LOGIA

A JOURNAL OF LUTHERAN THEOLOGY

WITTENBERG & ATHENS

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εἴ τις λαλεῖ, ὡς λόγια θεοῦ

LOGIA is a journal of Lutheran theology. As such it publishes articles on exegetical, historical, systematic, and liturgical theology that promote the orthodox theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. We cling to God's divinely instituted marks of the church: the gospel, preached purely in all its articles, and the sacraments, administered according to Christ's institution. This name expresses what this journal wants to be. In Greek, ΛΟΓΙΑ functions either as an adjective meaning "eloquent," "learned," or "cultured," or as a plural noun meaning "divine revelations," "words," or "messages." The word is found in 1 Peter 4:11, Acts 7:38, and Romans 3:2. Its compound forms include ὁμολογία (confession), ἀπολογία (defense), and ἀναλογία (right relationship). Each of these concepts and all of them together express the purpose and method of this journal. Logia considers itself a *free conference in print* and is committed to providing an independent theological forum normed by the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. At the heart of our journal we want our readers to find a love for the sacred Scriptures as the very Word of God, not merely as rule and norm, but especially as Spirit, truth, and life which reveals Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life—Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, we confess the church, without apology and without rancor, only with a sincere and fervent love for the precious Bride of Christ, the holy Christian church, "the mother that begets and bears every Christian through the Word of God," as Martin Luther says in the Large Catechism (LC II, 42). We are animated by the conviction that the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession represents the true expression of the church which we confess as one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

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The cover art of Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560) is Albrecht Dürer's 1526 engraving of Luther's Wittenberg colleague and friend. As a young man Melanchthon hellenized his family's German name—Schwartzerd—which means black earth. The Reformer affectionately referred to Melanchthon as "our little Greek." Melanchthon's greatest contributions to the Reformation include the Augsburg Confession, the Apology, and the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope. His learning was well known and he became known as "Preceptor Germaniae," or teacher of Germany. He remained a layman and never obtained a doctor's degree. Luther regarded Melanchthon's "Loci Communes" as one of the most useful of all writings.

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FREQUENTLY USED ABBREVIATIONS

AC [CA]	Augsburg Confession
AE	*Luther's Works,* American Edition
Ap	Apology of the Augsburg Confession
Ep	Epitome of the Formula of Concord
FC	Formula of Concord
LC	Large Catechism
LSB	*Lutheran Service Book*
LW	*Lutheran Worship*
SA	Smalcald Articles
SBH	*Service Book and Hymnal*
SC	Small Catechism
SD	Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord
SL	St. Louis Edition of Luther's Works
Tappert	*The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.* Trans. and ed. Theodore G. Tappert
Triglotta	Concordia Triglotta
TLH	*The Lutheran Hymnal*
Tr	Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope
WA	*Luthers Werke,* Weimarer Ausgabe [Weimar Edition]
Kolb-Wengert	Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000).

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Wittenberg and Athens

Introduction

This issue of *Logia* is dedicated to answering Tertullian's famous rhetorical question, "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" from a contemporary Lutheran perspective. While Tertullian would probably have answered his own question along the lines of "obviously, nothing at all," there have been many other Christians, from patristic writers like Clement of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea, and Augustine, to nineteenth-century churchmen like Thomas Arnold and John Henry Newman, who have found substantial areas of commonality between the two cities and what they represent. Not all Lutherans, including Luther himself, have endorsed Tertullian's radical rejection of the Classics. Indeed, Lutheran higher education has, until relatively recently, participated enthusiastically in what has been called "The Great Tradition," namely, the idea of an "education rooted in the classical and Christian heritage."[1] Luther himself praised "the languages and the arts" highly and regarded their study as a great "ornament, profit, glory, and benefit, both for the understanding of Holy Scriptures and the conduct of temporal government."[2] The relationship, however uneasy, between Athens and Wittenberg has been long-lasting and pervasive. It was by no means restricted to the time of the Reformation or limited by the borders of Germany or even of Europe. In America, too, young men preparing for the Lutheran ministry were expected not only to study biblical Greek and Hebrew, but to read the Greek and Latin pagan poets, philosophers, and historians as part of their training in the liberal arts. This practice persisted in at least one Lutheran preministerial college until 1995, when Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin, ceased to exist. Every student who went through the four years of the Untergymnasium (Preparatory School) and the Obergymnasium (College) was required to learn classical Latin (four years in high school; one in college), German (two years in high school; more in college); classical Greek (two or three years); and Hebrew (two years in college). It is true that Northwestern College was somewhat exceptional in this regard. As one of its best known professors, John Philipp Koehler, notes in his history of the Wisconsin Synod:

> The Missouri schools were different from what Northwestern now set out to be. Although organized at once after the pattern of the German gymnasium (excepting that they had only one Prima, hence only a six-year instead of a seven-year or today's eight-year course at Northwestern), they lacked a something in the study of languages that narrowed down the whole educational outlook. Walther liked to say humorously of the college study of the ancient languages that it was "the Court of the Gentiles." Many of his students misunderstood this to mean that the only purpose of such study was to prepare the student for the reading of the Bible in the original tongues and of the Latin church fathers. Just like the misunderstanding of Luther's saying (*An die Ratsherren*): As we love the Gospel, so let us cling to the study of the ancient languages. . . . These languages are the scabbard which sheathes the sharp blade of the Spirit; in them this precious jewel is encased. American and English teachers of New Testament Greek like to cite Erasmus in the same connection because he was the chief exponent of Humanism in the Reformation period, and we Lutherans, from the same point of view, might refer to Melanchthon. But the proper thing is to fall back on Luther, provided you understand him, because of his genius for language.[3]

In this connection, as Koehler notes, many will no doubt think first of the contributions of Philipp Melanchthon, a gifted philologist, who played a critical role in helping to shape the curriculum of Lutheran schools and universities along humanistic lines, but it would be a mistake to overlook Luther's own enthusiastic support of the Classics. While Luther certainly was no friend of ancient philosophers like Aristotle or Epicurus, he valued the ancient languages highly, praised the works of pagan poets and rhetoricians like Virgil and Cicero in hyperbolic terms, and recommended the continued study of

1. The second of Tertullian's questions in *De praescriptione haereticorum* 7:9 makes it clear that he has higher education in mind: *Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis? Quid academiae et ecclesiae? Quid haereticis et christianis?*
2. From Luther's 1524 address *To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany*, as cited in Richard M. Gamble's anthology, *The Great Tradition: Classic Readings on What It Means to Be an Educated Human Being* (Wilmington: ISI Books, 2007), 374–75. Gamble addresses himself to a growing community of educators, many of them involved in the homeschooling movement, that "values liberal education for its own sake; desires to educate for wisdom and virtue, not power and vanity; finds tiresome the present age's preoccupation with utility, speed, novelty, convenience, efficiency, and specialization; and refuses to justify education as a means to wealth, power, fame, or self-assertion" (xviii).
3. John Philipp Koehler, *The History of the Wisconsin Synod,* ed. Leigh Jordahl, 2nd ed. ([Mosinee, WI]: Protestant Conference, 1981), 138.

logic in Lutheran schools. It is altogether possible that without Luther's advocacy of the classical curriculum, the anti-intellectual ideology of contemporaries like Carlstadt and the Anabaptists would have held sway and Tertullian's vision of a clean divide between the church and the academy would have won through to a belated realization. Koehler observes that it was Luther, not Melanchthon,

> that penetrated into the life of the language concerned and mastered its psychology. He was not concerned only with vocables and grammatical forms but with the peculiar logic and mental processes of a people as expressed in its language. . . . He was not a pedantic scholar, but the artist and poet whose lines and colors and metaphors are true to life, and to him language was life.[4]

None of this is to gainsay Luther's famous repudiation of Aristotle and his insistence on the primacy of faith rather than meretricious reason in matters theological. Luther most emphatically rejected the notion, propounded by Plato and reinforced by centuries of ascetic thought and practice in the medieval church, that, given a proper education, human beings could free themselves from the powerful grip of sin. Aristotle's advocacy of human self-improvement through the power of moderate living runs completely counter to the Lutheran principle of *sola gratia* and the theology of the cross. This said, it would be a mistake to go so far in the other direction that we end up seeing Luther as some sort of proto-existentialist, teetering on the brink of irrationality or even insanity, whose truest interpreters are Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. Of these last two, Jaroslav Pelikan once observed that "their insanity helped them to insights of which the normal and balanced mind is rarely capable." In his famous assemblage of "fools for Christ," Pelikan also includes Paul, Luther, and Bach, but admits that these last three

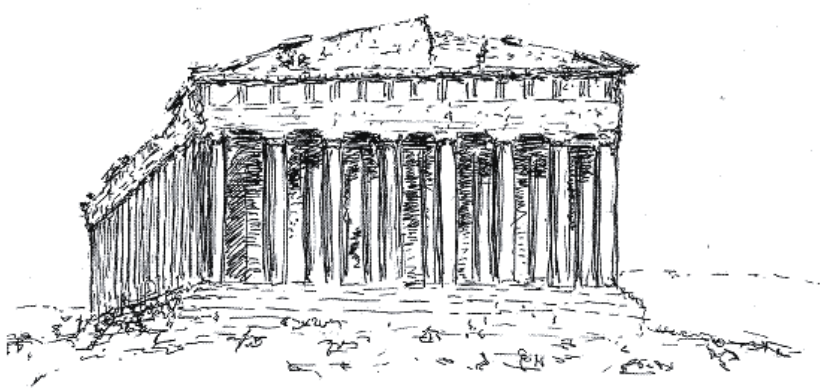
> may not have been insane in the clinical sense of the word. But by sacrificing themselves to the service of God and subordinating their values to the lordship of Christ, they evidenced the madness of the Holy, an insanity that saw what sanity refused to admit.[5]

Luther certainly can be described as "a fool for Christ," but, as the following articles amply demonstrate, it would not be fair to suggest that Luther was an irrationalist or that he did not highly value rationality. Everything he wrote, even his most emphatic attacks on Aristotle and Erasmus, reveals the pervasive influence of his own traditional Greco-Roman education in the liberal arts, grammar, rhetoric, music, and, yes, logic. It is true that he lived a spectacularly brave life (some would call it foolish, no doubt) in defiance of a world "filled with devils" and the imminent threat of death and yet he thought and wrote with the utmost clarity and sanity and sense of balance about how his followers should live safely and wisely and well in a world that might very well end with the Lord's return tomorrow. It is hoped that this issue of *Logia* may help readers to understand why Luther valued "Athens" as he did, to consider how influential his own endorsement of the Classics was for "Wittenberg," and to think more clearly about how best to reappropriate this neglected part of the Lutheran legacy today.

Carl P. E. Springer
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville
Guest Editor for Reformation 2008

4. Ibid., 138–39. There is no question that Luther understood the importance of the study of the Classics for the intellectual formation of those preparing to be servants of the word. In the preface to his study of Isaiah, he wrote: "Two things are necessary to explain the prophet. The first is a knowledge of grammar, and this may be regarded as having the greatest weight. The second is more necessary, namely, a knowledge of the historical background, not only as an understanding of the events themselves as expressed in letters and syllables but as at the same time embracing rhetoric and dialectic, so that the figures of speech and the circumstances may be carefully heeded."

5. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Fools for Christ: Essays on the True, the Good, and the Beautiful* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1955), ix. 1.
The second of Tertullian's questions in *De praescriptione haereticorum* 7:9 makes it clear that he has higher education in mind: *Quid ergo Athenis et Hierosolymis? Quid academiae et ecclesiae? Quid haereticis et christianis?*



This a pen-and-ink drawing of the Parthenon on the Acropolis in Athens was done by Daniel Jay, an architect and artist living in St. Louis. This famous pagan temple is most appropriate for this issue, not only because it so aptly symbolizes the city of Pericles and Plato, but because it was, for many centuries, a Christian cathedral dedicated to the Virgin Mary. From the sixth century A.D. until its conversion into a mosque in the 1460s, "Our Lady of Athens," as the Parthenon was called, was as well-known for its icon of the Virgin (supposedly painted by the evangelist Luke himself) and the sign of the cross scratched on one of its columns by Dionysius the Areopagite, as it was for its pedimental sculpture detailing the birth of the virgin goddess Athena or its frieze devoted to the Panathenaic procession.

Melanchthon and the Wittenberg Reception of Hellenism, 1518–1526

Bonae Literae et Renascentes Musae

Jon Steffen Bruss

Hellenism, the Greco-Roman cultural heritage, has not always done well in Christian circles.[1] To rehearse but a few well-known episodes: Tertullian (ca. a.d. 160–225) infamously intoned, "What hath Athens to do with Jerusalem?" Origen's (ca. a.d. 185–ca. 254) peers and subsequent generations of catholic Christians viewed the catechetical school at Alexandria with its feet in both worlds with suspicion; which was not helped by Origen's reputation as a heretic. The Emperor Justinian's policy of anti-Hellenism came to a feverish peak in his take-over of the (Neoplatonic) Academy in Athens in a.d. 529 and the ban throughout the Empire against all teachers of the pagan cultural and intellectual heritage.

By a.d. 900, in the East (and with its own Western parallel in the Carolingian Renaissance) we catch a glimpse of a recovery effort, the so-called first Byzantine humanism. This revival was spear-headed by Gregory, headmaster of the school at the New Church in Constantinople, and his student and successor, Constantine Cephalas. But the ἐγκύκλιος παιδεῖα (universal education) advocated by Gregory and Cephalas and modeled on ancient Greco-Roman principles soon came under fire from certain quarters in the church and government. In the rough-and-tumble of contemporary politics complicated by the residuum from the hot-button issue of iconoclasm vs. iconodulia, this revival clung to life but for a short time.[3]

Roll forward some eleven hundred years, to when the Lutherans of the erstwhile Synodical Conference are again faced with the perennial "Hellenism problem."[4] This time around, though, the structure of the question for the heirs of Wittenberg is different. It is no longer a matter of whether monotheistic Christianity can tolerate the learning of pagan polytheism, it is a question of which pagans we wish to tolerate. Is it those of antiquity who have been "baptized" by millennia-long Christian appropriation, or those of modernity? Additionally, roads to reform, or even consideration of reform, are complicated by an increasingly competitive higher education scene along with what Lew Spitz over twenty years ago rightly called a "late scholasticism" that has developed "into the leading major growth industry in academia."[5]

More commonly evoked by the phrase, "publish or perish," accompanying symptoms include departmental balkanization and specialization to the point of trivialization—or well beyond—that make discussion about shared principles increasingly difficult. For all that, the sputtering, modern reception of Reformation-era Hellenism as a formative element in Lutheran higher education is the proud king no one is willing to inform of his nakedness. This modern predicament, though, makes it incumbent upon the heirs of the Wittenberg reformation to be honest with the king by reconsidering certain features of the years of Lutheranism's early development and their implications for today.[6] Particular attention will be given to Melanchthon's presentation of the case for Hellenism and its establishment in the DNA of Lutheranism between 1518 and 1526. Granted, subsequent reforms of the university under Melanchthon in 1533 and 1536 brought the demise of Thomistic and

Jon Steffen Bruss teaches in the Department of Classics and the Honors Program at the University of Kansas, Topeka.

1. On ancient education, which provides the material and form inherited in early Christianity and to which "Hellenizing" movements returned, see Yun Lee Too, ed., *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), with relevant bibliography assembled there; and, with attention to papyrological information, Rafaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). On the Christian reception of classical antique education, see the work cited below in n. 2, along with the easy-reading Werner Jaeger, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1961); in short form and focused on Augustine, see, Virgilio Pacioni, O.S.A., "Liberal arts," trans. Matthew O'Connell in Allan D. Fitzgerald, O.S.A., ed., *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 492–494.
2. This conflict produced pendulum swings in the Byzantine monarchy ranging from enlightened Hellenism at the one end to Justinian-inspired anti-Hellenism at the other.
3. The cultural and intellectual history of tenth-century Eastern humanism is available in Paul Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme byzantin. Notes et remarques sur enseignement et culture à Byzance des origines au Xe siècle* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1971).
4. Meanwhile, the Church of Rome has produced the most renowned proponents of Hellenizing Christian liberal education, notably John Henry Cardinal Newman in the nineteenth century and Josef Pieper, Werner Jaeger, and Rudolf Pfeiffer in the twentieth. See John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, ed. Martin J. Svaglic (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990); Josef Pieper, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 1998); Werner Jaeger, *op. cit.*; Rudolf Pfeiffer, "Benediktinischer Humanismus," in *Ausgewählte Schriften: Aufsätze und Vorträge zur griechischen Dichtung und zum Humanismus*, ed. Winfried Bühler (München: Beck, 1960).
5. Lewis W. Spitz, "The Importance of the Reformation for the Universities: Culture and Confessions in the Critical Years," in James M. Kittelson and Pamela J. Transue, eds., *Rebirth, Reform and Resilience: Universities in Transition, 1300–1700* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1984), 42– 67, here p. 43.
6. On Luther, with reference to relevant medieval precedents, see Paul Lehninger, "Luther, Lutherans, and Liberal Education," *LSQ* 46.1 (2006), 44–67.

Scotist scholasticisms in Wittenberg. These simplified the curriculum in the philosophical faculty by reducing the number of certain topical lectures (on logic, for example) and taking over their content in philological courses, those that dealt with ancient authors in their own language. However, it was the period 1518–1526 in which the Melanchthonian vision of Hellenism was first articulated, defined, received, and implemented and then retrieved from the fire of near failure, reappropriated, reasserted, honed, and refined.

