting grounds.

Third, following hard upon what has already been said, Trueman makes the assertion that there is a pattern of decontextual reading in Mannermaa’s approach. The emphasis given to participation in Christ fails to take into account the significance of the two kinds of righteousness and the two kingdoms doctrine as basic elements of Luther’s understanding of the Christian life. This leaves Trueman doubtful that justice has been done to the theological content of the primary texts.

Fourth, Trueman points out that the distancing of Luther from the Formula of Concord would also require a distancing from the Augsburg Confession as well. This is scarcely plausible, given Luther’s comments on the *Augustana* and his later comments found in the Galatians commentary of 1535. In a bit of wry wit, Trueman suggests that, if the Finns are successful in their attempt to separate Luther from the Confessions, it may result in a Luther closer to Gregory of Palamas than the Lutheran Confessions!

In sum, Trueman sees the Finnish School of Luther interpretation engaged in a process of setting forward a systematic vision of Luther that may have usefulness in extending ecumenical dialogue, although he wonders how far one can get in dialogue on a skewed view of Luther. In

²⁶ Trueman, “Finnish Line,” 146.

the end, this trajectory runs afoul of the careful historical methods that need to be employed to give us an accurate picture of Luther. As he puts it:

To build a systematic case on a reading of Luther which flies in the face of the most basic canons of historical method (reading texts in context, not isolating quotations in a manner which effectively subverts their meaning) might appeal to the most postmodern of minds, but it should have no place at the table of reasoned ecumenism and honest, genuine, interconfessional dialogue.²⁷

Another critique worth mentioning comes from the Orthodox point of view. Anna Briskina has written an article entitled, "An Orthodox View of Finnish Luther Research," in which she raises several issues.²⁸ Among other things, Briskina focuses on the following: the "real-ontic" union, the later texts of the reformer that seem to be almost exclusively forensic in character, and what Finnish researchers seem to have overlooked in the Eastern Orthodox view of *theosis*.

Briskina points out that Finnish Luther research follows the Aristotelian principle that the knower becomes one and the same with the known. Or, in other words, when you know something or someone, your intellect is shaped by that experience. According to Mannermaa and his school, the union between Christ and the Christian is grounded in the fact that Christ comes to the Christian in faith and is present in the faith itself. Faith is in the form of Christ and in this way the Christian is formed in the image of Christ and is thus "*vergottet*." According to this logic, each object that one knows should become the form of the intellect. So, it might be possible to participate in God, or it might be possible to participate in one's horse, or in any number of other things.²⁹ The "real-ontic" union with Christ is trivialized greatly because it is merely one of any number of possible "real-ontic" unions.

In addition, but still on this topic, Briskina points out that it is disputed as to whether or not "union" and "participation" should be interpreted ontologically at all, for it has been understood as agreement. According to Melancthon, neither participation in the name of God nor in the divine nature has ontological surplus value over and against, or in addition to, participation in the gifts of Christ. So the problem of asserting the "real-

²⁷ Trueman, "Finnish Line," 148.

²⁸ Anna Briskina, "An Orthodox View of Finnish Luther Research," *Lutheran Quarterly* 22 (2008): 16-39.

²⁹ Briskina, "An Orthodox View," 22.

ontic" union and the sanitive transformation of the Christian has led, according to the critics, to neglect of the cross and sin, something that seems out of place with Luther's theology.

It has been pointed out by Reinhard Flogaus, among others, that the "*froehliche wechsel*"—the happy exchange—is no longer the major theme in Luther's doctrine of justification after the year 1531. Instead, the leading principle is exclusively *sola fide*.³⁰ The emphasis of these texts is the forgiveness of sins as pure gift, not participation in Christ, and they are therefore forensically grounded. These texts, not surprisingly, are undervalued by the Finns. So, the critics would point out that the theme of Luther's theology is not that of participation or *theosis* but is simply *solus Christus crucifixus*.

Perhaps most interesting in Briskina's article is the comment made regarding the Eastern Orthodox view of *theosis*. As Briskina points out, the doctrine of the Eastern Church goes hand in hand with their doctrine of deificatory life that embraces church life and ascetics. In their attempt to forge a deep relationship between the Eastern Church and Lutheranism, the Finnish researchers seem to have overlooked this fact. A full-scale comparison of Luther and the Eastern Church in the areas of piety, sacraments, and worship would become necessary. In this regard, one also needs to reckon with Luther's doctrine of *simul justus et peccator*. From the Eastern perspective, the *simul* can in no way be affirmed. Briskina chides, "the impression almost arises of a new doctrine of two undissolvable [*sic*] natures. But does not the goal of redemption consist in human beings being healed from one of these 'natures' and the *simul* dissolved? It would be a rather strange idea to deny this to the process of salvation."³¹

II. Forensic Justification

Up to this point we have had a summary look at the Finnish School and its interpretive approach to Luther, and we have recorded a few of the critiques of this new way of viewing the reformer. We turn now to the Finns and their concerns regarding the matter of forensic justification. Risto Saarinen reports that some of the most vehement opposition to the

³⁰ Reinhard Flogaus, "Melanchthon versus Luther? Zur Frage der Einheit der Wittenberger Reformation in der Rechtfertigungslehre," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 91 (2000): 37–39. See also Reinhard Flogaus, *Theosis bei Palamas und Luther: Ein Beitrag zum Ökumenischen Gespräch*, Forschungen zur Systematischen und Ökumenischen Theologie 78 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1997).

³¹ Briskina, "An Orthodox View," 25

Finnish approach comes from those who are proponents of a strictly forensic view of justification. By "strictly forensic," he means a theology that denies the effective or ontological side of justification in favor of an exclusively forensic decree framed in the mind of God. Understood christologically, the Christ "for us" is associated with the imputed righteousness of Christ, and the Christ "in us" is the effective side of justification. A theologian who would affirm Christ "for us" as the primary aspect of justification with the Christ "in us" subordinated to that primary aspect would, in this definition, hold to a "strictly forensic" view of justification.

As a good example of one who represents this point of view, Risto Saarinen cites Mark C. Mattes:

Christ is so for us that he becomes one with us in this marriage of the conscience to Christ. Christ and the conscience are then "one body." The reason that Christ lives in me is not to accentuate a mystical teleology of ascent into the triune life but to "abolish the law" Luther emphasizes Christ in us because it is the strongest scriptural affirmation to support the truth that Christ is for us. The efficacy of Christ in us is logically subordinate to the forensic declaration that Christ is for us.³²

Saarinen reads Mattes as saying that the forensic declaration is the most important thing, and that the Christ "in us" serves the purpose of supporting the truth that Christ is "for us." As such, Mattes' position cannot be reconciled to Mannermaa's view.

The issue in dispute here is the relationship between effective and forensic justification. Perhaps one of the best ways of getting at this topic is to speak of the two classic concepts: "grace" (*gratia*, *favor*) and "gift" (*donum*). The former denotes the sinner's being declared righteous (the forensic concept) and the latter the person's being made righteous (the effective aspect). As early as Luther's *Lectures on Romans* (1515–1516), this distinction appears. Following the terminology of Augustine and the medieval tradition, on the basis of Romans 5:15, "The grace of God the gift of God" (*gratia Dei et donum in gratia*), Luther expresses the opinion that

³² See Mark Mattes, "A Future for Lutheran Theology?" *Lutheran Quarterly* 19 (2005): 439–457.

"the grace of God and the 'gift' are the same thing, namely the righteousness which is freely given to us through Christ."³³

Saarinen and the Finnish school have always taken pains to say that *favor* and *donum* go together and cannot be sundered, any more than justification can be severed from sanctification. That is why this statement by Mattes is unacceptable from the Finnish point of view. Saarinen sees this as an attempt to place everything on the forensic side and, as a consequence, leave the believer in the position of having become a beneficiary of the benefits of Christ without becoming a full recipient of salvation.

Saarinen explains his complaint against Mattes more fully with the following:

Luther's theology of the Lord's Supper and the Mass exemplifies particularly well the fact that the salvific self-giving of Christ comprises humans as both beneficiaries and recipients. The fundamental problem of Catholic Masses was that the laypeople could be interpreted as mere beneficiaries: they did not need to attend the Mass but could benefit by the performance without participation. Luther, however, emphasized that the eucharist needed to be personally received. Likewise, the theology of justification needs both Christ for us and Christ in us—one aspect cannot be reduced to another. Paradoxically, the strictly forensic concept of Mattes thus approaches the theology of eucharistic sacrifice that Luther rejected.³⁴

What are we to make of this critique? It is certainly creative, but many might find it a bit over the top. Saarinen makes the distinction between being a beneficiary and being a participant; apparently, there is concern over the possibility of accommodating some form of cheap grace. I am sure, however, that it would come as a complete surprise to Mattes to think that his view of Luther's theology has anything in common with Eucharistic sacrifice or the merit-sharing schemes of medieval brotherhoods. I would further doubt that Mattes would advocate a view of Luther's theology that excluded transformation and renewal.

Mattes says, "The reason that Christ lives in me is not to accentuate a mystical teleology of ascent into the triune life but to 'abolish the law.'" Mattes says this to establish that the righteousness of faith is one which God imputes to us through Christ without works. It is not of the law; it is a

³³ AE 25:306

³⁴ Saarinen, "Finnish Luther Studies," 22

passive righteousness. This is the position that Luther emphatically takes in the opening salvos of the *argumentum* to the Galatians commentary of 1535. Mattes' point comes through loud and clear. Here, the Finns have been a bit reticent to acquiesce. They are more likely to affirm that forgiveness and renewal go together. Indeed, some are convinced that the Finnish school tends to equate the *inhabitatio Dei* (which belongs to sanctification) with the *iustitia Dei* (which belongs to justification).³⁵ This tendency in the Finnish School seems to be borne out in the major work of Mannermaa, in which his description of the relation between the gift of righteousness and imputation quite clearly—and rather curiously—gives precedence to the “righteousness in the heart” over the “imputation of God.”³⁶

One might quibble with the way Mattes speaks of *theosis*. After all, the Finns have a Lutheran way of talking about *theosis*. “A mystical teleology of ascent into the triune life” is hardly an accurate expression of what the Finnish school would say. Deification as understood by the Finns is not an ascent, but a descent into the form of a servant.³⁷ Since God has become man, the form or image that is being renewed in the believer is the image of the incarnate one. The marred humanity of Adam as a self-vaunting god is set aside in the renewed humanity of Christ, the one who is a friend to sinners. Perhaps one can excuse Mattes in this small infelicity while striving for clarity on the important relationship of grace and gift (*favor, donum*), which was the focus of his article.

As we turn to Saarinen, it is clear that he wants to be able to say that the believer is both beneficiary and recipient. His emphasis is to hold together the unity of the grace and gift. He rejects the notion that it is possible to be a beneficiary of the grace of God without simultaneously receiving the gift of the present Christ, who works real righteousness in the believer. But is it really the case that someone like Mattes is sundering the declaration of God's righteousness from the transformation of the believer in such a way as to falsify the presentation of righteousness that the Bible and Luther set forward? What is the source of Saarinen's opposition? Is there an aversion to the declaration of righteousness in Christ through the gospel because it does not fit with a view of divinization? Or, is it that the

³⁵ On this point see especially Timo Laato, “Justification: The Stumbling Block of the Finnish Luther School,” *CTQ* 72 (2008): 327–346.

³⁶ Tuomo Mannermaa, *Christ Present in Faith: Luther's View of Justification*, ed. Kirsi Stjerna (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 55–61.

³⁷ The main work here is Raunio, *Die Summe des christlichen Lebens*. See also Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *One With God*, 58–61, for a helpful summary.

Finnish approach does not have a strong embrace of the concept of performative language, or of the declaration of God's Word that makes things come into being? It makes one wonder what the Finns would say about the word of absolution in the Office of the Keys. Is there no room for any forensic aspect to Luther's view of justification?

Robert Kolb, reflecting on Gerhard Forde's treatment of the doctrine of justification, writes the following:

First the "Holl school" and recently the "Finnish school" of Tuomo Mannermaa challenged the so-called "forensic" interpretation of Luther's doctrine of justification. Holl recognized that Luther had emphasized the performance of good works and tried to tie the sanctified life to the act of justification. Mannermaa associates Luther's view with the Eastern Orthodox concept of *theosis* or divinization, in arguing that justification is more real than "merely" a divine verbal observation. Both interpretations wish to avoid regarding justification as the creation of a legal fiction—believers remain really sinners but God simply refuses to consider them as such. Gerhard Forde rightly recognized that such attempts are both historically inaccurate and theologically unnecessary when he observed that the more "forensic" Luther's teaching becomes, the more effective it is, because nothing can be more real than that which God's Word declares. Furthermore, Luther's distinguishing God's restoration of human righteousness and the effect it has on human performance of new obedience dare not be confused with a separation of the two, as though there were no moral consequences of receiving a new identity and new dignity as God's child.³⁸

III. Conclusion

The fascinating and creative work of the Finnish School of Luther interpretation has stimulated discussion and raised significant issues in Luther studies. The following observations are in order.

First, the Finnish School has already achieved significant gains and has made contributions to the wider community of Luther scholarship. The Finnish interpretation stands as a necessary corrective to the post-Kantian trajectories of German Liberalism. If it achieves nothing else, this contri-

³⁸ Robert Kolb, *Martin Luther: Confessor of the Faith*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 127–128. Kolb is referencing Gerhard Forde, *Justification: A Matter of Death and Life* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1982; reprint, Mifflintown, Pennsylvania: Sigler Press, 1991), 21–38, especially 36.

bution to Luther scholarship is invaluable. To be able to speak again in terms of “real presence” may take us a step closer to Luther’s worldview and help us to rethink some of our presuppositions in Luther studies.

Second, the Mannermaa school has produced a sizable corpus and mobilized the talents of a new generation of Luther scholars whose energy and love for the Luther corpus is winsome and catching. The works that have already been published will generate further discussion that promises to keep Luther studies dynamic and interesting. The Finnish School, with its emphasis on the realism of Luther, has achieved a platform from which to be heard.

Third, serious issues remain, especially when it comes to methodology, decontextualized reading of key Luther passages, and the assertion that *deification* constitutes the structural content of Luther’s theology. There is no question that there are significant and vivid passages where Luther uses this powerful terminology, but to say that this constitutes the structural content is not completely convincing.

Finally, one hopeful sign is that there is movement within the movement. That is to say, the critiques and the exchanges have produced change in some positions. For example, while Risto Saarinen has stated that the Finnish position has seen the favor of God and the gift of God as having a unity such that one does not have precedence over the other, he is now willing to say that his view gives priority to favor over gift.³⁹ The original position separating Luther from Melancthon and the Confessions has also been modified by the work of Olli-Pekka Vainio.⁴⁰ He applies the doctrine of union with Christ as an outside standard by which the various documents of the Book of Concord can be seen in unity. Thus the original stance of the Finnish interpretation, which sought to separate Luther from the Confessions, is being modified. For what else in the Finnish approach will be modified, we will have to wait and see.

In summary, Finnish Luther research advocates a reformer who is ready to be set forward afresh. The Finnish School wants to promote a fas-

³⁹ Saarinen, “Finnish Luther Studies,” 23, where he modifies the Finnish paradigm in terms of a “giver-oriented perspective.” It is unfortunate that this admission of the precedence of grace over gift does not allow him to recognize Mattes’ position in a positive light.

⁴⁰ Olli-Pekka Vainio, “The Doctrine of Justification in the Book of Concord—Harmony or Contradiction?” *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 48 (Winter 2009): 380–389.

cinating Luther who has something to say in the forum of contemporary ideas. The Finns have in mind to overcome stereotypes and misunderstandings perpetuated at the highest levels. At every turn, they seek to set forward a Luther who is "evangelical and catholic." If they can help us find our way to a new presentation of Luther, we will all be the better for it.

Gerhard Forde's Theology of Atonement and Justification: A Confessional Lutheran Response

Jack Kilcrease

In recent times, Gerhard Forde's (1927–2005) theology has enjoyed a great deal of influence among North American Lutherans. In a previous article,¹ we discussed Forde's doctrine of law and drew out many of the theological implications for preaching and Christian living. In the present article, we will examine Forde's doctrine of atonement and its relation to his understanding of justification.

In discussing Forde's thought, we will draw primarily on his piece entitled *The Work of Christ* (1984) found in the Braaten/Jenson dogmatics.² We will also draw heavily upon his essay "Caught in the Act,"³ written the same year. This basic account will be supplemented by other writings and essays, the primary one being his short systematic theology, *Theology Is for Proclamation!* (1990).⁴ We will also draw on his doctoral dissertation, *The Law-Gospel Debate* (1969).⁵ Although this is a relatively early writing, his understanding of the law and its place in the order of redemption presented there both anticipates and clarifies his later and more developed theological works.⁶

¹ See Jack Kilcrease, "Gerhard Forde's Doctrine of the Law: A Confessional Lutheran Critique," *CTQ* 75, (2011): 151–179.

² Gerhard Forde, "The Work of Christ" in *Christian Dogmatics*, 2 vols., ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 2:24.

³ Gerhard Forde, "Caught in the Act: Reflections on the Work of Christ," in *A More Radical Gospel: Essays on Eschatology, Authority, Atonement, and Ecumenism*, ed. Mark Mattes and Steven Paulson (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004).

⁴ Gerhard Forde, *Theology is for Proclamation!* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990).

⁵ Gerhard Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate: An Interpretation of Its Historical Development* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969).

⁶ In his own theological autobiography, Forde himself sees his later works as a deepening of theological themes already present in his early theological writings. See comments in Gerhard Forde, "One Acted Upon," *Dialogue* 36, no. 1 (Winter, 1997), 59–60, 61.

I. Forde's Critique of Previous Theologies of Atonement

Penal Satisfaction

We begin our examination of Forde's theology with a preliminary discussion of his critique of various theories of atonement proposed within the larger Christian theological tradition. Of all the doctrines of reconciliation that Forde discusses, it would seem that he dislikes none more than penal satisfaction. Forde's negative judgment upon this view of atonement first took shape in his doctoral dissertation, *The Law-Gospel Debate*, which largely colors his view of the doctrine in his subsequent writings.

In this early work, prior to discussing the doctrines of law and atonement in the theology of the 19th-century Erlangen theologian Johannes von Hofmann,⁷ Forde enters into a short of critique of the doctrine of reconciliation as expounded by the Lutheran scholastics. Lutheran scholasticism held that there was an eternal law (i.e., the holy and eternal statutory will of God), which was reflected both in natural law and sacred Scriptures. Since the law is the eternal will of God, it must be fulfilled in order for redemption to take place.⁸ To put the matter succinctly: in redeeming creation, God simply cannot ignore his own will.

As it pertains to the nature of atonement, Forde primarily registers his dislike of the doctrine of *lex aeterna* because it seems to place redemption within the structure of eternal law.⁹ According to Forde, if the gospel only comes about as a result of the fulfillment of the law, then the gospel is necessarily subsumed under the form of the law. As a result, the law becomes God's primary reality and the gospel is, at best, merely derivative and, at worst, something of an afterthought.

Forde's second objection to penal substitution touches on the eschatological nature of salvation. Conceptualizing redemption as the fulfillment of the law by Christ, Forde argues, does not make atonement a maximally disruptive eschatological act. Forde divides the human relationship with God between an old age of the law and a new age of the gospel. If the law was fulfilled in the gospel, then the new age of grace would, in fact,

⁷ Forde's position owes much to the theology of von Hofmann and his engagement with von Hofmann in his doctoral dissertation. For scholarship on von Hofmann, see Matthew Becker, *The Self-Giving God and Salvation History: The Trinitarian Theology of Johannes von Hofmann* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2004).

⁸ Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate*, 4–6.

⁹ Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate*, 6.

represent an unactualized potency latent in the old age of law.¹⁰ Forde credits Hans Joachim Iwand's dialectical interpretation of Luther as one source of this formulation.¹¹ One could also point to the influence of early- to mid-20th-century interpretations of New Testament eschatology proposed by such figures as Albert Schweitzer¹² and Rudolf Bultmann.¹³ These treatments argued that the advent of the kingdom of God in the preaching of Jesus and Paul represented a total reversal of the previous reality of the old age.

Lastly, in *The Law-Gospel Debate* Forde rejects the idea of substitutionary atonement because it describes reconciliation as an act that simultaneously fulfills God's justice and mercy. Forde feels that atonement is best thought of as a fulfillment of God's unilateral love, without any attempt to balance out love with justice. According to Forde, by way of contrast, the Lutheran scholastics "... attempted to understand the nature of the divine act in Christ in terms of an equivalence between wrath and love."¹⁴ Such a formulation makes salvation a mechanical and legalistic balancing act. Beyond this, Forde argues that the Lutheran scholastic doctrine of atonement makes the grace of redemption less authentic because it insists on the need for the satisfaction of justice.

In his treatment of the subject in the Braaten/Jenson dogmatics, Forde expands the criticisms first offered in *The Law-Gospel Debate*. Substitutionary atonement fits the work of Christ into a legal framework, which

¹⁰ Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate*, 200–216.

¹¹ Forde, "One Acted Upon," 59–60. See the following works by Iwand: Hans Iwand, *Die Gegenwart des Kommenden: eine Auslegung von Lukas 12* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag des Erziehungsvereins, 1966); *Glaubensgerechtigkeit* (München: Christian Kaiser, 1980); *Glaubensgerechtigkeit nach Luthers Lehre* (München: Christian Kaiser, 1941); *Nachgelassene Werke*, 6 vols., ed. Helmut Gollwitzer (München: Christian Kaiser, 1962–1974).

¹² See the following from Albert Schweitzer: *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God*, tr. Walter Lowrie (New York: Macmillan, 1950); *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, tr. William Montgomery (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998); *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, tr. John Bowden (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001).

¹³ See the following major works by Rudolf Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der Synoptischen Tradition* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1957); *History and Eschatology: The Presence of Eternity* (New York: Harper, 1962); *Jesus and the Word*, tr. Louise Pettibone Smith and Erminie Huntress Lantero (New York: Scribner, 1958); *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (New York: Scribner, 1958); *Primitive Christianity in Its Contemporary Setting*, tr. R.H. Fuller (London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1956); *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 2 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1953).

¹⁴ Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate*, 131.

obscures the actual event of the cross and domesticates the radicalism of God's revelation. It makes the "[l]aw . . . [into] an objective schema of commands and prohibitions, a checklist of what must be done and not done to be saved." Therefore "[o]nce this [the fulfillment of the law] occurs it is it is easier to make the logic of substitution work: someone might fulfill the checklist for someone else."¹⁵ Advocates of substitutionary atonement, Forde argues, forget the true and concrete historical narrative of the life of Jesus by fitting it into an abstract framework regarding law and the necessity of its fulfillment.¹⁶ Substitutionary atonement theology therefore rationalizes God's actions to make his grace controllable and predictable. Ultimately, this has the effect of domesticating the cross by fitting it into neat and understandable categories.

Following from this and his earlier criticism in *The Law-Gospel Debate*, Forde ultimately believes that the legal schema is not only an abstraction that obscures the concrete existence of Jesus, but that it also ultimately negates God's mercy manifest in the revelation of Christ. Having described Anselm's theory of atonement,¹⁷ Forde asks "But what of God? Can God not simply forgive?"¹⁸ In other words, not only is God's sovereignty constrained by the concept of the eternal law, but the doctrine of substitution represents God as an ogre who can only forgive as a result of Jesus' death. For God's mercy to be truly merciful, according to Forde's definition, it must be the result of spontaneous forgiveness. A God who demands that sin be punished would actually not be merciful, since by definition mercy is a relenting from judgment, not a pardon resulting from judgment's fulfillment. Therefore, Forde states: "The question remains: if God has been satisfied, where is God's mercy?"¹⁹ If God's mercy is not real mercy, reconciliation dissolves into a theory about a legal transaction, and

¹⁵ Forde, "The Work of Christ" 2:24.

¹⁶ Gerhard Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:80–81.

¹⁷ See discussion of Anselm's doctrine of atonement in the following works: Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement*, tr. A.G. Hebert (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 84–92; Daniel Deme, *The Christology of Anselm of Canterbury* (Burlington, Vt: Ashgate, 2003), 175–208; G.R. Evans, "Anselm of Canterbury," in *The Medieval Theologians*, ed. G. R. Evans (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 94–101; Bengt Häggglund, *History of Theology*, tr. Gene Lund (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 167–174; Giles Gasper, *Anselm of Canterbury and His Theological Inheritance* (Burlington, Vt: Ashgate, 2004), 144–173; Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, 5 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971–1989), 3:106–108, 116–117, 139–144, 210–211.

¹⁸ Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:21.

¹⁹ Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:23.

the reality of God's active love present in the saving event of the cross is lost.

"Subjective" or "Moral Influence" Theories of Atonement

Having discussed Forde's critique of penal satisfaction, we now consider the status of so-called "Subjective" theories of atonement in his theology. "Subjective," or what are frequently described as "moral influence" theories of atonement, fair somewhat better in Forde's appraisal than the class of theories described in the previous section. Forde's assessment is more favorable on several fronts. First, he appreciates²⁰ many of the critiques of penal satisfaction offered by Abelard²¹ and by the later Socinians,²² particularly with regard to issues of rational coherence.²³ Second, according to Forde, those who advocate subjective theories of atonement understand the gratuity of divine love. The recognition that divine love is a love that does not need to be "bought off,"²⁴ was, and remains, the main contribution of those who advanced this theory of atonement. This particular insight is very strongly represented in 19th-century liberal Protestant theologies of atonement. In his treatment of this class of atonements theologies in the Braaten/Jensondogmatics, Forde mainly focuses on the figures of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Albrecht Ritschl.²⁵

Ultimately, though, Forde does not find this theory of atonement to be without fault either. To begin with, he observes that both Schleiermacher and Ritschl identified Jesus' work with the communication of his peculiar God-consciousness to the church. The vocation of the church is then, in

²⁰ Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:24.

²¹ See Peter Abelard, "Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans," in *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham*, tr. and ed. Eugene R. Fairweather (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), 276–287. Also, see summary in the following: Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 95–98; Geoffrey Bromiley, *Historical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1978), 185–188; Hägglund, *History of Theology*, 167.

²² Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:24. Regarding the Socinian theory of atonement see: Faustus Socinus, *The Racovian Catechism*, tr. Thomas Rees (London: Paternoster Row, 1818), 297–320.

²³ Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:24.

²⁴ Gerhard Forde, *Where God Meets Man: Luther's Down-to-Earth Approach to the Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1972), 11.

²⁵ Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:29–31. See Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, tr. H.R. Mackintosh and J.S. Stewart (New York: T & T Clark, 1999). For the theology of Albrecht Ritschl, see: *Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, 3 vols. (Bonn: A. Marcus, 1895–1903).

turn, to communicate this consciousness to the world.²⁶ In Schleiermacher, this consciousness consists of divine sovereignty (i.e., “absolute dependence”), whereas in Ritschl, it is primarily that of divine love. For the liberal theologians, these experiences were not meant to contradict previous or normal human experiences of the divine, but rather to fulfill and complete them.

For Forde, herein lies the difficulty with these theories. According to him, the eschatological nature of atonement necessitates that the work of Christ be a wholesale reversal of all that had come before. The gospel cannot be identified with an activation or supplementation of the possibilities already present in the old age. This is true whether these possibilities or potencies are to be identified with an eternal law or a particular description of universal religious experience. The continuity of the old creation represents the continuity of the law. If the law’s continuity is unbroken, then the condemnation and demand of the law will never be broken. Therefore, the cross must be something brutal, harsh, and utterly disruptive, smashing to pieces all previous realities. It is the end of all human attempts at controlling God, including the attempt to force God into the straightjacket of human conceptual schemes, which ultimately serve a death-dealing legalism.

In discussing the feminist strain of the liberal theological tradition and its challenge to the Christian idea of atonement, Forde makes many of the same criticisms. In his late essay, “In Our Place,” Forde argues that the feminist theological critique of the Anselmic doctrine of atonement is unfair when that critique holds that Anselm’s doctrine represents cosmic child abuse. After all, even within the Anselmic schema, Jesus was an adult and gave up his life freely.²⁷ He notes, however, that such a critique on the part of feminist theologians (and other liberals) certainly does correctly expose the legalism of penal substitution, as well as the tyrannical view of God that it presupposes (i.e., one who demands sacrifice in exchange for forgiveness).²⁸

Nevertheless, the feminist theologians have the same problem that the larger liberal tradition does. In rejecting legalism, they set up a new law of personal fulfillment and social justice in order to replace it. Although they

²⁶ Forde, “The Work of Christ,” 2:30.

²⁷ Gerhard Forde, “In Our Place,” in *A More Radical Gospel*, 103. No date for this essay is given. It appears to have been written for a conference at Luther Seminary in the late 1990s.

²⁸ Forde, “In Our Place,” 102–103.

believe that such goals mean liberation from the tyranny of the law (i.e., an antinomianism that seeks to disestablish heteronomous authorities), such theological proposals degenerate into a new legalism. In effect, they simply set up a new law of personal liberation and therefore perpetuate the law's oppression.²⁹ If one posits that the goal of human existence is personal liberation, then one must live up to that goal, meaning that the demanding character of the law has simply reappeared in a new form. Since the human person is viewed as the innocent victim of oppressors, one is prevented from understanding oneself as a sinner. Without the death-dealing revelation found in the cross, one will simply persist within the sphere of the old creation and its legalism, will never be resurrected through divine grace, and will never have the law fully established within by faith. In feminist theology, then, the old medieval interpretative method of "moral tropology"³⁰ is revived and Christ becomes primarily an exemplar of the continuity of the legal schema and not a redeeming *sacramentum* of death and resurrection.³¹

Hence, when liberal theologians claim that Christ went to the cross merely to demonstrate his loyalty to his mission of communicating his God-consciousness or, perhaps, uphold his belief in the liberating truth of social justice, the harsh, brutal, and eschatological disruption of the cross was obscured and obfuscated. Ultimately, this does little better than serve as a means for sinful humanity to protect itself from the brutal negation presented before its eyes in the crucified Jesus. Therefore, Forde writes, "The bleakness and disaster of the cross are covered by all the theological roses. Jesus is rescued from death by theology, so any further resurrection is largely superfluous."³² As a result, legalism is unbroken by the disruptive event of the cross and human conceptual schemes are allowed to put a limitation on God's grace.

"Classical" or "Conquest" Theories of Atonement

Finally, Forde discusses the "classical" or what is often called the "conquest" theory of atonement. This theory of atonement primarily views the work of Christ as the conquest and destruction of demonic forces (i.e., sin, death, the devil, etc.). In describing this model of atonement, Forde draws heavily on the scholarly findings of the Swedish Lutheran theo-

²⁹ Forde, "In Our Place," 105-109.

³⁰ Forde, "In Our Place," 102-105.

³¹ Forde, "In Our Place," 109-113.

³² Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:31.

gian Gustaf Aulén in his classic work *Christus Victor* (1931). After reviewing the various versions of this motif in patristic theology,³³ Forde discusses what he considers to be weaknesses and strengths of the theory. Among the strengths, Forde argues that the conquest theory represents "... a protest against any legalistic rationalization that oversimplifies the human problem and ends with a God who is either a vindictive bookkeeper [penal substitution] or an overindulgent lover [subjective theories]."³⁴

In this, Forde appears largely to adopt Aulén's own interpretation. For Aulén, the conquest motif was the most fitting description of atonement because it represented a movement of God towards humanity, rather than a movement of humanity to God.³⁵ In both the satisfaction and moral influence theories, he detected often latent and sometimes not-so-latent legalistic and anthropocentric impulses.³⁶ Beyond this, Aulén viewed the conquest motif as representing an important negation of what he considered to be the rationalization of theological discourse found in scholasticism and post-Reformation theology.³⁷ As mythological and anthropomorphic as the theories of conquest offered by the church fathers were, they nevertheless functioned as accurate narrative representations of the event of redemption.³⁸ Since the event of redemption in Christ transcended normal human categories of rationalization, the actual mechanism of redemption is best left undescribed.³⁹ The most Aulén believed one could say is that atonement was a unilateral movement of the Second Person of the Trinity towards the created realm in order to save it from the snare of demonic forces.⁴⁰

According to Forde, the difficulty with the view of Aulén and the church fathers is that the gritty reality of the cross once again becomes obscured. For the Greek fathers in particular, Jesus' humanity is invested with divine glory in order to overcome and conquer where previously Adam had failed. Does this not, asks Forde, come perilously close to the Gnostic idea that Christ did not actually die?⁴¹ Does not his redemption

³³ Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:37–39.

³⁴ Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:41.

³⁵ Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 145–146.

³⁶ Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 146–147.

³⁷ Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 156–158.

³⁸ Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 58–60.

³⁹ Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 153, 156–158.

⁴⁰ Gustaf Aulén, *The Faith of the Christian Church*, tr. Eric Wahlstrom and G. Everett Arden (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1948), 204.