The Northern European Renaissance was a cultural setting not without its influence on Luther's formation as a biblical scholar.

Established in 1502, the University of Wittenberg from its first days fell under the influence of yet another of the Hellenizing cultural revivals that mark the history of the church. The Northern European Renaissance was a cultural setting not without its influence on Luther's formation as a biblical scholar. Once arrived in Wittenberg, he began to demonstrate the impact of the Renaissance above all in his adoption of biblical humanism. Its scholars, like Desiderius Erasmus, Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, and Johannes Reuchlin, provided the basic tools in the form of biblical texts in the original languages, reference works, and grammars and lexica for classical Greek, Hebrew, and Latin.[7]

Some decade and a half after the university's founding, in response to humanist advances at the competitor University of Leipzig, Frederick III the Wise in 1518 created seven new chairs at the University of Wittenberg, two of which were to be devoted to Greek. From the perspective of some members of the faculty and the elector's chancery, including Luther and Spalatin, the call to one of the new Greek chairs should have gone to Petrus Mosellanus of Leipzig. Considered by the Saxons a Graecist of top order, the fact of the matter is rather that this is a case of *videri quam esse*: Mosellanus was simply the first real Graecist at Leipzig after a virtual revolving door of humanistically-oriented poets and public intellectuals who had represented humanism there.

Though it could not have been predicted at the time, Mosellanus would turn out to be a light-weight. His relative importance became clear in the remaining six years of his life[8] with the arrival of a South German humanist on the faculty at Wittenberg. On the advice of Johannes Reuchlin, to whom Frederick III had written for a recommendation, the call to the new chair for Greek in the faculty of philosophy (granting the degrees of bachelor and master in the arts) was extended to Reuchlin's twenty-one-year-old great-nephew and the darling of the Northern Renaissance, Philip Melanchthon.[9]

A 1512 baccalaureus of Heidelberg and 1514 magister artium of Tübingen, Melanchthon was already at age twenty-one well-versed in the tenets of humanist thought. In 1517, he had delivered at Tübingen an Oratio de liberalibus artibus (CR 11.5–14) which bore a strong humanist stamp. The following year, he chose to use the occasion of his inauguration at Wittenberg to give a statement in strong — though not always clear — terms[10] of the humanist vision for education in the faculty of philosophy at Wittenberg.[11] The oration, *De corrigendis adolescentiae studiis* (On Correcting the Studies of the Youth),[12] was delivered by Melanchthon on 29 August, 1518. It was received with great enthusiasm by the faculty, including Luther, in spite of his disappointment in the elector's failure to follow his recommendation for filling the chair.

One of the important things humanists had going for them was a sense of human proportionality. In *De corrigendis,* Melanchthon did not point to an unachievable ideal, but to one that could be realized in the very effort to realize it. In support of this, the oration itself was a performative reprise of the ideal. Here the teacher Melanchthon offered, not only a goal and a method, but himself and his speech as a realization of the goal and method. In other words, he was what he expected his students to be.

Philip accomplished this in *De corrigendis* by staking out as his own the ground of one devoted to "proper learning" (recta studia). In so doing, he betrayed already at this early stage in his career the characteristics that would earn him the title of endearment and honor, praeceptor Germaniae. By representing himself as a model of humanism, he provided his audience with a man-sized ideal; and his own modeling of the ideal mapped out his expectation that they could and how they would achieve the ideal. The humanist vision is thus self-actualizing. The student who adopted the content and structure proposed by Melanchthon became by that very act a devotee of "proper learning" and so fulfilled the humanist ideal, represented by Philip himself.

Melanchthon summed up the content of this education as "good literature, and the Muses who are undergoing a rebirth," a hendiadyoin whose invocation of the Nine Ladies and their association with "good literature" established both his human-

7. E.G. Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 275–302.
8. He died at age 30 in 1524.
9. Heinz Scheible, *Melanchthon: Eine Biographie* (München: C.H. Beck, 1997), 31.
10. Keen, 47, believes that the style "would surely been impossible for part of his audience to understand."
11. On the oration's tailoring to the Wittenberg audience, see Wilhelm Maurer, *Der Junge Melanchthon: zwischen Humanismus und Reformation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1969), 2.10– 12.
12. *CR* 11.15–25 (= Keen, 47–57). In citing Melanchthon, I have drawn on material that is available in selections of Melanchthon's works available in English: Ralph Keen, trans., *A Melanchthon Reader* (*American University Studies, Series 7, Theology and Religion,* 41) (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1988), and Sachiko Kusukawa, ed., *Orations on Philosophy and Education*, trans. Christine Salazar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Henceforth, citations of Melanchthon will refer both to *CR* and to these editions as Keen, page number, and Kusukawa & Salazar, page number, respectively, though my translation will frequently differ from that in those editions.

ist credentials and his Greco-Roman classical literary program. He then juxtaposed the new humanist learning with the barbarism that he saw as both a contemporary threat and the sad heritage of Western Europe since the Gothic invasion some eight hundred years prior. This was a period in which war so dominated the minds of men that literature and libraries fell into disuse and "drove the Muses to extinction by the neglect of leisure time [for study]." Indeed, during that period no German passed any good literature on to his descendants.

This was all neatly summed up by a pithy allusion to Homer that reinforced Melanchthon's humanist credentials. At Iliad 5.831, Athena, attempting to arouse her favored Diomedes (a Hellene) who had become frightened by Mars' clear partisanship with the Trojans (barbarians), told the Greek to have no regard for that "full-wrought bane [Mars] raging" against her and hers. The episode goes on to relate how Diomedes, shielded by Athena from Mars' onslaught and inspired to valiance, drove a spear into Mars' belly, effectively eliminating him from the fight (Iliad 5.855–867).

In *De corrigendis,* Melanchthon, the humanists, his audience, and the University of Wittenberg, standing in for Diomedes and safe under the aegis of Pallas Athena, represented the end of an era in which Mars' ragings expunged "good literature and the Muses" from the culture. Philip's use—in Greek, no less—of Homer's descriptive phrase for Mars, "that full-wrought bane a-raging" (μαινόμενον, τυκτο;νκακόν), to describe the mad evil of the German love for warfare, simultaneously served both to proclaim and to enact the end of the era of Mars and the beginning of the era of Athena. In the context of Philip's speech, Athena was further transformed from the battlefield partisan of Diomedes into the goddess of wisdom and patroness of the city of learning, Athens, famed throughout antiquity for its Platonic Academy. Hellenism was back. It is a "zeal for [this] elegant literature (I mean Greek and Latin)"[13] that Melanchthon wished to impart.

Beyond the dismal history of intellectual life under the Mars-dominated culture of yore,[14] other threats remained in the contemporary world according to *De corrigendis*. Chief among them was scholasticism and its version of philosophy. The philosophy of the scholastics left nothing clear; the scholastics everywhere disagreed with one another. This was because scholasticism fed invidiousness. It was not, at the end of the day, about recovering the truth or even about recovering what the ancients said. Rather, based upon one-up-manship, scholastic culture could only bury the truth and what the ancients said under successive layers of subtleties and dispute.

That the education of the youth had fallen into the hands of such men was an even greater crime. The scholastic method was not only corrupt, it was also corrupting. In the end, scholastic education was no better than the martial mentality of the Goths. While both have proven equally effective in robbing the church of literature, scholasticism has proven the more effective in robbing the church of her own literature, Scripture. And yet, the failings of scholastic philosophy did not render philosophy useless. In fact, quite the opposite, according to Melanchthon. If we make use of Aristotle, we must make use of Aristotle, and not what the scholastics say other scholastics say yet other scholastics say Aristotle says.

The philosophy of the scholastics left nothing clear.

Echoing underneath his anti-scholasticism in *De corrigendis* was the solution to the problem posed by scholasticism, the humanists' call, "Ad fontes!" For Melanchthon in *De corrigendis,* this was a twofold proposition. It required both the use of primary sources—Aristotle, Plato, Scripture, Quintilian, Horace, Homer, Demosthenes, Cicero, Pliny are all mentioned in the oration—and, equally importantly and as the sine qua non for the study of these works, a thorough knowledge of the languages. Thus, in respect of higher things,

> since theology is partly from Hebrew and partly from Greek . . . , those eternal languages must be learned lest we sit there like mute characters when we take matters up with the theologians.

Language study, in other words, is not just window-dressing for the cultural and theological task, it lies at its core. Conversely, when the study of the languages is neglected, Melanchthon's theory was that, just as in philosophy so also in the church: true piety is removed and the commentaries of men, human traditions, and love of our own works fill the vacuum left. Put more generally, contempt of Greek is tantamount to contempt of philosophy, literature, and religious books.

In this oration, Melanchthon also schematized the interrelation between the various branches of study in liberal education, along with a plan for approaching this broad, if also somehow unified, knowledge. It was understood that students would arrive at the University of Wittenberg with some degree of grammar training from the local Latin schools. The university picked up their education with logic, the study of language usage in the great authors (figures, linguistic precision), "which grammar nearly covers." From the study of logic grew the branch of dialectic or rhetoric. Melanchthon in *De corrigendis* viewed the two as interchangeable names for the same thing.

Dialectic, itself neutral, may nevertheless be used for ill or good. The bad version of dialectic is represented by the scholastics; the good version by Aristotle himself in his Categories and Posterior Analytics. The all-important role of dialectic is its provision of a "set of questions." That is, a method of inquiry,

13. *CR* 11.16 (= Keen, 48); cp. *De studio linguarum* (*On the Study of the Languages*), *CR* 11.231–39 (= Kusukawa & Salazar, 29–37).
14. For all that, Melanchthon could speak also of an unbroken chain of learning through the period, *CR* 11.611–12 (= Kusukawa & Salazar, 14–15).

an order and a method of judgment, by providing training and habituation in the basic questions, the "five Qs," that appertain to simple matters: What? How much? Of what sort? Why? How? For complex matters, this basic study goes to the question whether something is true or false.

The goal of this program that Melanchthon called προγυμνάσματα (grammar, dialectic and rhetoric) was twofold. First, as an end in itself, it was designed so that students may gain instruction in speaking and making speeches and acquire the facility of judgment. Second, in respect of higher studies (medicine, law, and theology, the three higher faculties of medieval universities modeled on Paris), its aim was preparatory. Without it, students came with rashness to what is next.

Melanchthon encouraged his students to "dare to be wise" (*sapere audete*), to grasp a wisdom drawn from ancient Romans and Greeks.

Melanchthon put curricular flesh on the bone-structure of grammar, logic, dialectic, and rhetoric with these aims in view. In his elaboration, he again borrowed from the tradition of Hellenism, this time Plato. By reading the mundane details of the curriculum that guided everyday student life in light of the most famous student of Socrates, he ensconced them within the intellectual tradition of Hellenism and invested them with a congruous importance.

The student began with compendia (textbooks) of both Greek and Latin authors. Here, Greek — not Latin alone, and not Greek authors through Latin translations — was utterly necessary as it afforded one the ability to read the "philosophers, theologians, historians, orators, and poets," in order to "pursue the real thing, and not just the shadow of things (umbram rerum)."

The term *umbra*, of course, alludes to Plato's famous allegory of the cave (Republic 7, 514a–520a). There, in brief, prisoners are enchained in a cave in such a way that all they can see is the shadows cast on a cave wall of puppets in a play put on by men hidden from view. Those shadows are thus shadows of nothing real, but of a manufactured reality; true reality exists outside the cave in the light of the sun. In the Republic, of course, true reality is the realm of transcendent Forms, the puppets are the created kosmos (cp. Timaeus), and the shadows are poor human imitations by sophists and artists of the created world. In fact, the created world is itself an imitation of its ideal Form.

Melanchthon, however, shifted the allegory away from its Platonic use and marshaled it to advance the humanist program. "The real thing" was the literary inheritance of the Greco-Roman world, and "the shadow of things" was the show put on by the scholastics in their translations of Greek works.

Melanchthon then added another Platonic allusion, this one more complicated. Compendia are but the starting point; "and then you can, on light wing [καὶ εὐπετῶς], as Plato says, proceed on to philosophy." The wing-language picks up another Platonic allegory, that of the wingèd soul in the Phaedrus (246a–257d).

Though the exact term, ευjπετής, is not used there, forms of πετάννυμι (fly) and other derivatives of it abound in the context. In the Phaedrus, the wingèd soul represents the soul enabled to ascend to the realm of Forms and transcendent truth. The language of voyaging (accede, proceed on to) alludes to another Platonic dialogue concerned with education, the Symposium and its allegory of the ladder of beauty (210a ff.). There, the would-be viewer of ideal beauty ascends from particular instantiations of beauty up a ladder whose rungs consist of visions of beauty in objects, humans, and thoughts to a view of Beauty as a Form.

The Tübingen humanist reshaped the meaning of the allegory. Now it is the compendia, collections of many individual instantiations of solid knowledge, that formed the rungs of the ladder. The final vision, which was arrived at "on light wing" — in Plato transcendent truth or Beauty as a Form — was replaced by philosophy or, as Melanchthon defined his terms, the universe of "humane disciplines," the humanities. Chief among the authors he here had in mind are Aristotle, Plato, Homer, Vergil, and Horace; the last three, poets all, are "the font of all the disciplines." Nor did Melanchthon keep the study of history out of account; rather, "it is absolutely necessary," its great benefit residing in its ability transcending even that of ethicists to make judgments on what is good and shameful, useful and useless.

In sum, the program outlined in *De corrigendis* consisted of a movement in two directions: first, the removal from the curriculum of the residue of scholasticism with its inelegant dialectic and shadow vision of the truth; and second, a radical appropriation of the classical Greco-Roman heritage through thorough training in classical Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, thorough exercise in grammar, logic, dialectic, and rhetoric, and close reading of classical literature in its original languages.

Two elements of the oration served as stimuli to this revival of study. First, the eloquent, learned artistry of the new Greek chair-holder exemplified the ideal to which he lay claim. In *De corrigendis,* as we have noted, Melanchthon himself enacted the humanist ideal. Second, in his peroration, Philip made direct appeal to his students. His exhortation there, through its frank acknowledgement of the difficulty of the task along with its expression of high aspirations, was aimed at creating out of his hearers the very kinds of students who would benefit from his educational vision.

Melanchthon helped his students locate their motivation for "cultivating [their] good minds" in the moral point that must be drawn from the propitious revival of learning at the hands of the humanists: "being inept is no longer a permissible position." In light of this, borrowing from Horace, he encouraged his students to "dare to be wise" (*sapere audete*), to grasp a wisdom drawn from ancient Romans and Greeks.

Far from being dream-world aspirations couched in lofty terms with no real impact on the situation in Wittenberg, the ideals Melanchthon expressed in his inaugural address ulti-

mately took legs. Melanchthon advanced his ideas and continued to win adherents through further such orations, frequently penned by himself but delivered by others on the faculty.

But the legs were at first wobbly, and the fledgling Lutheran educational reforms were not without setbacks and nearly came to collapse. We may in no wise read out of the early influence of biblical humanism on Wittenberg and Melanchthon's presence after 1518 a guaranteed future for Hellenism, the intellectual heritage of Greco-Roman antiquity.[15]

By 1522, the question, *What hath Athens to do with Wittenberg?* suddenly became highly complicated. It is not clear that Luther, in emerging from an education steeped in and steered wrong by the use of Aristotle, ever outgrew his deep suspicions of the Stagirite. By 1520, Luther had imparted this suspicion so forcefully that it provoked a real crisis for the University of Wittenberg.

In 1520, not two years after Melanchthon's inaugural address, Luther issued his Address to the Christian Nobility. There, so Luther, Aristotle is a "wretched man" who in On the Soul taught "things of which [he] had not the slightest perception." His Ethics is "directly contrary to God's will and the Christian virtues." Those two works, along with Metaphysics should "be altogether abolished." Indeed, "the universities [are], as at present ordered, but, as the book of Maccabees says, 'schools of "Greek fashion" and "heathenish manners"' (2 Macc. 4:12–13) . . . where . . . the blind heathen teacher, Aristotle, rules even further than Christ."[16] When it comes to Aristotle, and, through guilt by association, the whole of the Greco-Roman tradition, it is for words like these that Luther is most remembered — and misunderstood — not only in the popular imagination, but also by scholars.[17]

The sentiments expressed above clearly derive from Luther's theological criticism of the scholastic appropriation of the philosopher that made "the blind heathen teacher, Aristotle, [to] rule even further than Christ." Ignored are Luther's remarks just a few paragraphs later where he makes a very Melanchthonian selection of "safe" Aristotle and supplies a Melanchthonian-humanist approach to those texts, tossing in Cicero for good measure:

> I would gladly agree to keeping Aristotle's books, Logic, Rhetoric, and Poetics, or at least keeping and using them in an abridged form, as useful in training young people to speak and to preach properly. But the commentaries and notes must be abolished, and as Cicero's Rhetoric is read without commentaries and notes, so Aristotle's Logic should be read as it is without all these commentaries.[18]

In spite of this clear avowal of the usefulness of Aristotle and the arts, the Wittenberg students took Luther's critique of Aristotle not just as a license, but as a demand to shunt aside the study of grammar, logic, dialectic, and rhetoric, those disciplines at the core of the curriculum of the faculty of philosophy, and to devote themselves, rather, to the "burning soteriological questions" of the day. They stopped attending lectures in the faculty of philosophy. This played directly into the crisis of 1522 when no students were prepared to take their exit examinations and so to graduate from the philosophical faculty.

The Wittenberg students took Luther's critique of Aristotle not just as a license, but as a demand to shunt aside the study of grammar, logic, dialectic, and rhetoric.

The problem is graphically demonstrated by Schwiebert: after 1521, matriculation at the University of Wittenberg tumbled from a high in 1519 of roughly 575 students to a low in 1526 of close to fifty.[19] The dearth of graduates from the philosophical faculty constituted a threat not only to that faculty, but also to the theological faculty, who depended upon arts graduates for matriculants.[20] The precipitous drop in lecture attendance understandably caused great dismay among the entire university faculty, including, of course, Melanchthon — and Luther, who had never intended his words to influence as they did.

This impact was not limited to Wittenberg. By this time, the burgeoning ecclesial reform movement was clearly connected with university humanism. And now the leader of the movement had clearly and publicly disavowed Aristotle and with him, so the students in humanistically-oriented universities thought, the curriculum in the philosophical faculty. This prompted Helius Eobanus Hessus, a humanist professor at Erfurt, to write Wittenberg with a complaint and to ask for a clarification. Melanchthon and Luther responded with a communication that Eobanus released for print immediately, *That*

15. Indeed, in terms of the history of the reception of the Wittenberg Reformation, the transformation that occurred in the Leucorea has often been popularly misunderstood as an anti-intellectual, fideistic rupture with the Western intellectual tradition. This is a line of thought that emerges particularly, though not exclusively, in Roman Catholic polemic and exerts a not insignificant influence even among Lutherans.
16. Martin Luther, *Address to the Christian Nobility*, §25 (=*AE* 44.200–201); translation from the Harvard Classics edition, trans. C.A. Buchheim (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909–1914).
17. See, e.g., N. Frost, "Aristotle's Ethics: The Real Reason for Luther's Reformation?" *Trinity Journal* NS18 (1997), 223–241. Richard A. Muller, "Scholasticism, reformation, orthodoxy, and the persistence of Christian Aristotelianism," *Trinity Journal* NS19 (1998), 81–96, successfully both establishes Frost's misunderstanding and offers a corrective.
18. §25 (= *AE* 44.201–202).
19. Schwiebert, 605. Schwiebert, 604–606, however, traces the decline to the papal ban. While the ban certainly played a role, Luther's and Melanchthon's reaction in *That Humanistic Studies . . . Should Not Be Neglected* (below) suggests that more was at work.
20. Scheible, 35.

Humanistic Studies, Most Necessary for Future Theologians, Should Not Be Neglected.

This response was accompanied in 1523 by an oration by Melanchthon that likewise addressed the situation, That the *Arts of Speaking Are Necessary for Every Kind of Studies, or In Praise of Eloquence* (*Necessarias esse ad omne studiorum genus artes dicendi, sive encomium eloquentiae*). Pulling no punches, the speech was directed against "the foolish young, who partly spurn elegant philology out of error—because they consider it unnecessary for achieving the other disciplines—and partly flee it out of sloth." But now, not by way of peroration as in *De corrigendis*, but by way of opening gambit, Melanchthon returned to the topos of difficulty: literature and other good things have it in their nature not to come easy; what is beautiful is hard. This time, the tone struck was one of reproof, not amicable solidarity.

Different, too, was Melanchthon's elevation of eloquence to a principle of higher education. In *De corrigendis*, the relationship between dialectic and rhetoric had not quite yet been worked out. In *Encomium eloquentiae*, all the "subsidiary" or preparatory disciplines—logic, dialectic, grammar—were marshaled in the task of eloquent rhetoric because Melanchthon could claim that "beauty of speech," that is, "speaking well," was by nature connected to the mind's ability to make judgments. Nor is this claim without justification.

"Care for speaking well in itself makes the mind more vigorous, so that it perceives more correctly what is most fitting or profitable in whatever matter," and "some power of judgment is conveyed to the student by the habit of these arts." Lest the point be missed, which could not have been more obvious in view of the crisis at hand, this applied to the study of theology as well as a return to the ideas expressed in the communication published by Eobanus. The defense of eloquence in this oration, in light of the crisis and the schema into which Melanchthon placed it, simultaneously constituted a defense of the whole curriculum of the faculty of philosophy and a defense of the Lutheran Reformation, which without the arts, so Melanchthon with Luther's concurrence, must fail under the weight of the inability to make good theological decisions.

The program expressed in this oration with its elevation of a philologically-informed eloquence to a principle of education was realized at the University of Wittenberg by supplementing the traditional practice of disputations with rhetorical exercises. Shortly thereafter elected rector of the faculty of philosophy (winter of 1523–1524), Melanchthon introduced further reforms to advance the Wittenberg educational project.

Disputations were now to occur less frequently, and only on physics and mathematics. Taking the place of the philosophical disputations there were to be orations every other week, alternating between professors of rhetoric and grammar and students under their direction. Radical for its time, too, was a policy Melanchthon had earlier advocated: each student enrolled in the faculty of philosophy was to have his own tutor or adviser assigned by the rector. It was the adviser's role personally to direct the education of the student. This was done on the basis of a frank assessment of the student's capabilities and background and with the exit examination in mind.

By 1526, yet another reform of the faculty of philosophy drafted by Melanchthon put teeth into this policy. Students were forbidden to attend general lectures without demonstrating a perfect mastery of written and spoken classical Latin.[21] At the core of the curriculum remained classical Greek and Roman authors and the traditional liberal arts disciplines.

Under the leadership of Melanchthon, the University of Wittenberg had thus come to an understanding on the role of the Greco-Roman heritage in reformation education. Although threatened by unconsidered and misunderstood comments made in the heat of theological battle, Hellenism was necessary for, and indeed central to, not only the university, but also the Reformation itself. Hellenizing education, a man-sized ideal, was achievable. It also provided the education necessary for the peaceable governance of the state,[22] a common set of ideas, shared texts, and ways of thinking that enhanced communication and the judgment of ideas which became tools necessary for "a learned theology" and were much in evidence in both the confessional period down to 1580 as well as in the orthodox period into the eighteenth century.

It is clear from Melanchthon's and Luther's reaction to the crisis of 1522 that embryonic Lutheranism and humanism are inextricably linked; and the DNA has not changed. The Wittenberg reformation—not only as a historical event, but now, as a heritage—is inconceivable apart from the Hellenism represented by Philip Melanchthon. Neither study of the languages—in their classical, not just ecclesial, form—nor a hearty, years-long encounter with Greco-Roman antiquity through Greek and Latin literature, both accountable to an exit examination, are options that may be foregone. Rupture with the tradition of humanistic Hellenism represents not only an inability to communicate with and receive the Lutheran intellectual tradition as a deposit of the thoughts of those who have gone before us; even more, according to Melanchthon, it constitutes an inability to do theology well at all.

Theological confusion and bad theology, possible under any circumstance where the devil prowls about like a lion, quickly multiply into an "Iliad of evils" in the absence of learning and eloquence. In a day and an age and in a country with a nearly universal literacy rate, a *per capita* wealth that rivals or exceeds that of any other time in history, and an ever-growing period of life devoted by students to the leisure of schooling, the only hurdle we modern heirs of the Wittenberg reformation face is that of moral resolve, as insurmountable as it may sometimes be. To borrow a phrase from Melanchthon: *ineptire non licet*. We are not allowed to be inept. LOGIA

21. Scheible, 35–40; Maurer, 2.428–35; example of an individualized plan of study at Scheible, 49–51. More broadly on the University of Wittenberg in these years, see Schwiebert, 254–72.
22. Melanchthon's schematization of the relationship between philosophy and the gospel is largely reflected in his treatment of the human will, *AC* 18. See also the 1527 *De discrimine Euangelii et Philosophiae* (*On the Difference between the Gospel and Philosophy*), *CR* 12.689–91 (= Kusukawa & Salazar, 23–25).

The Spadework and Foundation

Tools of Greek New Testament Study

Kevin L. Gingrich

The appearance of groundbreaking Greek Testaments at the very dawn of the Reformation has all the timing of a happy coincidence. In March of 1516, twenty months before German couriers carried the *Ninety-Five Theses* in a fortnight to the four corners of the empire, Erasmus's *Novum Instrumentum Omne* arrived, the first complete New Testament in the original language in a thousand years. The next year, fateful 1517, saw completed the printing (in Spain) of the historic *Complutensian Polyglot*, which "included the first printed text of the Greek Old Testament"[1] and, not insignificantly, seventy-five pages of a "rudimentary" glossary including New Testament words.[2] One would be hard pressed to find in the history of printing a two-year span of more important beginnings.

Of course, as with all great revolutions, the coincidence of dates has more to do with cause than correlation. The *ad fontes* spirit that would drive Luther to deeper reliance on the original languages was moving in Europe. Already Luther had felt the humanist fever at the University of Erfurt where several courses in the classics were in the curriculum. Digging for lost treasures, the humanists were in effect preparing the ground for the Reformation. As one historian explains:

> The southern and northern humanists prided themselves on their remarkable recovery of skills in the use of the Latin, Greek, and even Hebrew tongues. Not only did they thereby recover forgotten treasures of the Greco-Roman civilization, but they opened up forgotten riches of the Biblical world.[3]

They unearthed the gospel, which the church had buried. Indeed, the urge to return to the original languages preceded the Reformation like a proximal push. But if the legs and arms of the Reformation were popular and political, its heart and soul was theological. The prime source of Protestantism was literally God's word and that in the original. The gospel came in Greek.

A FOUNDATION OF GREEK

Erasmus's *Instrumentum* "provided Luther with an important tool," observes one Reformation scholar. "Almost immediately [upon its publication], Luther obtained a copy and on 1 May 1516, began using it in his lectures on Romans."[4] But how well did Luther know Greek at this time? Although he surely "had attained a noteworthy, broad acquaintance with classical authors,"[5] including some classical Greek works so that "in Luther's early marginal notes from 1509 we occasionally find Greek letters and words,"[6] he did not yet have mastery. Erasmus's collation was actually a parallel Latin-Greek Bible, with Koine on the left and the better-known Latin on the right. At the University of Erfurt, Latin, not Greek, was the primary language of academia (via the Latin classics in the curriculum); in the bursa, Luther was required to speak Latin and nothing but Latin. Of course, all this would prove an indispensable prerequisite for later biblical studies. Luther's exquisite background in Latin grammar, for instance, no doubt served as a template for his acquisition of biblical Koine. Now, with the introduction of Erasmus's critical, two-columned edition in the classroom at Wittenberg, it was imperative to shift the focus to Greek. But who knew biblical Greek well enough to teach it?

To supply their lack, the first "Lutheran university" called a young, precocious humanist scholar whose reputation would shortly be established far beyond the low walls of Wittenberg. On 25 August 1518, the twenty-one-year-old Philipp Melanchthon arrived by horseback, his library in tow by Frankfurt merchants. He came under the condition, stipulated by his famous uncle Reuchlin, that should Philipp not prove himself as professor within three years, he would be returned. No one in those critical years of the Reformation ever had reason to invoke the provision.

Teetering along in Melanchthon's wagon were the Greek grammars of his day, textbooks by Manutius, Henrichmann, Brassican, Simler, Wimpfeling; but none was to be more valued

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1. Frederick W. Danker, *Multipurpose Tools for Bible Study*, Rev. and expanded ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 70.
2. Ibid., 109.
3. Lowell C. Green, *How Melanchthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel: The Doctrine of Justification in the Reformation* (Fallbrook, California: Verdict Publications, 1980), 111.
4. Green, *Melanchthon*, 112 (see WA 56: 29, 400). E. Harris Harbison (*The Christian Scholar in the Age of Reformation* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956]) suggests a bit later date: "By the following August a copy had reached Martin Luther" whose Romans class was on the ninth chapter (103).
5. Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: His Road to Reformation 1483–1521*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985), 43.
6. Ibid.

by the first generation of Reformation theologians than Melanchthon's own freshly published *Rudiments of the Greek Language* (1518). Lo, a twenty-year-old had written the best Greek grammar of the day! Three years later, the Wittenberg professor would astound Beda and the world-famous faculty of Paris. "How could a Greek teacher possibly know so much!" cried the incredulous Sorbonne faculty.[7]

Many Lutheran pastors today measure their competency apart from this thorough knowledge.

Melanchthon's inaugural address to the Wittenberg faculty was impressed on Luther's memory for the rest of his life. In a lecture hall at Wittenberg, the frail youth, stoop-shouldered and prone to stuttering, stepped to the podium and intoned a "Ciceronian masterpiece,"[8] laying out an ambitious program of reform for German education. "Who is not affected in our lamentable times by the loss of our ancient writers," he challenged his hearers, "and the advances that might have been ours had their writings been preserved."[9] He would remedy the situation. Two Greek courses would immediately begin, one in Homer, the other in Paul's Epistle to Titus.

Soon, Reuchlin's nephew had everyone studying Greek. His classroom was packed. Four hundred students came to hear the new professor, including one tonsured monk who would outshine all the rest. Luther must have been paying very careful attention, for three-and-a-half years later he translated the entire New Testament into German, a brilliant translation on the order of magnitude of the Vulgate.

Indeed, the "tools" metaphor is apt. Melanchthon "placed the tools of humanism at the disposal of the University of Wittenberg, Luther, and the Protestant Reformation," notes one historian, "and under him Luther perfected his facility in the Biblical languages, especially Greek."[10] The humanists' curriculum "gave the reformers the tools for studying the Bible and discovering its insights, especially on justification."[11]

Wittenberg was laying a solid foundation on Greek grammar, thanks to Melanchthon. Not coincidentally, the great grammarian used the entire Bible as teaching material in his courses, and "Luther soon involved him in teaching theology."[12] It was a most logical reciprocity, for as Luther knew well, grammar is the beginning of theology; without it, as early Reformation heterodoxies would disgustingly demonstrate, there is no end anywhere.

Green notes that without fundamental instruction in Koine, "it would be very difficult to imagine the Protestant Reformation taking place,"[13] much less taking off. To Melanchthon, not knowing the sacred pages in the original language was "like trying to fly without feathers."[14] Greek was taught at Wittenberg. The Reformation took off.

Luther's able acquisition of Greek is illustrated by his masterful use of it. In less than eleven weeks, while holed up in the wide-planked Wartburg fortress from May 1521 to March 1522, the great Reformer accomplished one of history's most remarkable literary outputs with his German translation of the entire Greek New Testament. The achievement is all the more astounding when one considers, not the conditions under which he worked, but the bare tools he had to work with. None of the great lexicons and computer aids of our day: it was like building a castle with hand tools.

TODAY'S PASTOR

"So dearly as we love the gospel, let us also cling to the languages in which the Scriptures were written," said Luther in 1524, adjuring the town aldermen of Germany to provide schools for the furtherance of both biblical and secular studies (WA 15: 37–38).[15] For Luther, the matter was indisputable: a competent pastor must have a thorough knowledge of Greek and Hebrew.[16]

In spite of Luther's timeless exhortation, many Lutheran pastors today measure their competency apart from this thorough knowledge. If a not wholly unscientific survey of 100 Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod pastors can be trusted, nine out of 10 are not keeping up with their Greek (and for Hebrew the situation is even further gone).[17] In spite of the best drilling by the best of institutions, the battle is an uphill fight.

As everyone knows, the problem begins long before seminary matriculation, and good fathering at the seminary cannot always overcome poor mothering prior. For more than a

7. Clyde L. Manschreck, *Melanchthon: The Quiet Reformer* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1958), 68.
8. Ibid., 21.
9. Ibid., 23, citing Philipp Melanchthon, *Corpus Reformatorum: Philippi Melanthonis Opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. C. B. Bretschneider and H. E. Bindseil (Halle: C. A. Schwetschke, 1834–60), 1:42, cxlviii.
10. Green, *Melanchthon*, 113. In a sense, humanism and evangelicalism were reciprocal favors: the original languages opened Luther's eyes to the gospel and the gospel expression was checked against the original languages.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., 125.
13. Ibid., 113.
14. Quoted by Manschreck, *Melanchthon*, 95.
15. In 1518, Luther wrote of yet another reason for pastors to know the original Scripture: "And according to my test, the people expect the call of Christ himself in a pastor as well as study in sacred letters, which they seek for their youth. Therefore, Greek readings have begun among us, as Greek is preferred to all tongues for understanding the Bible." Luther then adds hopefully, "We yet have expectations for Hebrew . . ." (WA Br 1: 194.24–38 [Nr. 89], quoted in Timothy P. Dost, *Renaissance Humanism in Support of the Gospel in Luther's Early Correspondence: Taking All Things Captive* [Aldershot: Ashgate Pub. Co., 2001], 112).
16. See Green, *Melanchthon*, 113, from whom the summary adjectives "competent" and "thorough" are borrowed.
17. Survey conducted by the author in 1995. A generation ago, Edward W. Goodrich reached an identical conclusion for another Protestant denomination (*Do It Yourself Hebrew and Greek* [Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1976], 1).

generation, students in this country have not had the advantage of one of Western civilization's most precious heritages, the classical languages. Beginning in the late 1960s, Latin and Greek were unceremoniously dropped from United States' high school curriculums in favor of more practical concerns — Spanish and French, and tourism-based textbooks — so that today's educated student is more fluent in asking where the bathrooms are in Paris and Madrid than in parsing an English word or sentence. This institutional change seems to have been part of the cleansing of the countercultural revolution, whose wheels went forward fast and left the mother tongue stuttering in the dry ruts of academia. Few, it seems, read Greek and Latin anymore, though these languages are the basis of perhaps 90 percent of our technical stock. This unacceptable state of affairs is, like all social problems, "nobody's fault."