⁴¹ Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:40.

therefore reside in his hidden glory and not his death? Moreover, taken to its logical conclusion, the true battle of redemption for the church fathers occurs not in the concrete reality of the cross, but in the unseen realm of demonic forces. In looking for redemption in Christ, the believer is therefore asked to look past the actual and concrete reality of the cross to something invisible beyond it. Ultimately, ". . . the dramatic-dualistic imagery can also misdirect our attention away from the Jesus who was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate to a mythic figure who was paying a ransom to the Devil."⁴² The cross is therefore transcended, and its existential force is blunted through mythological and cosmological speculation. Indeed, yet again, "roses still obscure the truth."⁴³

II. Forde's Doctrine of Atonement and Justification

Human Existence under the Hidden God

Now that we have reviewed Forde's critiques of previous theologies of atonement, we turn to our central inquiry, namely, Forde's own description of the nature of atonement and how it determines his theology of justification. For Forde, Christ's work of reconciliation should be understood primarily as God's response to humanity's bondage to the power of unbelief. As will be demonstrated, he primarily constructs his theory of atonement around the moral influence and conquest atonement motifs. Put succinctly: Forde holds that God overcomes human bondage to unbelief by way of the grand existential gesture of the cross and the empty tomb.

Forde begins the exposition of his doctrine of atonement by describing the human situation under the power of sin and God's wrath. Much as for Luther in his *Bondage of the Will*,⁴⁴ Forde describes God's wrath as

⁴² Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:41.

⁴³ Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:40.

⁴⁴ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols., ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1986), 33. For a description of Luther's debate with Erasmus, see the follow sources: F. Bente, *Historical Introduction to the Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 209–225; Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther*, 3 vols. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985–1993), 2:213–238; Gerhard Forde, *The Captivation of the Will: Luther vs. Erasmus on Freedom and Bondage*, ed. Steven Paulson (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005); Robert Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and the Wittenberg Theological Method: From Martin Luther to the Formula of Concord* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005), 11–66; Harry McSorley, *Luther: Right or Wrong?, An*

manifesting itself primarily in his act of concealing his eternal being. As hidden, God is not concrete, but rather frighteningly abstract. He is everywhere and nowhere. By the power of his electing will, he relentlessly works all things. Because of human unbelief in his goodness and grace, his electing and all-determining nature becomes an unbearable threat. As Forde writes:

It is time now to take the final step. The fact is that we simply cannot reconcile ourselves to God. Why? Just because God is God. We cannot bear that. God is the almighty Creator of heaven and earth. God rules over all things, and God's will ultimately will be done. That is too much. Furthermore, according to the Scriptures, God is an electing God. God chooses. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy" is virtually God's name. The very thought of such a God is a threat to us.⁴⁵

Relying on several remarks Luther made in his *Antinomian Disputations*,⁴⁶ Forde identifies the hidden God's threatening activity with the law. Forde writes in *The Law-Gospel Debate* that the law must be broadly understood as "a general term for the manner in which the will of God impinges on Man."⁴⁷

Because the God of the Bible has revealed and identified himself as the almighty and electing creator, we cannot get around his unrelenting accusing and demanding activity by appealing to secondary causes, human autonomy, or by trying to weaken him with metaphysical tricks. All these acts are, according to Forde, attempts of sinful humans to justify themselves against God and his law. In a similar fashion, contemporary theologies whose goal is to develop a theodicy represent little more than human attempts at self-justification. Ultimately, all such theologies are infantile attempts at intellectualizing away the self-evident threat posed by the hidden God to humanity. God's law, wrath, and hiddenness cannot be escaped by way of clever intellectual theories.⁴⁸

Ecumenical-Theological Study of Luther's Major Work, The Bondage of the Will (New York and Minneapolis: The Newman Press and Augsburg Publishing House, 1969), 277-354; Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development*, tr. and ed. Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 16-18.

⁴⁵ Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:65.

⁴⁶ Martin Luther, *Only the Decalogue is Eternal: Martin Luther's Complete Antinomian Disputations and Theses*, tr. and ed. Holger Sonntag (Minneapolis: The Lutheran Press, 2008).

⁴⁷ Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate*, 192.

⁴⁸ Forde, *Theology is for Proclamation*, 19-20.

Whether consciously or unconsciously, all human beings recognize these truths and, therefore, rightly perceive the hidden God as a threat. This is why the human will is bound to the power of unbelief and sin. Humanity is incapable of loving or trusting in a God who wills its annihilation. Therefore, Forde writes:

God is a threat and a terror to the alienated. Faced with the threat of God and especially with the mere idea of God's election, I can only say, "No." In defiance of God and all the logic of the case, I must simply assert my own freedom so as to have some say about my own destiny. So, I must take over God's role. I must say to God, in effect, "God, I do not know what you plan to do; I cannot trust you. Therefore I must take my destiny into my own hands because I believe I can better decide such things."⁴⁹

Ultimately, then, a God who is neither touched nor seen, and who relentlessly works all things in his wrath, cannot be trusted. Deluding itself into the fantasy that it can rely on its own power of self-determination, humanity must eventually deny God's existence itself. Forde writes: "To put it bluntly, our so-called freedom cannot stop until it has done away with God altogether."⁵⁰

Ultimately then, the only solution to the problem of divine hiddenness is for God to become a God who in a tangible manner relents from his wrath and becomes a God of love and grace. In a word, it is for God to surrender himself to humanity in the person of Jesus and thereby reverses his previous negative existential relationship to the human person.⁵¹ This action will entail the event of atonement and justification, to which we now turn.

The Actualization of Atonement and Justification: The Ministry, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus

As we have seen, Forde holds that one cannot start from a pre-existent scheme or an abstract theory about God's nature in order to attain correct theological knowledge. Therefore, invoking Karl Rahner's famous distinction between Christology from "below and above,"⁵² Forde begins his

⁴⁹ Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:66.

⁵⁰ Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:68.

⁵¹ Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:67-69.

⁵² Karl Rahner, "The Two Basic Types of Christology," in *Theological Investigation*, vol. 13 (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 213-223.

atonement essay "Caught in the Act" (1984) by stating that a proper understanding of the work of Christ must necessarily begin "from below."⁵³ What this means in practice is that the starting point of all theological reflection must involve what Forde refers to as the "actual narrative"⁵⁴ found in the Gospels.⁵⁵ According to Forde's reading of this "actual narrative," Jesus did not come teaching a particular atonement theology or an abstract theory about the nature of God. Rather, Jesus simply traveled around Palestine, spontaneously and unilaterally forgiving sinners. Regarding this, Forde writes:

Why could not God just up and forgive? Let us start there. If we look at the narrative about Jesus, the actual events themselves, the "brute facts" as they have come down to us, the answer is quite simple. He did! Jesus came preaching repentance and forgiveness, declaring the bounty and mercy of his "Father." The problem however, is that we could not buy that. And so we killed him. And just so we are caught in the act. Every mouth is stopped once and for all. All pious talk about our yearning and desire for reconciliation and forgiveness, etc., all our complaint against God is simply shut up. He came to forgive and we killed him for it; we would not have it. It is as simple as that.⁵⁶

For Forde, this "actual narrative" therefore provides a more correct rationale for the crucifixion than either traditional theology or even the New Testament authors themselves ever could.⁵⁷ Jesus died because the legalistic opposition of sinful humanity ran headlong into the gracious and forgiving will of God. In point of fact, humanity, enthralled under the power of legalism, actually prefers not to be forgiven so that it can maintain its illusory control over God with its good works. In this regard, Forde writes: "But why did we kill him? It was, I expect we must say, as a matter of 'self-defense.' Jesus came not just to teach about the mercy and forgiveness of God but actually came to do it, to have mercy and to forgive

⁵³ Forde, "Caught in the Act," 93.

⁵⁴ Forde, "Caught in the Act," 91.

⁵⁵ This emphasis probably owes much to Barth's so-called "Actualism." See discussion in Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 4 vols., tr. G. T. Thomason et al. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1936–1977), 2:257–321, and in George Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth: The Shape of His Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 30–32. For Barth's influence on Forde, see James Nestingen, "Examining Sources" in *By Faith Alone: Essays on Justification in Honor of Gerhard O. Forde*, ed. Joseph Burgess and Marc Kolden (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004), 11.

⁵⁶ Forde, "Caught in the Act," 90–91.

⁵⁷ Oddly enough, Forde argues that the authors of the New Testament misunderstood the work of Jesus. See Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:11–19.

unconditionally . . . [this] shatters the 'order' by which we must run things here."⁵⁸ Another analogy Forde uses to describe the crucifixion is that of an "accident." Jesus' death is not unlike a man who throws himself in front of a moving truck and is killed while attempting to save a child playing in the road.⁵⁹ In this analogy, sinful humanity is driving the truck and the man killed is Christ. Humanity drives the truck insofar as we participate the legalistic order of the present evil age.

In spite of Forde's analogy of a car accident, Jesus' death is not in a literal sense accidental. It was in point of fact a quite integral part of God's own plan of redemption. Forde asserts that God willed for Jesus to be ". . . crucified by the [sinful and legalistic] order itself, so to bring a new order."⁶⁰ By killing Jesus, sinful humanity comes to recognize its bondage. In rejecting Jesus and his mercy, humanity is truly made conscious of its root-sin of opposition to God's grace. God allows himself to be killed by us, states Forde, in order to make ". . . it plain that 'all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' (Rom 3:23)."⁶¹ Jesus therefore did not die to fulfill the law or suffer the punishment for our sins as a substitute.⁶² Rather, he died in order to reveal fallen humanity's sin of self-justification and opposition to God's grace.⁶³

Ultimately, Jesus is victorious over the old sinful order by the power of his resurrection. In the resurrection, God not only negated the present evil age, but has also vindicated Jesus and his practice of unconditionally forgiving sinners. Therefore, writes Forde: "The resurrection is his [Jesus'] vindication against us. Therefore, it is vindication against death, the power of death resident in our legalism (see 2 Cor 3). It is the proof that he was

⁵⁸ Forde, "Caught in the Act," 92.

⁵⁹ Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:88-89.

⁶⁰ Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:91.

⁶¹ Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:90.

⁶² Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:81. Forde writes "What sort of sacrifice is this, and how is it 'for us?' *It is surely mistaken to say that his Father needed the sacrifice in order to be changed to a merciful God*" (emphasis added). Similarly, he writes again: "*Jesus dies for us and not for God*. There is not just a little perversity in the tendency to say that the sacrifice was demanded by God to placate the divine wrath" (2:82, emphasis added). In these statements, it is clear that Forde utterly and completely rejects the notion that Jesus died for our sin in order to fulfill the law of God.

⁶³ Of course, Luther also held that the crucifixion revealed the depth of human sin. The whole human person is corrupted, because Christ is the Savior of the whole human person. See AE 33:227-228. Nevertheless, for Luther it is because Christ is the substitute for our sins that we can understand the depth of sin through the cross.

right and we are wrong. God has made him Lord. God has now said what he has to say."⁶⁴

For this reason, the death and resurrection of Jesus is an utterly disruptive eschatological event. It is the breaking point between the old age and the new, the death of the old being of sin and the re-creation of the new person of faith.⁶⁵ In that we are made conscious of our sin by the death of Jesus, we quite literally die.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, by the power of the resurrection God validates Jesus' forgiveness and, therefore, creates new beings of faith.⁶⁷ Having succeeded in inculcating trust in his grace, God is "satisfied," not by Jesus' death and righteousness, but by our own righteousness actualized by faith. In this regard, Forde comments:

When faith is created, when we actually believe God's unconditional forgiveness; then God can say, "Now I am satisfied!" God's wrath ends actually when we believe him, not abstractly because of a payment to God "once upon a time." Christ's work, therefore, "satisfies" the wrath of God because it alone creates believers, new beings who are no longer "under" wrath. Christ actualizes the will of God to have mercy unconditionally in the concrete and thereby "placates" God.⁶⁸

As is clear from what was said above, Forde's rejection of the confessional Lutheran understanding of atonement also causes a significant deviation from the historic Lutheran teaching regarding justification. For this reason, Forde's view of justification is not in accordance with the Formula of Concord's definition of justification as the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of righteousness.⁶⁹ In traditional Lutheran doctrine, Christ's positive act of obedience and his negative act of suffering the judgment of sin are imputed to the believer and received by

⁶⁴ Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:92.

⁶⁵ Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:93.

⁶⁶ Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:94.

⁶⁷ Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:95.

⁶⁸ Forde, "Caught in the Act," 97.

⁶⁹ FC Ep III, 2; *Concordia Triglotta: The Symbolic Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, ed. F. Bente and W. H. T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 793. "Accordingly, we believe, teach, and confess that our righteousness before God is [this very thing], that God forgives us our sins out of pure grace, without any work, merit, or worthiness of ours preceding, present, or following, that He presents and imputes to us the righteousness of Christ's obedience, on account of which righteousness we are received into grace by God, and regarded as righteous." Here after *Concordia Triglotta* will be cited as "CT."

faith.⁷⁰ For Forde, the role of the imputation of passive righteousness is taken over by the divine act of forgiveness by fiat (i.e., forgiveness without a payment for sin), whereas the role of active righteousness is taken over by the positive righteousness of the new being of faith. Hence, faith saves not because it receives Christ's imputed righteousness, but rather partially because it receives God's act of forgiveness in Christ and partially because it recreates believers as righteous in themselves.⁷¹ Because of this, justification ceases to be wholly *extra nos* and is only in the most tenuous sense *propter Christum*. In the next section, we will expand on these points more fully.

It should of course be noted that it is not Forde's intention to undermine faith in Christ. Rather, in describing atonement and justification, he wishes to emphasize the mercy of God (that does not need to be purchased) and the creative nature of the word (which creates what it speaks). Overall, Forde does not want to be reductive in his understanding of justification or atonement. He wishes to emphasize the active and creative nature of God's love. Neither does he wish to reduce the work of Christ and the reconciliation of sinners to a mechanical legal transaction.

⁷⁰ FC Ep III, 1; CT, 793. ". . . Christ is our Righteousness neither according to the divine nature alone nor according to the human nature alone, but that it is the entire Christ according to both natures, in His obedience alone, which as God and man He rendered to the Father even unto death, and thereby merited for us the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, as it is written: As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous."

⁷¹ See Forde, "Forensic Justification and the Christian Life: Triumph or Tragedy?" in Mattes and Paulson, 114–136. Forde appeals to Luther's teaching in the Romans commentary of 1516 over and against the teaching of the Lutheran scholastics. He appears to assume that Luther's teaching on this point was different than Melancthon's forensic concept of justification present in the Lutheran confessional writings. This view goes back to Karl Holl and the Luther Renaissance, and is heavily influenced by his Swabian Pietism. See discussion in Lowell Green, *How Melancthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel: The Doctrine of Justification in the Reformation* (Fallbrook, Ca: Verdict Publications, 1980), 31–45, and Armand Boehme, "Tributaries into JDDJ: Karl Holl and Luther's Doctrine of Justification," *Logia* 18, no. 3 (2009): 1–16. Boehme helpfully identifies the following essays by Holl that deal with his work on justification in Luther: Karl Holl, "Die Rechtfertigungslehre in Luthers Vorlesung über Römerbrief mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Frage der Heilsgewissheit," in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, 3 vols. (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1928), 1:111–154; "Die *justitia dei* in der vorlutherischen Bibelauslegung des Abendlandes," 3:171–88; "Die Rechtfertigungslehre im Licht der Geschichte Protestantismus," 3:525–57; "Was hat die Rechtfertigungslehre dem modernen Menschen zu sagen?" 3:558–567. For evidence of Forde's influence by the Luther Renaissance, see Nestingen, "Examining Sources," 14–16.

III. A Confessional Lutheran Assessment and Response

The first and most important issue concerning an assessment of Forde's teaching from a confessional Lutheran perspective is to address the nature of atonement and its inner relationship to the article of justification. What Forde's interpretation of the doctrine of atonement makes clear is that there is a necessary relationship between the article of the work of Christ and that of justification. In other words, if one rejects the notion of Christ's vicarious satisfaction of the law (both actively and passively), the entire soteriological apple cart is upset and the forensic nature of justification is lost.⁷² Put succinctly: if Christ does not fulfill the law on our behalf, then someone else must, and that someone is necessarily us. This is evidenced by the fact that, without fail, those who reject vicarious satisfaction (for example, the aforementioned Abelard and Socinians) posit the fulfillment of the law by believers in some sort of watered-down form. In Forde's case, the believer does not fulfill the law by his or her own efforts *per se*, but rather is recreated by God's effective address as one who has fulfilled the law by faith. God is thereby "satisfied" and his wrath is silenced. In this formulation, Forde wishes to describe atonement and justification as expressions of the dynamic character of God's word.

Nevertheless, beyond the brute fact that this description of justification is in total disagreement with the confessional and biblical authorities,⁷³ Forde's teaching lacks coherence with his own theological presuppositions in at least two ways. First, in his discussion of penal substitution, Forde registers much disdain for the idea that God needs bloody sacrifice in order to save. Ultimately, though, within Forde's own doctrine of atonement, God does apparently need the law to be fulfilled or divine wrath will never cease. Forde's own critique of the antinomianism present in the feminist theology (that we examined above) presupposes this. The sinner is never free from the law until the law is fulfilled. For Forde, the

⁷² This is a point several theologians at Erlangen (specifically Gottfried Thomasius and Theodosius Harnack) made against von Hofmann. See Gottfried Thomasius, *Das Bekenntniss der Lutherischen Kirche von der Versöhnung und die Versöhnungslehre D. Chr. K. v. Hofmann's: Mit einem Nachwort von Th. Harnack* (Erlangen: Theodor Blasing, 1857).

⁷³ See in particular AC III; CT, 45: "Also they teach that the Word, that is, the Son of God, did assume the human nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, so that there are two natures, the divine and the human, inseparably enjoined in one Person, one Christ, true God and true man, who was born of the Virgin Mary, truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, that *He might reconcile the Father unto us, and be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men*" (emphasis added). See also Isaiah 53, Rom 3:25, Cor 5:21, and 1 Pet 2:24.

redemptive fulfillment of the law is simply moved from an external location (in Christ) to an internal one (within the believer).

Moreover, despite Forde's attacks on the Lutheran scholastic doctrine of atonement, the structure of the fulfillment of the law in his theology remains roughly the same as in the Lutheran dogmatists. In other words, the Lutheran scholastic doctrine of active and passive righteousness⁷⁴ assumed that two things needed to be accomplished for salvation to be realized. First, viewed negatively, guilt needed to be dealt with and sin judged. The imputation of sin to Christ and his suffering of God's judgment against sin on the cross (passive righteousness) fulfilled this aspect of reconciliation. In Forde, such a negative judgment does not occur on the cross, but through the cross. Internally, the believers suffer the judgment of their old being through the existential encounter with the reality of their own rejection of God and his grace actualized on the cross. Second, positive righteousness *coram Deo* (active righteousness) needed to be actualized in the form of Christ's perfect adherence to the law. In Forde, faith fulfills the law and therefore "satisfies" God. The new creature of faith is positively righteous before God; God's wrath, therefore, is neutralized. Consequently, the role of Christ's active righteousness is replaced by the transformation of the sinner through the efficacy of the word of God.

Though we cannot explore the sources of Forde's thought within this context, perhaps it is not too bold to suggest that we detect here a lingering Kantian preference (endemic for so much of post-Enlightenment Protestant dogmatics⁷⁵) for the phenomenal over the noumenal. For Kant, one cannot know the "*ding an sich*"⁷⁶ and therefore we can only know the effects of an entity on us rather than its actual reality in itself. Since positing the existence of an objective *lex aeterna* is too abstract for Forde, we must, therefore, focus on the existential impact of the law alone.⁷⁷ Correspondingly, he

⁷⁴ See summary in Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, tr. Charles Hay and Henry Jacobs (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 352–356.

⁷⁵ See critique of modern Kantian epistemology in modern Protestant theology in Paul Hinlicky, *Paths Not Taken: Fates of Theology from Luther through Leibniz* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2009), 43–86. Helmut Thielicke traced back the theology consciousness to Descartes. See comments in Helmut Thielicke, *The Evangelical Faith*, 3 vols., tr. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1974–1982), 1:38–64.

⁷⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1958), 74, 87, 149, 172–173.

⁷⁷ Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate*, 185. In response to Theodosius Harnack's *Amt-Wesen* distinction, Forde rejected the whole notion of speech about the law apart from its

considers the idea of vicarious satisfaction to represent a mere “abstract payment,”⁷⁸ rather than the more concrete fulfillment of the law actualized internally through the existential impact of the cross on the consciousness of the believer.

This leads us to the second area of difficulty, namely, the consequences for the preaching of justification. Since Forde’s account of reconciliation internalizes the basis of righteousness *coram Deo*, it is not difficult to recognize that on a pastoral level such an account will ultimately have the opposite effect that he intends. Forde is, of course, correct to identify the problem of post-lapsarian human nature as self-centered trust (*incurvatus in se*) and self-justification. It is for this reason that his understanding of justification is so problematic. If one is told that the basis of his righteousness before God is not *extra nos*, but, rather, that he becomes righteous *in se* through faith, the problem of the inward gaze of the sinner’s eye will simply be exacerbated. Forde is correct to emphasize the effective nature of the word of the gospel for both justification and sanctification.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, his desire to give an account of justification that effectively and completely de-centers the self is ultimately blunted by his false understanding of the righteousness of faith.

Moving beyond issues directly pertaining to atonement and justification, another major area of concern and difficulty is Forde’s underlying understanding of the relationship between the old and new creations. As is clear from our earlier discussion (particularly with regard to penal substitution), Forde is absolutely adamant that the relationship between the old and new beings must be thought of as a wholly disruptive death and resurrection. For him, atonement and justification are apocalyptic events that annihilate the old being of sin and replace it with a new being of faith. Sinful humanity resists this movement of death and resurrection

existential impact in stating that such a description of the law makes sinful humans “view it [God’s law] in the abstract. . . . This allows man to place himself *above* the law and to look at it from God’s point of view.” For the *Amt-Wesen* distinction, see Theodosius Harnack, *Luthers Theologie besonderer Beziehung auf seine Versöhnung und Erlösungslehre*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1969), 1:368–401.

⁷⁸ Forde, “The Work of Christ,” 2:48.

⁷⁹ See Gerhard Forde, *Justification by Faith: A Matter of Death and Life* (Milifinton, Pa: Sigler Press, 1999), 36. Forde writes: “[t]he old argument about whether justification is “only” forensic or also “effective” is transcended. . . . It is, to be sure, “not only” forensic, but that is the case only because the more forensic it is, the more effective.”

because it wishes to maintain continuity with the old being and its autonomy through death-dealing legalism.⁸⁰

In one of his later books, *Justification by Faith: A Matter of Death and Life*, Forde quite specifically attacks the idea of a purely forensic justification on these grounds.⁸¹ Much as penal substitution allows for the expression of God's merciful saving will to stand in an internal coherence with his holiness, so too a purely forensic account of justification (the "legal metaphor," as he puts it) allows the old being under the condemnation of the law to stand in continuity with the new creature of faith. Since the idea of imputed righteousness presupposes that the person of faith is the same subject as the one who once stood under the power of sin, a purely forensic justification allows the sinner to forgo the total death-dealing apocalyptic break of the cross.⁸² In speaking forth the word of the gospel, God wishes to bring about something completely new and not simply a dressed up version of the old creation. In light of this, the imputation of righteousness is simply unnecessary if the old sinful subject has ceased to exist and has been replaced. As a side note, it should not go unnoticed that this account of the human subject's discontinuity is almost nearly identical with that of Immanuel Kant's own conception of justification.⁸³

⁸⁰ This emphasis can also be found in Forde's students. See Mark Mattes, "Beyond the Impasse: Reexamining the Third Use of the Law," *CTQ* 69, no. 3-4 (2005): 278. Mattes writes: "... there is no continuity between old and new beings. This is because the new being lives from faith in Jesus Christ alone."

⁸¹ Forde, *Justification by Faith*, 18-19.

⁸² Forde, *Justification by Faith*, 13.

⁸³ See discussion in Immanuel Kant, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 22 vols. (Berlin: Druck und Verlag Georg Reimer, 1902-1942), 6:74-75. Also see Alister McGrath, *Iustia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 340. Though we do not have the space in this article to cite the whole passage, McGrath (within whose writing we discovered the above citation) summarizes Kant's position succinctly: "Kant's solution to this difficulty [the problem of guilt] is, in fact, apparently irreconcilable with the general principles upon which his moral philosophy is based, particularly the axiom that an individual is responsible for his own moral actions. No individual can be good on behalf of another, nor can the goodness of a morally outstanding individual be permitted to remove the guilt of another. The basis of Kant's rejection of the concept of vicarious satisfaction (*stellvertretende Genugthuung*) is the principle that guilt, like merit, is strictly non-transferable. It is therefore remarkable that Kant's solution to the difficulty noted above is based on the assertion that the individual who turns away from his evil disposition to adopt a good disposition may be regarded as having become a different person: the old disposition is *moralisch ein anderer* from the new. The discontinuity between the old and new disposition is such that Kant

Much of the difficulty with Forde's doctrine of justification and atonement becomes evident from the perspective of the article of creation. According to Forde's description, what appears to be the case is that creation is not so much redeemed, but is in fact replaced.⁸⁴ The old creation is not purified and redeemed by the cleansing blood of Christ, but rather is annihilated. This also seems to raise the logical problem as to why, if the old and new creatures are totally discontinuous, forgiveness is necessary in the first place. If I am not the same subject who was guilty, then why is it necessary that must I be forgiven?

Though it is certainly not his intention to impugn the goodness of the created order, by using the language of radical discontinuity Forde seems to place himself perilously close to Flacius' similarly unintended heresy.⁸⁵ After all, such an account of the relationship between the old and new creation would appear to assume the very thing that Flacius asserted, namely, that sin is the substance of human nature after the Fall and not merely an accident adhering in it.

denies that they may be predicated of the same moral individual. This conclusion appears to rest upon the assumption that the disposition itself is the only acceptable basis of establishing the identity of the moral agent. Having established this point, Kant takes the remarkable step of asserting that the new disposition 'takes the place' (*vertritt*) of the old in respect of the guilt which is rightly attached to the latter disposition." Note that Forde agrees with Kant in his rejection of the biblical principle of representation and substitution (see Forde, "The Work of Christ," 2:24). As any historian knows, influence is extremely difficult to prove. Nevertheless, it can be suggested that because the two authors have similar premises, they come to similar conclusions.

⁸⁴ I thank David Ramirez for this particular way of expressing the problem with Forde's description of redemption.

⁸⁵ FC, SD, I; CT, 859-881. FC, Ep. I; CT, 779-85. For sources on Flacius and his misstatement regarding original sin, see the following: F. Bente, *Historical Introduction to the Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 144-145; Richard Klann, "Original Sin," in *A Contemporary Look at the Formula of Concord*, ed. Robert Preus and Wilbert Rosin (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), 115-117; Robert Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and the Wittenberg Theological Method: From Martin Luther to the Formula of Concord* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005), 118-120; Kolb, "Historical Background to the Formula of Concord," in *A Contemporary Look at the Formula of Concord*, ed. Robert Preus and Wilbert Rosin (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), 29-33; Oliver Olson, "Matthias Flacius," in *The Reformation Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Carter Lindberg (Malden, Mass: Blackwell, 2002), 87; Heinrich Vogel, "On Original Sin, The Flacian Aberration" in *No Other Gospel: Essays in Commemoration of the 400th Anniversary of the Formula of Concord, 1580-1980*, ed. Arnold Koelpin (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1980), 126-131.

In order to combat this charge, Forde would likely appeal to the sometimes rather hazily defined concept (common in many late 20th-century Lutheran theologians, notably Gerhard Ebeling⁸⁶) of "relational ontology."⁸⁷ According to this manner of thinking, the ontic reality of a thing or person is not constituted by an unchanging essence within, but rather by the relationships they enter into, the most fundamental of which is their relationship to God.⁸⁸ Therefore, claiming a total discontinuity between the old and new beings is not somehow to assert that the substance of a creature is evil and therefore needs to be replaced by a new substance. Rather, it is to claim that through the effective address of the gospel a total and wholesale reversal of the existential relationship between God and the sinner occurs.⁸⁹

On one level, Forde's insight here is something that confessional Lutherans should heed. The relationship of the sinner to God is not one of degrees, but of kind. The divine-human relationship constituted by the condemnation of the law is the very opposite of that of grace and justification. The life-orientation of the sinner is precisely the opposite of that of the person of faith. Lutherans should not be lulled (as some in fact have⁹⁰)

⁸⁶ See the following writings by Gerhard Ebeling: *Dogmatik des Christlichen Glaubens*, 3 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1979); *Lutherstudien*, 3 vols. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1971–1989); *The Nature of Faith*, tr. Ronald Smith (London: Collins, 1961); *Wort und Glaube* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1960).

⁸⁷ Forde credits Ebeling as a formative influence. Forde, "One Acted Upon," 60. By contrast, James Nestingen states that the claim that Forde was influenced by Ebeling was a pernicious rumor. See Nestingen, "Examining Sources," 20–21. Also note Forde's endorsement of the concept of relational ontology. See Gerhard Forde, Pat Keifert, Mary Knutsen, Marc Kolden, Jim Nestingen, and Gary Simpson, "A Call for Discussion of the 'Joint Declaration on the Doctrine on Justification'" *Dialog* 36, no. 3 (Summer, 1997): 226–227. Note that the authors view the difference between Lutherans and Catholics on the issue of justification specifically as it pertains to substance vs. "relational" ontology.

⁸⁸ See Ebeling, *Dogmatik des Christlichen Glaubens*, 3:195–200. Ebeling describes the movement of justification from a state of non-being (*Nichtsein*) to being (*Sein*). Also see Wilfried Joest, *Ontologie der Person bei Luther* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 14, 37, 362.

⁸⁹ For this reason, Forde's proposal should not be confused with the debate within Lutheran scholasticism regarding the question of whether the created world would be completely annihilated or renewed. All parties involved assumed the continuity of the human subjects in creation, redemption, and the eschaton. See discussion in Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, 655–656, and also Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951–1953), 3:542–543.

⁹⁰ See description in Mark Mattes, "The Thomistic Turn in Evangelical Catholic Ethics," *Lutheran Quarterly* 16 (2002): 65–100.

into accepting a Thomistic account of divine grace completing nature.⁹¹ God's power, present and active in the preached Word, completely turns the sinner around. Divine grace does not work to activate the sinner's hidden potencies.

Nevertheless, Forde's rhetoric of total discontinuity fails on another level. First, his choice of language often seems to suggest that the creature's total being is constituted by the relationship of sin and condemnation. In fact, Forde often boldly speaks of his wholesale contempt for the notion that we are "continuously existing subjects,"⁹² (i.e., that there is any continuity between the old and new beings). Nonetheless, if indeed we are not continuously existing subjects, what becomes of our status as God's good creatures, of which, as the Formula of Concord states, sin is merely an accidental disruption (FC Ep I)? If the essence of humanity is conceptualized relationally, must it not be defined at an even more fundamental level by the creator-creature relationship and not merely by the relationship of sin and condemnation? Indeed, as the history of the Fall suggests, this more fundamental relational status as God's good creatures is precisely what defines us as sinners. As Luther strongly implies in his description of the first article of the creed, sinful humanity perpetually receives itself as God's ever good creation, but nevertheless remains untrusting and ungrateful (SC II, 1).

Beyond its inability coherently to maintain the creator-creature relationship in light of redemption, Forde's rhetoric of wholesale disruption fails in other regards as well. Chiefly, the rhetoric of total reversal stands disconcertingly out of step with God's trustworthiness as it is proclaimed and revealed in the gospel. In other words, if God's redemptive act destroys creation, rather than redeeming and purifying it from its negative relationship of sin and condemnation, then has he not been faithless to that which has come before? If he acts in such a way as to be faithless to his original creation by simply replacing it, why would the believer expect God to be faithful in his promise of the gospel?

The problematic nature of Forde's fixation on the paradigm of discontinuity also manifests itself in his understanding of the relationship between forgiveness and the law. For Forde, as we noted earlier, God spontaneously forgives sinners by an act of fiat. God may, it appears, simply abandon his word of law and its clearly articulated threats of

⁹¹ See description in Jacques Maritain, *Integral Humanism*, tr. J. Evans (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), 291–308.

⁹² Forde, "Radical Lutheranism," in *A More Radical Gospel*, 15

retribution present throughout sacred Scripture (e.g., Deut 27:26; 32:35). Nevertheless, the question remains: what assurance does the believer possess that God will not abandon his word of gospel just as he did his earlier word of law? Seen from this perspective, Christ's fulfillment of the law in traditional confessional Lutheran theology is neither an abstract nor mechanical legal transaction. It is part and parcel of the coherence of the creedal faith that sees God's dynamic activity in the first article (creation and law) as faithfully fulfilled in the second and third articles (atonement, justification, and sanctification).

Part of the answer to this question is that Forde tends to subsume the idea of the law as commandment into the larger reality of the law as negative existential relationship.⁹³ If God so chooses, he may reverse this relationship and thereby abrogate the law in favor of the new relationship of grace. Moreover (as we have previously seen), despite his rhetoric to the contrary, ultimately God really does need the law to be fulfilled in order to save.