The depths to which we have blithely slid might be illustrated by an example from one of the best Graduate Record Examination prep books. "When the moon in its orbit is furthest [*sic*] away from the earth," the guide prepares its students, "it is at its *apogee*."[18] It is not out of respect for the student that Barron's never once gives away (not with italics, nor boldface, not even with quotation marks, not with any overt indicator of etymology) that *apo* + *ge* (two Greek lexemes, ἀπό, γῆ, that appear frequently in the New Testament) literally equals "away from [the] earth." Since this sort of ignoring of basic elements of the language is now practically institutionalized — the opposite of Wittenberg's bringing in Melanchthon — who is not affected in our lamentable times?

It would be a particular shame if the denomination so proudly associated with Greek lexicography (the A in *BDAG* is for Arndt, the D for Danker[19]) would allow proficiency in New Testament Greek to become, rather than the solid foundation of biblical study, an arcane subspecialty. For the typical pastor, the question has become a very practical matter: is it worth the time and effort to rebuild, much less build upon, the eroded vocabulary of his seminary education? The otherwise-occupied pastor might take to heart these reminders:

1. For the New Testament, Koine is *the* language of inspiration, for all we know, the language in which God breathed the sacred text.
2. It follows then that every pew Bible is a translation, and these, though they may rightly be called "the word of God," are nonetheless once removed in form from the original. Therefore, it is the duty of *someone* to check the translation in the pew. Why would this not be the stewardship of the pastor, as much as the careful checking of the money in the collection plate is the responsibility of the prudent usher? The pastor does well to make a weekly check of the pericopes against the Greek — if not for troubles, then at least for treasures. With respect to readings from the relatively new English Standard Version (ESV), can the pastor be sure that "household" is the best gloss for "θεραπείας" in Luke 12:42 (Sunday Proper 14, Series C; see the New English Translation for a different translation)?

In Revelation, that profoundly symbolic book, is it mere physical "hurt" from which the Christian is spared in 2:11? The word translated "hurt" shares the same root (δική) as one of the most important common nouns in all of theology, a root that lies at the very heart of Reformation theology (see Romans 3:20–30, and AC IV). There may be more to say about it in a sermon, if not in the reading. Truly, what is lost in translation is more than poetry: it is the very meaning of life. And it is the business of the pastor to know it.

Few read Greek and Latin anymore, though these languages are the basis of perhaps 90 percent of our technical stock.

No one should trust too far the book-jacket claims of any publishing house version of Scripture, that their own highly-favored translation is either the most "literal" or the most "readable." The ESV's "Translation Philosophy" is fair-handed but typical: The ESV is an "essentially literal translation that seeks as far as possible to capture the precise wording of the original text and the personal style of each Bible writer."[20] But Luke 2:11, to cite but one example, is guided more by the beautiful syntax of the King James Version than the original. The editors wisely acknowledge that the task of translation is a "trade-off."[21] As stewards of the word, it is the duty of pastors to know what is being traded. For a generation a popular claim was spread by pastors and laymen alike, that the highly regarded New American Standard was "the most literal" translation. Rarely asserted by one who had actually tested the text against the Greek, the claim sounded like the accurate transmission of a rumor. As for outright paraphrases (to go to the other extreme), Luther expressed these disparaging words toward the end of his life (1544): "How ridiculous are those who, for the sake of style, put the Bible into paraphrase!" (WA 42: 2).

3. Pastors should be consulting good commentaries, and knowledge of Koine is a prerequisite for engaging them. The Concordia Commentary series, which year-by-year is

18. *Barron's How to Prepare for the GRE*, 15th ed. (Hauppage, New York: Barron's, 2003), 117.
19. See BDAG, vii, or Danker, *Multipurpose Tools*, 177.
20. *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2001), vii–viii.
21. Ibid.

proving to be one of Concordia Publishing House's most important treasure troves, makes its way book-by-book "following the contours of the grammar of the original languages . . . drawing on philology, linguistics . . . "[22] The series glistens with gems from the original languages.

4. Lastly, if these enticements to return to the pure source-waters of the Greek gospel are not alluring enough, there are eminently practical reasons as well. How about this: Greek can help preaching and teaching. The original word is not merely inspired but inspiring. It can breathe new life into stagnant sermon styles. Greek study gives confidence, stimulating correct thoughts about Scripture, verifying the certainty of word connections, anchoring messages to the sure word. It keeps one deep; it keeps one straight. Check the Greek, and sermons that would otherwise plumb the "fascinating depths" of personal anecdote are sometimes revealed to be so much fishing in the wrong spot.

A pastor need not have first-language knowledge of Greek to draw upon its wonders as much as first-language love. If Jerome was right that "every word or part of a word is full of meaning," then even a single word can make a sermon. (Recall that Luther's encounter with Jerome's own *penitentia* vs. *metanoia* changed more than Luther's mind; it changed the course of church history.)[23] One of my favorite illustrations is the forceful word ἕλκω, eight occurrences in the New Testament make it easily researchable, and deeply profound. It is a pivotal word in John 6:44 where it suffers a rather unhappy translation in standard English translations: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me *draws* (ἑλκύσῃ) him. And I will raise him up on the last day." No, it is not the same word found in chapter two regarding wine nor in chapter four of well water. Its connotations are more tempestuous and violent. They are more swashbucklers than buckets, of drawn swords, bows, or the pulling out of one's hair.[24] In Acts it is used of the people's *dragging* Paul out of the Jerusalem temple to kill him (Acts 21:30–31; see also James 2:6). Plato makes an interesting fourth-century B.C. use of it to describe Socrates' neo-Gnostic idea of the soul being *drawn* away from the body at death. But back in John, our sermon-maker word ἕλκω is also found in 12:32: "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will *draw* (ἑλκύσω) all [people] to myself." We find that it is also used, like an object lesson with great thematic effect, in chapter 21 when the full fishnet is *dragged* to shore. Picture the feisty fish and the agonized apostle being hauled off to where they do not want to go, against their will (even that of the fish!), "with [an] implication of exertion on the part of the mover," BDAG interjects.[25] Here we have a picture, a very Lutheran image, to hook the half-conscious parishioner who might otherwise sit in the hallowed wooden hull of the nave dreaming of carp and bluegill on a Sunday morn.

Yes, there are pastors who are doing just fine without the original languages, no doubt. But that claim is more compelling coming from one who actually knows them. LOGIA

22. Editors' Preface, Concordia Commentary Series (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House), xiii.
23. "Previously no word had been more bitter for him than the word 'repentance' . . . but now nothing sounded sweeter and more pleasant to him. . . . Surprisingly, Luther received further stimulation for his understanding of repentance in 1516 from the notes of Erasmus of Rotterdam on the New Testament, which revealed to him the meaning of the Greek word for repentance (*metanoia*)" (Green, *Melanchthon*, 184).
24. Liddell-Scott, 534–46.
25. BDAG, 318.

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ISSUE	THEME	DEADLINE
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Reformation 2009	Wittenberg & Mecca	March 1, 2009
Epiphany 2010	Lutheranism in Latin America	June 1, 2009

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Luther's Aesop

Carl P. E. Springer

One of the first things Martin Luther did after he arrived at the fortress town of Coburg in April of 1530 was to write a letter to his colleague Philipp Melanchthon, who had traveled on farther south to Augsburg to participate in the great diet to be held there:

> We have finally arrived at our Sinai, dearest Philipp, but we will make a Zion out of this Sinai and we will build here three tabernacles: one for the Psalter, one for the Prophets, and one for Aesop.[1]

That Luther would mention his interest in editing Aesop in this letter may come as something of a surprise to those who are unfamiliar with his deep attachment to these fables. In fact, the ecclesiastical reformer whose name is so closely associated with the phrase "*Sola Scriptura*" had nothing but the highest respect for the stories attributed to this pagan author, assigning them a status "next to the Bible" and regarding them as "better than the mangled utterances of all the philosophers and jurists."[2] Martin Luther told and retold the fables of Aesop throughout his life, strongly advocated their continued use in Lutheran schools, and at one point actually began to prepare an edition of Aesop in German. We have an autograph that contains the author's own corrected versions of thirteen Aesopic fables in German, which he edited in 1530 while staying at Veste Coburg.[3]

Why would this theologian, so dedicated to the study of the Bible above all other writings, include the fables of the pagan Aesop in the same company as the psalms and the prophets? Why would this professor of Old Testament at the University of Wittenberg, at this relatively late stage in his career, describe his planned Aesop edition in the same terms that Peter used on the Mount of Transfiguration to propose building structures to house Jesus, Moses, and Elijah? While other Lutheran theologians were debating the most serious theological issues of the day at the momentous meeting in Augsburg, why was Luther unapologetically planning to devote some of his own precious literary energies to editing the fables of Aesop?

Save for the predictable German academic monographs,[4] Luther's interest in Aesop has gone largely unnoticed, a casualty no doubt of a persistent misconception that he was indifferent, if not hostile, to the study of the Classics. Luther's most recent biographers have had little to say about his interest in classical authors such as Aesop. Heiko Oberman focuses on Luther as an apocalyptic thinker, absorbed with theological issues like the coming end of the world and the ubiquity of the devil.[5] Richard Marius' study of Luther centers on his preoccupation with death and fear of personal extinction and suggests that Luther's engagement with the Classics was superficial and negative.[6] The author of the most comprehensive recent biography of Luther, Martin Brecht, downplays the importance of the Classics for Luther: "Luther had no use for the humanists' synthesis of antiquity and Christianity."[7] If Luther is seen primarily, or exclusively, in existentialist terms, as a man caught between God

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1. *WBr* 5:285.
2. In his preface to the edition of his fables, Luther writes: "This book of fables or stories is one of the most highly esteemed books among the most highly learned people on earth, especially among the heathen. And, as it is, to be quite frank, in terms of our external life in the world, I am able to think of only a few books, outside of the Holy Scripture, which should be esteemed higher than this, if you take into consideration its usefulness, art, and wisdom, and lack of high-falutin pretension. For one finds in it, among the plain words and simple fables, the most refined teaching, admonition, and instruction (for whoever knows how to use it), to enable one to live in wisdom and peace among evil people in the false, vain world" (*WA* 50:452–5; translations of the preface, here and elsewhere, are the author's own).
3. The autograph was found in the Vatican Library in 1887 by Richard Reitzenstein. The fables are written in Luther's own hand using different inks and pens and bearing the marks of many corrections and alterations, especially in the "morals" that are attached to the conclusion of the fables. This manuscript was used as the basis for the edited version that appears in the fiftieth volume of the *Weimar Ausgabe*, 442–460. Its scholarly study has been greatly facilitated in recent years by the publication of a facsimile in 1983 along with a commentary: *Martin Luther Briefe und Aesop-Fabeln: Codex Ottobonianus Latinus 3029: Kommentarband zur Faksimileausgabe des Cod. Ottob. Lat. 3029* (Zurich: Belser, 1983), edited by W. Simon and M. Schultze. The manuscript contains 14 fables (13 of them are Aesopic) in a first draft on ff. 1–6, and a finished version of Fables 1–7 on ff. 7–9b.
4. The following are a representative sample: R. Dithmar, "Martin Luther als Fabelhans," *Luther* 64 (1993): 67–78; K. Doderer, "Über das betriegen zur Wahrheit, Die Fabelbearbeitungen Martin Luthers," *Wirkendes Wort* 1964:379–88; A. Schirokauer, "Luthers Arbeit am Aesop," *Modern Language Notes* 62 (1947):73–84. The fables themselves have been edited by E. Theile, *Luthers Fabeln nach seiner Handschrift und den Drucken neubearbeitet* (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1911; first edition published in 1888; third edition by W. Steinberg in 1961).
5. Heiko Oberman, *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil,* transl. E. Walliser-Schwarzbart (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).
6. Richard Marius, *Martin Luther: The Christian Between God and Death* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1999).
7. Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther* (in three volumes; English translation by J. Schaaf; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985–1993), vol. 3, *The Preservation of the Church, 1532–1546*, 84.

and the devil, or dangling precariously between life and death, it is no wonder that so few have paid serious attention to his enthusiasm for the study of animal stories having to do with living wisely and safely in this world.

Luther had a high regard for a number of classical literary authors. His famous aversion to Aristotle is one of the exceptions to that rule, and Aesop was one of his favorites.[8] Luther recommended classical authors for reading in Lutheran schools. In his directive to city magistrates to establish Christian schools, Luther makes it clear that students should read poets and orators of the past like Virgil and Cicero, "regardless of whether they were heathen or Christian, Greek or Latin. For from such must one learn grammar."[9] Luther even wrote his own Latin verse in the style of Virgil, Martial, and other classical Latin poets.[10] He recommended a background in the Classics for young men studying theology: "I am convinced that without literary training, pure theology is not able to stand upright."[11] Greek and Latin poets, philosophers, and historians were required reading at the University of Wittenberg.[12] While his learned colleague, Philipp Melanchthon is usually considered the *praeceptor Germaniae*, Luther was at least indirectly responsible for the establishment of the famous Gymnasium system in Germany with its strong predilection for the Classics.[13] Indeed, one could argue that it was Luther's endorsement, even more than Melanchthon's, that helped to ensure the continuation of classical studies after the Reformation, precisely because Luther was a theologian, not a humanist.

Even those scholars who have addressed the question of Luther's relationship with the Classics have tended to describe it in fairly superficial terms. The usual view is that Luther used quotations from the pagan authors for decorative reasons and appreciated their functionality as rhetorical tools, but did not have much interest in the larger questions they raised or the worldview they represented.[14] Often it is assumed too that Luther read the classical authors as a young student but did not devote much time to them later in life. This view is offered by Lewis Spitz: "Did Luther, in his later years, learn more of the classics and use them? Again the answer must be in the negative."[15] *Contra* Spitz, Luther's interest in the fables of Aesop persisted from the beginnings of his long literary career until the final years of his life. Luther would certainly have learned the fables, probably by heart, during his earliest school years.[16] We find him retelling an Aesopic fable in one of his earliest sermons, preached sometime between 1514 and 1517,[17] and he continued to retell the fables in his sermons and treatises and to talk and write about them well into the 1530s and 1540s, the last decades of his life. It could be said, in fact, that Luther's high regard for Aesop's fables is one of the few aspects of his thought that seems not to have changed during the course of his meteoric literary career.

Why did Luther value the fables of Aesop so highly?[18] For one thing, he felt that they had great value for basic schoolroom instruction.[19] Aesop was very much a part of the curriculum in the Latin schools before Luther's time and the fables play a prominent role in the influential manual Melanchthon and Luther prepared in 1528, "Instructions for the Visitors of Parish Pastors."[20] The success of Luther's reformation, with its em-

8. Luther's early devotion to Aristotle as well as his eventual rejection of his philosophy as "the enemy of theology" has been studied extensively. See, for example, Th. Dieter, *Der junge Luther und Aristoteles: Eine historisch-systematische Untersuchung zum Verhaeltnis von Theologie und Philosophie* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001). Luther's repudiation of Epicurus, especially later in his life, is well documented. See G. Maron, *Martin Luther und Epikur: Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der alten Luther* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek and Ruprecht, 1988).
9. *WA* 15:52. Luther's last recorded written words contain high praise for Vergil and Cicero. "No one is able to understand Virgil in his *Bucolics* and *Georgics* unless he has first been a shepherd or a farmer for five years. No one understands Cicero in his epistles correctly, unless has he has been involved in the affairs of an important state for twenty years. No one should think that he has sufficiently tasted the Holy Scriptures unless he has governed the churches with the prophets for a hundred years. Lay no hand on this divine *Aeneid*. Rather fall down on your knees and worship at its footsteps. We are truly beggars." *WTR* 5:317–8.
10. On Luther's imitation of Virgil, see my "Arms and the Theologian: Martin Luther's *Adversus Armatum Virum Cochlaeum*," *The International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 10 (2003): 38–53.
11. *WBr* 3:50.
12. See M. Harran, "Luther as Professor," in *Luther and Learning: The Wittenberg University Luther Symposium* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1983), 29–51.
13. K. Hartfelder, *Melanchthon als Praeceptor Germaniae* = Monumenta Germaniae Paedagogica 7 (originally published in Berlin in 1889; reprinted Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1964).
14. R. Schwarz, "Beobachtungen zu Luthers Bekanntschaft mit antiken Dichtern und Geschichtsschreibern," *Lutherjahrbuch* 54 (1987): 7–22.
15. See "Luther and Humanism," in Harran, 69–94, esp. 83. In his list of the classical authors Luther knew, Spitz fails even to mention Aesop, 78.
16. See the excellent discussion of what we may assume Luther would have studied during his years at the Latin school or the "trivial" school in Mansfeld in M. Harran, *Martin Luther: Learning for Life* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1997), 29–34.
17. *WA* 1:125.
18. Luther does not always praise Aesop unconditionally. In his commentary on Genesis 32:24 he says: "For unless they [allegories] have a story and a certain fact as a foundation, they are nothing else but fables like those of Aesop" (*AE* 6:125 and *WA* 44:93).
19. In the ancient world it seems to have been simply assumed by fabulists like Phaedrus and Babrius that the readers and hearers of Aesop's fables were adults. They considered themselves poets with serious literary aspirations and do not seem to have considered that anyone but adults would have been reading their works. By the Middle Ages and the time of the Reformation, the situation had changed. Melanchthon and Luther clearly intended Aesop to be studied by children, among others. By the seventeenth century, we see the development of the idea of an Aesop exclusively for children; see L.Gibbs, *Aesop's Fables. A New Translation* (Oxford: University Press, 2002), xi–xii.
20. "The second division consists of those children who can read and should now learn grammar. With these we should proceed in the following manner. All the children, large and small, should practice music daily, the first hour in the afternoon. Then the schoolmaster shall first expound the fables of Aesop to the second division . . . . In the morning the children shall again explain Aesop. The praeceptor shall decline a number of nouns and verbs, many or few, easy or hard, according to the ability of the pupils, and have them give the rule or explanation of these forms. When the children have learned the rules of syntax they should be required in this period to identify parts of speech or to construe, as it is called, which is a very useful practice, though employed by few. When now the children have learned Aesop in this way, they are to be given Terence to be learned by heart. For they have now matured and can carry more work" (*AE* 40:316–7; *WA* 26:237–8). Melanchthon valued Aesop highly, as we see from his comments in his *De utilitate fabularum* of 1526 and the preface to Joachim Camerarius' collection, *Fabellae Aesopicae quaedam notiores et in scholis usitatae*. See S. Kusukawa, ed., *Philip Melanchthon, Orations on Philosophy and Education* (Cambridge: University Press, 2000).

phasis on the importance of all believers having access to the Scriptures depended in large part on improving basic education for the young. This is a point that Luther himself grasped fully. "*Docendi sunt Christiani*" (Christians must be taught) is a phrase that appears already in the Ninety-Five Theses. Throughout his life Luther continued to grapple with the question of how best to educate all elements of German society, boys and *girls*, peasant and nobility, laity and clergy. Luther's personal interest in preparing an edition of a "German Aesop" indicates how strongly he felt that the fables should also be available to those who would never learn Latin. It is clear from visitation records that there was considerable opposition, especially in the rural areas, to educational reforms.[21] Luther continued to press for them, because he was not content with a reformation that would only affect the highest elements of culture and society.[22]

Luther seems to have valued especially the narrative pedagogy implicit in the fables, preferring it to the kind of formal philosophical doctrine presented in abstract form that presupposes years of schooling in logical thinking. Aesop is the perfect antidote for an educational system that has suffered from too much Aristotle! Luther's fullest account of how he believes these deceptively simple stories manage to have such a profound effect on listeners and readers, is expressed in the preface to the edition he began at Coburg:

> Still, those who would like to believe that Aesop was written by one master and who would like to create a biography for the same, perhaps have reason enough for doing so, namely that they as wise people would like to have such a book made commonly available for everyone for the sake of common usefulness (for we see that the young children and young people are easily moved by fables and stories). And so they are led on by pleasure and love to art and wisdom, which pleasure and love will be the stronger if an Aesop or the *larva* of the same or the kind of costuming used in *Fasching* is used to express such art or bring it about that they pay the more attention and accept and preserve it with laughing. One cannot, however, lead either children or great leaders and lords to the truth, even if it is for their benefit, unless one allows fools to tell them the truth, for they can stand them and listen to them. Otherwise, they will or cannot endure the truth when it is told by any wise man. Yes, the whole world hates the truth, if it hits someone.[23]

Luther appreciates Aesop's "foolishness," that is to say, his unpretentious origins, a former slave on the island of Samos, his unprepossessing appearance (like Socrates, Aesop was conspicuously ugly),[24] and especially his manner of instruction using animals and stories to make his points. All of this Luther must have found applicable to himself and his own situation. After all, Luther too rose from fairly humble origins to a position of considerable influence later in life. The former monk marveled often at his own audacity in presuming to speak before Emperor and Pope. Luther was self-deprecating about his own abilities, holding Melanchthon up to high praise while downplaying his own obvious talents. He refers to himself as a "fool" in *An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation* of 1520.[25] Of course, there is sound theological precedent for Luther's position. Jesus teaches that the kingdom of heaven belongs to children and those who are like children and marvels that its mysteries are destined to be revealed not to the wise and prudent but to former fishermen. Such folly corresponds well, too, with the Apostle Paul's declaration in 1 Corinthians 3:18 that he who wishes to become wise must "become a fool" and his conviction that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men" and that God has chosen to reveal his truth through the foolishness of preaching.

Luther was especially struck by Aesop's willingness to speak the truth regardless of the consequences. The verbal ex-slave got into trouble by criticizing the priests at Delphi for charging too much for their prophetic services and was finally hurled off a cliff, despite telling the religious authorities several fables about why that would be such a bad idea. Luther wrote:

> Therefore, such wise and distinguished people have invented the fables which allow one animal to speak with another. It is as if they wanted to say: all right then, if nobody wants to hear or endure the truth and one can just not bear it, then we are willing to decorate it and put it under a pleasurable coat of lies in the form of pleasant fables. And because people do not want to hear the truth from the mouth of humans, they arrange it so that it can be heard from the mouth of animals and beasts. So it happens then, that if one reads the fables, that one animal speaks the truth to another, one wolf to another. Indeed, sometimes the wolf or bear or lion depicted in the book have a good message to get across to

21. C. Dixon, *The Reformation and Rural Society: The Parishes of Brandenburg-Ansbach-Kulmbach* 1528–1603 (Cambridge, 1996). In Zinna, we hear of peasants who declined to participate in praying the Lord's prayer because it was too long. See Harran, *Martin Luther: Learning for Life*, 254.
22. The popularity of Aesop in the second half of the sixteenth century may, therefore, be one indication that the Lutheran educational program was not as complete a failure with the common people as some have suggested. Over six hundred editions of Aesop appeared between 1470 and 1600. We may usefully compare this with Brown's estimate that approximately two thousand editions of the enormously popular and influential Lutheran hymnals were produced in the sixteenth century. See C. Brown, *Singing the Gospel: Lutheran Hymns and the Success of the Reformation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).
23. *WA* 50:453.
24. "Pot-bellied, misshapen of head, snub-nosed, swarthy, dwarfish, bandy-legged, short-armed, squint-eyed, liver-lipped, a faulty creation of Prometheus when half-asleep." J. Papademetriou, *Aesop as an Archetypal Hero* (Athens: Hellenic Society for Humanistic Studies, 1997), 14.
25. "I know full well that I shall not escape the charge of presumption because I, a despised inferior, person, venture to address such high and great estates on such weighty matters, as if there were nobody else in the world except Doctor Luther to take up the cause of the Christian estate and give advice to such high-ranking people. I make no apologies no matter who demands them. Perhaps I owe my God and the world another work of folly. I intend to pay my debt honestly. And if I succeed, I shall for the time being become a court jester. And if I fail, I still have one advantage — no one need buy me a cap or put scissors to my head. It is a question of who will put the bells on whom" (Luther is comparing his monk's tonsure and cowl with the cap and bells often worn by a court jester; *AE* 44:123). On this point, see in general, E. Gritsch, *Martin-God's Court Jester: Luther in Retrospect* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).

> the real two-footed wolves and lions, which no preacher, friend, or enemy could otherwise dare to communicate. So, too, a fictional fox in the book, when one reads the fables, corresponds so well to a fox in real life that he breaks out in a sweat and probably wants very much to choke or burn Aesop. As, indeed, the author of the biography of Aesop indicates. Aesop was killed for speaking the truth and it did not help that he permitted his animals to speak such truth in the manner of fables and as a fictional Aesop. For the truth is the most unbearable thing on earth.[26]

Luther suggests that the fictional foxes in Aesop's fables correspond to two-legged foxes in real life, possibly sitting across the table from you, and that these "foxes" want nothing so much as to choke and burn Aesop, that is to say, the one who is telling them these stories in which so much that is unflattering about themselves is revealed. In a table conversation recorded in 1536, Luther makes much the same point. "In the guise of a stupid fool" Aesop spoke the truth and on that account had to be "persecuted."[27] Luther seems especially attuned to the tragic dimension of Aesop's life, the grim consequences that inevitably catch up with the incorrigible truth teller. Aesop gets away with his subversive story telling, once, even twice, but not for ever. Even though he masquerades as a fool, hiding behind the fictive characters of his animals, Aesop finally must suffer the tragic consequences for telling the truth, because it is the one thing people cannot stand to hear. Certainly the German critic of church abuses such as the practice of selling indulgences could empathize with the ancient Greek truth teller who was killed by the religious authorities of his day for questioning the expense and validity of their spiritual activities. That this ancient contrarian would have to be put to death by the priests of Delphi made complete sense to the blunt reformer, "because the truth is the most unbearable thing on earth." Luther himself fully expected that his own defiant stand against Pope and Emperor would lead to his eventual death. He was, as it turned out, able to die in bed, but not before he was declared an enemy of the Empire and excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church. It was entirely possible that his fate would have resembled that of his predecessor, the Czech reformer, Jan Huss, who was burned at the stake.

Like Aesop, Luther was an inveterate story teller. The fables appealed strongly to his own highly developed imaginative sensibility. In his preface to the fables, Luther observes that the fables work so well precisely because they are fictional. Aesop presents his "teaching and admonition under the pleasant form of the fable, just as one would in a mummery or a game." The idea that animals can talk and think and act like humans is, of course, a flight of fancy, but Luther was very comfortable with it. He liked animals and often compared them to himself and others, as for his instance, when he talks about his dog Tölpel in a number of the *Tischreden*.[28] Luther was especially fond of birds. An elaborate animal fantasy is included in a letter back to Wittenberg from the Coburg, describing a "*Reichstag*" of birds gathered outside his window.[29] One of the most amusing fictions Luther conceived was an official sounding complaint addressed by the birds of Wittenberg against his servant Wolfgang Seberger who was trapping them.[30] It is important to realize that it was not simply inevitable that a former Augustinian monk in the early part of the sixteenth century would have found stories such as these attractive and advocated so strongly for their continued use.[31] In fact, the fable was commonly associated in the Middle Ages with the idea of untruth and rejected as a result.[32] Among Luther's own contemporaries we find those like the Augustinian Johannes von Paltz of Erfurt who had a quite different estimation of the value of fables than Luther's: "A Catholic should avoid lying or lustful poetic fables as though they were contaminated by the plague and infected."[33]

It is clear, finally, that Luther's interest in Aesop goes beyond an appreciation of their value as grammatical and rhetorical tools; he also commends them as models of wisdom and sensible morality. We see Luther making this point in his commentary on Genesis:

> Therefore he who stands on the teaching of the Law is actually nothing but a hearer, who learns nothing else than to know what he ought to do. For those who want to learn

26. *WA* 50:454.
27. "To be well spoken. On the sixth of November he read his preface to Aesop, which book he commended wonderfully, because it was full of teaching and morals and experience. Then he added: He who can speak well, he is a man. For discourse is wisdom and wisdom is discourse. The word *reden* comes from the word *raden*, that is to say from advice . . . . So Aesop speaks and does not chatter; he sets forth a thing and truth in the guise of a stupid fool. He must on that account be persecuted" (*WTR* 4,126). On the *Vita Aesopi*, see N. Holzberg, *The Ancient Fable: An Introduction* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), 72–84.
28. "When Luther's puppy happened to be at the table, looked for a morsel from his master, and watched with open mouth and motionless eyes, he said, "Oh, if I could only pray the way this dog watches meat! All his thoughts are concentrated on the piece of meat. Otherwise he has no thought, wish, or hope" (*AE* 54:37–38).
29. "I have not yet seen their Kaiser but otherwise the nobility are swooping and swirling around and the great lords are always present, not in fancy clothes but simply garbed in a single color, all equally black and all equally gray-eyed. They all sing the same song, but still with a lovely difference between the young and the old, the great and the small. They do not pay attention to the great palace and hall, for their hall is vaulted with the beautiful, wide heaven, their floors are the simple fields, decked with pretty green branches, and their walls are as far apart from each other as the ends of the world" (*WBr* 5:293–295).
30. *WA* 38:290–293.
31. Luther's early biographer, Johannes Mathesius, preached a series of sermons on the life of Luther between the years 1562–1564 that was published in 1566. Of these, the seventh sermon preached on *Fastnacht* in 1563 is devoted to the interest Luther had in the fables of Aesop and Reinecke Fuchs.
32. Isidore's definition of *fabula* in his influential *Etymologiae* relied upon the same understanding, defining *fable* solely in terms of its fictive qualities: *res ficta est, non facta*. Ironically enough, Luther's own translation of 2 Timothy 4:4 might support such an understanding of the word *fable*.
33. "The reason for that is that lying fables, insofar as they accustom the mind to deceit, make it possible that the mind will not be able to distinguish the false from the true . . . and thus they corrupt the mind with errors. But fables that make up or recite fleshly lustful histories corrupt the mind making it carnal. For he who touches pitch is contaminated by it. From this it follows that fables infect and corrupt the whole spirit" (Schulze and Simon, 60).

> nothing else, it would be enough to provide Cato's poem or Aesop, whom I consider the better teacher of morals. Nevertheless, it is profitable to put both into the hands of young people. . . . So far as moral precepts are concerned, once cannot find fault with the industry and earnestness of the heathen. Nevertheless, they are all inferior to Moses, who gives instruction not only in morals but also in the worship of God.[34]

In one of his later Table Talks, Luther praised the fables of Aesop fulsomely (*vehementer*) for their usefulness "to the commonwealth:"

> They are worthy of translation and being put into a proper order and arrangement. It is not a book that was written by one man only, but it was diligently assembled by many men in different centuries. It would be very useful therefore if somebody would translate the book well and put it into proper order. The important fables that are pithy, smack of antiquity, and are useful to the commonwealth ought to be gathered into a first book: then those that are more elegant ought to be placed apart in a second book, and the rest ought to be reserved for a third. It is a result of God's providence that the writings of Cato and Aesop have remained in the schools, for both are significant books. Cato contains the most useful sayings and precepts. Aesop contains the most delightful stories and descriptions. Moral teachings, if offered to young people will contribute much to their edification. In short, next to the Bible, the writings of Cato and Aesop are in my opinion the best, better than the mangled utterances of all the philosophers and jurists.[35]

At the same time that Luther praises the value of the fables for the education of children, he is careful to point out that their wisdom is more broadly applicable and often underestimated by those who consider themselves to be already wise. In his lectures on Psalm 101:5, Luther remarks:

> To say nothing about other books, how could one prepare a finer book on worldly heathen wisdom, than that ordinary, silly children's book called Aesop? Indeed, because the children learn it and it is so ordinary, people pay little heed to it; and some have not yet understood a single fable in it think they are as good as four doctors.[36]

And in his Table Talk, Luther compares Aesop favorably to Jerome[37] and the third and fourth book of Esdras.[38]

In Luther's view, these fables present good advice for anyone, even Lutherans, or maybe even especially Lutherans, who wish to live wisely and well in a fallen world. Stories like the city mouse and the country mouse, which was the last fable that Luther retold in his Coburg collection, remind the Christian that one needs to be careful of attractive, wordly promises that turn out not to be true. The fable of the little lamb and the ruthless wolf who will use any excuse, or none at all, to get his way is quite in keeping with a Lutheran view of a fallen world, where sin reigns.[39] Aesop does not call for changes in societal structure, any more than the Apostle Paul did. For Lutherans, "the world is still the world," even after baptism or conversion. The lesson for the reader or hearer of the fables is always to be on guard, not to assume the inherent goodness of others. Lutherans do not expect heaven on earth. In the last days, Luther fully expected that the attacks of the devil would increase as a result of his reform of the church. He was disappointed frequently, it is true, later in life by the "swinish" behavior of his fellow Germans, but he was not surprised.[40]

Indeed, one could say that the fables complement nicely the kind of sane instruction that Luther presented in the Small Catechism, especially in the table of duties. There is a quite unfanatical side to Luther the educator, whose interest in teaching young people and others how to live Christian lives corresponds to the same pedagogical instinct that informed the writing of the Small Catechism or his hymn on the Ten Commandments. Here is what he has to offer on how best to use the fables of Aesop in instruction:

> And that I may give an example of how to use the fables well: If a father of a house at the table wants to provide some amusement that is useful, he can ask his wife, child, servant: What does this or that fable mean? And work that out for them and for himself in these fables. So the fifth fable about the dog with the piece of meat in his mouth means that if a servant or maidservant is doing well and wants to better him or herself, then it will go for them just like with the dog, because they will lose the good and not achieve the better. Likewise, if a servant depends on another servant and allows himself to be led astray, it may go for him as it did for the frog tied to the mouse, in the third fable, in which the fish eats them both. And so on with the other fables, interpreted in terms of love, compassion, threats and enticements, as you wish.[41]

Let us take a closer look now at how Luther reworked and interpreted his favorite fable, the story of the dog and the bone, one to which he referred or retold over a dozen times during the

34. *AE* 2:159; *WA* 42:373–374.
35. *AE* 54:210–213; *WTR* 3:353.
36. *AE* 13:200; *WA* 51:243.
37. "Surely there's more learning in Aesop than in all of Jerome" (*AE* 54:72; *WTR* 1:194).
38. In his preface to the Book of Baruch, Luther declares: "Thus, I very nearly let it go with the third and fourth book of Esdras, books which we did not wish to translate into German because they contain nothing that one could not find better in Aesop or in still slighter works" (*AE* 35:349–350).
39. On the ethical context of the fables and the values they implicitly teach such as humility caution, and the importance of friendship, see C. Zafiropoulos, *Ethics in Aesop's Fables: The Augustana Collection* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2001).
40. See, for example, his letter to his wife, Katie, threatening to leave Wittenberg, in *AE* 50:273–281.
41. *WA* 50:455.

course of his life. Perhaps Luther's most famous application of the fable is when he compares faith to the meat and good works to the meat's reflection in the water, in *The Freedom of a Christian,* in which he suggests that the Christian who is counting on some good work instead of faith to make him "pious, free, blessed, or a Christian" will lose faith and everything else, too, "just like the dog who carries a piece of meat in his mouth and snaps at its reflection in the water so that he loses both the meat and the reflection."[42] Luther's second, reworked, version of the fable, the fifth in the Coburg Collection, follows.