Nevertheless, neither answer is sustainable from the perspective of the Scripture or the symbolic writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. As is abundantly clear from these authorities, God has two separate words of law and gospel. Through his redemptive work of atonement and justification by the blood of Jesus, God reveals his trustworthiness by fulfilling the threats and promises of both. Indeed, as the Apostle Paul puts it, by his act of redemption in the cross and the empty tomb, God revealed "his righteousness . . . [as the one who is both] *just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus*" (Rom 3:26 ESV; emphasis added).

In light of the biblical and confessional authorities, perhaps a better way of conceptualizing the relationship between the old and new creations might be on the basis of an analogy of the fifth ecumenical council's description of the relationship between the two natures in Christ. According to this council, Christ's divine person is a proper *hypostasis* or center of identity within which his non-personal humanity (*anhypostasis*) is incorporated and subsists.⁹⁴ In a similar manner, as David Scaer has

⁹³ See summary description in Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate*, 192. See my own discussion of this fact in Kilcrease, "Forde's Doctrine of the Law," 151–180.

⁹⁴ For the text of the fifth ecumenical council see Heinrich Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, tr. Roy Deferrai (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1954), 85–90. See discussion of the content of the fifth ecumenical council in Martin Chemnitz, *The Two Natures in Christ*, tr. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), 68–72; Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, pt. 2, vol. 2 (Louisville, Ky: Westminster-John Knox, 1995),

correctly observed,⁹⁵ God's new act of redemption always incorporates within itself that which has come before. Hence, the new creation and its relationship with God's grace is (as Forde insists) something completely new. The new creation is not somehow the fruit of the activation of the hidden potencies in the old creation (i.e., the Thomistic "grace completing nature"). Rather, the new creation is its own independent reality, in a similar manner to the divine person of Christ. Ultimately though, because God is faithful to his previous words and works, he always incorporates his previous act into his new one. For this reason, the new creation becomes the proper *hypostasis* of the *anhypostasis* of the old creation.⁹⁶ Through Scripture we can see this in any number of instances. In becoming incarnate, Jesus took upon himself the flesh and condemnation of Adam in order to redeem. In the resurrection, his corpse was incorporated into his body of glory (see 1 Cor 15:35–38). Similarly, the sacraments of the new creation contain within themselves the elements of the old creation (bread, wine, water). Lastly, and most importantly, the law is contained within, and ultimately fulfilled in, the gospel (Rom 3:26; 8:3–4).

Although it is important to recognize the unity of the old and new creations, Forde must nonetheless be commended for insisting that the Bible describes the advent of the new creation as not coming about apart from eschatological judgment. Although the old creation is by no means abrogated by the new, in being purified from sin it does not escape God's judgment. For this reason, in the incarnation of the second Adam, the Holy Spirit purified the flesh he took from Mary from the sin of the first Adam. In the crucifixion, God concentrated all sin in the flesh of Christ and reduced him to a corpse in order to redeem the whole world (Isa 53:4; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24). Nevertheless, this judgment does not annihilate, but rather cleanses creation from the accidental vitiation of sin. Jesus' body, which bore the burden of human sin, becomes for those who have faith the medium through which we die and are resurrected into a new and infinitely abundant divine life. For this reason, our bodies, vitiated by sin, will not be destroyed, but will be glorified by "putting on incorruptibility" (1 Cor 15:53).

341, 387, 402–410, 419–462, 463; John Meyendorff, *Christ in Eastern Christian Thought* (Washington: Corpus Book, 1969), 38–40, 59–64; Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, 2:29–30.

⁹⁵ See David Scaer, "Sacraments as an Affirmation of Creation," *CTQ* 57, (1993): 241–263.

⁹⁶ See AE 34:140, where Luther himself comments in *The Disputation Concerning Man* (1536): "Therefore, man in this life is the *simple material* of God for the form of the future life. . . . [j]ust as the whole creation which is now subject to vanity [Rom 8:20] is for God the material for its future glorious form" (emphasis added).

IV. Conclusion

In developing a theology of atonement and justification, it is of the utmost importance that the Christian theologian think in terms of the internal coherence of the creedal faith. God's faithfulness in redemption must not trump his faithfulness to his creation and law. In spite of Forde's good intention, much of his theology of redemption can serve as a warning against drawing too sharp a line between the first article of the creed and the second and third. If God is truly the faithful God of the gospel, his identity as such will be revealed also by his faithfulness to that which he has created and also what he has commanded. Although, as we have seen, it was not Forde's goal to undermine the article of creation or law, his description of the gospel and the new creation that it establishes as something wholly discontinuous strongly implies a lack of faithfulness on God's part to the realities established by him in the first article.

We have argued, in response to this, that, according to Scripture, when God speaks forth his new creation through the gospel, he does so in such a way as to incorporate the reality of the old creation into the wholly new creation that he brings about. He does so by purifying the old realities from sin and the negative relationship of judgment that sin entails. In this, Forde's description of God's action in the gospel as something completely new can be reconciled with the reality of God's faithfulness to the law and the old creation.

The Ministry in the Early Church

Joel C. Elowsky

In this essay, I am going to paint, in rather broad brushstrokes, a picture of what the ministry looked like in the early church, how it organized itself, and how it saw itself in light of its purpose and authority. We will proceed by examining the three main periods—the New Testament, the period before Nicea (Ante-Nicene), and the Constantinian or Imperial Church—and conclude with some brief observations.

I. Ministry in the New Testament Church and Beyond

After Christ established his ministry in an anticipatory way in Matthew 18, he did so more fully in John 20 when he breathed his Spirit on his disciples and gave them the office of the keys along with the authority to preach (Mark 16:16), baptize (Mark 16:16; Matt 28:19), and celebrate the supper (Matt 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:19–20). The church then moved very quickly beyond the ministry of the twelve apostles, claiming no less than the sanction of Christ himself to do so. In 1 Corinthians and Ephesians, the Apostle Paul details those who were added *by Christ*¹ to the ministry of the church. In 1 Cor 12:28, he mentions “first apostles, second prophets, third teachers.” Then he adds to the list: miracle workers, then those who have gifts of healing, helpers, administrators, those who can speak in various kinds of tongues. In Ephesians 4:11–12, we hear that “[Christ] gave some as apostles, as prophets, as evangelists, as pastors and teachers, for the work of ministry, for the upbuilding of the body of Christ.” This indicates a much larger group than the twelve apostles. Ambrosiaster, in his commentary on this passage, takes this to mean that, at the beginning, everybody was involved in the work that Christ gave the apostles because there was mission work to do; the more hands, the better:

At the beginning they [perhaps those in the ministry listed in Eph 4:11?] had all preached and baptized on whatever day and at

¹ See Didymus’ comments, *On Zechariah (Sur Zacharie)* 1.228, ed Louis Doutreleau, *Sources Chretiennes*, vol. 83 (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1962), 310.

whatever time was convenient. Philip did not fix a day or a time for the eunuch's baptism Paul and Silas did not waste any time in baptizing the jailer and all his household nor did Peter have clerks or set a day when he would baptize Cornelius with all his household. He did not do it himself in fact, but ordered the brethren from Joppa who had gone up with him to Cornelius to do so. Up to that time too, no one had been ordained, apart from seven deacons. It was to allow the people to grow and multiply that at the beginning everyone [in the various ministries enumerated] was allowed to evangelize, to baptize and to expound the Scriptures in the church. But when the Church was established everywhere, places of meeting were established and rulers (*rectores*) and other offices in the Churches were appointed so that none of the clergy who had not been ordained to it should venture to take to himself an office which he knows not to have been committed or granted to him.²

Ambrosiaster paints a picture of a church where, initially, roles seem interchangeable. His reasoning is that a missionary church grows best when everyone is involved.³ But, Ambrosiaster says, this changed once churches were established, a change that occurred already in the New Testament age. As the initial missionary phase gave way to a necessary order and structure, many of these offices over the decades that followed slowly dropped out or were absorbed by other offices. The offices that disappeared were the ones associated largely with the mission work of the rapidly growing church: the apostles, prophets, and those with charismatic gifts (Acts 2; 8:15–17 [Samaria]; 10–11 [Cornelius; Gentiles], 13:8 [Salamis; Paul casting out demons]; 19:6 [Ephesus]). As the church became established in more and more areas, there were fewer new areas for the

² Ambrosiaster, *Commentary on Ephesians 4.11–12, Ancient Christian Texts: Commentaries on Galatians-Philemon: Ambrosiaster*, trans. and ed. Gerald Bray (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press Academic, 2009), 49. Hereafter referenced as Ambrosiaster, *Commentary on Ephesians*, ACT. The bracketed notes are mine. You will find similar comments in other fathers, such as Chrysostom's comments in his *Homily on Ephesians* 11.4.11–12, in John Chrysostom, *Interpretatio Omnium Epistularum Paulinarum*, ed. F. Field (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1849–1862), 4:218. See next note.

³ See also the comments of the reformers in dialog with Jerome. They cite Jerome, "Ep. 146 ad Evangelium," (*Patrologia cursus completus: Series latina*, 217 vols., ed. J.-P. Migne [Paris: Migne 1844–1864] 22:1193–1195) and other fathers and councils in support of their position that bishops were basically no different than presbyters in the early church, except that one was chosen to preside over the others to avoid schism and to ordain. See the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* 5–11, 60–63 in the translation provided in Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, tr. Charles Arand et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 332–333, 340.

Gospel to go, and the apostles, the prophets, and the charismatic gifts all decreased and faded away. Origen already testified that this was the case in the third century, and Irenaeus hinted at it even at the close of the second century. An exception occurred in certain pockets of charismatic activity, such as Carthaginian North Africa at the time of Tertullian in the third century.⁴

The fathers speak of the ministry operating on two tracks in the first centuries of the church: the missionary track and the local church track. The apostles, prophets, and teachers remain, we learn from the *Didache*, but largely as itinerants. They go from place to place establishing and strengthening churches so that faith will be created.⁵ But the church also had to guard itself against charlatans and false itinerant preachers who might bring dishonor on the Gospel. An apostle is not to stay for more than a day, the *Didache* says. If he stays more than three days, he is a false prophet; likewise, if a prophet asks for money, he is a false prophet (*Didache* 11.5, 12). The rapidly expanding church needed to put down roots and to discern what was real from what was ephemeral; otherwise, it would be a mile wide and an inch deep—something we see happening in the faster-growing churches of the majority world, such as Africa, Asia and Latin America. To provide some continuity and rootedness, the *Didache* says, the community is to go beyond the apostles and prophets and “appoint . . . bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord: men who are humble and not avaricious and true and approved, for they too carry out for you the ministry of the prophets and teachers” (*Didache* 15.1–2). Bishops and deacons, along with presbyters, carry on the work of the prophets, apostles, and teachers at the local level in the one ministry that Christ gave to his church.

The *Didache*, of course, is reflecting what Paul in the previous century had counseled Timothy and Titus to do in each of the cities he had visited. In Titus 1:5, he tells Titus that one of the things lacking in the cities he has visited are πρεσβύτεροι. You cannot have a church without πρεσβύτεροι. They were to establish a college of presbyters in each city, similar to the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, which was made up of the elders (πρεσβύτεροι), the chief priests, and the rulers. But then Paul refers to those same

⁴ For a more complete account with reference to various fathers, see Joel C. Elowsky, *We Believe in the Holy Spirit*, vol. 4, *Ancient Christian Doctrine Series* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 267–288; see especially 277–284.

⁵ The account we have in Acts that focuses on Peter and Paul was no doubt repeated by other apostles, prophets, and teachers as well.

πρεσβύτεροι two verses later as ἐπίσκοποι (Titus 1:5, 7). In the book of Acts, Paul also refers to the presbyters of Ephesus as bishops, or overseers, who are to feed the flock as pastors would (Acts 20:28). As the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope notes, the terms are interchangeable at this stage. Presbyters or elders were the mature leaders of the church; in Judaism, they were the only ones ordained among the Jewish leadership,⁶ modeled on the Jewish Sanhedrin, and they would have been in charge of church discipline and taken care of matters of jurisdiction. The ἐπίσκοποι or bishops were often city public officials in Hellenism occupying positions of leadership, their chief purpose being the oversight of others.⁷ Both bishops and presbyters were terms closely associated with the apostles. All three of Jesus' inner circle—the apostles Peter, James, and John—refer to themselves in their letters as presbyters (1 Pet 5:1; 2 John 1:1; 3 John 1:1).⁸ The apostles also thought of themselves as bishops; Peter speaks of the vacant “bishopric”⁹ of Judas that needed to be filled (Acts 1:20). The apostles already understood themselves as both bishops and presbyters, so the question of how to derive the positions of bishop and presbyter from the apostles is, in one sense, moot—the apostles had already done so themselves. Apostles are bishops, but not all bishops are apostles; bishops are presbyters, but not all presbyters are bishops.¹⁰ There was no rigid demarcation; the titles were also descriptors of the office. The presbyter-bishops were appointed by Paul and the other apostles, along with Timothy and Titus, in order to guard against false gospels and teachings that ran contrary to what they had received from the apostles, who in turn had received their message from Christ himself (1 Tim 3:2; 4:14; 6:20–21; 2 Tim 1:13–14; Titus 1:9). The authority for what they were doing came from Christ himself.

The apostles and those they appointed were never to forget the reason Jesus had commissioned them. Deacons were appointed in Acts 6 to

⁶ John Knox, “The Ministry in the Primitive Church,” in *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, ed. H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), 21.

⁷ See Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (TDNT), trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub., 1987), 2:611–614.

⁸ In Rev 5:4, the elders are the ones who sit around the divine throne, twenty-four of them altogether, representing Old and New Testament Israel. We do not hear of deacons or bishops in Revelation, only elders. Most of the early church agreed that the writer of the Revelation is the same person who refers to himself as the πρεσβύτερος called by the lady (the church) and her children in the Johanne epistles.

⁹ The Greek word there is τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν.

¹⁰ Ambrosiaster, *Commentary on 1 Timothy* 3.8, 128.

prevent the apostles from being distracted by the equivalent of “waiting on tables,” so they could devote themselves to the ministry of the Word and prayer that Christ had given to them. The deacons became the *de facto* social ministry people, but they also functioned liturgically, assisting with baptisms and also ensuring proper preparation for the elements to be used in the Eucharist. They did not baptize, nor did they preside at the Eucharist, but they occupied an important role in ensuring that all things were done decently and in order so that the presbyter-bishops could focus on the tasks given to them by Christ and his apostles.

The deaconesses came shortly after the appointment of the deacons. Clement of Alexandria tells us that women also accompanied the apostles on their missionary journeys in order to protect the apostles’ reputation. The women’s presence allowed them “to reach the women, without giving rise to malicious gossip.”¹¹ The deaconesses also served at worship by seating the women in the assembly, and outside of worship by making home visits to female church members. We know that the church grew fastest among the women of the ancient world, which again testifies to the important role that deaconesses occupied, especially in the churches of the East.¹²

II. The Ante-Nicene Church: Clement of Rome and the Role of the Presbytery and the Presbyter-Bishop

One of the earliest churches established by Paul was in Corinth. As a contemporary of John the evangelist, elder, and apostle, Clement of Rome wrote to the church at Corinth fifty or so years later, towards the end of the first century. Clement, as the head presbyter in Rome,¹³ writes this authoritative disciplinary letter to the congregation in Corinth, a congregation that had already seen its share of fights during the time of the apostle Paul. Things had not changed much fifty years later.

In his letter, which can be dated to A.D. 95–96, Clement tells us that the strife in the church at Corinth still revolved largely around the pastoral office, just as it had in Paul’s day: “The well-established and ancient church of the Corinthians” was rebelling against its college of presbyters

¹¹ Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 3.6.53.

¹² See Paul Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites of the Ancient Churches of East and West* (New York: Pueblo Publishing Co., 1990), 83–92.

¹³ Irenaeus refers to him as the third bishop of Rome after Peter and Linus. See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.3.

because of one or two people.¹⁴ A few people had, in fact, been successful in having some pastors, “their good conduct notwithstanding, [removed] from the ministry which had been held in honor by them blamelessly.”¹⁵ However, the dissension and strife that happened at Corinth over the office of the ministry was no surprise:

Our apostles . . . knew, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that there would be strife over the bishop’s office. For this reason, therefore, having received complete foreknowledge, they appointed the officials mentioned earlier and afterwards they gave the offices a permanent character; that is, if they should die, other approved men should succeed to their ministry. (*1 Clement* 44.1–2)

Clement does not tell us how the apostles did this; he assumes it is common knowledge. Nonetheless, Clement goes on to provide the theological justification for his assertion that subsequent bishops and presbyters have the same authority that the apostles had to preach and teach the Gospel (*1 Clement* 42–43) and administer the sacraments, which he refers to as “the offering of the sacrifice” (*1 Clement* 44.4). They were given such authority through an order established ultimately by God that goes all the way back to (1) the cosmic order of creation (*1 Clement* 40.1–4), (2) the Levitical structure of the priesthood in the Old Testament (*1 Clement* 40.6), and, finally, (3) the structure Christ himself had received and passed on to the apostles in the New Testament. Concerning this third point he writes,

The apostles received the gospel for us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus the Christ was sent forth from God. So then Christ is from God, and the apostles are from Christ. Both, therefore, came of the will of God in good order. Having therefore received their orders . . . they went forth with the firm assurance that the Holy Spirit gives, preaching the good news. . . . So preaching both in the country and in the towns, they appointed their firstfruits, when they had tested them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons for the future believers. And this was no new thing they did, for indeed something had been written about bishops and deacons many years ago; for somewhere thus says the Scripture: “I will appoint their bishops in righteousness and their deacons in faith.”¹⁶

¹⁴*1 Clement* 47.

¹⁵*1 Clement* 44.6. For a contemporary instance of almost the same incident, see the January (2012) issue of *Forum Letter*, where Peter Speckhard muses about why it is that pastors are expected to keep their vows while congregations are not.

¹⁶ Isa 60:17 (LXX)—not in the Hebrew. *1 Clement* 42.1–5, *The Apostolic Fathers*, ed. Michael Holmes (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992), 75.

Appointing successors was no new thing, in other words. It was done in the Old Testament with Moses and Joshua and prophesied in the LXX (if not in the Hebrew) version of Isaiah 60:17. It was also foreshadowed with the threefold priesthood of the Old Covenant: "For to the high priest the proper services have been given, and to the priests the proper office has been assigned, and upon the Levites the proper ministries have been imposed" (1 *Clement* 40.6). Clement sees the threefold office of his day already mirrored in the Old Testament Levitical Priesthood in which there were high priest, priests, and Levites. "The layman (λαϊκος)," Clement says, however, "is bound by the layman's rules" (1 *Clement* 40.6). The ministry established by Christ can only be dissolved by him, even though some laymen had taken matters into their own hands in removing some of the presbyters. In response, Clement says, "Let each of you, brothers, in his proper order, give thanks to God, maintaining a good conscience, not overstepping the designated rule of his ministry, but acting with reverence" (1 *Clement* 41). He believes this order had been established by God, not by human beings.

It was not as if laymen had no role in the church. The pattern that had been established in the choosing of deacons continued, with the earliest ordinations to the episcopate most likely conducted entirely by the local church, according to Paul Bradshaw.¹⁷ However, Bradshaw cautions that this fact should not be taken to indicate "some notion of the ideal of democracy in early Christianity."¹⁸

Nor was it seen as in any way opposed to the divine calling of a minister, but on the contrary it was understood as the means by which God's choice of a person for a particular ecclesiastical office was discerned and made manifest. As both early Christian writings and the prayers in the rites themselves make clear, it was always

¹⁷ Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 21–22. The people did have the right to refuse, and did on occasion. The fifth century historian Philostorgius tells us that when Demophilus, an Arian bishop, was being foisted upon the people of Constantinople in A.D. 370, any number of people shouted "anaxios" (unworthy) instead of "axios" (worthy). Philostorgius *Hist. Eccl.* 9.10 (*Patrologia cursus completus: Series graeca*, 162 vols., ed. J.-P. Migne [Paris: Migne 1857–1886] 65:576C), citation from Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 25, fn 16.

¹⁸ Paul Bradshaw, "A Brief History of Ordination Rites," in *Services and Prayers for the Church of England: Ordination Services: Study Edition* (London: Church Publishing House, 2007), 111.

considered that it was God who chose and ordained the ministers through the action of the Church.¹⁹

Church and ministry worked together—most of the time. As time went on, the role of the local church did diminish. By the third century, as we learn from Cyprian of Carthage,

[A] candidate for the episcopate [still] required the approval both of the local church and also of the neighboring bishops. It was this, rather than any theory of sacramental transmission, that led to the presence and involvement of the [neighboring bishops] in the rite of Episcopal ordination. In the case of the presbyterate and diaconate at this time, the right of nomination seems to have rested with the bishop, but he did not normally act without the advice of the clergy and people.²⁰

But how did the candidates for bishop arise out of the presbytery? George Williams surmises that one of the presbyters from among the college of presbyters became accustomed to presiding over the Eucharist and ultimately became identified with the priesthood, since the Eucharist was often referred to in the early church as “the sacrifice,” due to the close connection with the events of Calvary. As Williams puts it,

By contagion and imputation the Eucharist president himself became looked upon as at least analogous to the high priest of the Old Covenant and the spokesman of the entire royal priesthood which is the church. Though he was normally one of the presbyters, the cultural president acquired, through his supervision of the deacons, a pre-eminence over the presbyters in their corporate capacity.²¹

This, he says, coupled with “conflicting and sometimes irresponsible claims and vagaries put forward by certain prophets and teachers conspired to bring also the surviving ‘charismatic’ ministries under the oversight of the bishop in order to assure the theological solidarity of the Christian community ever in peril of its life from a hostile populace and an intermittently persecuting magistracy.”²²

For these reasons a single bishop arose out of the presbytery about which Ignatius of Antioch (d. ca. 112) can say,

¹⁹ Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 22.

²⁰ Bradshaw, *Ordination Rites*, 22.

²¹ Williams, “Ministry of the Ante-Nicene Church,” in *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, 28.

²² Williams, “Ministry of the Ante-Nicene Church,” 28.

[W]hen you are subject to the bishop, it is evident to me that you are living not in accordance with human standards but in accordance with Jesus Christ. . . . It is essential, therefore, that you continue your current practice and do nothing without the bishop, but be subject also to the presbytery as to the apostles of Jesus Christ. . . . Furthermore, it is necessary that those who are deacons of the "mysteries"²³ of Jesus Christ please everyone in this respect. For they are not merely "deacons" of food and drink [Acts 6:1–6] but ministers of God's church. Therefore they must avoid criticism as though it were fire. Similarly, let everyone respect the deacons as Jesus Christ, just as they should respect the bishop, who is a model of the Father, and the presbyters as God's council and as the band of the apostles. Without these no group can be called a church.²⁴

According to Ignatius, there is no church without her bishops, her college of presbyters, and her deacons. The presbytery continues its association with the apostles, but the bishop's association is elevated to the one who sent the apostles—in other words, Jesus. The bishop is in relationship to Jesus as Jesus is to the Father;²⁵ when you honor the bishop, he says, you are honoring God.²⁶ Likewise, when you act in harmony with the mind of the bishop, you are, in effect, acting with the mind of Christ.²⁷ The bishop is to be regarded as Lord;²⁸ this is why nothing that pertains to the church²⁹ is to be done apart from the bishop.³⁰

You must all follow the bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and follow the presbytery as you would the apostles; respect the deacons as the commandment of God. Let no one do anything that has to do with the church without the bishop. Only that Eucharist which is under the authority of the bishop (or whomever he himself

²³ See 1 Cor 4:1, "οἰκονόμους μυστηρίων θεοῦ."

²⁴ *To the Trallians* 2.1–3.1; Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers*, 159–161.

²⁵ Ignatius, *To the Ephesians* 3.2, "For Jesus Christ, our inseparable life, is the mind of the Father, just as the bishops appointed throughout the world are in the mind of Christ."

²⁶ Ignatius, *To the Smyrnaeans* 9, "It is good to acknowledge God and the bishop. The one who honors the bishop has been honored by God; the one who does anything without the bishop's knowledge serves the devil."

²⁷ Ignatius, *To the Ephesians* 4.1.

²⁸ Ignatius, *To the Ephesians* 6.1.

²⁹ Ignatius, *To the Smyrnaeans* 8.1.

³⁰ Ignatius, *To the Magnesians* 7.2; *To the Trallians* 2.2, 7.2; *To the Philadelphians* 7.2.

designates) is to be considered valid (βεβαία)/certain. Wherever the bishop appears, there let the congregation be; just as wherever Christ is, there is the catholic church. It is not permissible either to baptize or to hold a love feast without the bishop. Rather, whatever he approves is also pleasing to God, in order that everything you do may be trustworthy and certain (βέβαιον).³¹

Why is the presence of the bishop so important that nothing in the church can be done without him?³² There are at least two reasons, Ignatius tells us: to avoid division and to ensure trustworthiness and certainty (βέβαιον) in whatever the church does. βέβαιον means, “reliable; firm, well-founded; confirmed, verified; effective.”³³ This is why the bishop is to be listened to and obeyed.³⁴

The picture we have with Ignatius and the other bishops of the second and third centuries is of a ministry where the bishop is acting as the *paterfamilias* (οικοδεσπότης), the “administrator” (οικονόμος) of the οἶκος θεοῦ. He is the head of the household, with the presbyters and deacons taking care of the household chores, so to speak. As father of the house, he seeks to enlarge the family through Baptism over which he continued to preside, and to feed his family through the Eucharist, which provided spiritual food and the medicine of immortality.³⁵ The father also makes sure he has many sons to carry on his legacy. Thus, the *vivâ voce* (the living voice) of the apostles and their teaching is provided through their successors, according to Tertullian³⁶ and Irenaeus.³⁷ Apostolic succession provides the nascent church with a level of βέβαιον (i.e., certainty) in an uncertain world where, at least at that time, the Scriptures were not as accessible as they are today, though heretical teachers were accessible—and still are. People went to church and consulted their bishop as the final authority in matters of faith and doctrine.

In summary, the elevation of the bishop is probably one of the most significant developments in the ministry of the Ante-Nicene church. As the bishop gained authority, power, and administrative duties, he also began

³¹ Ignatius, *To the Smyrnaeans* 8.1–3. Note the importance of certainty, of which the bishop is the primary guarantor.

³² Ignatius, *To the Magnesians* 7.2; *To the Trallians* 2.2, 7.2; *To the Philadelphians* 7.2; *To the Smyrnaeans* 8.1.

³³ Bibleworks GNM Morphology + Barclay-Newman.

³⁴ Ignatius, *To the Ephesians* 20.2; *To the Magnesians* 3.2.

³⁵ Ignatius, *Letter to the Ephesians* 20.2; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.2.2–3.

³⁶ See, for instance, Tertullian, *Prescription Against Heretics* 21 and 32.

³⁷ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.3.3.

to exercise jurisdiction beyond his parish, especially as churches began to hold more councils. This is evidenced especially in Carthage from at least the early third century, but also in Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome. Thus, due to the expanding duties of the bishop, many of his liturgical functions were given over to the local presbyters. This happened sooner with the Eucharist than with Baptism, which remained the purview of the bishop—with notable exceptions—for a much longer time.³⁸ Thus, wherever a presbyter was presiding over the sacrament, he became, like the bishop, a *sacerdos* or *hiereus* (i.e., a priest).³⁹ Much of the initial disciplinary and supervisory responsibility of the presbyter had been gradually taken over by the bishops, so that by the time of Dionysius' *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* (late fifth to early sixth century), the presbyter did not even figure in the hierarchy, having been fully replaced by the priest.⁴⁰

In the meantime, the duties of the deacons and deaconesses expanded, which entailed the everyday running of the church. The deacons and deaconesses themselves continued serving in the liturgy, their main tasks there being to help with baptisms and to ensure that the gifts for the Eucharist were prepared.⁴¹ The deacon, in particular, helped with the distribution of the cup, while the bishop reserved for himself the distribution of the host, which he did in connection with his role of discipline in determining who was to be admitted to the sacrament and who was to be refused. There were, however, also expanded duties inside and outside of the liturgy that needed attention. The deacon brought in help, so to speak, with the increasing needs of the congregation. Sub-offices, such as the subdeacon, were created that could comprise—depending on the church and the area—acolytes, exorcists, lectors, doorkeepers, gravediggers, and

³⁸ An example is the church in Alexandria, where we hear of other clergy such as the presbyters performing baptisms, no doubt due to logistical considerations more than anything else; see Ambrosiaster, *Commentary on Ephesians* 4:11, ACT, 49.

³⁹ The term "priest" is, in fact, connected etymologically to presbyter. See, among others, P. Hinchliff's article "Presbyter" in *The New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy and Worship*, ed. J.G. Davies (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1986), 446. The English word goes back to the German "*Priester*," which in turn goes back to the Greek "*Presbyter*," not to any Latin or other Greek root. Also, in the late patristic period, in his *De Civitate Dei* 20.10, Augustine says that bishops and presbyters are now properly called priests in the church. See *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* (NPNF), First Series, 14 vols., ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1952-1957), 2:432.

⁴⁰ Dionysius, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 5.

⁴¹ The ordination rites seem to indicate that the deaconess would not have served at the altar.

cantors/singers.⁴² The catechists were also important as teachers of those preparing for baptism, especially in Alexandria.⁴³ Arch-deacons, or head deacons, also arose to direct the work of the deacons under them. In the third century, this expanding cadre of workers associated with the church became semi-clericalized during the time of Cyprian: the Latin term was *clero proximi*,⁴⁴ which means “near/almost clerics.” By the time of the fourth century, many had become, in fact, part of the clergy—some ordained, like the lectors and acolytes; others not, like the gravediggers.⁴⁵

III. The Imperial Church

As we move into the fourth century, I follow the lead and will attempt to summarize the work of George Williams’ *The Ministry in the Later Patristic Period (314–451)*⁴⁶ because he helpfully condenses what would amount to a very large body of literature, figures, and movements. He notes that the metropolitan churches had already become well established. There was an apparatus in place for carrying out the work of the church that had greatly expanded. The presbytery that had served as the disciplinary council in each city where it had been established was “well on its way towards disaggregation. The episcopate becomes a totally distinct order from the presbyterate by the time of the council of Nicea.”⁴⁷ This can be seen, for instance, in the council’s fourth canon, which stipulated the duties and responsibilities of the bishops in ordaining other bishops whose ratification occurred under the Metropolitan. Canon 4 of Nicea states:

It is by all means proper that a bishop should be appointed by all the bishops in the province; but should this be difficult, either on account

⁴² For further background on these minor offices, see the article by A. Chupungco on the “Diaconate” in the forthcoming third edition of Angelo DiBerardino, *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* 3rd ed., English eds. Joel Elowsky and Thomas Oden (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, forthcoming).

⁴³ See Pseudo-Clement, “Epistle of Clement to James 13,” in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: the Writings of the Fathers Down to AD 325* (ANF), 10 vols., ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 8:220.

⁴⁴ Cyprian, *Epistle* 29.2. He uses the term “*clero proximos*” in the singular.

⁴⁵ According to Martin Chemnitz, in a work attributed to Jerome, the ranks of clergy are listed as seven, leaving out the exorcists and acolytes. But it is also true that the enumerations varied. See *The Examination of the Council of Trent*, 4 vols., trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), 2:686.

⁴⁶ George H. Williams, “The Ministry in the Later Patristic Period (314–451),” in H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams, eds., *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), 60–81.

⁴⁷ Williams, “Ministry in the Later Patristic Period,” 60.

of urgent necessity or because of distance, three at least should meet together, and the suffrages of the absent [bishops] also being given and communicated in writing, then the ordination should take place. But in every province the ratification of what is done should be left to the Metropolitan.⁴⁸

By the time of the Council of Antioch in Encaeniis (A.D. 341), a candidate for bishop could be elevated, even against the wishes of the people of his see.⁴⁹ Even more, ordination had acquired the significance of a second baptism or a second penance that blotted out all but carnal sin, according to Canon 9 of the Council of Neocaesarea.⁵⁰ Later on, at the time of Augustine's controversy with the Donatists, this evolved further into the teaching of the indelible character of the priest imposed through ordination.⁵¹ Celibacy also became a mark of the clergy. The Spanish Council of Elvira (A.D. 306) decreed that continence as distinct from celibacy was mandatory for all who presided at the altar.⁵²

Not everyone agreed with the burgeoning hierarchy, as our Lutheran Confessions acknowledge. Jerome,⁵³ Chrysostom,⁵⁴ Epiphanius,⁵⁵ Theodore of Mopsuestia,⁵⁶ and Theodoret⁵⁷ contended that bishops were simply

⁴⁸ *Council of Nicea*, Canon 4; translation from NPNF, Series 2, 14:11.

⁴⁹ See, for instance, Canons 18 and 23. The epitome of Canon 18 says, "Let a bishop ordained but not received by his city have his part of the honour, and offer the liturgy only, waiting for the synod of the province to give judgment," NPNF, Series 2, 14:117.

⁵⁰ See Council of Neocaesarea, Canon 9; NPNF 2 14:83. I was directed to these references provided by Williams, "Ministry in the Later Patristic Period," 62.

⁵¹ See Augustine, *Contra Epistolam Parmeniani* 2.13.28; *Corpus scriptorium ecclesiasticorum latinorum*, 51:79. See also Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 5.15; PL 35:1422; NPNF, Series 1, 7:37. Augustine originated his discussion of ordination from Baptism, insisting that what is true of Baptism is also true of ordination. See the article by H. E. J. Cowdrey, "Pope Anastasius II and St. Augustine's Doctrine of Holy Orders," *Studia Patristica* 11, pt. 2:311-315.

⁵² Canon 33; J.A. Stevenson, *A New Eusebius*, New Edition, rev. W.H.C. Frend (London: SPCK, 1987), 292.

⁵³ Jerome, *Letter* 146, to *Evangelus*.

⁵⁴ Chrysostom, *Homily XI, On 1 Timothy* 3.8-10; NPNF, Series 1, 13:441.

⁵⁵ Epiphanius, *Haereses* 75, although Epiphanius does argue for the distinction, he notes in the earliest layers of the church's history, that if there were not enough presbyters or bishops in a given city the presbyter might function as a bishop and there might only be bishops and deacons, as in Philippi. But otherwise normally there was a distinction.

⁵⁶ Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on Titus*, ed. H.B. Swete, *Theodori episcopi Mopsuesteni: In epistolas b. Pauli commentarii*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1880), vol. 2:239, in ACCS XI: 287.

presbyters who served a greater regional jurisdiction. The only thing that set bishops apart from presbyters was the authority to ordain, although, even in this regard, someone like Ambrosiaster could point out that presbyters of the ante-Nicean Alexandrian church had ordained others on occasion, and that their presbyters performed confirmations if the bishop was not present.⁵⁷ Nonetheless, as Williams contends, “these were not representative contentions, for the provincially organized and ecumenically minded episcopate had become fully conscious of participating in a *ministry*, as well as a *jurisdiction*, different from that of their subordinate presbyter-priests.”⁵⁹

At this time, “the city ‘parish’ (*paroikia*) was becoming a diocese (though not yet in name) under its bishop while the presbyters were more or less permanently assigned to outlying communities, or to the regional churches in the case of the more populous cities.”⁶⁰ Those presbyters who lived in the surrounding parishes of the bishop, and had moved out to outlying areas of the city, became known as *chorepiskopoi*, or country bishops. In many ways, these bishops had a closer connection with the people than did the city bishops, who were becoming more and more removed from the daily parish life to focus on administrative duties. Over time, however, the *chorepiskopoi* were eliminated, in no small part due to the fact that many of them had to become “worker priests” because of the small pay they received. At times, they engaged in part-time work that was not considered consistent with “the episcopal dignity.” Canon 6 of the Council of Sardica (A.D. 343) decreed that *chorepiskopoi* were no longer to be appointed and the Canon 54 of the Council of Laodicea (A.D. 363–364) had as its goal the replacement of all rural bishops with visitors from the city churches.

In the meantime, bishops became more involved in doctrinal disputes, such as at the Council of Nicea, or the many subsequent councils that were called to deal with various heresies and schisms. There were also disciplinary duties that many of the canons of these councils delegated to the bishops on a regional or sometimes empire-wide level. Paul had enjoined Christians not to take cases in dispute to the secular courts but to have such cases resolved by the church. This naturally had become the purview of the bishops-presbyters. However, as the bishop began to be further distinguished from the presbyters, deciding judicial cases became

⁵⁷ Theodoret, *Interpretation of the Letter to Titus* 1.7; PG 82:859C–860C, in *ibid*.

⁵⁸ Ambrosiaster, *Commentary on Ephesians* 4.12; ACTS 49.

⁵⁹ Williams, “Ministry in the Later Patristic Period,” 62.

⁶⁰ Williams, “Ministry in the Later Patristic Period,” 60.

one more of his duties, and even more so when the newly Christian state was formed. Within the organizational structure of the Roman Empire, Williams notes, the bishop became, "as it were *ex officio*, the emperor's 'personal' *defensores* of the municipalities to protect the local populations, Christian and otherwise, from any unfair practices of the local or provincial officialdom of the Empire."⁶¹

The diaconate originally had served in its own right in the church, performing many of the important works of mercy along with its liturgical functions in the church. In time, however, the deacon had become more of an assistant to the bishop-presbyters-priests. In the imperial church, the diaconate came to be viewed as the initial rung on the proverbial ladder of the clergy that one stepped on in order to move up the order.⁶² This was the ecclesiastical counterpart, as Williams notes, "of the succession of officers or the *cursus honorum* through which the magistrate normally advanced in the service of the state. Thus, the ministry became more of a career than a calling."⁶³ They became professional church workers who were "appropriately trained and promoted, even from one parish to another."⁶⁴ The diaconate, in some ways, had an inherent unfair advantage, at least over the presbyterate. This is due to the fact that some of the churches, such as Rome, limited the diaconal number to seven, dating back to the time of the Acts of the Apostles—"but with quite unapostolic prerequisites and powers." The more limited number of deacons meant that they were more in demand. This, coupled with their close association with the people due to the everyday activities in which they were involved, meant that they were often considered for election to the episcopate over some of the presbyters.⁶⁵ We know of some rather famous preachers who were deacons, such as Ephrem the Syrian, who is perhaps best known for the beautiful poetic imagery in his hymns.

⁶¹ Williams, "Ministry in the Later Patristic Period," 63.

⁶² Damasus, for example, moved all the way from deacon to pope. See Ambrosiaster's tract, *On the Arrogance of the Roman Deacons*, whose title is self-explanatory, also cited by Williams, "Ministry in the Later Patristic Period," 64. This, of course, varied from place to place, depending on how the various minor offices were ranked. Basil of Caesarea, for instance, began as a lector, not a deacon. Gregory of Nazianzus used him as an example to counsel candidates for higher ecclesiastical offices to pass through the lower orders first. Cf. Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 43.27.

⁶³ Williams, "The Ministry of the Ante-Nicene Church (125-325)," 29.

⁶⁴ Williams, "The Ministry of the Ante-Nicene Church (125-325)," 30.

⁶⁵ Williams, "Ministry in the Later Patristic Period," 64.

Whereas in the period before Nicea there were no treatises devoted to the ministry, per se (it was more or less alluded to in the context of other arguments), during the fourth and fifth centuries, there are any number of such treatises written.⁶⁶ Many of these writers were critical of the hierarchical structure that had developed and perhaps even overdeveloped in the imperial church. Many of these works dealt with the spiritual life of the clergy—what we today would call pastoral formation. They were critical of the many who were entering into the ranks of the clergy as a way to advance themselves rather than to advance the Gospel. Christianity was now safe, but it had become institutionalized, bureaucratized, compromised, and anaesthetized to the needs of the people.

IV. Conclusion

The fathers in every age understood, as Luther did,⁶⁷ that the ministry is not ours; it is not even the church's, except by gift. It is first and foremost Christ's. Luther spoke of the danger of altering or improving this ministry: "then it becomes a nothing and Christ is no longer present, nor is his order."⁶⁸ The church in its history, especially during the imperial era, was constantly in danger of making this ministry "a nothing." On the one hand, offices and a structure that were intended to and did serve the church in the beginning ended up losing their servant character in some cases, with the result that the church served the structure. On the other hand, the initial structures that the church set up were erected to build a fence around the bishop, presbyters, and deacons so that they could carry out the core purpose of the office of the ministry, namely, the ministry of teaching and preaching the word and administering the sacraments in order to deliver God's gospel of forgiveness to his people. Sometimes, of course, they forgot that fences need gates, too.

⁶⁶ The sayings of the desert fathers and the rule of Pachomius deal with the spiritual life of the monk or clergy; Ambrose wrote his *de Officiis* on the duties of the clergy modeled on Cicero's work by the same title; Theodore of Mopsuestia and Chrysostom both have works in the Antiochene tradition entitled, *On the Priesthood*; Gregory the Great wrote his *Pastoral Rule*, which details what every minister should know about almost every aspect of ministry and conduct. There are, for instance, practical guides on how to preach law and gospel in Part III of Gregory's *Rule*.

⁶⁷ See Martin Luther's comments in *Concerning the Private Mass and the Ordination of Priests* (1533), *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 55 vols., ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1986), 38:200; *Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe [Schriften]*, 65 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–1993), 38:240,24.

⁶⁸ AE 38:200.

The ministry in any age is in danger of losing its purpose. Only when it remembers the one who gave us that ministry—the one who did not consider equality with God as something to be grasped, the one who humbled himself by taking the very form of a servant (Phil 2:5–11)—only then can it know its true purpose, which always has been and always will be *diakonia*, service. The privilege of serving in this way is best summed up by John Chrysostom writing *On the Priesthood* at the end of the fourth century:

[E]arth's inhabitants, having their life in this world . . . have been entrusted with the stewardship of heavenly things. They have received an authority which God has not given to angels or arch-angels. Not to the [angels] was it said, "Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever you loose, shall be loosed" [Matt 18:18]. Those who are lords on earth have indeed the power to bind, but only men's bodies. But this binding touches the very soul and reaches through heaven. What priests do on earth, God ratifies above. The Master confirms the decisions of his servants. Indeed, he has given them nothing less than the whole authority of heaven. For he says, "Whoever's sins you forgive are forgiven, and whoever's sins you retain, they are retained" [John 20:23]. What authority could be greater than that? "The Father has given all judgment to the Son" [John 5:22]. But I see that the Son has placed it all in their hands. For they have been raised to this prerogative, as though they were already translated to heaven and had transcended human nature and were freed from our passions."⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood* 3.5. NPNF, Series 1, 9:47, adapted.

Walther and AC V

Roland Ziegler

C.F.W. Walther's doctrine of the ministry has received considerable attention over the years. This study will consider only one detail: how does Walther interpret Article Five of the Augsburg Confession (hereafter, AC V) and how does Walther's view compare to his sources and to other interpretations of AC V in his time and later? The central question is the meaning of the words *ministerium* and *Predigtamt*. Do they mean *Pfarramt* and nothing else, or does the *ministerium* go beyond the *Pfarramt*? This question is debated not only in the North American context, but, as the last part of this study will show, continues to enjoy ongoing discussion among Lutherans in general.¹ My goal here is to examine the understanding of AC V as it is presented in Walther's *Kirche und Amt*, and then put it in context: the context of the interpretation of AC V in Lutheran orthodoxy, in which Walther puts himself, as well as the later history of the interpretation of AC V. This study will not engage in a detailed interpretation of AC V in its original historical context.

I. AC V in *Kirche und Amt*

The Differences between First and Later Editions of Kirche und Amt

In the series of theses on the ministry found in the first edition of *Kirche und Amt*, the second thesis reads: "The preaching office or pastoral office is not a human ordinance, but an office established by God himself."² In the chapter "Witnesses of the Church in Her Public Confessions," Walther quotes the first sentence of AC V in German.³ The second edition of *Kirche und Amt* (as well as all subsequent editions),

¹ There is, of course, much more to AC V than this question, such as the rejection of enthusiasm and the binding of the work of the Spirit to the means of grace. For Walther's view on the means of grace, see Franz Pieper, "Walther als Theologe. Die Lehre von den Gnadenmitteln," *Lehre und Wehre* 36 (1890), 113–121.

² "Das Predigtamt oder Pfarramt ist keine menschliche Ordnung, sondern ein von Gott selbst gestiftetes Amt," C.F.W. Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt*, 3rd ed. (Erlangen: Verlag von Andreas Deichert, 1875), 193. All translations are, if not otherwise marked, my own.

³ "Solchen Glauben zu erlangen, hat Gott das Predigtamt eingesetzt," C.F.W. Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt* (Erlangen: C. A. Ph. Th. Bläsing, 1852), 215, first edition; 194, third edition.

includes an additional, lengthy annotation in the text. In it, Walther distinguishes between the office *in concreto*, (i.e., the pastoral office), and the office *in abstracto*, pointing the reader to Ludwig Hartmann's *Pastorale evangelicum* for this interpretation.⁴ This distinction is necessary, says Walther, because of those who want to make the pastoral office a means of grace and coordinate it with word and sacraments. To do so would make the pastoral office "absolutely necessary" for salvation, meaning that no one can come to faith or have his sins forgiven without an ordained pastor. Against this, AC V only states that the external or bodily word is necessary for salvation, which argues against an enthusiastic teaching that postulates that God operates immediately.⁵ Nevertheless, Walther holds, even though AC V cannot be restricted to the pastoral office, it also includes the divine institution of the pastoral office.⁶

Walther on the one hand understands *ministerium* here as primarily functional. The systematic concern is the issue of whether or not faith and forgiveness of sins depend solely on God's word and sacrament or also on the ordained person administering them. Thus, word and sacrament are not restricted to the ministration of the pastor; the forgiveness of sins is communicated also through the word spoken by a person not called and ordained to the pastoral office.

Walther's Argument

Walther argues for his position from the Schwabach Articles, which served as a source for the Augsburg Confession, and he quotes the following from Chytraeus's *History of the Augsburg Confession*: "To obtain such faith or to give to us men, God has instituted the preaching office or oral word, namely, the Gospel . . ."⁷ Additionally, for this understanding of *Predigtamt* as synonym for gospel, Walther quotes from the Formula of Concord (SD XII, 30). There, in the German, *Kirchendienst* stands without a conjunction next to "*das gepredigte und gehörte Wort*," whereas the Latin

⁴ C.F.W. Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt*, 2nd ed. (Erlangen: Verlag von Andreas Deichert, 1865), 198–199. I will be using subsequently C.F.W. Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt*, 3. auf Anordnung der Synode aufs neue durchgesehene und vermehrte Auflage. (Erlangen: Verlag von Andreas Deichert, 1875). The section of interest is in this edition on pages 194–195.

⁵ Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche*, 195.

⁶ Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche*, 195

⁷ "Solchen Glauben zu erlangen oder uns Menschen zu geben hat Gott eingeseyt das Predigtamt oder mündlich Wort, nemlich das Evangelium . . ." Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche*, 194.

translation reads: "*Quod ministerium ecclesiasticum, hoc est, verbum Dei praedicatum et auditum.*"⁸ The Latin thus clearly identifies *ministerium ecclesiasticum* with the preached and heard word, not as an estate in the church or as the pastoral office. If this does not prove that AC V is to be understood in Walther's sense, it at least proves that *ministerium ecclesiasticum* was not always used in the 16th century or in the confessions as synonymous with the pastoral office. Walther quotes another passage from the Formula for this understanding of *ministerium* which reads in the Latin translation: "*Verbum enim illud, quo vocamur, ministerium Spiritus est* (2 Cor 3:8)."⁹ Thus, the ministry of the Spirit is the word, meaning that the ministry is not the pastoral office, but rather the preached word itself.

Ludwig Hartmann's Pastorale

As already noted, Walther quotes the *Pastorale evangelicum* by Ludwig Hartmann for the distinction between the ministry *in abstracto* and *in concreto* as well as a proof that AC V does not deal with the ministry *in concreto*, (i.e., the pastoral office or *Pfarramt*). Hartmann describes two ways in which one can speak of the ministry:

1. *Abstractly*, the position itself and the same office is, in a Christian way, subject to consideration in which respect the ministry is treated in article AC V.
2. *Concretely*, in regard to the persons, who are engaged in this office, thus treats AC XIV this subject, that namely no one is allowed to preach or administer the sacraments without being lawfully called. Therefore, the ministry or pastoral office is the office/duty to preach in the public meeting the word of God and lawfully to administer the sacraments, instituted by God, entrusted to fit persons through the mediation of a lawful call, so that through the true knowledge of him it kindles faith and

⁸ *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, 5th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), 1097,17–19. This edition is subsequently abbreviated as "BSLK." In Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, tr. Charles Arand, et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), this sentence is translated: "That the church's ministry—the Word as it is proclaimed and heard—is not a means through which God the Holy Spirit teaches human beings..."

⁹ FC SD XI, 29 (BSLK 1072, 23–24). Kolb-Wengert has, "For the Word through which we are called is a ministry of the Spirit." The German follows Luther's translation of 2 Cor 3:8 and has, for *ministerium* (διακονία), "Amt."

the virtues resulting thence, and imparts to all believers all the benefits of Christ and eternal salvation.¹⁰

Walther quotes Hartmann only through the first part and omits everything that follows—a decision with consequences, for Hartmann goes on to identify the *ministerium* with the *officium pastorale* and the public preaching and administration of the sacraments.

In my reading, what Hartmann does here is simply distinguish between the abstract noun *ministerium*, which denotes an office, and the *minister*, the person to whom this office is entrusted. This is supported by the fact that the chapter from which this quote is taken is titled “*De Pastoralis officio in abstracto*,” and the following chapter is “*De Pastore*”—or, as it says on the heading on the pages “*de Pastoralis Munere concretive spectato*.”¹¹ The distinction made is therefore between the office and the bearer of the office, but, as can be seen from the continuation of the quote above in Hartmann, he does not envision that the *ministerium* is occupied by anybody but ministers. He discusses, for example, the vocation into the ministry, which is the vocation into the public office.¹² He discusses also the question about who is to be called into the ministry.¹³ There is no indication whatsoever that Hartmann sees the *ministerium* as mere functions that can be exercised by any Christians. This results in a rather puzzling situation: how can it be that Walther has so seriously misread Hartmann?¹⁴

AC V in the Commentaries Referred to by Walther in Kirche und Amt

Walther does concede at the end of his remark on AC V that the article also witnesses, though indirectly, to the divine institution of the pastoral office, and he refers to the commentaries of Mylius, Carpzov, Menzer,

¹⁰ J. Ludovicus Hartmann, *Pastorale Evangelicum* (Norimbergae: Sumptibus Wolfgangi Mauricii Endteri, 1722), 27 (emphasis added).

¹¹ Hartmann, *Pastorale Evangelicum*, 25.40–41. In the table of contents (no page numbering, it would be p. 33), the headings are “*De Pastoralis officio in abstracto considerato*” and “*De Past. concretive spectato*.”

¹² Hartmann, *Pastorale Evangelicum*, 33.

¹³ Hartmann, *Pastorale Evangelicum*, 36.

¹⁴ On Walther’s interpretation of Hartmann, see also Naomichi Masaki, “Augsburg Confession XIV: Does it Answer Current Questions on the Holy Ministry?” *CTQ* 70 (2006), 123–162, 137–140.

Franz and others.¹⁵ Does this reference shed light on the insertion of this comment? How do the authors of these commentaries understand AC V?

The first work mentioned is most likely Georg Mylius's commentary on the Augsburg Confession.¹⁶ The next commentary listed is by Johann Benedict Carpzov (1607–1657), a professor in Leipzig, who wrote the *Introduction to the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church*.¹⁷ Carpzov states that the *ministerium* is established by God and that it is an *ordo* and *status divinitus*. The organs of the ministry are word and sacrament. In the operation of the ministry, God is the principle cause, the ministry is the ministerial cause, word and sacraments are the organs, not ἔργα. Carpzov rejects Enthusiasts, Zwinglians, and Papists who believe that faith is given without the word and that one obtains merit *de congruo* through self-preparation. Carpzov explains the role of the ministry further in a note:

Out of the opinion of the Augsburg Confession therefore, the ministry concurs not only in the production of faith distantly, and in no other way than because it administers and distributes the means, namely, word and sacraments, but also most closely effects faith and concurs

¹⁵ Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche*, 195. None of the authors are mentioned in Walther's series of articles in *Lehre und Wehre*, "Lutherisch-theologische Pfarrers-Bibliothek."

¹⁶ Mylius, Georg (Theologe, 1548–1607) . AVGVSTANAE || Confessionis || QVAE ECCLE-||SIARVM EVANGELICA-||RVM NOVISSIMI TEMPORIS || AVGVSTISSIMVM SYMBOLVM,|| & doctrinae Lutheranae lapis || verè Lydius est;|| Explicatio: || PVBLICE TRADITA IN || Academia Ienensi || A || GEORGIO MYLIO || Augustano S. Theologiae Doctore || et Professore Primario: || (pars altera. ||) Ausgabebezeichnung: IENAE || TYPIS TOBIAE STEINMANNI;|| Sumtibus Salomonis Gruneri,Bibliop.|| Ienens.Anno M.D.XCVI.|| Impressum: Jena : Gruner, Salomon : Steinmann, Tobias, 1596 (VD16 M 5249), 2 parts in one volume. Unfortunately, I was not able to consult this book, since the only copies in the United States are at Harvard and Duke, and another edition of it is in the process of being digitized. It is strange, though, that in the libraries of the educational institutions of the LCMS, there are no copies, according to OCLC and the online catalogue of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Did Walther have a copy that was later lost? Or might it still be in a private library? Reinhold Pieper (President of Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield) in his *Wegweiser durch die Theologischen Disciplinen und deren Litteratur für Theologische Studenten und Pastoren bei Anschaffung einer Bibliothek*, (Milwaukee, WI: Druck der Germania Publishing Co., 1900), 42, mentions this book by Mylius.

¹⁶ Johann Benedict Carpzov, *Isagoge in libros ecclesiarum Lutheranarum symbolicos*, Editio 2. auctor & corrector (Lipsiae : Typis & impensis Viduae & Haeredum Joh. Wittigau, 1675). The first edition was published 1665.

¹⁷ Johann Benedict Carpzov, *Isagoge in libros ecclesiarum Lutheranarum symbolicos*, Editio 2. auctor & corrector (Lipsiae : Typis & impensis Viduae & Haeredum Joh. Wittigau, 1675). The first edition was published in 1665.

through the preaching of the word and the administration of the sacraments to accomplish the one result, namely, so to speak the ministerial cause. This is clear partly from the titles by which the ministry of the word is marked when it is called God's co-worker, 1 Cor 3:9; saviours Ob [21], 1 Cor 9:22; 1 Tim 4:16; spiritual parents 1 Cor 4:16; Gal 4:19; partly from the assignment of the spiritual effects, which are salvation, Rom 11:14; conversion, Acts, 14:28; enlightenment, Eph 3:9.¹⁸

Here we have a view that the ministry is not simply distant from its means but that there must be truth in the language of scripture that attributes agency in the coming of faith to the human minister. On the other hand, Carpzov does not want to make the human minister a cause of faith, so that the coming to faith would be the result of a human-divine venture. Therefore, he stresses that, even though 1 Cor 3:9 rightly attributes to the ministry the production of faith, nevertheless, this only happens insofar as they are ministers and handle the instruments, namely word and sacraments, which are appointed to this office. Thus, they produce faith only insofar as they exercise their ministry, which they occupy according to God's will, and handle and distribute word and sacrament, irrespective their own spiritual state.¹⁹ Carpzov thus clearly does not equate ministry with word and sacrament. Rather, word and sacrament create faith and the ministry exists to administer word and sacrament; only insofar as it does this does it become a ministerial cause of faith and salvation. To put in more personal terms: the pastor is God's coworker and a father in the faith when he does what he is appointed to do and because of the means he administers. Outside and beyond that, he has no claim to be God's coworker in the sense of 1 Cor 3:9.

Balthasar Mentzer (1565–1627), professor in Marburg and Giessen, published his *Interpretation of the Augburg Confession* in 1613.²⁰ Mentzer connects AC V and the Schwabach Articles, which he ascribes to Luther.²¹ The principal cause of faith is the Holy Spirit, the instrumental cause are word and sacrament. The ministry of the gospel is instituted by Christ, therefore the apostle and all faithful teachers are called servants of Christ. It is the ministry of the Spirit, not only because the Spirit has instituted it

¹⁸ Carpzov, *Isagoge*, 248.

¹⁹ Carpzov, *Isagoge*, 250.

²⁰ Balthasar Mentzer, *Exegesis Augustanae Confessionis : Cuius Articuli XXI. breviter & succincte explicantur, & subiecta antithesei tōn heterodoxōn* (Giessae Hassorum: Hampelius, 1613).

²¹ Luther did, though, reject that he was the only author, cf. WA 30 III, 194–197.

with the Father and the Son, but especially because the Spirit works through it. The power (*virtus*) and efficaciousness of the ministry is therefore God the Holy Spirit alone, not some created quality within it. Mentzer can also call the *ministerium* an instrumental cause, but he does not call the minister an instrumental cause. He stresses over and over that God himself is working in word and sacrament and that therefore human agency is not a cause of salvation.²² Nevertheless, there is no indication that he assumes that every Christian has the *ministerium*.

Wolfgang Franz (1564–1628), professor in Wittenberg, published a collection of Disputations on the Augsburg Confession.²³ There is no trace of the distinction between *ministerium in abstracto* and *concreto* in them. Rather, in the section dedicated to AC V, Franz discusses the succession of ministers, from the patriarchs to the Levites to the apostles, who then chose some of the gentiles as doctors.²⁴ It is quite obvious that Franz thinks that the *ministerium* pertains only to those who have been specially appointed to this office, not to every believer.

It seems, therefore, that the commentaries Walther cites do indeed support his claim that they teach that the pastoral office is included in AC V. But they do not give any support to the understanding that the ministry goes beyond the pastoral office—admittedly, not a claim that Walther made. There is, nevertheless, a theological affinity in the strong emphasis on the sole operation of God in the production of faith through the means of grace and thus a subordination of the ministry to the means of grace. None of the three authors investigated simply coordinates ministry, word, and sacrament.

Why the Addition?

Thus, the historical question: why did Walther add that annotation? What happened between 1852 and 1862 that caused him to make this addition?

²² Mentzer, *Exegesis*, 160–161. It is quite interesting that, in a context where Mentzer could speak of ministers as means of God's operation, he does not.

²³ Wolfgang Franz, *Augustanae Confessionis Articuli Fidei XXI, Et Articuli Abusuum VII. Disputationibus XXXIII in tres Adversus Pontificios, Calvinianos, ac Antitrinitarios hodiernos, breviter explicati & ex Verbo Divino confirmati* (Wittebergae : Gormanus, 1619). The book is digitized, cf. http://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/dms/werkansicht/?PPN=604023545&PHYSID=PHYS_0005 (accessed May 23, 2012). The section on AC V is P3r til S2v.

²⁴ Franz, *Augustanae Confessionis*, Q1r.

In 1852 and 1853, “supplements” (*Beilagen*) were published in *Der Lutheraner* in addition to the regular issues. Here, among other pieces, an article by Pastor Ottomar Fürbringer (Freistatt and Kirchhain, Wisconsin) was printed on the debate between Missouri and the “Grabauians.”²⁵ In it, Fürbringer appeals to Christian Löber for his distinction between *ministerium in abstracto* and *concreto*.²⁶ He sees in this distinction a potential to solve the differences between Grabau and Missouri. “The office *in abstracto*, i.e. insofar as one abstracts it from the administration by a person apt for it, is given to the church; but she has God’s command to establish it *in concreto*.”²⁷

Fürbringer then references AC V in passing.²⁸ The apostles were the firstfruits not only of the church, but also of the office; through the mediated call “it [the office] comes forward similarly through the operation of the Spirit of Christ as the innermost circle from the womb of the entire congregation, which is the continuation of the operation of the master who is invisibly being present with her.”²⁹ With the means of grace the office is instituted, and it is present wherever they are administered and used. This sounds like a purely functionalist understanding, but then Fürbringer states that God wants this office to concentrate itself in a presbyterate worthy of that honor. The church that was the subject in the calling of a man to office is now the object of the office’s operation. Pastors

²⁵ O. Fürbringer, “Geschichtlich-theologischer Beitrag zu vollständigerer Beurtheilung der Streitigkeiten zwischen den Grabauianern und den sogenannten Missouriern,” *Beilage zu No. 10. Jahrg. 9. des Lutheraners*, 9–11; *Beilage zu No. 12. Jahrg. 9 des Lutheraners*, 17–20; *Beilage zu No. 13. Jahrg. 9. des Lutheraners*, 21. On Fürbringer, see W. G. Polack, “Ottomar Fuerbringer,” *Concordia Theological Monthly* V (1934), 211–217, and Ludwig Ernest Fuerbringer, *80 Eventful Years* (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House 1944), 5–16.

²⁶ Fürbringer, “Geschichtlich-theologischer Beitrag,” 20. The reference is to Christian Löber, *Die Lehre der Wahrheit zur Gottseligkeit . . . mit gnugsamen Schrift-Gründen erweist verfasst* (Altenburg: Bey Joh. Ludwig Richtern, 1711), 973. Walther wrote the preface to a new edition: Christian Löber, *Evangelisch-Lutherische Dogmatik*, 2nd ed. (St. Louis, MO; Leipzig: Verlag von F. Dette, 1893 [1st edition, 1872]).

²⁷ Fürbringer, “Geschichtlich-theologischer Beitrag,” 20. “Das Amt in abstracto, d.h. insofern von seiner Verwaltung durch eine hierzu tüchtige Person abstrahiert wird, ist der Kirche gegeben; Sie hat aber Gottes Gebot, es in concreto aufzurichten . . .”

²⁸ He also mentions that the Pommeranian and Saxon Catechism agree with this distinction.

²⁹ Fürbringer, “Geschichtlich-theologischer Beitrag,” 20.

can only be transferred or removed if God's Word orders and commands it.³⁰

Thus, the pastor is not the creature of the congregation, as Grabau feared would be the consequence of the Missourian doctrine on the ministry. Fürbringer's point seems to be to emphasize that the ministry does not exist only in the person of the minister and, therefore, can only be transferred by a minister, but rather that the ministry is in the church and, therefore, the church calls ministers. What Fürbringer does not say here is that every Christian has the ministry.

In 1855, the first volume of the new theological journal of the Missouri Synod, *Lehre und Wehre* (Doctrine and Defence), opened with an article by Fürbringer, "On the Doctrine of the Holy Preaching Office,"³¹ in which he engaged a recently published book on the ministry by Johann Friedrich Wucherer.³² Fürbringer states: "As the Gospel is given to all who believe, even so the office, which cannot be separated from the former, for through it comes preaching, as it brings with it the necessity, that it, received through *akoe*, spreads itself into wider circles, Rom 10:17. 15; Lk 2:10.17."³³ In a footnote to this sentence, *Predigtamt* is explained as synonymous with gospel and the sacraments, because otherwise it should read "*Evangelium und Sakrament gegeben und das Predigtamt*." Additionally, Fürbringer quotes the Formula of Concord for this understanding, "For the Word, by which we are called, is an office of the Spirit" (FC XI, 28).³⁴ Fürbringer repeats: the office of the gospel is "a common good," which, according to divine order, is to be exercised in the community by those whom God has given gifts

³⁰ Fürbringer, "Geschichtlich-theologischer Beitrag," 20. This remark by Fürbringer might be interesting: "Nothing is more removed from the true church than to suggest unlimited arbitrariness and independence of the individual congregations in church polity, ordination, liturgy, discipline, and similar forms for the freedom which the gospel teaches, as long as through them grace and salvation are not simultaneously supposed to be obtained." The early Missouri Synod was neither fiercely independent-minded nor anarchic.

³¹ Fürbringer, "Zur Lehre vom heiligen Predigtamt," *Lehre und Wehre* 1 (1855), 1-13, 33-57.

³² Johann Friedrich Wucherer, *Ausführlicher Nachweis aus Schrift und Symbolen, daß das evangelisch-lutherische Pfarramt das apostolische Hirten- und Lehramt, und darum göttliche Stiftung sei* (Nördlingen: C.H. Beck, 1853).

³³ Fürbringer, "vom heiligen Predigtamt," 5.

³⁴ "Denn das Wort, dadurch wir berufen werden, ist ein Amt des Geistes," BSLK 1072,22-23. This is the same passage that Walther will quote in the second edition of *Kirche und Amt*.

and called through the congregation.³⁵ There is no detailed discussion of AC V, since Wucherer does not build his argumentation on this article.

We see in these two articles by Fürbringer a foreshadowing of Walther's annotation in *Kirche und Amt*. Does that mean that Walther got the distinction between *ministerium in abstracto* and *in concreto* from Fürbringer, or is Fürbringer here the mouthpiece of Walther?³⁶

In 1856, there was a free conference in Columbus, Ohio, that examined the articles of the Augsburg Confession.³⁷ Already at AC V, though, there were differences in understanding. The question was the relationship between AC V and AC XIV. One side (it is not identified who said what) identified the ministry in AC V with the pastoral office in AC XIV; the other side claimed that AC V only speaks about the administration (*Verwaltung*) of word and sacrament, but not who is to do it, not about the administrator (*Verwalter*). The pastoral office is included, insofar as it administers, but it does not exhaust AC V.³⁸ When no agreement could be

³⁵ Fürbringer, "vom heiligen Predigtamt," 11. Fürbringer strongly opposes, with Wucherer, Höfling's thesis that the office of *presbyteros* or *episkopos* is not divinely instituted and that the office in the Lutheran church is a different office than the apostolate or the presbyterate in the New Testament. See Fürbringer, "vom heiligen Predigtamt," 37–43.