GREED

Of the Dog in the Water

A dog ran through a stream of water and had a piece of meat in his mouth. But when he saw the reflection of the meat in the water, he thought that it was also meat and he snapped eagerly for it. But when he opened his mouth the piece of flesh he had fell out and the water carried it away. So he lost both the meat and its reflection.

Teaching

One should be content with what God has given him. He who disdains having a little will not have something bigger. He who wants to have too much, will have nothing in the end. Many lose what is certain for what is uncertain.

The fable is included in the earliest versions of Aesop's fables in Latin and Greek that we possess. While we do not know its ultimate origins, it is included in almost all of the late medieval collections that antedate Luther's, including Caxton's famous English translation. Most of the versions have the dog in the river, swimming, or, as he appears in the illustration in Heinrich von Steinhöwel's edition, wading in the water.[43] Steinhöwel was a doctor in Ulm whose bilingual edition of Aesop was published in the 1470s and served as Luther's immediate source. Caxton has the dog crossing a bridge while Luther clearly understands the dog to be in the water, running through the stream, when he spots his reflection in the water.

Luther plunges directly into the story instead of beginning, as Steinhöwel and others do, with a brief description of the point of the fable. All he provides by way of commentary at the beginning of the fable is the single word in his fair copy, "Greed." Luther proceeds directly to tell the story itself, which he does with a fine economy of words and felicity of style. This is one of the fables in which Luther does the least editing, perhaps because he had told it so many times before. The small changes he makes in this first part of the fable appear to be mostly for the sake of euphony. The result is a narrative gem. In four clear, elegant sentences, Luther's fable follows the familiar pattern of the traditional fable structure, with the most apparent simplicity and ease. The stage is set in the first sentence, in which we meet a dog with a piece of meat in his mouth. The next sentence expresses the action, in which the dog snaps at his reflection on the water. The third sentence tells of the reaction, where the dog drops the meat in his mouth into the water, which carries it away. And the fourth sentence presents the the reader or listener with the result, without moralizing: the dog loses both the meat and the reflection.

Here as elsewhere, Luther divides his treatment of the fable into two distinct parts. In the first, he tells the story itself. In the second, he presents what is often called the *epimythium,* or the moral of the story.[44] Luther usually refers to it as "the teaching" or "the meaning," and sometimes he simply says: "This fable shows." Luther's practice allows, or forces, readers or listeners to refrain from forming their own judgments about the meaning or application of the story until they have finished the story itself. Narratives, all by themselves, have a powerful impact on us, no doubt because their structure so clearly appoximates that of our own lives. It is almost impossible for us not to be drawn into the line of a story and to identify, almost instantly, with its characters and what is happening to them. That the fables' subjects are not human may have actually factilitated this process for Aesop's and Luther's contemporaries, even as it still seems to do today. After all, talking animals, including daffy ducks, smart aleck rabbits, and laid back dogs who philosophize on the top of their doghouses, continue to fascinate millions of contemporary human readers and viewers of cartoons. The lessons learned from the world of the animals, whether in the comics or at the zoo or in the behavior of our own pets, may be all the more credible in their application to our own human condition, insofar as they have been taken from a world that is not entirely our own. The wisdom gained and translated from one world to the other is often all the more valuable precisely because it has not been easily acquired.

Luther retold the fables brilliantly, but he was not content to let the narratives of these fables simply speak for themselves, if you will, without making clear what he believed their moral content to be. He would have had little use, one suspects, for a 1960s translation of Aesop's fables that advertised itself as presenting the fables "without morals."[45] Indeed, the concluding proverbs are precisely where Luther devoted most of his critical attention. Luther's "morals" are unique, not only insofar as they are kept separate from the fable itself, but also because Luther typically finds and uses more than one. In the first draft of this fable there are three epimythia and in the fair copy we find four. It seems that Luther did not intend any one of these to be the last word on the subject, but was inviting the reader or listener to pick and choose the ones that might best suit the fable. This is apparently where he believed readers or listeners would profit most, namely, by spending their hermeneutic energies determining exactly how the fable might be applied to life in general and their own lives in particular.

The first sentence, "One should be content with what God has given him," expresses a broad moral lesson that resembles the

42. *WA* 7:28; *AE* 31:356.
43. See H. Österley, *Steinhöwels Aesop* (Tübingen: L.F. Fues, 1873), 85–86.
44. See B. Perry, "The Origin of the Epimythium" *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 71 (1940): 408–412.
45. Lloyd Daley, *Aesop without Morals* (New York: Yoseloff, 1961).

familiar advice of St. Paul (1 Tim 6:6): "Godliness with contentment is great gain." This seems to be, in Luther's view, the most general application of the fable and fits the "vice" he chooses for the fable's caption: "greed." The dog already had a piece of meat in his mouth, not an everyday occurrence in most medieval dogs' lives, but he is greedy. It is not enough. The moral? Everyone has something already, given by God, and failure to be content with what we have, the essence of greed, is a vice that results in self-punishment. This failure to be content is at the heart of Luther's application of the fable to Alexander the Great in a set of sermons on Psalm 112 that were preached in 1526 with Ernest and Francis, nephews of Elector Frederick the Wise, in the congregation. Regardless of how much they might already have, even the very wealthy and powerful are susceptible to the temptation to reach for even more:

> He [Alexander the Great] once attended a lecture and heard a philosopher say that there are many worlds. Then he sighed in his heart and said: "O God, are there other worlds, and I have hardly conquered one? How can I get the others?" That greedy belly could not be satisfied with only one world. He had a wide heart and wanted to enclose other worlds within it when he could not properly use the one he had. We are all like that. We turn our hearts away from what we have toward something else that we do not have. Therefore we do not have what we own; for the heart is not attached to what it has but to what it does not have, and thus a man has and still does not have. He cannot use what he has, and he cannot get what he does not have. So he sits down between two chairs and gets neither. The same thing happens to him that happened to that dog in Aesop's fable. The dog had stolen a piece of meat and was running though some water, when he saw a reflection in the water. Thinking it was a real piece of meat, the dog snapped at it and lost the piece of meat he had in his mouth and the reflection as well. This is what happens to all who are not content with their possessions, who want to reach out and have more. They have stolen their possessions, as that dog stole the meat, greedily raking them in for themselves, robbing or cheating someone out of them. But this is not enough for them. They want to snap up more. So they lose both.[46]

The next sentence of the epimythium is one that Luther added in the fair copy: "He who disdains having a little will not have something bigger." This was one of Luther's favorite proverbs and one that he wrote on the wall of his house in Wittenberg.[47] Luther intended this and other fables to speak not only to the powerful and mighty who possess much, but also to everyday people, such as servants, who possess little. One of the most poignant of all of his applications of this fable is when he describes the situation of a typical father who, while certainly no Alexander, has a little something, but cannot be happy with that. In *XV Psalmos graduum* (1532/33), we read:

> While the fleshly human being thinks about these future things, he loses the present things, just like Aesop's dog, who, while he gapes after a reflection, loses the meat which he had in his maw along with the reflection. And rightly so. For who would dare to condemn this judgment? Therefore that dog is the picture of the whole world. There you see a father to whom God has given wife, children, family, property, etc. This is the meat in his maw. What then does he do? He does not care about the present things given to him by God nor enjoy them, but meanwhile he tears himself up with cares about other empty things not present, which he never achieves, and he suffers something similar to those who try to escape in dreams and nonetheless do not seem to be able to move one foot from its place.[48]

The third moral is: "He who wants to have too much, will have nothing in the end." The dog who could have been content with what he had, wanted too much, not just one bone, but two, and he ended up with nothing. The way in which Luther formulates this ironic truth is strongly reminiscent of biblical passages such as Luke 1:51 in which "the rich are sent empty away." In 1542 in a letter to Graf Albrecht von Mansfeld, Luther makes this some point about the risk of losing everything:

> Otherwise they will lose it all, both, and it will happen as the fable of Aesop says about the man who cut off the goose that laid a golden egg every day, so that he lost the daily golden egg along with the goose . . . and like the dog in Aesop who lost the piece of meat in the water while he snapped at the reflection.[49]

The final sentence, "Many lose what is certain for what is uncertain," fits the fable perfectly, because what has distracted the dog's wits is a reflection, not the real thing, namely, the meat that he has firmly in his maw. Here it becomes apparent, finally, that there is another irony implicit in the fable; the dog loses something real in his greed to get something that does not even exist.[50] In his notes on Ecclesiastes, Luther refers three times to the fable, in each instance making this same point. The dog fails to distinguish between what is real and what is only appearance or opinion, between that which is present reality and what is only future prospect for gain. On Ecclesiastes 3:22; 6:3–4; and 6:9, Luther remarks:[51]

> This, therefore, is the portion of the righteous: to enjoy the things that are present and not to be afflicted by the

46. *AE* 13:396; *WA* 19:304.
47. *WA* 7:566.
48. *WA* 40 iii:240–241.
49. *WBr* 9:629.
50. This is how Luther applies the fable in his *Lectures on Isaiah* (1527–1528): "Paul says of the Jews in Rom 10:2: They have a zeal for God, but it is not enlightened. They apply the terms God, the name of God, the work of God, and faith in God to that which is not God. They follow a shadow like that well-known dog and lose the truth. Therefore let this example scare us away from every pretense, let it open our eyes so that we may distinguish false religion from the true." See *AE* 16:78; *WA* 31:55.
51. *AE* 15:61; *WA* 20:72; *AE* 15:96; *WA* 20:111; and *AE* 15:100–101; *WA* 20:117.

> things that are in the future. But this does not happen under the sun. Those who act otherwise, take a double burden upon themselves: they do not make use of the things that are present, and they do not gain the things that are in the future. The same thing happens to them that happened to the dog in Aesop, which snapped at its shadow and lost the meat. Thus they also become bored with the things that are present and look for other things . . . . The traveler with an empty purse can sing in the presence of a robber. But the rich man is frightened by every bramblebush, and at the height of his happiness he is as miserable as possible. Truly the world is ruled by opinions. God rules by realities, but we are troubled by opinions and lose the reality, just as that dog did in Aesop . . . . The meaning, then, is this: It is better to enjoy the things that are in sight, right before your eyes, than to have a wandering desire. That is, use the things that are present and do not wander in your desires, as that dog in Aesop did when he desired the reflection and lost the meat that was present.[52]

The famous historian, Will Durant, represents the usual perspective on Luther's relationship with Aesop and other classical authors when he says that Luther, like other influential

> reformers, engaged in a struggle for life, strengthened their cause with a religious faith that centered on personal salvation in the other world and left little time for studies of classical civilization or of human amelioration here below.[53]

In fact, as we have just seen, Luther spent a lot of time with the fables of Aesop, not only because he felt that they could provide valuable training in grammar and rhetoric, but also because they could teach important moral lessons for life "here below." Only rarely does he takes issue with the pre-Christian worldview that the fables take for granted, although he acknowledges that no matter how wise, Aesop is inferior to Moses when it comes to "instruction in the worship of God." Unlike radical reformers who felt that only the Bible should be read in schools and who harbored a deep distrust of all art, including fiction, Luther was careful to carve out a place in the Lutheran school curriculum for these and other imaginative texts, regardless of language or origin. Unlike utopian Christians who envision a Gospel that will radically transform individuals and societies, Luther believed that we continue to live in a fallen world where there will always be wolves in sheep's clothing and where it is not at all a foregone conclusion that sinners, even redeemed ones, will be able to live wise, virtuous, and safe lives.

Luther was careful to carve out a place in the Lutheran school curriculum for these and other imaginative texts, regardless of language or origin.

With all due respect to Martin Brecht, it simply will not do to say that Luther did not strive for a synthesis between the Classics and Christianity. It is true that he most emphatically rejected Aristotle, and the "whore reason." It is true that he had little use for the seductive Platonic notion that ignorance, not sin, is the heart of the human dilemma. One should not on this account, however, conclude that Luther's thought had no affinity at all with those elements within the Classical tradition, for example., Aesop, Homer, the Greek tragedies, which recognized the finitude of human knowledge, the importance of limits and self-control and prudence, as well as the power of divine judgment. All too often the Classics have been associated almost exclusively with the idealistic principles of "sweetness and light" that Matthew Arnold identified as the essence of Hellenism. Luther would have agreed with Thomas Carlyle's critique of this partial definition:

> It is all very well to talk of getting rid of one's ignorance, of seeing things in their reality, seeing them in their beauty but how is this to be done when there is something which thwarts and spoils all our efforts? This something is sin.[54]

And sin is something that Aesop understood.

Luther's "synthesis" may not look like that of Erasmus or Michaelangelo or even Melanchthon, but we should not simply assume, on that account, that he did not seek and find his own answer to the question of what Athens has to do with Jerusalem. For Lutherans today who still believe that the classical authors have an important role to play in a Lutheran academic curriculum, and in the formation and enrichment of the Lutheran mind, there may very well be no better place to start than with Luther's Aesop. LOGIA

52. In his Lectures on Galatians, too, Luther makes the same point, but applies it to the monastic life (*AE* 26:405; *WA* 40 i:616). A perspective that does not come out either in the fable as Luther tells it or the teachings which he attaches to it, is the idea that the Aesopic dog is not just greedy, but arrogant. This is clear in a sermon Luther preached in 1537 on Eph 3. Luther compares those who praise the Gospel, yet still remain haughty, to the dog in Aesop's fable: "The same thing happens to them as happened to the Aesopic dog . . . " *WA* 45:137–138. In *XV Psalmos graduum* (1532/33), Luther makes a similar application: "Nobody should be so arrogant that he thinks when he has once heard these things that he is a theologian and fully understands these things" (*WA* 40 iii:186–187).

53. Will Durant, *The Reformation: A History of European Civilization from Wyclif to Calvin: 1300–1564* = The Story of Civilization, Part VI (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), 325.

54. William Barrett, *Irrational Man: A Study in Existential Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday, 1962), 71.

The Use of Logic in Lutheran Theology

Anders Kraal

When confessional Lutheran theologians have discussed the relationship between faith and reason, standardly they have made a distinction between two different uses of reason: its magisterial use (*usus rationis magisterialis*) and ministerial use (*usus rationis ministerialis*).[1] They have rejected the magisterial use of reason as impermissible, but have considered the ministerial use not only permissible but, indeed, necessary for theology and the study of Scripture. But of what does the ministerial use of reason consist? How should the line between the two uses be drawn? This article will seek to provide some answers to these questions by considering the status and use of logic in Lutheran theology.

LOGIC AND THE MINISTERIAL USE OF REASON

The confessional Lutheran endorsement of the ministerial use of reason is not easy to state in detailed, exact terms. Nevertheless, there is significant agreement that reason may be used ministerially to understand the Scriptures as God has intended them to be understood. One classic and oft-quoted statement to this effect is from the monumental *Theologia didactico-polemica*[2] of the seventeenth-century orthodox Lutheran theologian, Johann Andreas Quenstedt (1617–1688), who says that Christians are to employ the innate principles of reason "as aids to acquire theology."[3] The twentieth-century American Lutheran theologian Francis Pieper (1852–1931) quotes approvingly Quenstedt's claim in *Christian Dogmatics* and comments that the ministerial use of reason "serves solely to understand the contents of Scripture and does not add its own content."[4] In accordance with these and similar assertions from other confessional Lutherans, the doctrine of the ministerial use of reason can be explicated as follows: reason is used ministerially in theology and the study of Scripture, if, and only if, it is used to understand the meaning of the Scriptures as God has intended them to be understood.