³⁶ Walther and Fürbringer were part of the original Saxon emigration party of 1839. In 1842, Fürbringer had married the widow of Otto Hermann Walther, C.F.W. Walther's brother. Thus, there were rather close bonds. Perhaps Walther's correspondence gives some information about the intellectual conversation between the two.

³⁷ "Auszug aus den Verhandlungen der freien, evang.-lutherischen Konferenz, versammelt zu Columbus, Ohio, vom 1. bis 7. Oktober 1856," *Der Lutheraner* 13 (1856–57), 49–54. The president was Wm. F. Lehmann, professor at Capital University; cf. J. C. Jenson, *American Lutheran Biographies* (Milwaukee, WI: Press of A. Houtkamp & Son, 1890), 459–462. The secretaries were H. C. Schwan and M. Loy. Walther was present at the conference, as were W. Sihler and O. Fürbringer.

³⁸ "Es folgte die Verlesung des *fünften Artikels*. Hier wurde von einer Seite behaupten, das Wort 'Predigtamt' in diesem Artikel sei völlig gleichbedeutend mit dem Presbyteriat oder Pfarramt, wovon der 14. Art. handelt. Dagegen wurde von anderer Seite geltend gemacht, 1. Der Gegenstand dieses 5. Art. sei, die Mittel anzugeben, durch welche wir den rechtfertigenden Glauben, von welchem im vorigen Artikel die Rede war, erlangen sollen. Das erhelle unzweifelhaft aus dem Titel und der Antithesis (dem verworfenen Gegensatz.) 2. Diese Mittel seien, wie der lateinische Text noch deutlicher zeige, *einzig und allein* das Wort Gottes und die heil. Sacramente. Die ihre Kraft in ihnen selber haben, nicht in den Personen, welche dieselben verwalten. 3. Weil diese Mittel eine Verwaltung erfordern, so habe Gott Fürsorge getroffen und befohlen, daß sie verwaltet und ausgeteilt werden. 4. Der 14. Artikel gebe an, wie Gott wolle, daß diese Mittel öffentlich verwaltet werden; der gegenwärtige 5. Artikel aber enthalte nur die göttliche Anordnung, daß sie überhaupt verwaltet werden sollen. 5. Natürlich schließe der 5. Artikel das Pfarramt mit ein, als die *ordentliche* Weise, ihrer öffentlichen

reached on this point, the participants agreed to postpone further discussion until they took up AC XIV.³⁹ Lack of time ultimately prevented this from happening.

Three years later, at the free conference in Fort Wayne, the topic was taken up again. This time, there was agreement that AC V does talk about the ministry *in abstracto*, not *in concreto*. Here we find both the terminology and a similar line of argumentation that was used by Walther in the second edition of *Kirche und Amt*. The seventh of the Schwabach Articles is quoted as a source, so that *Predigtamt* is to be understood as synonymous with bodily word. The distinction between administration, talked about in AC V, and administrator, talked about in AC XIV, is repeated from the conference three years before in Columbus. The conclusion of the participants stated:

The conference recognizes from a comparison of the super-scription of the 14th article, in the German as well as in the Latin, with the fifth article, that article five deals concerning the administration of the means of grace in general (though certainly with the institution of the Gospel as oral word at the same time the preaching office in the narrow sense is included); but that in the 14th article speaks of the preaching office in the narrow sense, or the *pastoral office*.⁴⁰

Here we have the same interpretation as in the second edition of *Kirche und Amt*, and it was not even proposed by Walther, since he was not present at the conference! It is, of course, a good guess that Walther had already proposed his understanding of AC V at the conference in 1856. At the later conference, it was probably Sihler and Craemer who proposed this understanding.

Verwaltung nach Artikel 14; ja das Pfarramt sei der Centralpunkt dieser Verwaltung. Doch befasse sich der 5. Art. nicht damit, irgend welche besondere Verwalter zu bezeichnen, sondern rede eigentlich nur von der Verwaltung.“ “Auszug, 1-7 Oktober 1856,” 50-51.

³⁹ The conference did agree that the article speaks about “church ministry or the administration of the means of grace. “Auszug, 1-7 Oktober 1856,” 51.

⁴⁰ “Auszug aus den Verhandlungen der freien, evang.-lutherischen Conferenz in Fort Wayne, Ind., vom 14. bis 20. Juli 1859,” *Der Lutheraner* 16 (1859-60), 10-12, 19-20, 27-30, 35-37. The conference was presided over by J.A. Ottesen and Wilhelm Sihler. Walther was not present, nor were Wm. F. Lehmann or M. Loy from the Ohio-Synod. The only professors present were A. Crämer and W. Sihler from the Fort Wayne Seminary.

In 1857, an article that was sent to *Lehre und Wehre* titled "From a Letter of a preacher of the Missouri-Synod to a brother in the ministry in the Prussian-Lutheran Church" in which the author gave an interpretation of *Predigtamt* as actions, referring to the German text of Apol. VII/VIII, 22.

We can see, therefore, in *Der Lutheraner* and *Lehre und Wehre*, that the position that Walther takes in 1865 dates back at least to Fürbringer in early 1853, which puts it quite close to the date of the first edition of *Kirche und Amt*. By 1856, it had become the position of the Missourians.

AC V in Walther's Essay at the Northern District 1873

At the 19th convention of the Northern District, Walther gave the doctrinal essay on conversion. In it he makes a passing remark on the meaning of AC V in his discussion of the word of God as the means by which man is converted. Thesis II reads, "The means by which man is converted is the Word of God, heard or read." Point two reads: "Ordinarily through called preachers, extraordinarily also through laypeople who are not called."⁴¹ Walther refers then to experience, which has shown that not only pastors but also laypeople can be instruments through which people are converted, and rejects the claim that AC V teaches that a person can only be completely converted through a pastor. Rather, AC V refers not simply to the pastoral office: "The ministry is the institution of God that a man should be converted by the Word of God. Of this ministry *in abstracto* (cf. Torgau Article No. 7), Art. V of the Augsburg Confession treats; however, it is Art. XIV of the Augsburg Confession that treats of the office of the ministry [*Pfarramt*, R.Z.] or of church government." Walther's interest here is to maintain that it is God's word that converts and that it does not derive its power from the ministry or is less effective when spoken by a lay person. At this time, the distinction between *in concreto* and *in abstracto* seems to be so common that the allusion suffices.⁴²

⁴¹ C.F.W. Walther, *Essays for the Church*, vol. 1, 1857-1879 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 248.

⁴² Cf. the remark in the second convention of the Synodical Conference in 1873: "The word 'preaching office' is understood here in the narrow sense and therefore synonymous with 'pastoral office.'" "Verhandlungen der zweiten Versammlung der Evang.-Luth. Synodal-Conferenz von Nord-Amerika, zu Fort Wayne, Ind., vom 16 bis zum 22. Juli 1873" (Columbus, OH: Druck von John J. Gaßmann, 1873), 24. "Verhandlungen der zweiten Versammlung der Evang.-Luth. Synodal-Conferenz von Nord-Amerika, zu Fort Wayne, Ind., vom 16 bis zum 22. Juli 1873" (Columbus, Ohio: Druck von John J. Gaßmann, 1873), 24. "Verhandlungen der zweiten Versammlung der Evang.-Luth. Synodal-Conferenz von Nord-Amerika, zu Fort Wayne, Ind., vom 16 bis zum 22. Juli 1873" (Columbus, Ohio: Druck von John J. Gaßmann, 1873), 24. "Das Wort

II. Walther's Interpretation in the Context of Commentaries on the Confessions in the 19th Century

Gustav Plitt

The lively discussion on the meaning of *Predigtamt* finds no consideration in the scholarly commentary on the Augsburg Confession of the 19th century by Gustav Plitt (1836–1880), professor in Erlangen. In a footnote at the beginning of his comment on AC V, he remarks that the lack of the heading (On the Preaching Office) in the manuscripts and oldest printings must be considered in understanding this article, and then dedicates the rest of the article to the history of the understanding of word and sacrament as means of grace in the time of the Reformation.⁴³ Admittedly, Plitt's aim was not to write a "dogmatic commentary," but his choice of material seems to indicate that he understands *ministerium* as primarily (or perhaps exclusively?) functional.⁴⁴

A.F.C. Vilmar

A.F.C. Vilmar (1800–1868), professor in Marburg, lectured five times on the Augsburg Confession. Posthumously, these lectures were edited by his student K.W. Piderit.⁴⁵ Vilmar distinguishes the *ministerium ecclesiasticum* (a term not used in AC V) from the priesthood of all believers; the source of the *ministerium ecclesiasticum* is not the congregation. Faith and salvation is therefore bound up with the *ministerium ecclesiasticum*, and a congregation cannot lack the specific preaching office without losing its faith.⁴⁶ Presence and operation of the Holy Spirit is mediately bound to the *ministerium ecclesiasticum*.⁴⁷ Vilmar does not argue for his position or

'Predigtamt' ist hier im engeren Sinne genommen und also gleichbedeutend mit 'Pfarramt'." The overall topic was church fellowship; no author is given.

⁴³ Gustav Plitt, *Einleitung in die Augustana. Entstehungsgeschichte des Evangelischen Lehrbegriffes bis zum Augsburger Bekenntnis* (Erlangen: Verlag von Andreas Deichert, 1868), 160–184.

⁴⁴ Plitt seems nevertheless to see some kind of relationship between the pastoral office and AC V. Plitt, *Einleitung in die Augustana*, 380

⁴⁵ A.F.C. Vilmar, *Die Augsburgische Confession* (Gütersloh: Druck und Verlag von C. Bertelsmann, 1870). His treatment of AC V is found on pp. 72–78.

⁴⁶ Vilmar, *Die Augsburgische Confession*, 75. It is interesting that the phrase "besondern Predigtamt" ("special preaching office") appears here. Is this simply pleonastic or is there also a "general preaching office," at least in the discussion in the lecture?

⁴⁷ Vilmar, *Die Augsburgische Confession*, 75, "Ebenso ist das Vorhandensein und die Wirksamkeit des h. Geistes mittelbar an das *ministerium ecclesiasticum* gebunden." Vilmar quotes Luther for his view, Jena edition 7,120 (= WA 45:617,13–35; AE 24,171).

engage any differing interpretations. This omission might be due to the state of the class notes available. In Vilmar we find, so to speak, the contrary position to Walther's exegesis, in which *Predigtamt* and *Pfarramt* are straightforwardly identified; also the operation of the Holy Spirit is bound to the pastoral office.

Otto Zöckler

Otto Zöckler (1833–1906), professor in Giessen and Greifswald, has a quite different take on AC V than his teacher Vilmar. In his book, *The Augsburg Confession as Confessional Doctrinal Platform of the German Reformation Church*, he sees on the one hand that AC V does not simply talk about the office in the same way that AC XIV does.⁴⁸ The heading of his chapter on this article reads: "The Preached Word (or Grace Calling through the Word) as Foundation of Justification."⁴⁹ He explains the heading of AC V "on the preaching office/ecclesiastical ministry" as an expression of the "conservative attitude of the confession, intended on greatest consideration of the hierarchical views and interest of Catholicism."⁵⁰

Zöckler interprets the ordering of the articles as a sequence that goes from justification (AC IV) back to the means of justification, then to the apex and crown of the individual application of salvation, sanctification or the new obedience. This outline is, nevertheless, muddled by the fact that Melancthon mentions not only the word which creates faith, but also the sacraments—which can "only in a very indirect way be figured among the aspects that prepare and mediate justification"⁵¹—and the office or ministry. The reason, again, is the irenical or "if one may say so, romanizing attitude of the article."⁵² Additionally, there is an apologetic interest. In order to reject the charge that Lutherans are associated with enthusiastic anabaptists, the article is formulated as it is so that instead of grace

Reading the quote in context does not show that Vilmar is here in agreement with Luther.

⁴⁸ O. Zöckler, *Die Augsburgische Confession als symbolische Lehrgrundlage der deutschen Reformationskirche historisch und exegetisch untersucht* (Frankfurt a. M.: Heyder & Zimmer, 1870).

⁴⁹ Zöckler, *Die Augsburgische Confession*, 186: "Das gepredigte Wort (oder die durch das Wort berufene Gnade) als Grund der Rechtfertigung."

⁵⁰ Zöckler, *Die Augsburgische Confession*, 188

⁵¹ Zöckler, *Die Augsburgische Confession*, 189.

⁵² Zöckler, *Die Augsburgische Confession*, 189: "Der Grund für beide Anomalien des Ausdrucks liegt, wie oben angegeben, in der irenischen, oder wenn man so sagen darf, katholisierenden Haltung des Artikels . . ."

operating through the gospel, the office is, rather, the subject of the article.⁵³

Zöckler's interpretation is quite interesting because he takes up some of the difficulties of the simple equation of *ministerium* and pastoral office. His solution, though, that the terms *Predigtamt* and *ministerium* are simply accommodations to the Roman Catholic dialogue partner is quite unconvincing and has found no followers.

Matthias Loy

Matthias Loy (1828–1915), professor at Capital University, was present at the free conference in Columbus, Ohio, in 1856, where the dissent on AC V broke out. In his massive commentary on the Augsburg Confession, he emphasizes that AC V speaks of functions about the ministration of word and sacraments, not primarily about the minister.⁵⁴ Even though it would not be “necessarily” a false doctrine to identify AC V with the pastoral office, Loy, as did Walther, wants to avoid the impression that the operation of the Spirit giving faith is limited to the “special ministerial order in the Church.”⁵⁵

The point which we desire to impress upon the reader is that our Confession speaks of the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments as the means by which God works and maintains the faith through which sinners are justified, not of the order in the Church by which this ministration is committed for public use to special ministry publicly called for the purpose. The validity of Word and Sacrament is not dependent on the ministers, but on the divine institution, and they effect that where-

⁵³ Zöckler, *Die Augsburgische Confession*, 189. This is not a convincing argument. The Lutherans could have simply stated that faith comes by word and sacrament, as the Schwabach Articles did, and been done with it. If *Predigtamt* refers to the office, as Zöckler assumes, then it is used deliberately and not only as an accommodation. Zöckler, in a footnote to the quote above, also points to the fact that the heading of the article only comes later. While this is certainly true, it does not explain the use of *Predigtamt/ministerium* as the subject of the article. If one wants to go Zöckler's route, one has to understand *Predigtamt* as the action of preaching, as Walther and others did.

⁵⁴ “For the clear understanding of our article it seems necessary to point out that its purpose is not to elucidate the law of order in the Church which limits the public ministration of the means of grace to the pastoral office, or to those who are called by the Church to the performance of such public functions. M. Loy, *The Augsburg Confession: An Introduction to Its Study and an Exposition of Its Content* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1908), 503.

⁵⁵ Loy, *The Augsburg Confession*, 503

unto God has instituted them, independently of the fidelity or infidelity of the persons administering them. That this is the meaning of our article is rendered incontrovertible by the antithesis stated. . . .⁵⁶

Though Loy does not use the same terminology as Walther, he nevertheless has the same understanding of AC V.

III. Walther's Interpretation as Standard View in the LCMS and Synodical Conference

The identification of preaching office and means of grace in AC V became widely accepted in the synodical conference. Franz Pieper wrote in his popular book on the occasion of the 350th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession: "Our article tells us *how a person obtains faith*, namely, through the preaching office, that is, through the means of grace, ordered by God, the gospel and the sacraments."⁵⁷

Without a reference to AC V, we find the same view in Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics*:

The term 'preaching office' is used both in Scripture and in ecclesiastical usage in a general and in a special or narrow sense. In the general sense, it means any mode of proclamation of the gospel or application of the means of grace, without distinction if this is done by all Christians, to whom the gospel or the means of grace are given and commanded originally and immediately, or by the chosen public servants (*ministry ecclesiae*), commissioned by the Christians.⁵⁸

The same view is also found in the Wisconsin Synod. Hoenecke writes: "One can speak of the preaching office in the abstract way, i.e., understand it as the means of grace. Scripture itself does it, e.g., 2 Cor 3:4-8, where the

⁵⁶ Loy, *The Augsburg Confession*, 504.

⁵⁷ "Wie ein Mensch den Glaubenerlange, sagt unser Artikel, nämlich: durch das Predigtamt, das heißt durch die von Gott geordneten Gnadenmittel, das Evangelium und die Sacramente." Franz Pieper, *Das Grundbekenntniß der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, 2nd Part (St. Louis: Druckerei des "Luth. Concordia-Verlags," 1880), 16 (emphasis in original).

⁵⁸ Franz Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatik*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1920), 3:501-502, my translation. Cf. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 3 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950-1953), 3:439. The allusion here is to Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, 24.

apostle Paul calls the law the office of the letter, the gospel the office of the Spirit. The Augsburg Confession talks also in this abstract way about the preaching office, which teaches in article V. . . .”⁵⁹

If we continue forward in time, similar views were expressed by James H. Pragman, then professor at Concordia College Seward in 1983, and John F. Brug, Professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.⁶⁰ Historically, there have been, of course, differences on the doctrine of the ministry between Missouri and Wisconsin, but they have not been on the interpretation of AC V. A more critical view of the traditional interpretation has, though, emerged in the Missouri Synod.⁶¹

⁵⁹ This is my translation of: “Man kann vom *Predigtamt* abstractive reden, d.h. darunter die *Gnadenmittel* verstehen. Die Schrift selbst tut es, z.B. 2. Kor. 3,4–8, wo der Apostel Paulus das Gesetz als das Amt des Buchstabens, das Evangelium aber als das Amt des Geistes bezeichnet. So abstracte redet vom *Predigtamt* auch die *Augustana*, die Art. V so lehrt ...” Adolf Hoenecke, *Ev.-Luth. Dogmatik* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Northwestern Publishing House, 1909), 4:175. See also Adolf Hoenecke, *Evangelical Lutheran Dogmatics*, vol. 4, trans. Joel Fredrich, Paul Prange, and Paul Tackmier (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1999) 187.

⁶⁰ James H. Pragman, *Traditions of Ministry: A History of the Doctrine of the Ministry in Lutheran Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1983), 42–43. “This ministry [in AC V] is further identified as the teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. Through these, as through means, the saving faith is engendered among the people of God. Thus, the ministry is a divine institution and has a functional character; the activity of the ministry is preaching, teaching, and administering These first references to the doctrine of the ministry in the Augsburg Confession do not include any mention of the pastor, the one who is to do the preaching, the teaching, and the administering. But in Article XIV, Melancthon very succinctly noted that ‘... nobody should publicly teach or preach or administer the sacraments in the church without a regular call.’ The call to the public exercise of the office of the ministry is an absolute necessity. The need for order in the establishment and exercise of the ministry is assumed and understood throughout the Augsburg Confession.” John F. Brug, *The Ministry of the Word* (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2009), 350: “We have presented the evidence that *Predigtamt* is not used in the sense of *Pfarramt* in AC V. Rather, AC V teaches us that God chooses to give faith through the Holy Spirit, who works through the gospel and the sacraments. Therefore, the gospel and the sacraments must be diligently used and administered. AC V does not specify through whom this is done. No, it leaves open the question of who should administer the sacrament and proclaim the gospel. That this is to be done publicly only by those rightly called (that is, as representatives of the church) is first made explicit in AC XIV.”

⁶¹For example, David P. Scaer, “Augustana V and the Doctrine of the Ministry” *Lutheran Quarterly* 6 (1992), 403–42; Kurt Marquart, *The Gospel Ministry: Distinctions Within & Without* (Fort Wayne, IN: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 2000); Mark

IV. The Discussion on CA V in the 20th Century

Wilhelm Maurer proposed an interpretation of AC V similar to that of Walther. In 1957, he published *The Law Concerning the Pastor and Confession: On the Confessional Basis of a Law Concerning Pastors in the Evangelical-Lutheran Church*.⁶² In it, he distinguishes between the pastoral office and the general “ministerial office.” He explicitly denies the identification of the two.⁶³ He argues for this interpretation first from the usage of *ministerium* in the confessions. Melanchthon uses *ministerium* in the Treatise in a way that is not restricted to a certain person entrusted with an office. The *ministerium professionis* in Tract. 25–26 is not limited to office bearers. The connection between *ministerium* and *sacerdotium* in Tract. 69 leads to the conclusion: “The *ministerium* is a special form of the *sacerdotium*. It can exist in a specific, legally ordered form only because and insofar as it is owned in the whole of Christianity by every Christian as a gift and a responsibility at the same time.”⁶⁴ Because there is this universal connotation of the term “*ministerium*,” Melanchthon was able to identify the *sacerdotium* with the *ministerium verbi et sacramentorum aliis porrigendorum* in Apol. XIII, 7–13.⁶⁵ *Ministerium* is, therefore, “materially identical with the operating power of the Holy Spirit, who has created instruments for himself from the days of the apostles, to witness to itself in

P. Surburg, “‘That is’? A Look at the Translation and Interpretation of AC V”, <http://www.logia.org/features/Surburg-That-Is-ACV.pdf> (accessed May, 25 2012).

⁶² Wilhelm Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis. Über die bekennnismäßige Grundlage eines Pfarrerrechtes in der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1957). This book grew out of an opinion Maurer wrote for the Vereinigte Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche Deutschlands. Concerning the term “law,” it might not be superfluous to remark that churches in Germany that are corporations of public law (i.e., not just private associations, or, as in the United States, corporations) have the authority to pass laws for their internal governance laws. These are the equivalent of a constitution and by-laws in denominations in the United States. “Pfarrerrecht” are all the regulations concerning the service of a pastor, summed up in one corpus of law.

⁶³ Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis*, 67–68: “Was ist es um das ‘*ministerium docendi evangelii et porrigendi sacramenta*’ in CA V? Keineswegs ist es schlechthin gleichzusetzen mit dem rechtlich geordneten u. d. h. begründeten, lehrgesetzlich normierten und mit rechtlicher Autorität ausgestatteten Pfarramt. Eine solche Annahme ist zwar sehr verbreitet, aber dennoch kurzschlüssig und mit Recht zu verwerfen.”

⁶⁴ “Das *ministerium* ist eine Sonderform des *sacerdotium*. Es vermag in einer bestimmten, rechtlich geordneten Form nur zu existieren, weil und soweit es in der gesamten Christenheit jedem Christen—als geistliche Gabe und Aufgabe zugleich—zu eigen ist.” Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis*, 69 (emphasis in original).

⁶⁵ Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis*, 69.

the church in a salvific manner.”⁶⁶ Maurer sees here Melancthon taking up Luther’s thoughts that the priestly office of the believers includes teaching and administration of the sacraments.⁶⁷ Thus, according to Maurer, AC V simply states that there must be preaching and administration of the sacraments; while it does not state that there has to be a specific office, neither does it deny it.⁶⁸ Since, however, this operation includes also the ordered office, therefore one is justified in thinking of the pastoral office whenever “minister” is used.⁶⁹ Maurer does not believe that the gospel alone is instituted and that the pastoral office is only of human right. Rather, the pastoral office is by divine right.⁷⁰

In his magisterial commentary on the Augsburg Confession, Maurer reiterates his position.⁷¹ He begins with the thesis that Luther’s understanding of “to minister” leads to the correct understanding of *ministerium verbi*. Maurer develops Luther’s view that every servant of God is a minister of the word. Then he adds to this the service of prayer, which includes all Christians, and reaches this conclusion:

The preaching office does not exclude the general priesthood. Article 5 does not intend to establish the institutional means by which one comes to faith; that is based on the individual responsibility of every Christian. Even the emergency baptism administered by women provides the preaching authority for every Christian—man, woman, and child—who has the opportunity.⁷²

⁶⁶ Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis*, 69: “Es ist sachlich identisch mit der wirkenden Kraft des Heiligen Geistes, der von den Tagen der Apostel an sich Werkzeuge geschaffen hat, um sich in der Kirche heilsam zu bezeugen.”

⁶⁷ Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis*, 70, reference to WA 12:180,1–9.

⁶⁸ Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis*, 72.

⁶⁹ Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis*, 70

⁷⁰ Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis*, 119. Maurer does not agree with Höfling and explicitly rejects the thesis that the pastoral office is derived from the priesthood of all believers; Maurer, *Pfarrerrecht und Bekenntnis*, 73.

⁷¹ Maurer, *Historischer Kommentar zur Confession Augustana*. Band 2: Theologische Probleme (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1978), 139–145; English translation: Wilhelm Maurer, *Historical Commentary on the Augsburg Confession* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 354–360.

⁷² Maurer, *Historical Commentary*, 355–356. Cf. also Maurer, *Historical Commentary* 357: “The universal nature of the preaching office, which not only addresses all people but also is laid upon all groups and ranks of the congregation by virtue of the general priesthood, is based on the all-encompassing claim of God’s word.” Maurer, *Historical Commentary*, 191: “In CA 5 they [Melancthon and Brueck] reworked Schwab. 7 so that it was limited exclusively to the sphere of salvation without reference to the institutional office, which was along the lines of Bucer’s critique.”

Gunter Wenz, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften*

Gunter Wenz, professor of systematic theology in Munich, published his *Theology of the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*⁷³ in two volumes in 1996 and 1997. In the second volume, he provides a lengthy overview of the discussion on the meaning of AC V.⁷⁴ He is quite critical of Maurer's interpretation. On the other hand, neither does he agree with the interpretation of Dulles and Lindbeck who say that the word of God is only life-giving when it is proclaimed by the office standing opposite to the congregation.⁷⁵ Such an understanding, making the *ministerium verbi divini* an exclusive property of the ordained office, contradicts, says Wenz, the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.⁷⁶ Against Höfling, Wenz maintains that the pastoral office is divinely established. He interprets Ap. VII, 28 to mean that the office bearers are *vice et loco Christi*, not in the sense of an exclusive representation of Christ by the office bearer, but rather, as the comparison with AC XXVIII, 22–23 shows, as an assurance that the office bearer is in the stead of Christ when he does what is mandated. Those who are in the office but teach against the gospel are to be avoided and are not in the stead and command of Christ, so that the *vice et loco Christi* is not merely formally defined, but rather through a faithful communication of the gospel.⁷⁷ The relation of office and priesthood of all believers cannot be identified with the relationship of Christ and his church. "Therefore it cannot be simply wrong systematically to say that the *ministerium docendi evangelium et porrigendi sacramenta* is 'given to the entire church,' notwithstanding the mentioned historical reasons, which make it probable to understand the initial sentence of AC V in regard to the office treated in AC XIV."⁷⁸ That does not mean that every baptized Christian has

⁷³ Gunther Wenz, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche*, 2 vols. (New York: de Gruyter, 1996–1997).

⁷⁴ Wenz, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften*, 2:318–336.

⁷⁵ Avery Dulles, George A. Lindbeck, "Bishops and the Ministry of the Gospel" in *Confessing One Faith. A Joint Commentary on the Augsburg Confession by Lutheran and Catholic Theologians*, ed. by George Wolfgang Forell and James F. McCue, (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Publishing House, 1982), 148–172.

⁷⁶ Wenz, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften*, 326.

⁷⁷ Wenz, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften*, 331–332.

⁷⁸ Wenz, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften*, 334: "Von daher kann es trotz und unbeschadet der vorgetragenen historischen Gründe, die es nahelegen, den Eingangssatz von CA V von dem in CA XIV thematisierten Amt her zu verstehen, systematisch nicht einfachhin falsch sein zu sagen, das *ministerium docendi evangelium et porrigendi sacramenta* sei 'der Kirche als ganzer gegeben'." The quotation is from L. Goppelt, "Das kirchliche Amt nach den lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften und nach dem Neuen Testament" in *Zur Aufererbaung des Leibes Christ. Festschrift für Peter Brunner* ed. E. Schlink and A. Peters (Kassel: Johannes Stauda Verlag, 1965), 99.

the right of public teaching and proclamation, or that the office is derived from the priesthood of all believers.

For as much as commission and authority for proclamation of the word and administration of the sacraments are given to all Christians, as little may an individual make use of it publicly, because commissioning and authorization is given to all in common. The commonality of the priesthood of all demands the special office, whose specific commission is in the service of the common priesthood and its realization.⁷⁹

V. Concluding Thoughts

Our survey of the history of the interpretation of AC V has shown us that there is less than unanimity. Regarding Walther, if the distinction between *ministerium in abstracto* and *in concreto* is something more than the distinction between *ministerium* and *minister* (i.e., pastor), then neither Hartmann nor the interpreters of Lutheran orthodoxy are really Walther's precursors. Walther has a stronger argument with his analysis of *Predigtamt* and *ministerium*—which in the 16th century certainly can mean preaching, as the Schwabach Articles show—and also the German translation of the Apology.⁸⁰ There is therefore a certain linguistic ambiguity in the text, which is increased by the fact that the condemnation supports a functionalist understanding of the text. Walther, Zöckler, and Maurer—and, to some extent, Wenz—have a similar understanding of AC V. If one goes with the identification of *Predigtamt* and *ministerium*, one has to take into account that word and sacrament are not the property of the pastoral office. The gospel can be spoken by laypeople and the sacraments can

⁷⁹ Wenz, *Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften*, 335: "Denn sosehr Auftrag und Vollmacht zur Wortverkündigung und Sakramentsverwaltung allen Christen gegeben sind, sowenig darf ein einzelner ohne ordentliche Berufung von ihnen öffentlichen Gebrauch machen, eben weil Beauftragung und Bevollmächtigung allen gemeinsam gegeben sind. Die Allgemeinheit des Priestertums aller erfordert das besondere Amt, dessen spezifischer Auftrag gerade im Dienst des allgemeinen Priestertums und seiner Realisierung steht."

⁸⁰ Cf. Apol. VII,19. The Latin is: "Et addimus notas: puram doctrinam evangelii et sacramenta" (BSLK 238,22f), which is translated thus: "und sagen, dieselbige Kirche habe diese äußerlichen Zeichen: das Predigtamt oder Evangelium und die Sakramente." (i.e. the church has these external signs: the preaching office or gospel and sacraments) (BSLK 238,50-52). Cf. also the usage by Melanchthon: "zum andern irren sie sehr vom Predigtamt oder Wort und vom Brauch der Sakramente." Melanchthon, *Opera Omnia*, Corpus Reformatorum 1, 1099, quoted in Plitt, *Einleitung in die Augustana*, 184.

likewise be administered, in certain situations, by laypeople.⁸¹ Thus, in my opinion, if one identifies *Predigtamt* and *Pfarramt*, one has to maintain that of course word and sacrament come to us through the *Pfarramt*, but that there is also communication of the gospel outside of the *Pfarramt*. I think that Walther and others were incorrect when they thought that the identification of *Predigtamt* and *Pfarramt* has to lead to an exclusive mediation of salvation through the pastor. Their emphasis, however, that the office is not coordinated, but subordinated, to word and sacrament—that the pastor is not a means of grace but merely the administrator of the means of grace, and that the gospel comes to men not only through the pastor—seems to me dogmatically correct and also in harmony with the history of interpretation of the AC V in Lutheran orthodoxy.

⁸¹ Cf. Treat. 67 on emergency absolution and baptism. Luther goes further in his *Brief Exhortation to Confession*, 13–14 (BSLK 728, 27–44, not a part of the Book of Concord of 1580): “Besides such a public, daily and necessary confession there is this secret confession, that takes place before a single brother. This serves us when there is a special concern or affliction that eats at us so that we cannot be at peace, nor be strong enough in the faith. Thus, we speak our trouble to a brother to receive counsel, comfort, and strength, when and as often as we want to . . . Christ himself has put the absolution in the mouth of his Christendom and has commanded us to absolve each other of our sin.” See also SA III, IV, where one form of the gospel is *per mutuū colloquium et consolationem fratrum* (BSLK 449,13f).

Research Notes

The Gospel of Jesus' Wife: A Modern Forgery?

Two newspaper articles published on September 18, 2012, broke a story that prompted a lot of buzz in the media.¹ Karen L. King, the Hollis Professor of Divinity at Harvard Divinity School and a specialist in early Christianity and Gnosticism, shared evidence with both the general public and scholars about a small fragment of papyrus, dated to the 4th century A.D. and measuring about 1.5 inches by 3 inches, with a Coptic text on it that when translated reads (brackets indicate text is missing or reconstructed):

] “not [to] me. My mother gave to me li[fe . . .”
] The disciples said to Jesus, “[
] deny. Mary is worthy of it [
] . . .” Jesus said to them, “My wife [
] . . . she will be able to be my disciple . . .[
] Let wicked people swell up . . . [
] As for me, I dwell with her in order to [
] an image [

Because there is no extant document containing this precise text of supposed teaching by Jesus that mentions his “wife,” King provocatively titled it the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* and immediately set off some speculation that Jesus was indeed married or at least some “early Christians” taught so.² To her credit and unlike the shroud of secrecy surrounding the announcement of the *Gospel of Judas* just a few years ago, King released a high-resolution photograph of the fragment³ and the pre-publication version of an extensive article detailing her research that is scheduled to be published in *Harvard Theological Review* 106:1 (January 2013).⁴ It is noteworthy that the third sentence of her article addresses speculation head-on: “It [this fragment] does *not*,

¹ Laurie Goodstein, “A Faded Piece of Papyrus Refers to Jesus' Wife,” *New York Times*, and Lisa Wangsness, “Harvard Professor identifies scrap of papyrus suggesting some early Christians believed Jesus was married,” *Boston Globe*.

² For example, the conclusion that “Jesus was married” has been drawn by Simcha Jacobovici, known especially for the film *The Lost Tomb of Jesus* that premiered on PBS (March 7, 2007); see <http://www.simchajtv.com/jesus-was-married-something-has-changed/> (accessed September 20, 2012). For my response to *The Lost Tomb of Jesus*, see CTQ 71 (2007): 199–200. Jacobovici was also produced the film *The Resurrection Tomb Mystery* and has co-authored two related books: *The Jesus Family Tomb* with Charles Pellegrino (New York: HarperCollins, 2007) and *The Jesus Discovery* with James Tabor (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012). The conclusion that “some early Christians believed Jesus was married,” taken from the title of the *Boston Globe* article mentioned in note 1, can also be misleading unless it is understood that “Christians” is being used in a very broad sense because the fragment may have been written by Gnostic “Christians” whom orthodox Christians condemned as heretics.

³ http://news.hds.harvard.edu/files/papyrus_front_lg.jpg (accessed 19 September 2012).

⁴ Karen L. King, “Jesus said to them, ‘My Wife . . .’: A New Coptic Gospel Papyrus,” http://news.hds.harvard.edu/files/King_JesusSaidToThem_draft_0917.pdf (accessed September 19, 2012).

however, provide evidence that the historical Jesus was married, given the late date of the fragment and the probable date of original composition only in the second half of the second century.”⁵ The release of this information to the general public coincided with her announcement of the find to the Tenth International Congress of Coptic Studies that was meeting in Rome.

Even with such a limited amount of text, King theorized that the ideas set forth in this fragment indicate that it may have been part of a Gnostic document. Gnosticism is a broad label given to the teaching of various sectarian “Christians” who denied central truths of Christianity such as Jesus’ death for the atonement of sins, and in its place taught, among other things, salvation through esoteric knowledge (“gnosis”) supposedly given by Jesus but often drawn in part from Platonic philosophy. The teachings and writings of various Gnostic groups posed a significant challenge in the 2nd through the 4th century and were regularly condemned as heretical by Christian leaders familiar with their teachings, such as Irenaeus, who wrote primarily in the last three decades of the 2nd century. The discussion concerning the worthiness of “Mary” (probably Mary Magdalene) to be a disciple of Jesus in the *Gospel of Jesus’ Wife* does seem similar to texts found in some Gnostic documents also written in Coptic, like the *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Gospel of Mary*, and the *Gospel of Philip*. King’s research demonstrates a probable relationship between the ideas expressed in this fragment with the ideas expressed in these Gnostic Gospels.

In spite of the fanfare with which this fragment was announced, widespread doubts among scholars about the authenticity of this text quickly surfaced. Although the dating of this papyrus fragment to the 4th century A.D. has been confirmed by two papyrologists, the ink has not been tested to confirm that it is consistent with ink used in documents of a similar age. Furthermore, hardly anything is known about the history of this fragment. With some finds, like the Dead Sea Scrolls or the Nag Hammadi Codices, the manuscripts that came to the attention of scholars could be traced back to where they were actually discovered. What is known about this fragment’s history prior to an antiquities dealer delivering it to King for evaluation in December 2011 is pitifully little. It is noteworthy that some Coptic scholars at the international congress who examined the fragment thought it was a forgery; even a non-specialist like me was suspicious when the Coptic proclitic pronoun translated “my” in “my wife” appears darker than the rest of the text.

Within hours of the release of the photograph of the fragment, several scholars began blogging and conferring about this text. Francis Watson of Durham University was among the first to propose that the text was a modern forgery constructed out of words and phrases from a genuinely ancient text. On October 11, 2012, Andrew Bernhard of Oxford University posted his study that convincingly demonstrates that almost every word from the *Gospel of Jesus’ Wife* can be found in different portions of the *Gospel of Thomas*.⁶ Especially noteworthy is the fact that he attributes several particularities in the Coptic of the *Gospel of Jesus’ Wife*, including an odd omission of

⁵ King, “New Coptic Gospel Papyrus,” 1.

⁶ Andrew Bernhard, “How *The Gospel of Jesus’s Wife* Might Have Been Forged: A Tentative Proposal,” <http://www.gospels.net/gjw/mighthavebeenforged.pdf> (accessed 25 October 2012).

a letter, to the fact that the forger used an online Coptic-English interlinear version of the *Gospel of Thomas* originally posted in 1997 that contains a typo that appears to have been copied into the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife*. The only detail of the text not found in the *Gospel of Thomas* is the proclitic pronoun translated “my” in the phrase “my wife”; this was probably added by the forger to create more interest in the text. Therefore, although the piece of papyrus upon which the *Gospel of Jesus' Wife* is written appears to be from the 4th century A.D., its Coptic text was probably written on it after 1997.

This forgery teaches a good lesson. Where should we look for reliable historical evidence about Jesus, including his marital status? There are four first-century Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—whose testimony was proclaimed and written while eyewitnesses were still alive and whose Greek text is widely attested by many 2nd- through 7th-century papyri manuscripts as well as some 4th- and 5th-century parchment manuscripts that contain the complete text or most of the text of these books. These Gospels testify prominently to many aspects of Jesus' humanity, including that he was known as Joseph's son, had a mother, had brothers, attended weddings, supported life-long marriage, and had several women who were among his wider group of disciples but not one of the twelve apostles. Especially helpful for the study of these women is Richard Bauckham, *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002). There is no historical evidence in these Gospels, however, that Jesus was married to a woman. If he would have been, the result would have been a wife and a child (or children) who would have attracted significant attention worthy of mention after his resurrection and ascension. Instead, it appears historically probable that the only “bride” Jesus ever had is the church (Eph 5:25–32; Rev 19:7–8).

Charles A. Gieschen

This is a revised and updated version of the brief analysis of this fragment distributed electronically via the seminary website on September 21, 2012. Gieschen's studies at the University of Michigan (Ph.D., 1995) included the Coptic language and Gnostic writings. The Editors

Theological Observer

Notes on the NIV

Recently the staff of the LCMS Commission on Theology and Church Relations released an opinion concerning the New International Version (2011), an updated version of the popular NIV translation that was first published in the 1970s. In their opinion, this gender-neutral version exhibits “a serious theological weakness and a misguided attempt to make the truth of God’s Word more easily understood.” The opinion goes on to explain that “the use of inclusive language in NIV 2011 creates the potential for minimizing the particularity of biblical revelation.” While the opinion makes clear that this is not an official judgment on this revision of the NIV as a Bible translation per se, it recommends against its use as a text for the reading of Holy Scripture in corporate worship or as a Bible version generally recommended for use by the laity.

This development should not come as a surprise to congregations in the LCMS. When work on *Lutheran Service Book* began in 1999, the Commission on Worship established a separate Translations Committee to examine the issue of Bible translation and other language issues. Already then, Zondervan, the publisher of the NIV, was field testing in Great Britain an updated version of its signature translation. The Commission on Worship did not want to be in the position of choosing to retain the NIV translation for the new hymnal only to discover at a later date that Zondervan was moving on and no longer supporting the original NIV translation. That day, evidently, has now arrived.

The primary concern of the Translations Committee, however, was not whether a given translation would later be supported by the publisher. Rather, the committee focused on choosing the best translation among the many modern versions that were available. From the outset, it was clear to the committee that there is no perfect translation. Inherent weaknesses in the NIV, however, compelled the committee to search for an alternative. Please understand: it’s not that the NIV was a bad translation. Its readability made it a favorite of many. But there were blatant mistakes, such as the translation of Acts 3:21 that securely locks Jesus up in a Calvinist heaven (“He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything”)! More insidious, however, was the NIV’s penchant for leaving out the many conjunctions of the Greek text. That was the tradeoff the translators of the NIV made in order to achieve a more readable text. But therein lies the problem: conjunctions are important! Without the conjunctions, for example, the theological arguments that St. Paul sets forth in his epistles begin to unravel. When a conclusion that Paul reaches is dependent on the points he has previously given, the conjunctions are there to make that connection explicit. (This insight was

brought to my attention by Dr. Jerald Joersz, a former staff member of the CTCR, who once told me that the more he worked with the NIV, the less satisfied he became with it.)

The casual reader of the NIV text—even the more serious student of Scripture—more often than not has no idea that such liberties have been taken with the text. If a translator is willing to sacrifice conjunctions for the sake of readability, the reader has to wonder what else might be missing. This is one reason why the Lutheran Church has always insisted that her pastors study the original languages of Greek and Hebrew. Pastors need to wrestle with the intricacies of the biblical text. But so do the people of God! This concern was at the heart of the Translation Committee's endeavor to select the best translation for this time and place in our history. That search eventually led to the choice of the English Standard Version (ESV), a conservative revision of the Revised Standard Version (RSV). To be sure, the ESV is not perfect, either. The committee was, for example, more than a little disappointed when in the final version of the ESV the Hebrew noun *mishpatim* was translated as "rules," an editorial decision that was apparently made very late in the process. Crossway Bible, the publisher of the ESV, later gave the LCMS permission to substitute the translation "just decrees" wherever this occurred in the *LSB* Psalter and in the lectionary readings. (It is a disappointing that the same substitution was not retained in later resources, such as CPH's *Treasury of Daily Prayer* and *The Lutheran Study Bible*.)

Why is this important for us today? After the publication of *LSB* and its companion resources, the Commission on Worship received anecdotal reports that some congregations were choosing to retain the NIV instead of transitioning to the ESV as provided in the *LSB* lectionaries. Concordia Publishing House even received requests that the NIV text be included in *Lutheran Service Builder* as an optional translation. With Zondervan's recent announcement that they are no longer supporting the original version of the NIV translation—including granting permission for reprinting the text—congregations still using the original NIV translation are left with one of several choices. One option is to transition to NIV (2011), the concerns of the CTCR notwithstanding. Another is to make the move to the ESV as it is provided in the *LSB* lectionaries and in *Lutheran Service Builder*. Or, lastly, congregations can continue using the original NIV, though they will no longer be able to reprint the biblical text in their bulletins or project it on a screen. Of course, they could continue doing just that, though it would be in violation of the publisher's wishes and copyright law. Last I checked, however, the Bible has something to say about that as well, no matter the translation.

Paul Grime

The Digital 17th Century

The 17th century, the age of Lutheran Orthodoxy, now comes close to everybody with a high speed internet connection. The digitalization of books continues on a rapid pace. Thus, books that would be available only in specialized research libraries and inaccessible to most pastors and students can now be present on one's computer screen. Many readers will be familiar with Google's program to digitize any book ever printed. But there is also a German portal which serves as a catalogue for German books digitized by German libraries. This makes available many more books than are on Google books. For the pastor interested in classical Lutheran theology, the URL www.zvdd.de puts at his fingertips a huge library of publications from the age of Orthodoxy. The texts, in PFD format, can be downloaded for scholarly purposes, though there is as of yet no search function. Of course, the theological task is much more than mere reprinting. But the theological enterprise neglects the fathers to its own detriment. There is much to be learned from them for the present theological debate.

The language barrier, however, remains problematic. Even though Concordia Publishing House does the church a favor by publishing translations of Gerhard and Chemnitz, most of the material of the age of classical Lutheranism is not and probably never will be translated into English. Latin, though once the universal language of scholarship, is not high on list of many modern curricula. Lutherans should have an interest in promoting the learning of Latin as a means to connect with an important part of their history. The availability of so many resources in Latin in a digital format refutes the charge that Latin has no use. There are more books in Latin readily accessible than ever. The 17th century is present on your screen. Click and read!

Roland Ziegler

Preparing the First English Edition of Johann Gerhard's *Theological Commonplaces*

Gerhard and the Commonplaces

Johann Gerhard is now recognized among confessional Lutherans as being an important witness to the Christian faith and a true Lutheran confession of that faith. Lutheran churchmen have recognized Gerhard's stature for centuries. In the early 20th century, E. Gerfen wrote, "There are three stars shining most brilliantly in the firmament of Lutheran theology, *viz.*, Martin Luther, Martin Chemnitz, and Johann Gerhard."¹ Such descriptions go back to

¹ E. Gerfen, in *Pastor's Monthly* 8, no. 5, cited in J.T. Mueller, "Johann Gerhard als

Gerhard's own century. His fellow Lutheran Salomon Glassius called him "a stronge and firm column in the house of the Lord," and Hoe von Hoenegg called him "the most deserving and worthy arch-theologian," and "the eye of theologians."² The 17th-century Roman Catholic bishop of Meaux, Jacques Benigne Bossuet, called him "the third man of the Reformation after Luther and Chemnitz."³ He has also been called the "greatest theologian of the age of Lutheran orthodoxy in the period after the Formula of Concord."⁴ His works and thought were so influential that he soon was considered a representative of orthodoxy and was so considered by those who followed him.⁵ Thankfully, many of his works have been translated into English and published in recent years. Dissertations and papers have been written on his thought both in German and English.

Gerhard himself was born in 1582, two years after the Book of Concord was published. His monumental *Loci theologici* (*Theological Commonplaces*) began to be published in 1610, when he was only about 28 years old. He spent twelve of his most productive years on the *Loci* (1610–1622),⁶ and then started over again with his *Exegesis uberior*, which was published in 1625. (The first three volumes of CPH's *Theological Commonplaces* are from the mature Gerhard. These are the volumes of his *Exegesis uberior*, which were printed together with the *Loci*.) In 1616 (about age 34), after serving the church as superintendent (functional equivalent of a bishop) and as a high school teacher, he became a professor of theology at the university of Jena, and served there for 21 years. He died in the Lord on August 17, 1637.

It is his *Loci theologici* that have held the fascination of Lutheran scholars for centuries. Whereas CPH's printing of Martin Chemnitz's *Loci* took up two volumes, and our publication of his *Examination of the Council of Trent* filled four volumes, Gerhard's *Theological Commonplaces* will fill seventeen large volumes.⁷ Up until now, no full translation of the *Commonplaces* has ever been attempted in any language, no doubt due both to the size of the work as well as to the difficulty of the contents.

So far, some of the most fundamental of Gerhard's *loci* have been

lutherischer Kirchenlehrer," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 8 (1937): 592.

² J.T. Mueller, "Johann Gerhard als lutherischer Kirchenlehrer," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 8 (1937): 592.

³ *Bibliothèque des Auteurs Ecclesiast. du 17. Siècle*, vol. 2, cited by J.T. Mueller, "Johann Gerhard als lutherischer Kirchenlehrer," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 8 (1937): 602.

⁴ Johannes Kunze, "Gerhard, Johann," in *The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1908–1912), 4:463.

⁵ Richard Schröder, *Johann Gerhards lutherische Christologie und die aristotelische Metaphysik* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1983).

⁶ Mueller, "Johann Gerhard," 599.

⁷ Even these seventeen planned volumes will not quite complete the *Theological Commonplaces* series.

published: "On the Nature of Theology and on Scripture" (2nd revised edition, 2009), "On the Nature of God and on the Trinity" (2007), "On Christ" (2009), "On the Church" (2010), "On the Ministry" (part 1, 2011; part 2, 2012). With Concordia's completion of "On the Ministry II," Gerhard's compendious work on church and ministry is now available in English with all the detailed annotations and careful attention to works cited that are a hallmark of this translation project. Moreover, the availability of these volumes in particular pairs nicely with the CPH release of a study edition of C.F.W. Walther's *Church and Ministry* (December 2012), which cites heavily from these two loci. Upcoming titles include: "On Creation and Angels," "On Providence," "On Election and Reprobation," "On the Image of God in Man Before the Fall," "On Original Sin," "On Actual Sins," and "On Free Choice."

Challenges in Preparing the First English Edition of Gerhard's Commonplaces

In general, the main problem for any translator or editor of a translation is to understand the content. In the case of Gerhard, this is especially a challenge. First of all, the language that Gerhard uses presents challenges. His Latin is not terribly difficult to get used to, and he does repeat a lot of the same vocabulary. But he often uses terms that cannot be found in the most complete Latin-English dictionaries,⁸ or he uses words in ways not covered by these works. In addition, he often uses philosophical jargon without explanation, expecting that his readers will simply understand it. For example, the phrase *praedicatio in quid* could be (incorrectly) translated "making statements into what." Instead, it means "predication according to essence," or "quiddity," that is, making statements about God's essence. In short, the solution is to find other Latin dictionaries: a fine Latin-German dictionary (Georges), a Latin-French dictionary of patristic Latin (Blaise), an enormous Latin-Latin dictionary (Forcellini), two Latin dictionaries for the scholastic philosophy of Thomas Aquinas (Schütz, Deferrari), philosophical dictionaries from the 16th and 17th centuries (Altenstaig, Scherzer, Micraelius), and others.

But not only is Gerhard's Latin a challenge, his Greek is a challenge, too. The Greek technical terms that Gerhard throws around are perhaps the most difficult aspect of his *Loci*. The standard Greek-English dictionaries (Liddell & Scott, Lampe) are not always sufficient. Sometimes they shed some light, but sometimes not. Gerhard drops these Greek terms as if he thinks they will help explain things, as if the terms themselves do not need to be explained. In addition, Gerhard sometimes quotes classical Greek, and even Orphic poetry. Gerhard often does not bother translating these into Latin. But for a modern translation, we must master the translation even of obscure quotations. The solution is to use bigger Greek lexica: a four-volume Greek-German dictionary (Possow) and an enormous, exhaustive Greek-Latin dictionary that Gerhard

⁸ Lewis and Short; *Oxford Latin Dictionary*.

himself owned (Stephanus). A team effort, in which outside experts are consulted to ensure the accuracy of select passages, has been helpful.

But as if Latin and Greek weren't enough, Gerhard was also highly skilled in Hebrew and other semitic languages. He often cites obscure medieval rabbis, often with the titles of their books and their names transliterated into Latin (making it difficult to locate bibliography). In addition, his discussion of Hebrew grammar is done in the Latin language, which uses different terms than we learn in our Hebrew training. Gerhard also has no problem citing the Targums and other Hebrew and Jewish literature. For example, he quotes a number of Cabbalistic texts approvingly and uses them to find a trinity of persons and a unity of substance simply in the name YHWH. One saving grace is that he nearly always translates semitic material into clear Latin prose. Also, old Hebrew grammars have been helpful, since many of them make reference to the older Latin terms for Hebrew grammar.

When Gerhard quotes Scripture, he sometimes uses the medieval Vulgate.⁹ But in other places he gives a Latin version that agrees with the Greek, but not with the Vulgate.¹⁰ On Jer. 18:17, he says it mentions God's *cervix* (neck), but the Vulgate and Luther read "back" (*rücken, dorsum*). He also had Luther's German Bible before him.¹¹

To translate or edit Gerhard, one must also work in long quotations of patristic Latin and Greek.¹² Quotations of the church fathers are found everywhere in the *Loci*. Gerhard nearly always quotes early church fathers and medieval scholastics for support, almost never contemporary Lutherans. This could be because quotations from contemporary Lutherans would not be very convincing against his adversaries. Perhaps he limited his quotations to what would be most useful against non-Lutherans. In any case, the *Loci* are a fine patristic anthology. J.T. Mueller wrote, "Even just because of the excellent, innumerable citations from the church fathers and the later Christian church teachers, one should read his *Loci*."¹³

Gerhard, however, does not just quote the early church fathers and the medieval scholastics. He also cites his opponents. The *Loci* are filled full with references to other books. Gerhard cites authors in a very shorthand manner. He rarely gives full bibliographic data for his works cited, and he often quotes the same book in different ways. Yet, for a translation, knowing the full title of the work cited is important in order to know how much of the abbreviation is part of the title and how much is part of the text. This has required that we

⁹ His quotation of Eph. 4:15–16 matches the Stuttgart *Biblia Sacra Vulgata*. Gerhard, *Exegesis 1625*, locus 2, § 103.

¹⁰ Quoting 2 Tim. 4:8 in *Exegesis 1625*, locus 2, § 103.

¹¹ In *Exegesis 1625*, locus 2, § 121, on Gal. 3:1, Gerhard reads "praescriptus."

¹² E.g., *Exegesis 1625*, locus 2, § 117.

¹³ Mueller, "Johann Gerhard," 602.

create a works cited list, and track down the full bibliographical data for all the works that Gerhard cites. A catalog of Gerhard's library, published by Johann Anselm Steiger, has been of help in constructing the works cited list.¹⁴ That, together with German library catalogs on the internet, have allowed us to construct the full bibliographical data for about 90% of the works Gerhard cites.

Philosophy

If there is one thing for which 17th-century Lutheran orthodoxy is reproached above all others, it is their reception and use of Aristotelian philosophy and medieval scholasticism. Often, these reproaches argue by saying, "Luther rejected philosophy, but Gerhard brought it in again." Or, "Gerhard and the 17th-century Lutherans laid the foundations for rationalism and the Enlightenment." Modern scholars like to play Luther off against Gerhard.¹⁵ But other scholars have not been so negative about Gerhard's use of philosophy and scholastic concepts. Johann Anselm Steiger says that the scholastic concepts used by Gerhard were simply a way of making Luther's unsystematic heritage usable for students and pastors. "Gerhard's *Loci* dogmatics are thus themselves pastoral care in action."¹⁶ In any case, the use of scholastic concepts was a general movement. If blame is to be placed, it cannot be placed on Gerhard alone.¹⁷ C.F.W. Walther writes,

No matter how true it is that aristotelian philosophy has often crept into theology with the scholastic form, nevertheless, it is this form which a considerable number of our theologians have used to avoid ambiguity of terms and to express their thoughts to their readers without having to heap up many words. Even Baier [and the same goes for Gerhard] made none other than this healthy use of philosophical, technical terms in his theology. Whoever has just once figured this out can only be thankful to him for using this form.¹⁸

Despite Gerhard's assertion that Scripture is the only judge of doctrine, he

¹⁴ Johann Anselm Steiger, ed., *Bibliotheca Gerhardina* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: frommann-holzboog, 2002).

¹⁵ E.g., Schröder, *Johann Gerhards lutherische Christologie*, 3, 5, 26; Johannes Wallmann, *Der Theologiebegriff bei Johann Gerhard und Georg Calixt* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1961), 61; Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 41, 46, 55–56, 193, 198, 355–356, 374; 109, 163, 288–289, 399–400, 407, 510.

¹⁶ Johann Anselm Steiger, *Johann Gerhard (1582-1637): Studien zu Theologie und Frömmigkeit des Kirchenvaters der lutherischen Orthodoxie* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1997), 32; see also Mueller, "Johann Gerhard," 598–602.

¹⁷ Martti Vaahtoranta, *Restauratio imaginis divinae: Die Vereinigung von Gott und Mensch, ihre Voraussetzungen und Implikationen bei Johann Gerhard* (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft, 1998), 18.

¹⁸ Walther, *Lehre und Wehre* I, 342.

also uses arguments from reason. The latter does not overthrow the former. Gerhard uses Scripture to nail the case shut on his arguments. Then he uses reason and the Fathers to “set the nails,” so to speak. Gerhard seems to use reason as Thomas Aquinas does. There are some things that we can know about God, ourselves, and the world from the book of reason, but this is not saving theological knowledge. Gerhard quotes Thomas with approval, “We know some things about God that exceed the common reach of human reason and are knowable only through revelation (for example, that God is one and three, that Christ is God and Man), but some are demonstrable.” And this way of arguing goes back to the early church. Gerhard says, “We can prove that God exists both from nature and from Scripture, and for this reason the knowledge of God, according to Augustine, can be divided into natural and revealed knowledge.”¹⁹ Of course, St. Paul had much the same thing to say in Romans 1.

When giving proof for a thesis, Gerhard first goes to Scripture. Second, he presents rational arguments. When he gives these arguments, they are nearly always in the form of a syllogism: major premise (*major*), minor premise (*assumptio*) marked by an adversative (e.g., “but”), and then the conclusion marked by “therefore.” Following this, he gives an explanation of the cogency or soundness of the major premise and of the factuality or truthfulness of the minor premise. Then he sometimes considers objections to the argument (usually a challenge to the minor premise), and gives a reply.²⁰ Gerhard uses these *rationes* in a secondary way to prove his points. He often, but not always, makes rational arguments where the minor premise is supplied by Scripture. He refutes the *rationes* of others with the use of rational arguments. Yet sometimes he appeals to revelation to show that an unbridled use of reason would overthrow the articles of faith. For example, he says that the Calvinists misuse reason “when they attack articles of faith set forth in clear and open passages of Scripture on the basis of philosophical principles that they poorly understand or apply. They abandon the genuine, proper, literal meaning of Scripture and look for an understanding harmonious with logic.”²¹ Thus, despite assertions to the contrary, Gerhard did indeed give warnings against the improper use of philosophy and reason.

Why Study Gerhard's *Commonplaces*?

After telling people about my work with Gerhard, they often ask, “Why are you doing that?” Their question is not meant to imply that translating and publishing Gerhard is of little value. It is a good question, and the following reasons come to mind.

¹⁹ *Commonplaces (Exegesis 1625)*, loc. 2, § 59.

²⁰ For example, *Commonplaces (Exegesis 1625)*, loc. 2, § 33.

²¹ Gerhard, *Commonplaces (Exegesis 1625)*, loc. 1, § 452, p. 421. See also his appeal to the incarnation in loc. 2, § 154.

(1) Gerhard's *Commonplaces* are more *thorough* than any work of classical Lutheran theology that we have in English. For example, Pieper devotes barely a page to God's immutability, whereas Gerhard devotes about four times as much space to the same topic. Pieper is three volumes; Gerhard will be seventeen volumes.

(2) Gerhard's *Commonplaces* are *educational*. By reading him, one can learn an enormous amount about God's Word, church history, philosophy, and clear thinking.

(3) Luther and Melanchthon use the same terminology. For example, FC SD VII 93–103 gives a lengthy quote from Luther's *Large Confession Concerning the Holy Supper*. In this quotation, Luther outlines three modes of presence—the local, the spiritual, and the divine—and then says God has even more modes of presence. These three modes of presence were not made up by Luther. He was bringing forth a way of speaking that was used by Gabriel Biel and other scholastics. Gerhard, in turn, discusses these same modes of presence in his discussion of God's immensity.²²

(4) The *Commonplaces* are filled to the brim with quotations from the church fathers, many of whom have never been translated. One can read large quotations from Augustine and Cyril of Alexandria, for example, and also quotations from figures less well-known to American Lutherans, such as Alcuin, Bernard of Clairvaux, Savonarola, and Jean Gerson.

(5) Gerhard lived in an era that is basically unknown to us. We know a lot about the time from the Reformation to the Formula of Concord, and then from C.F.W. Walther to the present, but not about the 250 years in between—fully half of our entire history since the Reformation! It's as if someone buried a treasure and left us a treasure map. We've known about Gerhard for a long time—that's the treasure map. But only now are we beginning to dig up the treasures themselves.

(6) Gerhard's *Commonplaces* give us a window into how the Formula of Concord was understood in the generation after it was written.

(7) German scholarship has taken a renewed interest in Gerhard in recent years. Johann Anselm Steiger's editions and studies have made a very significant contribution to Gerhard studies.

(8) Many of Gerhard's opponents had incorrect views which are popular today. For example, in Commonplace II, *On the Nature of God*,

²² *Exegesis 1625*, loc. 2, § 172.

Gerhard is constantly arguing with Conrad Vortius, a late 16th- and early 17th-century Reformed theologian who was condemned at the Synod of Dort (1618–1619). Vorstius denied God's eternity, using the very same arguments used by certain modern theologians.²³ Instead of being eternal, God is (for Vorstius) a temporal, everlasting being, bound by time just as we are. Nowadays, open theism and various modern theologies, which redefine or deny God's attributes, have found open ears in many Lutheran circles. Gerhard's *Commonplaces* can help pastors and theologians today connect to the entire Christian tradition, which from the early church through the Middle Ages and the Reformation affirmed such things as God's impassibility, eternity, immutability, omnipotence, and omnipresence. Gerhard can help us to break free from modern theology.

(9) Gerhard is thorough in his use of polemics. Although it may not be popular these days, polemics is still an important discipline in helping us to go beyond saying, "This is what we believe," to saying, "and this is why." Gerhard especially argues against Socinians (anti-Trinitarians, who were commonly called "Photinians"), Roman Catholics, and the Reformed.

(10) Yet Gerhard was not overly polemical. He loved the truth and was willing to attack errorists, but he did so with moderation. He always endeavored to represent his adversaries truthfully. This makes his writings all the more accessible to us today.

(11) Gerhard gives thorough consideration to issues dealing with pastoral practice and ethics. Marriage is the largest volume in the series. (It deals also with celibacy, polygamy, forbidden grades of relationship, etc.) Many scholars have noted that Gerhard's *Commonplaces* are not just intellectual, they are also pastoral and devotional.²⁴ Steiger notes that for Gerhard dogmatics does not exist as an end in itself, but is always to be applied in preaching and personal pastoral care. Theology is not to be speculative, but "*eminens practica*."²⁵ Robert Preus noted that for Gerhard theology has the goal of God's glorification and the intermediate goal of man's salvation. All other knowledge is not "theological" but only "mere logomachy."²⁶ Robert Scharlemann recognized that Gerhard did not neglect the *usus*

²³ Nicholas Wolterstorff in Gregory E. Ganssle, ed. *God and Time: Four Views* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001).

²⁴ Steiger, *Gerhard*, 31.

²⁵ Steiger, *Gerhard*, 37–38.

²⁶ *Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism* I, 117.

practicus of theology. The “practical use” was “the employment of the doctrine *in concreto* to ‘strike down’ and then ‘lift up’ the hearer.”²⁷

(12) Gerhard is the third most important classical Lutheran theologian after Luther and Chemnitz. He quickly became a standard for all later Lutheran doctrine. Everyone quoted him and interacted with his writings, at least until people stopped reading Latin. This is seen especially in C.F.W. Walther’s claim that his own doctrine of church and ministry can be found in greater detail in Gerhard. Until now, however, Gerhard’s presentation of Church and Ministry remained inaccessible to most people. Now finally we have access to the sources and can see the careful manner in which Gerhard formulates his own doctrine of Church and Ministry.

Now, some 375 years after his death, Gerhard’s monumental *Theological Commonplaces* are finally being translated for the first time. Concordia Publishing House invites readers to subscribe to the series, which locks in a 30% discount off the volume price as well as the ability to purchase previously published in-stock volumes at the same 30% discount. For more information on the series and to sign up as a subscriber, visit cph.org/gerhard.

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Can There Be Peace? Violence in the Name of Religion

[*These reflections concerning the atrocities that occurred in Norway on July 22, 2011, and what they reveal about the situation of the Church of Norway were delivered at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana, on September 13, 2011. The Editors*]

Norway is a small country. We have only 4.9 million citizens. On July 22, 2011, we were hit by terror, an attack on the government with a car bomb (8 dead) and a slaughter of idealistic youth gathered in a political summer camp (69 victims, the youngest only 14 years old). The terrorist reportedly shouted with joy each time he succeeded in killing a youth.

In those first days the whole nation was struck with horror. It left us numb. In a sense, the Norwegian naïveté and innocence had also been killed. How could this happen to us—the country of the Nobel Peace Prize? Part of the shock was caused by the fact that this was not an outbreak of Islamic terror. It

²⁷ Robert P. Scharlemann, *Thomas Aquinas and John Gerhard* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 5.

had been done by "one of our own." Gradually both sorrow and a strong feeling of national unity overtook the nation. Roses became a symbol of our sorrow and hope. It was not uncommon to see people crying openly in the streets and embracing even total strangers for comfort. In a national memorial event, our King Harald V publically shed tears during his speech.

Norway had been hit by evil, and evil always needs to justify itself. The best way of doing this is by maintaining that terror is done for the sake of an honorable and good cause (cf. communism, Nazism, inquisition).

Anders Behring Breivik has maintained that he is "a Christian," not in the sense that he prays, attends church, and has a personal faith in Jesus, but Christian in a cultural sense. The day after Breivik had been apprehended, one of the leading police officers stated that Breivik was a "Christian fundamentalist." Of course this terrorist is no Christian in any sense of the word, no more than he was a police officer even though he dressed up as one.

Breivik regards himself as a knight fighting against the great evil represented by Islam, an evil that only can be defeated through military means. One of his great role models is Charles Martell, who in AD 732 prevailed in the battle of Poitiers against Muslim expansion in Europe; another is the order of Knights Templar from the period of the crusades. Ideologically, the closest parallel in the United States is probably the 1995 Oklahoma bomber. Timothy McVeigh's thoughts in many ways seem to resemble those of Breivik.