This raises the question, "How has God has intended the Scriptures to be understood?" Orthodox Lutherans standardly have answered this question with two points. First, God intends that the Scriptures be understood in accordance with the rules of ordinary language, including the whole array of linguistic rules, which the old Lutherans usually referred to simply as "grammar" (or as "grammar and rhetoric").[5] Second, God intends that the Scriptures be understood in accordance with the rules of formal logic, which the old Lutherans identified as those laws of logic famously expounded in *The Organon* of Aristotle (384–322 B.C.).[6]

The sixteenth-century reformers and the seventeenth-century orthodox theologians showed their appreciation for the use of logic in theology by including the study of formal logic in the core curricula of Lutheran higher education, including ministerial education. This emphasis can be traced to the early phase of the Reformation. In his 1520 *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, Martin Luther (1483–1546), while discussing the need for a reformation of higher education, qualified his often heated criticism of Aristotle, saying, "I would gladly agree to keeping Aristotle's books *Logic*, *Rhetoric*, and *Poetics* . . . as useful in training young people to speak and to preach properly."[7] Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560), no doubt the most important organizer of Lutheran institutions of higher education in the Reformation era, went further: "The true way of teaching and reasoning [that is, logic or dialectics] is God's gift and is necessary in expounding the heavenly doctrine."[8] Again, "I urge and entreat . . . for the sake of the glory of God and the welfare of the Church, not to neglect dialectic, nor to applaud the foolish speeches of those who disparage it."[9] The seventeenth-century

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1. See Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. 1 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 197–199.
2. The relevant portions of Quenstedt's *Theologia didactico-polemica sive systema theologicum* have been translated into English by Luther Poellot under the title *The Nature and Character of Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 156–175.
3. Quenstedt, 159.
4. F. Pieper, 198.
5. Quenstedt, 158; F. Pieper, 197.
6. It is important to note that rules of formal logic are not "rules of rationality" that dictate what is reasonable or rational from a human point of view. Rules of formal logic are held to be immanent in language usage, and such usage is neutral with respect to the reasonableness or unreasonableness of what is communicated by means of it. When the old Lutherans said that God intends that the Scriptures be understood according to the laws of logic, they were by no means endorsing a principle of rationalism in theology and the study of Scripture.
7. Martin Luther, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation," *Three Treatises,* trans. C.M. Jacobs (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 94.
8. Philipp Melanchthon, "Dedicatory Letter on the Questions on Dialectics," *Orations on Philosophy and Education*, ed. Sachiko Kusukawa, trans. C.F. Salazar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 87.
9. Luther, *Three Treatises*, 85.

orthodox Lutheran theologians followed Luther and Melanchthon in their appreciation of logic. For example, Quenstedt, a professor of logic at the University of Wittenberg, held that the laws of logic should be "allow[ed] in theology, for they are formed not only in view of finite but also of infinite nature."[10] In modern times, Francis Pieper has echoed this insistence on the importance of logic in Christian education by affirming that the ministerial use of reason includes "the observance of . . . the laws of human thinking (logic) as used in Scripture."[11]

To help flesh out the content of the logical use of ministerial reason in theology, three simple methodological rules are offered here. *Rule 1: In order to understand the meaning of a portion of Scripture, it is necessary to observe the laws of formal logic*. In practice, *Rule 1* depends upon what the laws of logic are. In classical Aristotelian logic there are three laws commonly considered to be "pillars" or "cornerstones" that hold up the entire edifice of correct logical thinking: the law of non-contradiction, the law of excluded middle, and the law of identity. For the sake of simplicity, the subsequent discussion of the laws of logic will be confined to the law of non-contradiction, but the points that will be made about this law apply *mutatis mutandis* also to the two other laws.

Aristotle was the first to explicate the law of non-contradiction, and his formulations have become more or less canonical in subsequent logical theory. He formulated the law in three different ways: ontologically, semantically, and psychologically.[12] In its ontological formulation the law says, "It is impossible for the same attribute at once to belong and not to belong to the same thing and in the same relation."[13] Semantically, the law says, "Opposite statements are not both true at the same time."[14] Psychologically, the law says, "It is impossible for anyone to suppose that the same thing is and is not."[15] Historically, the semantic formulation of the law of non-contradiction has been most canonical, and in what follows, this way of understanding the law will be presupposed.

On the basis of the discussion of Rule 1, a second rule follows: *Rule 2: In order to understand the meaning of a portion of Scripture, it is necessary to observe the law of non-contradiction.* Here, "to observe" means "to acknowledge the validity of," "to take cautions not to violate," or the like. Because *Rules 1* and *2* specify how the Scriptures are to be understood properly, it follows that an understanding of the Scriptures that violates these rules will yield an improper or incorrect understanding of Scripture. Accordingly, a third rule is implicit in the previous two rules: *Rule 3: If a portion of Scripture is understood in a way that violates the law of non-contradiction, then that portion of Scripture has not yet been understood correctly.*

The above three rules could be described as hermeneutical-logical rules for the ministerial use of reason in the study of Scripture. The practical consequences of these rules, if observed, are manifold. If one were to interpret some difficult sentence *A* in Scripture and conjecture that it should be understood in a certain way that contradicts another clear sentence *B* of Scripture, then the above rules demonstrate that sentence *A* has not yet been correctly understood. Therefore, another interpretation must be sought because there can be no contradictions in Scripture.[16]

VOICES OF DISSENT

Traditional confessional Lutheran theology standardly has endorsed the ministerial use of reason as explicated in the above three hermeneutical-logical rules, but voices of caution, and even dissent, have been raised, especially among twentieth-century confessional Lutherans in America.

In his "Scripture and Reason," Wauwatosa theologian August Pieper (1857–1946), brother of Francis Pieper wrote, with explicit reference to the laws of logic,

> Now the question is whether these principles of reason that rule all of human thinking are absolutely objective and universal, thus also valid for God, or not. Answer: It is not permitted to say that.[17]

And again:

> [I]t is pure figment of the imagination when they say that God's thinking is governed by the same principles as human thinking [that is, the laws of logic], that God's reason and human reason have the same basic rules.[18]

August Pieper provided at least two examples of what he takes to be scriptural doctrines that violate the law of non-contradiction. First, concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, Scripture teaches that God is both one and three, and A. Pieper concluded that here is "only the choice between a mathematical and a logical contradiction."[19] Second, regarding the christological doctrine of the communication of attributes in the person of Christ, A. Pieper wrote that logic forces us to conclude that since Christ, being God, is infinite, and being man, is finite, then Christ is both infinite and finite. "Thus," he said, "if the logical axiom that a thing cannot at the same time be its contradictory opposite (finiteness, infinity) is to be of value here, then we must wipe out the scriptural doctrine of the person of Christ."[20]

A second voice of protest can be heard from Siegbert Becker (1914–1984). Like A. Pieper, Becker believed that various scrip-

10. Quenstedt, 158–159. Cf. Luther, *Three Treatises*, 94.
11. F. Pieper, 197.
12. This classification of the formulations into ontological, semantic and psychological is from Jan Lukasiewicz. See Lukasiewicz, "Aristotle on the Law of Contradiction," *Articles on Aristotle 3,* ed. J. Barnes, M. Schofield and R. Sorabji (London: Duckworth, 1979), 50–51.
13. Aristotle, *The Metaphysics: Books 1–IX*, trans. Hugh Tredennick (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 161.
14. Aristotle, 199.
15. Aristotle, 163.
16. For a recent endorsement of this principle by a Lutheran exegete, see David Kuske, *A Commentary on Romans 1–8* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2007), 12.
17. August Pieper, "Scripture and Reason," *The Wauwatosa Theology*, vol. 1, ed. C.A. Jahn, trans. James Langebartels (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997), 163.
18. A. Pieper, 164.
19. A. Pieper, 165.
20. A. Pieper, 167.

tural doctrines involve a violation of the law of non-contradiction. In his book *The Foolishness of God* he wrote,

> The Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper transcends the ordinary categories of rational thought. It insists . . . that the finite is capable of the infinite. In so doing it refuses to apply the law of contradiction . . . . Lutheranism simply says that we must believe the Word of God rather than the law of contradiction.[21]

Becker made similar remarks with respect to the doctrine of the two natures in Christ:

> The incarnation of the eternal Son of God is one of the doctrines for which all evangelical Christendom must hear the charge of 'irrationalism' directed against it. Unless something is done to explain away the apparent inconsistency this doctrine assails the law of contradiction.[22]

A third voice of protest comes from Robert Hoerber (1918–1996), formerly professor of exegetical theology at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. In the "Introduction" to the *Concordia Self-Study Bible*, Hoerber asserted that the Lutheran principle of *sola Scriptura* requires that simple faith take precedence over adherence to the laws of logic: "Where paradoxes occur, a childlike faith must prevail over logical deductions."[23] He argued that the Lutheran doctrine of election presents such a paradox because Scripture teaches that God is the sole source of salvation but that a condemned man is solely responsible for his damnation. Hoerber said that this is contrary to logic because "according to logic" each person's destiny is either predestined by God or in his or her own hands with "no third alternative."[24]

A. Pieper, Becker, and Hoerber have protested the assertion that the law of non-contradiction must be observed while seeking to understand what a given portion of Scripture means. Therefore, there are at least three clear voices of protest against the three hermeneutical-logical rules mentioned above. According to these three men, the Scriptures do violate the laws of logic, and Christians should simply acknowledge this and cling to the truths of Scripture in childlike faith. However, these theologians assert elsewhere that the contradictions found in Scripture are, in a certain sense, not contradictions after all. For example, Becker wrote, "What looks like a contradiction to reason the believer accepts in childlike faith as perfectly harmonious divine truth."[25] Becker's thought appears inconsistent because he wrote that the Scriptures violate the law of non-contradiction, but also that there are no contradictions in Scripture after all! This inconsistency seems merely apparent, however, because it seems that Becker was saying that if *contradictions* are understood as violations of the rules of formal logic, then the Scriptures do contain contradictions, but if *contradictions* are taken to be real falsehoods, then, of course, the Scriptures contain no contradictions.

SHOULD CONTRADICTIONS BE TOLERATED?

Contrary to A. Pieper, Becker, and Hoerber, the seventeenth-century orthodox Lutheran fathers were unwilling to concede that the Scriptures violate any laws of logic, let alone the law of non-contradiction. Becker and Hoerber seemed to be unaware of this discrepancy vis-à-vis the old Lutheran theologians. Becker spoke of his own position as simply that of "Lutheranism" or "the believer,"[26] and Hoerber reasoned along similar lines.[27] A. Pieper, on the other hand, was well aware of the discrepancy, writing:

> We are fully aware that with this position we are in opposition to Quenstedt and the dogmatics of the seventeenth century, to say nothing of later dogmatics; and we also know that here and there among us some think that we have gone too far.[28]

According to Franz Pieper, who on this point agreed with the orthodox Lutheran fathers rather than his brother August, the orthodox fathers were unwilling to concede violations of the laws of logic in Scripture because of their commitment to the principle that the truth is one—that is, truth cannot contradict truth. F. Pieper wrote,

> [T]he old theologians also decide the question whether there is a real contradiction between theology and reason . . . . They answer: The truth is but one. A contradiction arises only when reason, gone mad, presumes to judge things that transcend its sphere.[29]

F. Pieper adduced no evidence in favor of this assertion, but such evidence is not difficult to find. The great Wittenberg theologian Abraham Calovius (1612–1686), for example, wrote in his *Systema Locorum Theologicorum* that reason is not hostile to theology "because the true agrees with the true, and does not antagonize it."[30] If truth agrees with truth, there can be no contradictions between truths; *ipso facto*, no violations of the law of non-contradiction occur. This was the general position of the seventeenth-century orthodox Lutheran fathers.

21. Siegbert Becker, *The Foolishness of God* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1999), 193.
22. Becker, 195.
23. Robert G. Hoerber, "Introduction," *Concordia Self-Study Bible* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), xvii.
24. Hoerber, xvii. Strictly speaking, Hoerber seems here to be saying that the Lutheran doctrine of election violates the law of excluded middle rather than the law of non-contradiction, but this is of minor importance since what we are here saying vis-à-vis the law of non-contradiction holds *mutatis mutandis* also with respect to the law of excluded middle.
25. Becker, 221.
26. Becker, 193, 220–221.
27. Hoerber, xvi–xvii.
28. A. Pieper, ibid., 160.
29. F. Pieper, 199.
30. Quoted from Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. C.A. Hay and H.E. Jacobs (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), 31.

There are further reasons for upholding the validity of the laws of logic in seeking to understand the Scriptures, however. First, observance of the law of non-contradiction is a basic requirement for conveying knowledge. If one were to say, "God loves you," and then immediately add, "God doesn't love you," obviously the second statement cancels the first. This is a general characteristic of contradictory statements: they cancel each other and, therefore, convey no factual information.[31]

A second reason for upholding the validity of the laws of logic in seeking to understand the Scriptures is that failure to uphold these laws will prevent the declaration of falsehood upon all things that contradict the Scriptures. When the Scriptures say that Jesus is our redemption, the law of non-contradiction declares false any statement to the contrary (for example, the claim that Jesus is not our redemption). If the law of non-contradiction were deemed invalid, it might be true that Jesus is not our redemption, a wholly unsatisfactory conclusion!

A third reason for upholding the general validity of the laws of logic for the interpretation of Scripture is that these laws authorize many of the crucial logical inferences made from statements in Scripture. For example, statements that apply Christ's redemption to individuals, such as "Jesus died for Anders" and "Jesus has reconciled Anders with God," are not found in Scripture. However, the Scriptures do say that Jesus died for and has reconciled all human beings with God, and since we know that Anders is a human being, it can be inferred logically that Jesus died for Anders and has reconciled him with God.[32] If the laws of logic were deemed uncertain then such inferences would be equally uncertain; again, a wholly unsatisfactory conclusion!

It seems, then, that a rejection of the validity of the laws of logic in theology and the study of Scripture would come at a very high price. In effect, one would have to: (1) reject the assumption that truth agrees with truth; (2) reject the prerequisites for expressing factual information; (3) reject the rationale for rejecting as false whatever contradicts Scripture; and, (4) be deprived of certainty in inferring instances from general truths found in the Scriptures.

OVERCOMING THE CONTRADICTIONS

Martin Luther dealt directly with the question of contradictions in theology and Scripture in an enthralling academic disputation from 1539 entitled "The Disputation Concerning the Passage: 'The Word Was Made Flesh'."[33] This disputation offers insights that help solve the question of whether it should be conceded that there are logical contradictions in Scripture.

Luther's solution proceeds from three premises. The first premise is that the laws of logic are in themselves entirely valid. He said that when there seem to be contradictions between the truths of Scripture, this is "not because of the defect of the syllogistic form but because of the lofty character and majesty of the matter."[34]

Luther's second premise is that logical inferences can be made from one set of statements to another set of statements only when the terms used in both sets are used in the same sense.[35] For example, in order to infer "Socrates is good" from "All human beings are good," it is necessary that the term *good* be used in the same sense in both statements. This is a commonplace in logic; a commonplace that Luther uses with powerful effect.

The third premise is that whenever predicates are applied to God, or to any Person of the Holy Trinity, the predicates do not have the exact same meanings as when applied to other things, but instead have analogical meanings. Luther said that in theology we must "speak in a new language."[36] This familiar doctrine is found not only in Lutheran theology but also in much pre-Reformation theology. Perhaps its most famous articulation is in Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*.

On the basis of these three premises, Luther attempted to show that whenever there seems to be contradictions between the statements of Scripture, those contradictions are inferred by illegitimate inferential procedures. Luther offered the following example.[37] When the Scriptures assert that the Word became flesh, this seems to present a contradiction because the Word, being divine, is not a creature. However, all fleshly existence is creaturely; therefore, it would seem to follow that God is not a creature and yet at the same time a creature—a plain contradiction. The inference that leads to this contradiction could be put as follows: (1) Every man is a creature; (2) Christ is a man; (3) Therefore, Christ is a creature.

Luther said that what is faulty with this inference is not the inferential pattern itself, but the fact that the term *man* does not have the exact same sense in the major premise as it has in the minor premise. Luther explained,

> In the major premise it [the term *man*] designates physical man, in the minor premise another, both the divine and the incarnate God . . . here it means something greater and more comprehensive.[38]

According to Luther, the above inference demonstrates not that the laws of logic are necessarily untrue, but rather that the laws cannot be applied freely across categories, because when terms are applied to God, they have special, unique meanings.

In summary, Luther's solution to the problem of contradiction consists in: (1) making a clear distinction between state-

31. This point was forcibly argued for by the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. See his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1985), 99.
32. The rule of logic licensing this logical inference is called the rule of universal instantiation.
33. AE 38:239–278. For an in-depth study of Luther's views in this disputation, see Graham White, *Luther as Nominalist: A Study of the Logical Methods used in Martin Luther's Disputations in the Light of their Medieval Background* (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Society, 1994), 124–180. My understanding of the present disputation of Luther is strongly influenced by White's study.
34. AE 38:241.
35. AE 38:246.
36. AE 38:242.
37. AE 38:246–247.
38. AE 38:246–247.

ments in which theological terms occur and statements in which they do not occur; and (2) rejecting those inferences as spurious in which statements are made from one of these classes over into the other. There are distinct spheres that God has established, and logical inferences are to be made within the boundaries of each respective sphere, but not across the boundaries. When inferences are made from non-theological spheres over into the theological sphere, they become pseudo-inferences. Since the apparent contradictions in Scripture are, or so Luther seems to suggest, obtained precisely by means of such pseudo-inferences, they are only apparent contradictions, not real contradictions. Hence, they involve no real violations of the laws of logic.

The assertion that statements of theology exist in a distinct sphere that should be held apart from other spheres can be found in various orthodox Lutheran fathers of the seventeenth-century, including Gerhard (1582–1637) and the aforementioned Quenstedt and Calovius. For example, Quenstedt affirmed that "each discipline has its own axioms, which are not to be carried over into another frame of reference."[39] Similar assertions can be found in the writings of both Calovius and Gerhard.[40] Thus, it could be said that Luther's method of overcoming the apparent contradictions in Scripture was also employed by representatives of seventeenth-century Lutheran orthodoxy.

When Luther and the orthodox Lutheran theologians sought to overcome apparent logical contradictions in the Scriptures, they were not seeking to make the gospel attractive to human reason, nor were they trying to rationalize the mysteries of God. Rather, they were working out an understanding of how the laws of logic relate to divine revelation. The laws of logic are rules that, along with the rules of grammar, help us understand the contents of divine revelation.