It all comes down to "the battle between civilizations." In his manifesto that was published on the Internet the day before the atrocities, Breivik regards himself as the defender of Christian civilization against the barbarism and tyranny of Islam. His enemy is Islam, and all who have opened the doors for the Muslim immigration into Europe. He regards as traitors all those who advocate a pluralistic society, where tolerance and respect is given to every belief and conviction. He believes they have left our society defenseless against a future Muslim takeover. He calls the secular idea of tolerance within the framework of a liberal democratic society "cultural Marxism," and to him the political establishments that advocate the modern pluralistic welfare society are Judases and "the enemy within." Consequently Norway's government has become his prime target, his first attack in a war. The slaughter of vast numbers of youth was intended to quench the interest of youth in the Labor Party and to prevent further enrollment into this party. In the wake of the events of these days, the result has been quite the opposite.

The reaction and sorrow, especially to the shooting of the youth, was national. This was our 9/11. Prime Minister Stoltenberg was very quick in stating that this was an attack on our democracy and the values that have almost unanimously been regarded as fundamental to our society: tolerance, openness, and multiculturalism. What he wanted as the national response to this act

of terror was "more democracy, more openness, more tolerance." If the society did not react in this way, the terrorist would have achieved his exact goal. He believed that Norway should not allow its society to be defined by the extremist's agenda.

Four days after the attacks, a large rally of mourning and resistance to violence and terror was organized in the capital city of Oslo. Oslo has about 600,000 citizens, approximately 200–300,000 people attended. In his speech, the mayor of Oslo said, "we shall punish the terrorist. We shall punish him by not letting him achieve any of his aims. We shall punish him with tolerance, with openness, with love."

A second, important part of the nation's reaction was religious. The churches around the country were opened up and filled with people lighting candles for the dead, laying down flowers in their honor and memory. Ministers and bishops within the state church system suddenly got the important role in bringing grief counselors together with psychologists and were given the responsibility of caring for the mourners, families and friends of the victims, and the survivors of the shootings. Certainly many of the youngsters from Utøya have been traumatized by the horrors they experienced and are in need of help, comfort, and treatment for months and perhaps years to come.

What is conspicuous about the role of the Church of Norway and its servants is that it has walked into this therapeutic role, defined by public need, without hesitation. Suddenly, vast numbers of people in a secular and irreligious society seemed to stand in need of some kind of religious comfort. When the Church realized that its ministry was needed, it grabbed the opportunity without questioning the premises. A number of years ago, a former professor of practical theology, Olav Skjevesland, now bishop, made a comment on the transformation of the ministry of the Church, a transformation that has taken place as a growing number of women have been ordained. He said: "The ministry of word and sacrament has been replaced by the ministry of caring and comforting." Two important features of the national church's role may here be pointed out: First, the name of Christ has scarcely been mentioned. The leaders of the church have limited themselves to a general and very unspecific "God-talk." But which god? Second, the god that has been preached is a therapeutic one, "a shrink," to say it a bit disrespectfully. This means that the Church of Norway in this situation has reduced itself and its message to be part of the social welfare system, taking care of psychological health and religious comfort. A secular journalist comments on this as follows: "After July 22nd the church has taken up the role as administrator of public sorrow, willingly paying the price through ideological self-annihilation."

In the history of the church, national disasters have been met with a totally

different response: The people sought out the church to repent and confess their sins, to cry out for the mercy of God, that he might turn away His wrath. The difference between the present religious reaction and the past reveals a deep shift in the mentality of our nation. This shift also brings to light the psychology of secularization. The main problem is that we hurt because we are hit by evil, not that we ourselves are evil. Our problem is "the others," those who not are as tolerant as we are. Consequently we do not need grace or salvation, only comfort and explanation. The Church now portrays God as the sympathetic God, God on our side. God's job is to fulfill our felt needs.

What we here have touched upon is the result of a transformation of the Church of Norway (the state church system) that has been going on over the last half-century. In a way, the thinking of Anders Behring Breivik and the horrors that he has brought upon our small country can, in this age of secularization, shed some light on the role and development of Christianity in Scandinavia and Europe as a whole. Here are some thoughts.

When Breivik looks upon himself as a crusader in the "war between civilizations," he is promoting a view of Christian civilization that goes back to Constantine the Great, emperor of the Roman Empire from AD 312–337, an empire that reached its peak in the medieval period. Constantine brought about the most important turnaround in the ancient world, both for the early Christian church and the Roman Empire. Up until the year AD 313, the church had periodically been persecuted in the cruelest way. Under Constantine's predecessor, Diocletian (AD 305–311), the worst and bloodiest of all persecutions in the Roman Empire took place. But in AD 313 Constantine authored the "Edict of Milan" (or "Edict of Tolerance"), which gave full acceptance to Christians within the empire and put a final end to the ancient martyrdom of the church. Eleven years later, Constantine made Christianity the favored religion within the Empire, supporting the church in every possible way—including the building of large churches and cathedrals all over the empire. This development reached its peak under the Emperor Theodosius (AD 379–395), who in 380 made Christianity the official state religion and in 391 the only legal religion, closing down and destroying heathen temples and forbidding heathen worship.

These decisions by Constantine and Theodosius framed and laid down three fundamentals of what became the basic characteristics of European culture for the next 1500 years. First, the strong bond between church and state; the state is a Christian state, and Christianity the only legal religion. Second, Europe identifying itself as the Christian culture. Third, the identification of the population as a whole with the church: the people are a Christian people.

Since the reign of these two emperors, western culture has shaped a historical epoch that may be called "the Constantinian Era," an era that now is coming to an end. The Constantine linking of imperial power with ecclesial

authority, by and by, resulted in deep consequences for the church that remolded Christendom. I here will highlight only a few important features. First, while Jesus said that his "kingdom was not of this world" (John 18:36), the church to a large extent now became of this world. Second, although Jesus taught that the use of force, power, and violence belonged to the princes of this world, his church should be characterized by meekness, willing service, and love of one's neighbor (Matt 20:25-28). The church was to suffer evil rather than inflict it on others. This is also an important part of the message of the Sermon on the Mount. St Augustine struggled with this question: was it acceptable that the emperor used the sword to bring people(s) into the fold of the church? He found—although hesitantly—the theological foundation for legitimating this in the words in Luke 14:23 (the parable of the great banquet): "...compel them to come in" (KJV). This set a path for an expansion of Christianity that dominated much of the medieval period, even up to the religious wars of the 17th century. The sword—royal power—became a most important "missionary" instrument. Third, Christian morality became the norm of legislation within the civil society, and regulated all parts of European life. Finally, Christian faith became the formative influence in all parts of what we call "culture": literature, music, painting, sculpture, architecture and so forth.

The crusaders' war on Islam in the name of Christ was mainly a part of this Constantine inheritance: defending Christian faith and defending the Christian nations was one and the same thing. It is this tradition that Anders Behring Breivik is utilizing in his war on the infidels. But it is not the way of Jesus. In the New Testament we find an episode where Peter tries to defend Christ with a sword (Matthew 26:51ff). We all know what our Lord has to say about this. It is deeply significant that Peter cuts off the ear of the servant of the high priest: violence in the name of Christ disables hearing!

The connection between church and state, faith and secular power, that characterizes the Constantinian era has been a persistent spiritual trap and temptation to the church, a kind of prison. Jesus taught the separation of secular and spiritual power, but they have been mixed together. The two governments, according to Jesus' teaching, are to be ruled in totally different ways. The kingdom of God shall rule men's hearts by the sword of God—His word only; the government of this world is to rule over our physical life through secular power—if necessary, police and military force (Romans 13). The mixture of worldly and spiritual power that the state church system implies too often results in some kind of tyranny, either in the form that the church seeks worldly dominion, which was the case during the medieval period and in Calvin's Geneva, or when secular power exercises dominion over the church, the so-called "caesaropapism". The princes of this world always have abused religion as part of their "power-play." Religion is an

excellent instrument to control people. The Scandinavian churches, particularly in Denmark and Norway, probably hold the world championship for governmental rule over the church.

Augustine's idea to "compel them" has, as we have seen, legitimized the use of violence in the name of Christ. It is sad to observe how even the church's best theologians and teachers may err in the need to justify the *status quo*. The idea of using force in service to the gospel is totally contrary to the gospel for two primary reasons. First, the expression "the weakness of God" (1 Cor 1:25) is an expression that belongs to the essence of the gospel. Second, the only means that has been given to the church for the salvation of men is the means of grace, and, particularly, "the word of the cross" (1 Cor 1:18).

"The weakness of God" is God's way of salvation. Jesus says: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12: 24 KJV). God is revealing himself under what seems contradictory to what he is: his almightiness looks like weakness; his wisdom like stupidity; the man that he wants to live must die; the cross on which Christ was gloriously victorious over sin, Satan, and death looks like a total and disgraceful defeat in men's eyes. In this way God conceals himself to all flesh and disbelief. But he reveals himself to faith and faith alone. Human strength which expresses itself in might, force, and violence, becomes the opposite of the gospel. The will to exercise power appeals to the flesh, and is a satanic temptation to the church. The state has, in contrast to this, been given a mandate from God to exercise power as a barrage against evil (Romans 13:1-7). The church, on the other hand, is a spiritual kingdom, and individual Christians have no such mandate. This is why our Lord extols that which is small and weak, but degrades that which is big and strong (Matt 18:1-5; 20:25-28).

Second, God's "mode of operation" is through his word. When God wants something done, he speaks. This is how it was in the beginning when he created heaven and earth, and this is the way he spreads and enlarges his spiritual kingdom on earth. God's word is the secret of his kingdom. All other means are flesh. Through his word God speaks to our hearts. Efforts to coerce the heart have never been Christ's way. This means that all true and godly work in Christ's kingdom on earth rests in faith in the efficacy of the word. In the end we cannot do God's work. Only God's word has this power.

When the Lutheran Reformation came to Denmark and Norway and these two countries became Lutheran in 1537, this was a royal decision quite in line with Constantinian tradition. There is no reason to doubt that the king was personally convinced by the Lutheran teaching. It also served his self-interest as he now could confiscate all church properties. Vast riches fell to the crown.

In his struggle to protect the newborn evangelical church, Luther allied

with the princes. This resulted in a bond between church and state in the Lutheran countries that was far stronger and more reaching than what had been the case during the medieval period. The Roman Catholic Church maintained relative independence in its relation to royal power. Such independence was almost totally obliterated in the Lutheran countries. Church and state became one. The state was a confessional state and the king was *summus episcopus* of the church (Peace of Augsburg 1555: *Cuius regio, eius religio*). This also is the reason why Denmark and Norway never accepted the Book of Concord, like other Lutheran nations. When King Fredrik II was presented the Book of Concord during the winter of 1581, he threw it into the stove, stating that he "had enough of the quarreling of the theologians." During the pietistic period, Denmark and Norway adopted "state pietism," and the inhabitants were forced by law to attend church (e.g., "The Sabbath Ordinance" of 1735). For instance, people were not allowed to marry if they were not confirmed. Consequently, young men and women who had difficulties learning Pontoppidan's Catechism by heart were not able to have their own families. This use of political force on behalf of the church has not been forgotten and caused quite a bit of resentment against the Christian faith in our countries.

The bond between church and state was preserved in Norway's democratic constitution in 1814. The king remained head of the Church of Norway. In 1884, parliamentarianism was introduced in Norway, with the result that the king was forced to give governmental power to the majority of the national assembly (Stortinget). To the church this meant that the head of the church no longer was the Christian king but a government elected by the people. In the constitution the king was and still is bound to the Lutheran confession, but the various political parties and their representatives are not.

Since World War II, the Social Democratic Party (the Labor Party) has been the major political force in our country. This party has a distinct religious agenda and policy which is in line with caesaropapism. It has made the most of this power, to such an extent that many within the church would call it an abuse of power. The prevailing ideology is that since almost all Norwegians are members of the state church (about 87%), the elected government represents the people in the church. Their leading thinkers hold that "the state is the church" (Castberg, 1953; Børre Knudsen-dommen, 1981). Because the whole people are members of the church and, as such, baptized Christians, it is the people's will that should govern the church and what the church believes. The word for this kind of thinking in German is *Volkskircheideologie*. The church is the people and the people the church. One of the members of the government said it this way upon the appointment of a liberal bishop: "the king (government) leads the way; the church follows." Sadly, this is exactly the case in the church. Popular religiosity and ethical indifference have become normative.

The government further undermines the confession of the church through its legal right to appoint bishops and deans. In the last decades, they have installed bishops with a liberal persuasion. By now eight of eleven bishops are in favor of gay marriages, and the other three are teaching that this is an *adiaphoron*, an issue that is not of such importance that we need to break up ecclesial unity or to fight over it.

What kind of men and women are those who are willing to go along this way, who preach what the people like and what the Social Democratic Party propagates? In the state church system, theological education is offered in state universities, not in confessional seminaries governed by the church itself. Since the Enlightenment, theological education has been dominated by the so-called Historical-Critical Method, over time resulting in the most radical criticism of the Holy Bible and its message. In Norway we have had a free theological institution since 1907, "Menighetsfakultetet." The Menighetsfakultet has educated most of the pastors that held office in the state church for a century. Even though the Historical-Critical Method was accepted there from the start, the Menighetsfakultet managed to safeguard a conservative Lutheran position until the 1960s. It changed its stand on women's ordination in 1973, years after the first female pastor was ordained in Norway in 1961 and this fueled a development away from biblical authority that gradually became a landslide within the Church of Norway. Presently it seems that about half of the professors (five or six of 11) at the faculty are in favor of homosexual marriages.

In Sweden some of the theologians setting the tone have advocated what they call "open revelation" in contrast with "closed revelation." Closed revelation means that what God has revealed about himself and his will has been given in Holy Scripture. Open revelation implies the idea that God continues to reveal himself through history. The Holy Spirit speaks through "the spirit of the times," and it is the bishops who, as leaders of the church, have been given the prophetic office of interpreting this revelation. In such a perspective the Bible is reduced to an accidental expression of "the spirit of its times," conditioned by the interests and hopes of accidental religious groups in ancient Israel. The Bible only reflects the subjective ideas of these groups, and consequently cannot be said to represent absolute truth, far less an infallible source of faith. To the church, then, the task is given to extract what is of "religious value" in the Bible and scrap all else that is contrary to our ideas. We end up with a church that, to a large extent, adapts to popular religion, a religion that Reinhold Niebuhr already in the 1930s characterized like this: "God without wrath permits (a) man without sin through a Christ without cross into an eternity without hell."

This is, of course, nothing else than a postmodern version of subjective religiosity, sharing the basic postmodern rejection of absolute truth and all that is holy, advocating tolerance and openness as its fundamental creed. You may

believe whatever you like as long as you limit yourself to saying that this is "true for me" and as long as you do not confess your faith to be absolute truth. This has become the ultimate requirement for a bishop in the Church of Sweden, and the church of Norway is going down the same path, only a bit slower. Secularization in Europe and Scandinavia not only means that the Constantinian era is coming to an end and the Christian faith no longer has any influence on society. Churches are so secularized, that they are void of a confessional backbone and dilute their message into a wishy-washy humanism.

The adapting of the church to what modern man thinks and holds true is a kind of ecclesial counter-strategy; it is an attempt to halt the flow of people exiting the church and Christian faith by demonstrating that Christendom is relevant to modern man. Paradoxically, while making journalists and mass media more "positive" towards the church, this strategy has had the opposite effect. The churches are being "preached empty." When the church tries to be "relevant" on the conditions set by secular man, it loses its relevance; it has nothing of real importance to say. The sad thing about all this is that the church through all this ceases to be "the salt of the earth." But "if the salt has lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matt 5:13 KJV).

I here have to add that there still are a number of faithful pastors within the state church systems in Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, but their number is diminishing. They often are in very difficult situations, even facing persecution. The church establishment strongly dislikes their presence, and the mass media has often given them a hard time. The confessional movement in Norway, "For Bible and Confession", 40 years ago still was a strong movement within the church, has lost its fevor over the last 20 years. Most pastors participation in this confessional movement now regard it as a heavy burden and unhelpful to their ecclesial careers.

I also have to mention an initiative that was taken four years ago, called *Carissa* (the Latin word for beloved ones, which John the Apostle uses in his first letter when addressing the congregations). The men behind this initiative are ministers and theologians with clear heads and warm hearts. Their goal and hope is to secure a safe haven for confessional ministers and congregations within the state church system through the establishment of a confessional diocese within the church, guaranteeing episcopacy in line with biblical Lutheran faith and practice. The number of ministers supporting this petition was so substantial that the bishops could not ignore them for fear that they would resign, and create a clergy shortage. Consequently, for a few years now there have been a number of meetings and negotiations, but it will probably come to naught. A couple of ministers have already given in and left, and I think more will follow.

The sad story of the downfall of the Lutheran churches in Scandinavia—I have here, of course, mainly concentrated on the situation in my own country—is the story of what happens when false doctrine, unbiblical teaching, is not refuted. It is like gangrene: if not cut off, it will spread and in the end lead to death. The guarding of biblical doctrine to the Christian church is the same as the immune system is to our bodies. It safeguards us from dangerous infections that might threaten life itself. We all know what happens if the immune system fails.

In conclusion, Lutherans are today an endangered species in the Scandinavian countries and the Lutheran faith is threatened with being reduced to a historical parenthesis. The national churches have, as a whole, left their Lutheran and biblical basis; they are now Lutheran in name only, not in reality.

The state church system is gradually coming to an end. In Sweden this already has happened. In Norway the national assembly has decided to dissolve the bond between church and state in 2014. In Denmark there seems to be no such process at present. What is interesting with the cases in Sweden and Norway is that the politicians have wanted to preserve the state church system and thus to be in control up until the time that the biblical and confessional backbone of the churches had been broken. At that point, the churches no longer represent any theological salt that might represent a threat to those in power.

The growth of pluralistic secular societies means the end of the Constantinian era, along with its unified and singular national culture and religion. In such eras of transition there always will be unrest and uncertainty about the future. A number of people are looking back, wanting to reverse the development because of the fear this is creating. Anders Behring Breivik is an extreme representative of this nostalgic trend.

Can there be peace? In a democratic secular society, it is self-evident that tolerance is a basic condition for peace between the different religious and ethnic groups. What is alarming is that the word tolerance also has been given a new meaning. It now implies that it is no longer acceptable to maintain absolute truth or that there is an absolute line between good and evil. The word tolerance has become a crowbar to leverage everybody into relativism and an instrument to change Christian churches into silent cowards, particularly on ethical issues. Thus tolerance has become repressive. For instance, it has become hate speech to preach the biblical message of God's will in holy matrimony, how the violating of the Sixth Commandment is sinful. This may be persecuted under civil law. The strange thing is that this seems only to apply to Christians, but not Muslims.

Can there be peace? We do not know the future. What is happening now in western culture is signaling a more difficult situation for Christian faith. Here we have solemn promises from our Lord:

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid (John 14:27).

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world (John 16:33).

In the end the church of Christ never has been given anything else to build upon than his word. On this foundation we may be of good courage, whatever the world might do to us.

So the Constantinian era is coming to an end. This means that the true Christian church today will gradually find itself in a situation similar to the church of the first three centuries in becoming a despised minority and losing the privileges to which we have become accustomed. This may be an advantage to the church, as it always has been during times of adversity and trouble that the church of Christ has gained health and found her way back to her true identity. Yes, we can be of good courage!

Jan Bygstad
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Book Reviews

***God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* By John C. Lennox. Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2007. 190 pages. Paperback. \$14.99.**

John C. Lennox teaches mathematics at Oxford University, England. He is a committed Christian and an internationally recognized mathematician. His book is a contribution to the debate regarding the universe and its physical laws, the origin of complex biological design, and the purpose of mankind. It comes at a time when many regard evolution as a solid scientific fact, beyond any question. Lennox writes, "The question that is central to this book turns out to be in essence a worldview question: which worldview sits the most comfortable with science—theism or atheism? Has science buried God or not? Let us see where the evidence leads" (13).

Lennox points out that there is a general consensus among scientists that the universe had a beginning. It is also agreed that the universe is incredibly fine-tuned. For example, if the ratio of the nuclear strong force to the electromagnetic force had been different by one part in 10 multiplied by itself 16 times, no stars could have formed. It is also said that, had an alteration in the expansion and contraction forces during the Big Bang event been different by one part in 10 multiplied by itself 55 times, the expansion would have been too rapid for galaxies to form or too slow an expansion with consequent rapid collapse of the entire universe. One scientist, Paul Davies, says, "It seems as though someone has fine-tuned nature's numbers to make the universe. . . . The impression of design is overwhelming" (70). Another, quantum scientist Henry F. Schaefer III, writes, "A Creator must exist. The Big Bang ripples and subsequent scientific findings are clearly pointing to an ex nihilo creation consistent with the first few verses of the book of Genesis" (29). There are numerous other examples of such fine tuning. For instance, the distance of the earth to the sun must be just right. Too near and all the earth's water would evaporate, too far and the earth would be too cold for life. A change of only 2 percent in either direction would cause all life to cease. This fine tuning argues strongly against the universe having formed itself by chance. It points clearly to a supernatural plan.

Lennox then moves on to present evidence of a Creator to be found in the world of living things. He states, however, "There is a widespread feeling that the theory of evolution has swept God away as unnecessary and irrelevant" (85). Lennox quotes a Chinese paleontologist who, at a conference in America, noted the wholesale inclination to accept Darwinism and said, "In China we can criticize Darwinism, but not the government. In America you can criticize the government, but not Darwinism" (93). Actually, Darwin's theory of natural selection assumes that there are the life forms to start with and deals only with

modifications within these life forms by mutations. Mutations or changes in the gene structure of organisms does not create new anything radically new. Moreover, the vast majority of mutations have deleterious effects. Only one in one thousand are non-deleterious. If Darwinism was the explanation of new and radically different forms of life, there should be an enormous number of transitional forms in the fossil record. But this is not the case. Sir Fred Hoyle is quoted as writing, "The Darwinian theory is correct in the small, but not in the large. Rabbits come from other slightly different rabbits, not from either primeval soup or potatoes. Where they come from in the first place is a problem yet to be solved, like much else of a cosmic scale" (98).

Evolution may be divided into three forms. First, there is microevolution, the variation of already existing organs or structures. An example is the mutation of bacteria to resist antibiotics. No one questions this. Second, there is macroevolution, the large scale change or innovation of new organs, structures, and body plans. No solid evidence exists for this. Finally, there is molecular evolution, the emergence of the living cells from non-living materials. There is no evidence of this either, and it is, in fact, far beyond any likelihood of possibility.

Lennox next deals with the question of the origin of life, with the likelihood of living cells having developed entirely by chance from non-living materials. This is the greatest of all challenges to the evolutionary theory. The complexity of the living cell system that is found in all living organisms speaks loud and clear of an intelligent Designer, of an almighty creative God. Lennox quotes geneticist Michael Denton, who states that even the tiniest of bacterial cells weighing less than a millionth of a gram is "a veritable microminiaturized factory containing thousands of exquisitely designed pieces of intricate molecular machinery, made up of 100 thousand million atoms, far more complicated than any machine made by man and absolutely without parallel in the non-living world" (116). Evolution has no answer to this challenge. Again, nature points to the Creator.

Finally, Lennox treats the question of how living forms replicate the next generation of living forms. Science tells us that a chemical called Deoxyribose Nucleic Acid (DNA) functions as the genetic code that controls the replication process. So the DNA in the fertilized sperm of a human being directs the development in the mother's body of a child. Here, Bill Gates is quoted as saying, "DNA is like a computer program, but far more advanced than any software we have created" (136). Again, the evolutionist would have us believe that such a code developed by blind chance!

Most books promoting the concept of intelligent design stop short of identifying the designer with a Creator God. But, to his credit, Lennox does not. In the epilogue, he writes, "Long before Aristotle, the book of Genesis was penned. It starts with the words, 'In the beginning God created the

heavens and the earth.’ This statement stands in complete contrast with the other mythical cosmogonies of the time— like the Babylonian, in which the gods were part of the stuff of the universe.” Genesis claims there is a Creator God who exists independently of the universe (177–178). Lennox then quotes the opening verses of John’s Gospel and says, “At this point, we once again encounter the statement of the Bible, that God has spoken in the most profound and direct way possible. He, the Word who is a person, has become human, to demonstrate fully that the ultimate truth behind the universe is personal” (178).

Lennox closes his book with the verdict, “In conclusion, I submit that far from science having buried God, not only do the results of science point toward his existence, but the scientific enterprise itself is validated by his existence” (179). *God’s Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* is a valuable addition to Christian apologetics.

Paul A. Zimmerman

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***The Revelation of Jesus Christ: The Cross and the Crown of Our Savior and Lord.* By G. Davis Dean, Jr. Pittsburgh: RoseDog Books, 2009. 305 Pages. Paperback. \$27.00**

This is a solid, non-technical, exposition of the book of Revelation written by a Lutheran layman. Davis Dean, who received a Master of Arts degree from Concordia Theological Seminary in 1996, blends reverent regard for the Word of God, careful research on the English text of Revelation, and a clear Lutheran identity in his section-by-section interpretation of a biblical book that is often avoided by Lutheran pastors and laymen alike. Dean sought to offer an exposition that was free from the technical discussions of a commentary written for pastors or scholars (e.g., no footnotes appear in this volume) and yet be much more theologically substantive than most popular Christian literature on Revelation. He regularly notes the differences between Amillennialist and Premillennialist interpretations of various scenes of Revelation, including chapter 20, and is unabashed in expressing his own convictions about the Christological focus of Revelation as a Lutheran. It is apparent that Dean experienced significant spiritual growth through his study and writing of this book, and now wants readers to share what he found: “My hope would be to bless the lay reader above all with an increased love for God and a strengthened faith and hope in the Son, as well as an increased general knowledge of Revelation” (4).

Charles A. Gieschen

***The Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel.* By Craig R. Koester. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008. 245 pages. Paperback. \$21.00.**

Craig R. Koester's book conveys a scholar's depth of theological insight in layman's terms. Written for the non-specialist, the book is designed to appeal to a broad readership. Koester's prose is simple and engaging, unencumbered by technical language. Overall, it is a very enjoyable read.

Koester poses fundamental theological questions of the Gospel of John concerning the nature of God, human beings, and the world. He devotes individual chapters to God, the world and its people, Jesus, crucifixion and resurrection, the Spirit, faith, and discipleship. Working with the present form of the text as a unified composition, he traces the principal figure or theme of each chapter through successive narratives in the Gospel.

The book has a few shortcomings. Although methodologically sound, Koester's approach becomes tedious by the book's end as he repeatedly draws upon many of the same narratives chapter after chapter. Koester overlooks John's distinctive presentation of Jesus as the Son of Man, devoting only one paragraph to this important christological title in his discussion of Jesus as the Son of God. Koester defines atonement exclusively in terms of reconciliation between God and his wayward creation. Jesus' sacrificial death manifests divine love, but does not propitiate divine wrath. The Lamb of God "takes away" sin by taking away unbelief, not guilt, and evoking faith in a God who so loved the world. According to Koester, atonement in the Johannine sense is not substitutionary. Baptism and the Lord's Supper receive short shrift, relegated tellingly to the chapter on discipleship rather than the Spirit. Sacramental references and allusions, when acknowledged, typically occupy the secondary level of meaning at best. New birth "of water and the Spirit" is primarily a metaphor for entering life in relationship to God evoked by faith with or without baptism (137-143). "Eating" is primarily a metaphor for partaking of the crucified Jesus by faith and secondarily a possible reference to participation in the Lord's Supper (207-209). These are the most obvious examples. Recognition of John's pervasive use of sacramental imagery throughout the Gospel is sadly wanting. As a result, the Spirit's sacramental disclosure of the risen Jesus present and active in the world to which the Gospel of John attests is minimized.

Nevertheless, this book warrants a place next to Koester's *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*. Whether preparing a sermon, Bible study, or online course, this book will prove its worth as an overview of Johannine theology. It would also serve as a good book to whet a prospective one's appetite for the theology of John.

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The Letter to the Philippians. By G. Walter Hansen. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI and Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2009. 355 + xxxiii pages. Hardcover, \$44.00.

Authors of the Pillar New Testament Commentary series, of which Hansen's *Philippians* is the twelfth volume, seek to "make clear the text of Scripture as we have it" (thus series editor, D.A. Carson, ix). A goal of the series is to present an "even-handed openness to the text" leading to a more reverential appreciation of God's Word than those whose vaunted objectivity is really no more than "a vain chimera" (ix). In keeping with these intents, Hansen considers the following items in his "Introduction" (1-35): the historical setting of the church in Philippi; the nature of the letter; the occasion of the letter; and a preview of two themes—the Gospel of Christ and the community in Christ. By reading *Philippians* in light of the Roman character of Philippi (it was a Roman *colonia*, according to Acts 16:12), one gains an appreciation of Paul's report that his imprisonment had become manifest to the "whole palace guard" (1:13; cf. "Caesar's household," 4:22), his references to our heavenly "citizenship" (1:27; 3:20), his descriptions of outside opposition to the faith (1:28-30), his unusual use of the emperor's titles "Lord" and "Savior" for Christ (2:11; 3:20-21), his sorrow over those who had abandoned their faith on account of the pressures of the surrounding culture (3:18-19), and his promise—not of a *pax Romana*—but of the "peace of God" to guard the believers in Christ Jesus (4:7; cf. 1:2; 4:9). The whole letter, as is generally known, "exudes a joyful spirit and warm affection" (1). Such awareness allows Hansen to discuss "ten expressions of friendship language" in *Philippians* (8-11) and the likely monetary nature of the gifts conveyed to Paul by the *Philippians*' emissary Epaphroditus (2:25; 4:18; pages 19-20, 42, 203, 209-210). Hansen seems to favor Ephesus as the place where Paul was imprisoned when he wrote the letter (1:7, 13, 14, 17; pages 23-24, 30), although he shows an awareness of scholarly arguments for Rome (20-22) and Caesarea (22), and ultimately decides that all such discussion is "speculative and therefore inconclusive" (25).

While demonstrating an impressive command of the scholarship on *Philippians* (cf. Select Bibliography, xviii-xxxiii), Hansen decides most issues exegetically, grounding conclusions on insights contained in a verse-by-verse exposition of the letter (37-332). Hence, Hansen's *Philippians* represents an extremely satisfying blend of both biblical exegesis and scholarly exposition, keeping an eye both on what has been said about the letter at scholarly conferences, yet never losing sight of what *Philippians* brings to the church in today's world. Many Lutherans will approve.

John G. Nordling

***Christ and Caesar: The Gospel and the Roman Empire in the Writings of Paul and Luke.* By Seyoon Kim. Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008. 228 + xvi pages. Paperback. \$24.00.**

At the culmination of the Christ Hymn in Philippians 2, St. Paul asserts that “Jesus Christ is Lord [κύριος], to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:11 ESV). Later Paul states that from heaven “we await a Savior [σωτήρα], the Lord Jesus Christ [κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν]” (Phil 3:20 ESV). Does Paul betray in such passages a kind of anti-imperial polemic, pitting the theological Lordship of Jesus against the political lordship of Caesar? Such scholars as R.A. Horsley, J.D. Crossan, J.L. Reed, N.T. Wright, and D.G. Horrell typically answer the question in the affirmative: Paul waxes subversive in such places (cf. xiv–xv) and calls for nothing less than the violent overthrow of the contemporary Roman order. However, Kim argues throughout that the anti-imperial interpretation is actually difficult to sustain when subjected to scrutiny. That same observation holds for Luke’s depiction of Jesus and the first Christians in the book’s second half (75–190). While Luke was aware that the Christian gospel could be perceived as anti-imperial in some quarters, the consistent portrayal in Luke-Acts is of a Jesus who committed no crime against the empire (e.g., Luke 23:13–25, 47) and of a Christianity that even Pilate, Felix, and Festus knew was upright and law-abiding (see Acts 24:22–27; 25:18; 26:30–32).

Christians did, to be sure, refer to Jesus as “Lord” (*kyrios*) in the awareness that this was one of the imperial titles used of Caesar at Rome. Other terms used to sustain imperialism were *parousia* (“arrival”), *apantesis* (“meeting”), *epiphania* (“appearance”), *euangelion* (“good news”), *ekklesia* (“assembly”), *dikaiosyne* (“uprightness”), *pistis* (“trust”), *eirene* (“peace”; cf. *pax Romana*), *elpis* (“hope”), *eleutheria* (“liberty”), and *katallage* (“reconciliation”). Here there is space to engage only *kyrios* (“lord”). Kim demonstrates that κύριος actually came from the Old Testament and traditional Judaism (29, 44, 68, 151), not Romanism. Thus, while the Christian terminology “overlapped” that of contemporary usage, Paul alluded to the Lordship of the Messiah to present Jesus “in a majestic and glorious way” (69). Jesus, not Caesar, was the Christians’ true “Lord and Savior,” yet this recognition would not have entailed an attempt to overthrow the Roman order by revolution. Jesus’ messianic battle was principally against Satan, not Caesar; so while Kim can write of the “diabolic” nature of the Roman empire (110, 116, 123, 131, 177, 182, 189, etc.), he maintains that neither Jesus nor Christianity were against the imperial Roman order, but rather sin, death, Satan, and other spiritual evils. Such argumentation seems suspiciously Lutheran. That is because Kim lets the scriptural evidence speak for itself, and passages plainly support such Lutheran doctrines (e.g., the two kingdoms). So while much is of interest to Lutherans, the arguments never seem novel nor even that interesting: “For many, the lessons drawn here may be only too obvious and familiar” (200). In the New Testament circles wherein Kim runs, however, the arguments counter

tendencies to reduce Jesus to political messiah and Christianity to political correctness and social engineering.

John G. Nordling

***Jesus, Paul, and the People of God: A Theological Dialogue with N.T. Wright.* Edited by Nicholas Perrin and Richard B. Hays. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2011. 294 pages. Paperback, \$24.00.**

In an age of fragmentation and specialization, few contemporary theologians have captured the public imagination. One man, though, draws a crowd wherever he goes. Former Bishop of Durham, New Testament Scholar N.T. Wright is every bit the rock star of biblical studies, and deservedly so. He is not only a churchman, but also a scholar, a vivid writer, and a wonderful raconteur. His quick wit and engaging banter has made him the most popular of speakers, and worthy combatant for the likes of J.D. Crossan or Bart Ehrman. His *Resurrection of the Son of God* has won the admiration of many traditional Christians for its unapologetic defense and proclamation of the bodily resurrection. His work on Paul and the New Perspective has been feted by many, even while drawing fire from Evangelicals and Lutherans.

Given his celebrity status, it is no surprise that a host of scholars gathered together to discuss his work at the 2010 Wheaton Theology Conference. The conference, which forms the basis of this book, explored the many and varied aspects of Wright's theology. Almost all the essays are worth reading. Whatever you say about Wright, he almost never fails to entertain, and he tends to bring out the best in his friends and critics.

On the positive side, Wright has reinvigorated New Testament studies with a concern for history. He is not content with a Bultmanian Jesus, who died and rose, but whose life remains basically unknowable. He is keen to introduce the world to the Jesus of history. For Wright, the Jesus whom we worship must be the same Jesus whose earthly life "is reliably attested in the canonical gospels" (42). Accordingly, he fights against a theology that takes Paul seriously while relegating the Gospels to background material.

According to Wright, it is imperative that we understand that Kingdom Theology (the Gospels) goes hand in hand with Cross Theology (the Pauline Epistles.) He emphasizes again and again that Christianity has to be about more than "going to heaven." Indeed, Wright would emphasize that we, as the people of God, do for the world what Christ did for Israel—that is, we actualize the kingdom of God in the world.

Now, admittedly, many of Wright's statements are grand; occasionally, however, they veer towards the grandiose. For instance, he says things like, "I think that the Western church has simply not really known what the Gospels

were there for" (133). Wright lays much blame on Lutherans, who supposedly have separated the cross from the world and turned Jesus into a distinctly other-worldly figure. He summarily and airily dismisses the ideas that Jesus lived "a sinless life in order that his atoning sacrifice would be valid," or that "Jesus was fulfilling the mosaic law in a life of 'active obedience'" (142). Yet, to be fair, Wright's criticism goes back even further, citing the Apostle's Creed as an example of confession that speaks of Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection, while ignoring his life and kingdom-work (141).

What does Wright offer in the place of active obedience and substitutionary atonement? He offers Kingdom Theology, that is, a world in which the gospel is put into action. This world is surprisingly vague, but includes not only justice, but also a creation that is "wisely stewarded by the gentle, wise governance of human beings" (272), and "a humanness" that does not "diminish resources, relationships, and responsibilities into money, sex, and power" (275). When Wright begins to speak this way, as he does so often, he appears to offer more of a party platform than a christological vision. It is a wonderful world Wright imagines, as a "kingdom-bearing people" address such social concerns (149).

What is lacking in Wright's theology, it would appear, is the reality of sin and its ongoing power, not simply in the world, but within the Christian. While it would be hard to say that Wright denies the atonement, it appears to play little role in his vision of Christ and the work of salvation. That is not to say that Wright does not raise interesting questions. We do have to ask ourselves in what way the life of Christ, and not just his death and resurrection, matters to us. Wright's encouragement to read the Gospels is an especially welcome challenge to the tendency to make the gospel abstract, or to those who seem to understand the Gospels as simply background material to the primary theology of Paul. Yet, far too often Wright appears to commit the same error of which he accuses others. That is to say, his vision of the Gospels has a way of overpowering what the evangelists actually say, with everything simply falls into Wright's kingdom-building paradigm of social justice and societal betterment. One wonders, in the end, whether Christ's work is integral to the whole enterprise.

Wright also lacks any deep appreciation for the church. In that sense, he is the ultimate protestant, seeming to believe, as he does, that the early church got it wrong, as did the western church, but now, lo and behold, the truth has been rediscovered. Because of this lack of appreciation for the church, perhaps, he does not see the life of Jesus as preparation and template for the life of the church. He sees healing miracles as the way to social betterment, but not towards baptism. He sees feeding miracles as the way Jesus sets the table for our own acts of mercy, which is true. What he does not see is the way in which Christ's feeding leads to the Supper, which finally is the only meal that will satisfy poor and rich alike. For

Wright, the sacraments are simply “acted symbols,” instead of the very reality of Christ’s kingdom-building. Wright is right to spur the church on in acts of mercy towards the world. What needs to be added is that the world needs even more to be brought into the church, where people will be truly healed, washed, and fed. So, we may say with Wright, the church is about kingdom-building, but ultimately this kingdom is not of this world.

Peter J. Scaer

***Religion and Resistance in Early Judaism: Greek Readings in 1 Maccabees and Josephus.* By John G. Nordling. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010. xxiii + 361 pages. Paperback, \$34.99.**

A good language reader should accomplish at least two things: it should serve to increase reading skill in the language in question, and it should engender within the student greater familiarity with the historical and cultural context of the language being learned. Thanks to a judicious selection of texts, a lucid introduction, and carefully written explanatory notes, John Nordling’s *Religion and Resistance in Early Judaism* succeeds on both counts. While there are deficiencies that should be addressed in subsequent editions, these make the text hardly less valuable for its intended purpose.

Following a list of abbreviations and a bibliography, a 19-page introduction provides the student with the necessary historical and literary background to appreciate the significance of the texts included in this reader. The texts themselves occupy only 60 pages, 20 for 1 Maccabees and 40 for Josephus—a fact that should render this volume less intimidating to the student who might otherwise be in dread of a thick volume of pure Greek. The texts are divided into brief selections, each of which is preceded by a brief introduction of its own. Following the 1 Maccabees texts are 26 pages of explanatory notes, while Josephus gets a full 182 pages of notes. Concluding the volume is a 171-page glossary, which makes it possible for the student to carry and use this volume without the need for additional resources. An in-depth study of these texts will, of course, require the use of a stand-alone dictionary, but for the goal of quickly gaining linguistic facility, the glossary that is provided is more than sufficient.

Given the wealth of explanatory material in the introductions and notes, together with the glossary, no intermediate student should find this volume too difficult to be useful. The notes are particularly helpful, providing guidance in actually reading the Greek. Nevertheless, the notes could be improved in a subsequent edition by the removal of frequent unnecessary abbreviations. I found myself turning repeatedly to the list of abbreviations at the front of the volume, only to find that the abbreviation that had me perplexed was not listed. For example, the note on 1 Maccabees 1:35 reads,

"The subj. of ἐγένοντο seems delib. vague. It might refer [to] the irreglig. Jews mentioned in 1:34. The statement reinforces the author's neg. view . . . during the dire circums. recounted" (44). The abbreviation of "subject" may be called for, but "deliberately," "irreligious," "negative" (when not used grammatically), and "circumstances" should not be abbreviated. This occurs throughout the notes and gives the impression that the author's first written draft was transcribed without expansion.

A more serious problem concerns the formatting of the Greek text. Throughout the text, strangely placed extra spaces inexplicably appear and disrupt the flow of the text. Sometimes these spaces come within words themselves, such as 1 Maccabees 1:11, where "Ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις" becomes "Ἐν ταῖς ἡμ ἔραις." Breathing marks are also missing from some of the initial vowels. Problems like these can range from being simply irritating to posing a real difficulty for the inexperienced student. Furthermore, the Cardo font is not easy on the eyes and should be replaced in a future edition with something more legible, such as the Times New Roman polytonic Greek font.

These difficulties can and should be addressed in subsequent editions. In the meantime, *Religion and Resistance* remains a valuable textbook for students who wish to improve their Greek after completing introductory coursework. Any student of the New Testament would also benefit from familiarity with the texts included in this volume.

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***And She was a Christian: Why Do Believers Commit Suicide?* By Peter Preus. Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2011. 183 Pages. Paperback. \$25.99**

The literature on the Christian perspective of depression and suicide is quite large; the Lutheran contribution to this effort is, however, sadly lacking. Apart from a few pages in pastoral theology manuals and the occasional journal article, the topic of depression and suicide is rarely, if ever, explored in-depth. In addition, with ever new discoveries concerning the illness of depression, new material on how the Christian (and pastor) can most effectually minister the gospel to those affected is always helpful. Peter Preus offers such a resource in this work.

Preus draws from the most intimate of experiences with the subject of depression and suicide and does not shy away from this experience. Preus' wife, Jean, committed suicide after suffering from severe, clinical depression for a number of years. Preus recounts Jean's story and constantly refers back to her

situation and those it affected. Preus is adamant throughout this book that the victims of suicide have been misrepresented in the church, and that their family and friends have not been cared for adequately. This has developed what Preus terms the stigma of suicide, the unjustifiable labeling and/or judging of a person, in this case the victim of suicide (11). Preus attempts in this book to put an end to the stigma that accompanies the suicide of a Christian. Along with the stigma, he identifies various paradoxes that accompany the suicide of a Christian and deals with these throughout the book.

Preus divides his book into five parts. He begins with the story of his wife and the current state of the church's response to the suicide of a Christian. He then proceeds "to provide a strategy for pastors and Christian educators and counselors who offer hope to suicide survivors" (18). In part two he traces the history of the church's articulation of suicide. In this he challenges modern theology as it attempts to add things—obedience, reason, self-esteem, and optimism—to saving faith. Part three deals with the issue of suicide from the perspective of sin and grace, articulating a solid Lutheran theology of both. Parts four and five deal in particular with practical applications of the gospel for the survivors. Preus adds two appendices: the sermon from his wife's funeral and resources for suicide prevention.

Preus addresses what is becoming more and more of a "hot-button" issue in the church. He challenges misrepresentation of depression, faith, and grace with solid Lutheran theology. In addition, he delves into the mind of the depressed and suicidal in order to give a picture to the readers. Not afraid to call suicide a sin, but also not willing to damn the Christian who commits suicide to hell, Preus provides a much-needed and sensitive study of the subject that is likely to challenge the reader, comfort the bereaved, and cause interesting and profitable discussion. The paperback is short and easy to read, perfect for group study. Northwestern Publishing House also offers a free, downloadable Bible study. A must-read for pastors and Christian educators who, when encountering such situations, will desire to administer the pure Gospel in all its sweetness.

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Counsel and Conscience: Lutheran Casuistry and Moral Reasoning after the Reformation. By Benjamin T.G. Mayes. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011. 250 pages. Hardcover. 69.99 €.

That traditional Lutheran theology holds moral behavior in high regard may surprise some contemporary scholars and Lutheran pastors. Works on the law and ethics in Lutheranism during the 20th-century increasingly challenged

the place of a developed, careful moral theology that draws from Scriptural commands and the natural law as foundational sources for human action, to the extent that any instructive use for the law in many Lutheran circles is called into question. (For a summary work on this development, see Scott Murray, *Law, Life, and the Living God*, St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002.) However, Mayes demonstrates that, far from there being concern over whether there is a third function of the law, Lutheran pastors and theologians of the late 16th through the mid-18th century—the period of Lutheran Orthodoxy—explicitly sought direction from God’s law in order to inform how better to love their neighbors.

The bulk of Mayes’ scholarly effort is to examine a particular collection of Lutheran casuistry from the 17th century, *Thesaurus Consiliorum Et Decisionum* [Treasury of Counsels and Decisions] (1671), edited by Georg Dedekenn and Johann Ernst Gerhard (son of the famous dogmatician). The *Treasury* was essentially a collection of pastoral counsels, consistorial judgments on church law, and official responses by faculties, ministeria, or respected individuals to difficult theological or pastoral questions (28–37). The *Treasury* was organized topically, covering both theological and ethical questions. Besides examining the *Treasury*’s material, organization, purpose of publication, and method of moral reasoning, Mayes also considers in detail the counsels on marriage as a case study. His findings are that theologians relied on a number of sources in offering their counsels, and that, due to the complexity of some cases and differences in methods of applying source material, there is some diversity in the guidance given in marriage cases. While the detailed consideration of the *Treasury* itself and of marriage cases may be of interest only to specialists, Mayes’ discussion of the methods of moral reasoning among Lutherans in the 17th century is of broader interest.

The primary method of moral reasoning of Lutherans in the 17th century was casuistic. “‘Casuistry,’ broadly conceived, is any effort to apply general moral principles in particular circumstances, particularly when two otherwise valid principles conflict, or when, for whatever reasons, we simply do not know how to apply our principles in our current circumstances” (16). By considering carefully the circumstances, a person would learn which principle(s) of the law should be followed. The choice of action was made with direction from the conscience; however, conscience was to be informed by the law of God.

It is important to recognize that Lutheran casuistry differed significantly from Roman Catholic casuistry, and that collections like the *Treasury* explicitly distanced themselves from Roman Catholic methods. Lutherans rejected Roman Catholic manuals of casuistry because they mixed law and gospel: they misled people into thinking that if the right principle and rules are followed, a person could avoid sin altogether. Rather than clarifying principles and cir-

cumstances for the conscience, they clouded them. This is a subtle yet important difference. Lutheran casuistry did seek the good action, while yet recognizing that an absolutely exhaustive treatment of laws is impossible. Because new situations and conditions continually arise, uncertainty over action cannot be completely overcome. The gospel needs to accompany a careful consideration of the law, in order to comfort those anxious about difficult choices. Roman Catholic manuals suggested that sin could be altogether avoided, sidelining the need to receive the gospel. Essentially, Roman Catholic casuistry hoped to assuage doubts about God's grace. If people could avoid sin, they would not need to be anxious, wondering if they would receive God's grace. Lutherans, on the other hand, offered guidance not to assuage doubts about God's grace (which was accomplished through the unconditional preaching of the gospel), but to overcome doubts about what to do (22–26, 29). To put it another way, the Roman Catholic method of casuistry was rejected because it found ways to permit sinful action while yet denying that the action was a sin. Lutheran casuistry called a sin a sin, and attempted to present the course of action that would avoid sin, while upholding the gospel as the true remedy for sin.

Collections of casuistry such as the *Treasury* differed from theological counsels in that they catalogued and arranged cases for reference in order to treat theological and ethical topics in a systematic and predictable way (34). Thus, collections provided a reference for consciences, rather than direction that had to be followed. When a person faced a case of difficult circumstances, collections of casuistry presented a method of reasoning and argument (106). In other words, persons were not expected always to follow the judgments laid out in the collections, because of variations in circumstances. Instead, consciences could be guided by the method and rationale of moral reasoning through the collected examples (44).

Scripture was always upheld by the Lutherans as the highest authority for theological and ethical understanding. However, "when Scripture is not specific," then the "aristocratic" method is to be used. Individuals should seek counsel from the wisest, such as pastors, theologians, and those gifted in wisdom and knowledge (65–67). If Scripture did not offer applicable counsel, then one could determine the "logical consequences of Scripture" (106). If a decision still was not clear, the aristocratic method relied on further sources, subordinate to Scripture: "church law, civil law, local custom, and natural law" as well as conscience (68–69, 106). All of these sources required intelligence to understand the variety of principles, logic to discern the connections between the principles and the case at hand, and prudence to determine the proper action to take in the circumstances of the case. The variety of sources combined with the complexity of cases suggested the need to rely on wise authorities, including the judgments of previous, similar cases. Nevertheless, the editors of the *Treasury* and other collections did not urge their readers simply to follow

previous judgments, but to consider the logic of argument, method of reasoning, circumstances of the judgment, and their comparability to the case at hand (68–69).

Mayes' study suggests that Lutheran ethics of the 17th century was actively concerned about ethics and relied on numerous, established sources and a developed method for determining right action. Importantly, in contrast to Roman Catholic casuistry, Lutheran casuistry did not set up another authority than Scripture, arbitrating the Scriptural command with the situation of the person. Instead, it presented the application of Scripture to dogmatic and ethical cases, so that the logic of the decision could be observed (40–41). It offered an aid in the proper application of Scripture, not an authoritative directive for action. The individual, after prudent consideration and consultation with the wise, was encouraged to act according to his informed conscience. The conscience is not merely the preference of the individual, but the judge of action that is still ruled by God's law. Scripture, the other sources for determining action, and the guidance of the wise served to keep the individual conscience uninjured (70).

Finally, Mayes also shows that Lutheran theologians of the 17th century recognized the close relationship between theory and practice. The *Treasury* was not merely a manual for ethics, but a manual of theology. Cases included complex questions of belief and understanding. Books of casuistry "aid pastors in the conduct of their ministry, especially in their duty to instruct and console consciences" (106). This required a right understanding of the faith. The word of God grants both right understanding and conviction, and empowers and directs the practices that bear the fruit of good works. The word of God enlightens the regenerate nature with the result that it does the will of God (61–62). In this way, Lutheran books of casuistry included both doctrine and practice, and show the deep connection between the two.

By the mid-18th century, however, a rigorous Lutheran ethical practice grounded in careful understanding of doctrine was waning. In spite of the differences articulated by Lutheran casuists, the general understanding of casuistry had become that portrayed by Roman Catholics: casuistry was seen as seeking exceptions to the law (204). Further, in the second half of the 18th century, conscience oriented to a law outside of itself was criticized in favor of "an inwardly felt conscience. This type of *vox-Dei* conscience, which was not seen as being much darkened by human sinfulness, became more prevalent in the latter half of the eighteenth century. With norms internal to the conscience, there was no longer any great need for instruction from casuistry" (204–5). The role of Scripture and other authorities in instructing the conscience was abandoned. "For Kant and others in the late eighteenth century, the conscience brings moral information with itself and does not need external authority" and it is to act in a universally consistent way (205). Coupled with this, if the

conscience merely acted in a universal way, then anyone with understanding and diligence to understand the law could determine such cases, without the need of the rigorous method and several sources previously used (205–6). A slackness toward moral theology has characterized Lutheranism ever since.

Mayes writes in a clear and organized style, packing much information and explanation into each section. The one exception is his excessively brief discussion of probabilism and related ethical methods (22–24). Mayes' writing remains clear, but the concepts themselves are so tortuous that further explanation is needed for most readers. This volume is highly recommended for specialists interested in manuals of casuistry and marriage cases. It is also highly recommended for pastors and theologians interested in the Lutheran moral tradition and for those who are unaware that the tradition is so rich. This book could be a catalyst for restoring an understanding of the law and deep moral reflection as informative for the conscience and right action.

Gifford A. Grobien

***Good and Bad Ways to Think About Religion and Politics.* By Robert Benne. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. 120 pages.**

Once again Robert Benne has provided thinking Christians with a carefully reasoned and profoundly *Lutheran* approach to political involvement. It is a good follow-up on his earlier books, *The Paradoxical Vision: A Public Theology for the Twenty-first Century* (Fortress, 1995), *Ordinary Saints: An Introduction to the Christian Life* (Fortress, 2003), and *Reasonable Ethics: A Christian Approach to Social, Economic, and Political Concerns* (CPH, 2005). Avoiding the pressures of modernity to sequester religious convictions in the realm of the private, as well as activists to the right and the left who mistake their political ideology with divine revelation, Benne charts a different path, one of critical engagement. Liberalism can become the shadow of the fundamentalism it deplores. Tolerance becomes rigidly intolerant. Nothing is quite as legalistic as liberalism. Benne demonstrates how the principle of "the separation of church and state" is not to be distorted to prevent a free interaction of religion and politics: "Engagement, yes; straight-line connection, no" (81). Freedom of religion does not mean freedom from religion, so that religious voices are excluded from the public arena. Individual believers as well as corporate communities of faith may not be deprived of the right to express their moral convictions in the secular realm.

Benne is rightly impatient with denominational agencies and leadership that too easily presume to speak for the faithful on a wide range of civic issues where equally committed Christians may draw different conclusions without violating biblical truth or creedal standards. Conversant with theology and political theory, Benne urges Christians to approach politics in a way that

results neither in “fusion” or “separation” but “critical engagement.” Lutherans are equipped for such engagement with our understanding of God’s two governments and the necessity of the political use of the law.

This short book is abundant with theological insights resonating from a Lutheran understanding of law, creation, and vocation. Conversational in style, it would easily be adaptable for use in adult education forums within the congregation. (A study guide for this book is available at www.lcmslifeconference.org.) To play on the title of one Benne’s previous books, this volume speaks to “ordinary saints” who have a vocation as citizens. It is highly recommended as a text that will challenge Christians to think more carefully and clearly about this worldly calling.

John T. Pless

***Luther’s Spirituality*. Edited and translated by Philip D. Krey and Peter D.S. Krey. Classics of Western Spirituality Series. New York: Paulist Press, 2007. 296 pages.**

This is a sampling of Luther’s spiritual writings organized under three headings: Luther’s spirituality in a late-Medieval context, teaching spirituality; and “A New Path to Prayer.” Most of the selections are available in the American Edition of *Luther’s Works*, although several have been freshly translated with an eye toward making the reformer speak in inclusive language. The “Scholia on Psalm 5: On Hope” was rendered into English for the first time for this volume. The preface by Timothy J. Wengert identifies spirituality as reflecting “the down-to-earth approach to the gospel” (xv) evident in Luther’s theology. Wengert notes “that at Luther’s hands medieval piety not only received criticism but found a new home” (xv). A general introduction is provided by Jane Strohl in which she suggests that Luther’s spirituality is best seen as the faith of a “wounded man” in light of the eschatological horizon of the Gospel. She rightly observes that Luther’s spirituality was concerned not with a spiritualistic retreat from the world, but with a more profound discipleship in the context of the mundane concerns of family and day-to-day life.

The late Heiko Oberman is credited with advising the editors in their choice and arrangement of materials. Oberman is well-known for his insistence that Luther must not be understood as a modern man but one who lived with an apocalyptic view of history where the devil is on the attack. Demonstrating this theme in Oberman’s reading of Luther are numerous selections from Luther’s correspondence, commentaries, and devotional tracts that urge the Christian to learn the art of trusting Christ’s promises in the face of demonic terrorist assaults on the conscience. This is exemplified by the inclusion of Luther’s letter to Jerome Weller on how to defy the evil one with mockery

grounded in God's word. This letter is one of the several writings found in Theodore Tappert's classic, *Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel*.

While bearing marks of continuity with medieval traditions of spirituality, Luther's reformational insight of justification of the unrighteous by faith alone trickles through every aspect of his care of souls. The Reformation is also a reformation of spirituality, demonstrated by the inclusion of "The Freedom of the Christian." Luther's application of the theology of the cross to the Christian life is demonstrated in his sermon from Holy Saturday, 1530, "Sermon at Coburg on Cross and Suffering," and "Psalm 117: The Art that Cannot be Mastered."

Luther's spirituality was lived through prayer and vocation. He intended the catechism not only to be learned but to be prayed. This is especially evident in "A Simple Way to Pray, for Master Peter the Barber," which is fittingly included in the final section of the book, "A New Path to Prayer." Also included in this section are excerpts from the Large Catechism and the texts of several of Luther's hymns. The book concludes with a helpful bibliography of books and journal articles on aspects of Luther's spirituality.

Luther's Spirituality is an accessible resource for those who seek to learn more about Luther's understanding of discipleship and the Christian life, the use of God's word and prayer. It lends itself to both devotional reading and use in adult education settings in the congregation.

John T. Pless

***Proverbs.* By Andrew E. Steinmann. Concordia Commentary Series. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009. 719 pages. Hardback, \$49.99.**

Once again, the Concordia Commentary series receives another erudite contribution from Andrew Steinmann, who, as I write this, has scored a hat trick for the now 20-year-old project of Concordia Publishing House (Daniel [2008], Proverbs [2009], Ezra-Nehemiah [2010]). Readers familiar with the series should not need any lengthy discussion of its unabashedly Lutheran hermeneutical presuppositions, such as expounding Law and Gospel, the sacraments, ecclesiology, and, ultimately, "that which promotes Christ" (xiii).

Steinmann's work in Proverbs is saturated with these convictions, which goes all the way down to his foundational understanding of biblical wisdom: "the concept of wisdom is completely theocentric and Christocentric. Without this understanding of wisdom, one cannot fathom the role of the Gospel throughout Proverbs. Wisdom is to be comprehended as God's gracious gift to his people in Christ" (24). As regards Proverbs, then, "the theme that unites the book is Christ as God's Wisdom, and no passages can be properly interpreted if one's understanding of any part of Proverbs is not informed by this

aspect of the Gospel" (44–45). An example of unmistakable faithfulness to this belief is Steinmann's almost excessive reminder that the "righteous" person throughout Proverbs is (forensically) justified by grace (alone) through faith (alone).

The commentary proper quickly reminded me of Steinmann's linguistic aptitude. His textual notes integrate an impressive range of comparative material, statistics on particular words/phrases, probable Aramaisms, and other illuminating features (esp. 8:22, 30; 22:6; 22:20; 30:1; 31:1, 27). Yet Steinmann does not pretend to have all the answers, which is refreshing to hear now and then (e.g., the grammatical difficulties of 12:25–27). He handles the text reverently.

Interpreting Proverbs as Christian Scripture, of course, forces the theologian's hand on a number of weighty issues. Steinmann routinely explains the book's "idealism" eschatologically, inviting frequent recourse to Jesus' discourses (among numerous other NT associations). But he also acknowledges Proverbs' inherent ambiguity (e.g., 13:5 as "purposely elliptical" [317]), and so commends the book's "earthly" value for the Christian as well, without in any way becoming literalistic (e.g., disciplining with rods in 13:24).

Steinmann's insistence that "wisdom" in 8:22–31 (and 3:19, noteworthy [120]) is a "hypostasis" and not a personification (22, 23, 210) felt somewhat reactionary and left me wanting more. Perhaps this discussion was articulated with someone like Tremper Longman in mind, who, contra Steinmann, stresses "wisdom" in 8:22–31 as a personification of Yahweh's wisdom and not a hypostasis. To this extent, Steinmann's substantiating reference to Longman as "A recent commentator who rightly interprets Wisdom in 8:22–31 as Christ" (216, n. 18) is, given their dissimilarity, an oversimplification of Longman's position, who, furthermore, prefers the language of NT "association" and not "identification." Even so, this quibble should not divert anyone from the fact that Steinmann's penetrating work has given Lutheran commentary on Proverbs a tough act to follow.

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***Making African Christianity: Africans Reimagining Their Faith in Colonial South Africa.* By Robert J. Houle. Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2011. 311 Pages. Hardback. \$80.00.**

American revivalism or African reimagination? While the author, Robert J. Houle, suggests the latter, it appears that the book better represents the former. The focus of the book is the history of a small group of Christians

found in the area surrounding South Africa, specifically the American Board of Missions (ABM) and the American Zulu Mission (AZM). The value of this book comes in the historical accounts, with some of the most interesting information coming from the literature included in the endnotes. In this regard, this book is well worth the time for any student of history. The political motivations of the book become tiresome, however, as the author places a greater emphasis on the secular liberation of the Zulu Christians than he does on the sacred.

As far as the Christian environment of the time, the author recognizes the ineffectiveness of the preaching of the American missionaries. The missionaries failed to accept the traditional veneration rites of the ancestors or the possibility of their healing ministries. Therefore, amidst the tumult of the time the author finds the defining change having occurred through a series of revivals in 1862 led by an American preacher named George Weaver. The author argues that Weaver's Pentecostal-leaning theology provided an opportunity for the Zulu Christians to become spiritually equal to their colonizers. If they had received the same spiritual gifts of healing and preaching, they should also be recognized as equals in the secular realm. Though the author states that this was not a syncretizing movement, the reader will struggle to find proof of his assertions. As a result, this book leans toward a liberation theology hiding under the facade of Pentecostalism. The theological and political implications of this book will therefore be more appealing to a Pentecostal or Holiness audience than to one that holds to Lutheran theology.

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Christopher Boyd Brown, ed. *Luther's Works*, vols. 56-74 (St. Louis: CPH, 2009-). Vol. 58: *Sermons V*. Vol. 59: *Prefaces I*. Vol. 60: *Prefaces II*. Vol. 69: *Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 17-20*.

Most readers of this journal are probably aware of the commitment by Concordia Publishing House to add 20 more volumes to the American Edition of *Luther's Works*. The original series, a joint project of CPH and Fortress Press, consisted of 54 volumes plus an index volume and appeared over time from 1955 to 1986. For many years, it has provided the English-reading world with direct access to Luther's thought, but it included only about a third of what the critical (Weimar) edition contained. Now, however, thanks to CPH, we are going to have even more Luther in English!

In fact, we already do. Four volumes have appeared and, if they are typical (and we have no reason to think that they are not), then the new series will be a very welcome supplement to the original series. To date, two volumes

of sermons and two of prefaces have been released. According to the prospectus, the new series will also include volumes devoted to early works, disputations, biblical interpretation (especially the Psalms), letters, and miscellaneous theological and polemical writings. The publishers are also including a volume devoted to 16th-century biographical material, everything from the sermon Bugenhagen preached at Luther's funeral to Johannes Mathesius's series of sermons on the life of Luther from 1566. Concordia Publishing House is also preparing an index to the entire collection, both old and new.

As was true of the original series, the new one includes excellent introductions to explain the various genres being translated and to point out the significance of each work for Luther's biography and theology. Every volume also includes subject and Scripture indexes. The footnotes provide background information, cross references to other works, and comments regarding textual or translation issues.

The four volumes already published include a great deal of interesting material. Volume 69, for example, devoted to sermons on John 17–20, includes significant data regarding Luther's understanding of the office of the keys in verses 22 and 23 of chapter 20. As late as 1540, Luther was referring to a public office, committed to called ministers, *and* to a private office, committed to everyone (431). In that same volume, the editors are to be commended for including a sermon (349–72), originally published posthumously by Andreas Poach in 1566, for which we also have Georg Rörer's contemporaneous notes from 1529. By using a bold typeface for material attested to in the notes, publishers let the reader see just how much "Luther" may actually belong to his 16th-century editor.

This is just a sample of the treasures that await the reader in the new volumes of *Luther's Works*. In format, binding, and dust covers, they are very similar to the old. At \$49.99, the price is reasonable but not cheap, although subscribers to the entire series can purchase each volume for just \$34.99. Serious students of Luther will want the whole set.

Cameron A. Mackenzie

***The Juvenilization of American Christianity.* By Thomas E. Bergler. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2012. 286 Pages. Paperback. \$25.00.**

This is the essential book for understanding contemporary Christianity in America, from the worship styles currently in vogue to the decay of historic theology and practice in favor of emotional, relational, and therapeutic experience. Virtually everything can be explained in terms of what Thomas Bergler calls "juvenilization." This is, in his words, "the process by which the

religious beliefs, practices, and developmental characteristics of adolescents become accepted as appropriate for Christians of all ages. It begins with the praiseworthy goal of adapting the faith to appeal to the young. But it sometimes ends badly, with both youth and adults embracing immature versions of the faith."

This is not a mere critique of contemporary Christianity. Rather, Bergler is making direct, historical connections between "youth ministry" and the church growth movement.

Much of the book is a history of youth ministry. Beginning in the 1930s, churches began worrying about how to transmit the faith to the next generation. They did so using different strategies. Fundamentalists developed a style of revivalism that appealed to young people. Mainline Protestants thought to appeal to youthful idealism by enlisting them in progressive politics. Roman Catholics used sports and recreation with the occasional dash of theology in an effort to create a distinctive Catholic subculture. African-American churches were perhaps the most successful by integrating their young people with their adults, rather than setting up separate structures. In the aftermath of the 1960s, those formed by "youth groups" became adults and brought their distinct brand of Christianity with them into the rest of the congregation. Today, youth culture has become the model for adult culture, so that even grownups have adopted the narcissism, anti-intellectualism, and rebellion against authority usually associated with adolescence.

Bergler is not against youth ministry—he teaches that subject at Huntington University—and he considers some of its influence to be valuable in keeping Christianity as popular as it is. But, drawing on principles of psychological development, he urges churches to cultivate spiritual maturity in both their young people and their adults.

Gene Edward Veith
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Purcellville, Virginia

Books Received

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- Sundberg, Walter. *Worship as Repentance: Lutheran Liturgical Traditions and Catholic Consensus*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2012. 206 Pages. Paperback. \$18.00.
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