However, Luther and the Lutheran theologians were also keenly aware of the limitations of the use of logic in theology and the study of Scripture. In particular, as Luther explicitly pointed out, rules of logical inference cannot be brought to bear on theological and non-theological statements in the same way. When terms are applied to God, they take on new meanings; meanings that are analogous to, but not identical with, the meanings that these terms have in non-theological discourse. This limitation does not involve a repudiation of the use of logic in theology and Scripture study, however, but rather presupposes this use. In conclusion, contrary to what has sometimes been suggested, acknowledging the validity of the laws of formal logic is wholly compatible with orthodox, confessional Lutheran theology. **LOGIA**

39. Quenstedt, 172.
40. Schmid, 32, 33.

Inklings

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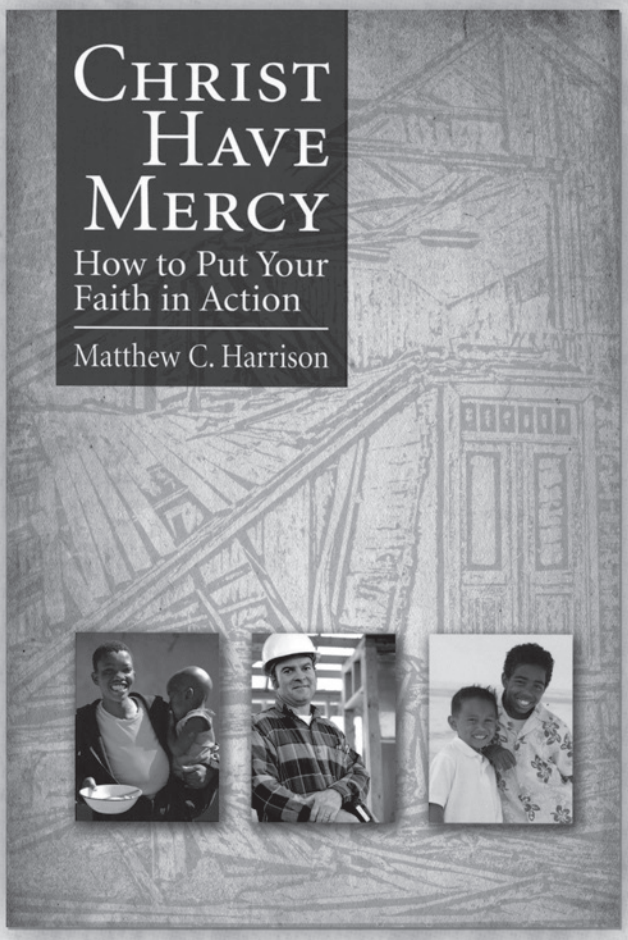

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A Pure Critique of Reason

Reason within the Limits of Sound Theology Alone

James A. Kellerman

On 12 September 2006 Pope Benedict xvi gave an address in Regensburg that stirred the ire of the Muslim world because he was thought (mistakenly) to be criticizing Islam as an evil religion. Instead, the pope did not particularly have Islam in mind in this discourse, but rather the decadent West. Speaking to scientists gathered at the University of Regensburg, he urged them not to embrace a world of reason devoid of faith, just as they should not embrace a world of faith devoid of reason. Christianity, he argued, has always been a synthesis of reason and faith, for God revealed himself through the Logos. As the West has separated faith and reason, it has prevented true intellectual advancement and it has spiritually impoverished itself. Neither faith nor reason has benefited, the pope averred.[1]

Benedict sees something essential at stake in maintaining the synthesis of reason and faith. It was not an Irrational Being who became flesh, but rather the Logos: "Reason" as well as "Word." Thus, if we try to remove the "Hellenic" from Christianity in search of something more primitive and thus more authentically Christian, we end up with something that denies the essence of the incarnation. Hence the pope agrees with the Byzantine Emperor Manuel ii Paleologus that "not to act according to Logos is contrary to God's nature." Thus, the pope is not merely opposing a spiritually sterile scientific worldview or an intellectually immature faith, although both are abhorrent to him; for him nothing less than the Christian faith is at stake. A de-Hellenized faith is no faith at all.[2]

Who, then, is responsible for this process of de-Hellenization and this divorce between faith and reason? To some degree the seeds were already sown in the medieval era, as the synthesis between faith and reason began to unravel. It can be seen in particular in the works of Duns Scotus, who suggested that God was not bound to behave according to the dictates of reason. Nonetheless, the real devolution began in the sixteenth century and continues apace today. Benedict sees three stages in this process of de-Hellenization. The first stage occurred as the Reformation tried to restore the living word that had become incarcerated in an alien philosophical system. Although Benedict thinks that the de-Hellenization that resulted was a step in the wrong direction, he is somewhat sympathetic to the Reformation, both in his Regensburg speech and elsewhere in his writings. The reformers, he notes, would not have attempted to root faith exclusively in practical reason, apart from reality as a whole, as Immanuel Kant did. But while the reformers were cautious in their efforts to de-Hellenize the church, those who participated in the second and third stages have not been. The second stage, nineteenth-century liberalism, went several steps beyond the Reformation and disavowed the whole Christian doctrinal enterprise (including the Trinity and the deity of Christ) as a wholesale borrowing from Greek philosophy. Moreover, nineteenth-century liberalism then reduced the Christian faith to the mere moralism of a less-than-divine sage.[3] The final stage is the pluralism prevalent today, which posits that most of Christianity is simply Western baggage that must be discarded rather than imported into today's mission fields.[4]

Behind the pope's comments is an understanding that equates Hellenic culture or Greek philosophy with the fully rational. That itself is a claim that merits further investigation, for no matter how much the Greeks have shaped Western civilization and its intellectual history, not everything of Greek an-

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1. Benedict xvi, "Glaube, Vernunft, und Universität: Erinerrungen und Reflexionen," Aula Magna der Universität Regensburg, 12 September 2006. For an English version of the speech see http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_ university-regensburg_en.html. For the original German, see http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_benxvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg_ge.html. Since there is no pagination, I will refer to the document by paragraphs.
2. Benedict, "Glaube," paragraphs 4–8.
3. Benedict, "Glaube," paragraphs 10–11. In his 2005 visit to Germany Benedict stated his desire to continue ecumenical discussions with Protestants, but acknowledged that such things as the Protestants' ordination of female clergy and their approval of gross sexual immorality proved serious obstacles. In that respect he seemed more genuinely Lutheran than his allegedly Lutheran counterparts in Germany. See the archives of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland concerning this visit at http://www.ekd.de/aktuell_presse/news_2005_08_20_1_rv_papsttreffen.html. At the same time, as the pope acknowledges in the next paragraph, the scientific world limited the realm of reason to that which is strictly empirical and excluded faith from the realm of the rational.
4. Benedict, "Glaube," paragraph 14. Certainly, it is not always an easy matter to discern what sort of cultural accommodations are possible and necessary, as Benedict himself acknowledges. Because Benedict and Lutherans start from different premises on the role of Hellenism in Christianity, they will necessarily draw different conclusions. But in principle we would agree that not everything that has accrued over the years needs to be jettisoned on the mission field, while also acknowledging that some areas of church life and practice call for authentic indigenization.

tiquity is praiseworthy in this regard.[5] However, that is a topic for another day. In this article I will examine two related questions: How should Christians regard reason and, in light of the answer to that question, to what degree should they cultivate reason, both in matters of the faith and in life in general?

These questions are pertinent because the heirs of the Reformation, with or without the reformers' blessing, have often fallen into a trap of anti-intellectualism. This is most visible in those realms affected by Pietism or its cross-oceanic counterpart, American Evangelicalism. Both movements rejected the intellectual rigor of Protestant Orthodoxy, whether Lutheran or Reformed, and replaced it with heartfelt piety alone. After all, it was argued, had not the Reformation rejected the intellectual pretensions of the medieval scholastics? Why then should one foster discussion over idle curiosities when the chief matter was faith?[6]

After Pietism and Evangelicalism excluded reason from the Christian faith, the Enlightenment was able to have a field day. In fact, Pietism fostered the Enlightenment, for if faith became simply an irrational feeling or a moral disposition, then it allowed the mind freedom to roam wherever it desired. The Enlightenment is full of individuals such as Immanuel Kant and Gottfried Lessing who detached themselves from historic Christianity, but who nonetheless essentially retained the dour Pietism of their childhood.[7] But it can also be seen in those individuals who did not abandon the Christian faith, but sought an enlightened version of it. For example, Johann Griesbach, the famous eighteenth-century New Testament scholar, was raised in a Pietistic household and maintained a Pietistic faith throughout his life, and yet adopted a rationalistic approach to the Scriptures. David Dungan has shown both the Pietistic and rationalistic strains in Griesbach's work (and in the works of others of that era) and how the two could coexist. Dungan also points out how both Baruch Spinoza and John Locke, although representing opposite poles of the theological spectrum, led New Testament scholars to adopt a reductionistic and rationalistic approach to the Scriptures that has influenced both liberal and conservative scholarship, respectively, to this very day.[8]

Those historically confessional churches that today are ravaged by a virulent form of rationalism and unbelief first passed through a pietistic phase.

But Pietism did not lead only individuals astray. Those historically confessional churches that today are ravaged by a virulent form of rationalism and unbelief first passed through a pietistic phase or (in the American scene) were part of nineteenth-century Evangelicalism; no confessional church seems to have gone directly from a solid confessional orthodoxy to liberalism.[9] Once Pietism or Evangelicalism had deconfessionalized these churches, they were tossed to and fro by wherever the winds of rationalism blew them. Meanwhile, those churches that maintained a strongly confessional and anti-Pietistic stance (such as the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the Christian Reformed Church) were not so easily corrupted by those who sought to bring Modernism into their midst in the post–World War II era.

However, it is not only less-than-orthodox Lutherans who foster anti-intellectualism. I have met many students whose orthodoxy was not in question, but who had little use for the intellectual life. Although they wanted a degree in Greek, they wanted the minimal amount of Greek and were unwilling to read anything beyond the New Testament or (perhaps after much persuasion) a little from the Septuagint. (Imagine an undergraduate classics major who refused to read any Greek except for, say, the speeches of Eratosthenes!) These same students hated the notion of taking such useless things as philosophy, art,

5. It is tempting to read Greek history as the development of the intellectual life from superstition into philosophy. Even if one buys that particular premise, it is quite late in the development of Greece (well into the fourth century B.C.) before one sees the full flowering of Greek philosophy. Moreover, a careful examination of the Hellenistic era (the era after the philosophical giants Plato and Aristotle had flourished) reveals a world marked as much by superstition as in the preclassical era (sixth century B.C.).
6. One should note that this anti-intellectualism is not simply a development of Protestant theology. By the late Middle Ages, the *devotio moderna* arose in reaction to scholasticism. It espoused a simple and pious reading of the Scripture in a moralizing sense. Some of its adherents (such as Gert Groote and Thomas à Kempis) remained firmly in the bosom of the Roman Church, while others were proto-Protestants (such as John Wycliffe and Jan Huss).
7. Peter Gay's magisterial work on the Enlightenment is full of observations of how the rabidly anti-Christian intellectuals of the eighteenth century retained in large measure many of the intellectual habits of their Christian childhood. Gay's comments on Kant are especially perceptive: "Kant, born into a Pietist household and instructed by some admirable Pietist teachers testified that at its best Pietism gave its serious adherents 'that calm, that cheerfulness, that inner peace that is disturbed by no passion.' As a consequence even Kant—who repudiated all but the most abstract religion, who condemned enthusiasm and refused to engage in any religious observance—even Kant himself paid Pietism the unconscious tribute of incorporating some of its teachings into his work: its love of peace both in public and domestic life, its inner sweetness, and its conviction that religion depends not on dogma or ritual or prayer but on experience" (Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* [New York: Vintage Books, 1966–1969], 1:328–329). Cf. his similar comments on Gotthold Lessing's abandonment of his childhood faith, 1:60–62.
8. David Laird Dungan, *A History of the Synoptic Problem: The Canon, the Text, the Composition, and the Interpretation of the Gospels*, The Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 309–322 and 198–286. Dungan's work is especially valuable in demonstrating that much of modern biblical scholarship has not been truly neutral and merely interested in discovering the facts, but has been shaped by theological, philosophical, and even political concerns.
9. For a survey of Evangelicalism's dominance of the nineteenth-century Protestant scene, see Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 222–242. See also "Are Charismatic Inclined Pietists the True Evangelicals? And Have the Reformed Tried to Highjack Their Movement?" *Modern Reformation* 10, no. 2 (March/April 2001), 40–49, especially 45–46.

history, and literature, since none of these subjects would help them preach the Bible. Of course, such anti-intellectualism collapses under its own weight. A pious simpleton is to be preferred over a godless sage, but better yet is a godly sage. Moreover, few of those whose interest is solely in biblical Greek know the Scriptures all that well. By adopting a minimalist attitude, they in the end preserve neither orthodoxy nor a sound mind.

In the remainder of this essay, I will try to establish a more balanced approach to the Christian use of reason. Sound Lutherans are wont to emphasize the profound truth that "I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him" (SC II, 6). For some, those words have fostered an anti-intellectualism and a rejection of the role of reason in all spheres. But the same man who rejected reason's role in conversion also wrote a few paragraphs earlier that "God has given me . . . my reason and all my senses" (SC II, 2). Reason, at least as it exists in fallen man, cannot bring one to faith, much less establish articles of faith. But that does not mean that reason is no less a gift of God.

In order to find a more balanced approach to reason, I will examine both the Lutheran Confessions and what Luther wrote about reason in his Genesis commentary. I have chosen his Genesis commentary as source material for several reasons. First, this is the natural place to look for Luther's comments about the nature of reason both before and after the fall. These data are useful to consider so that we can distinguish in human reason the goodness of God's creation from the evil corruption caused by mankind's fall (FC SD I, 41–42). Second, this work was written in the last decade of Luther's life and represents his mature thinking after his various controversies over free will and human reason had taken their course. Third, much that is told of the life of the patriarchs involves matters in which human reason played a large role. And, finally, Genesis contains one major event that is especially an affront to reason: Why would God demand something so irrational of Abraham as to sacrifice his son?

I hope that the reader will indulge the pun in the title of this article. While Kant may have sought to discover an ethereal realm where pure reason could judge unaided by the senses (much less by extraneous sources such as tradition or Scripture), my concern is not to look for any such rarified realm. Instead, I seek to offer up a pure critique, that is, a sanctified analysis, of reason (pure or otherwise). With that in mind, the reader will understand why I do not use *reason* in as strict a sense as possible. Reason may include Aristotelian syllogisms and modern symbolic logic, but reason is much more than that. Reason may include what we know apart from experience, but it also includes what we know from processing the data from the senses. Philosophers have always erred whenever they have sought to limit reason to too narrow a circle.[10] For the purposes of this article, *reason* will refer to everything that marks man as a thinking being. Thus, I include under *reason* such things as opinion and intuition, even if philosophers and lay people alike have good grounds for questioning their reliability.

REASON: A GIFT FROM GOD

It is appropriate to begin by seeing the goodness of reason before we see its corruption and its limits. Reason is included in both the Large Catechism and Small Catechism as one of the gifts given by God, along with our body and soul and all the blessings needed to sustain these gifts (LC II, 13; SC II, 2). Luther's inclusion of reason along with all the rest of the corporeal blessings of creation ought to admonish us not to make too light of reason. Just as we would eschew a Gnostic deprecation of the body and of the created world around us, inasmuch as these items are part of God's good design for the world, so we should for the same reasons not disparage reason as if it were an invention of the devil.

It is not only reason before the fall that is praised. Luther's catechisms do not speak of reason in its pristine state, but as it operates in the world today. This very point is not lost on the authors of the Formula of Concord, for they quote both catechisms to prove that God is the one who has created mankind, including his reason and will. The confessors are not blind to the corruption of reason as it is currently constituted. But the authors of the Formula do not credit the devil with the ability to create anything and thus maintain that God is the creator of the will and of reason. Thus, they avoid both the synergistic and Flacian errors (FC SD I, 38).

Had reason not been corrupted by the fall, it would have been something wonderful to behold. Luther cannot help meditating upon that particular fact in his Genesis commentary. He thinks of the wonderful dominion Adam and Eve must have had over the animals. They would have understood everything that the animals were thinking, for how else could they have had dominion? And they must have been able to communicate their orders to the beasts so that the latter readily understood what to do. Moreover, our primordial parents were able to do all of this without violence or intimidation. In addition, they were able to understand things as they were, without any of the distortion that would be caused by the fall. Thus, our first parents were the greatest philosophers (or to use modern terminology, the greatest scientists and scholars) of all time. The dominion we have over the animals today is a mere sham in comparison. Much of the animal kingdom pays no heed to us. Even the domesticated animals stubbornly disobey us and we cannot direct them easily (AE 1: 65–66; WA 42: 49–50).

Nonetheless, reason is able to accomplish much today, even in its governance of animals. Even after the fall and the Flood, animals fear mankind. To be sure, it is not a simple kind of fear where animals always respect mankind. Sometimes humans are devoured by wild beasts because an animal's indignation or hunger drives it to overcome its fears. But Luther argues that animals respect mankind's ability to reason and thus still render us some kind of obedience or respect. That explains why even a child can manage a herd of mighty animals (each of which

10. David Hume, for example, doubted reason's ability to make observations without being deluded by the senses, and Bertrand Russell limited philosophy to logic and empirically verifiable observations. See David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (London: John Noon, 1739), especially book 1, part 3, and Bertrand Russell, *Our Knowledge of the External World: As a Field for Scientific Method in Philosophy* (Chicago: Open Court, 1929).

would be enough to overpower the child) and ride horses and other beasts that far excel them in weight and brute strength (AE 2: 135; WA 42: 356–57).

Thus, human reason has been given a large scope in this life between the fall and Christ's return, as the Augsburg Confession acknowledges in its article on the freedom of the will. That confession quotes Augustine, who, despite emphasizing the need for God's grace, was willing to concede a great deal of room for the human will and for reason. The free will, governed by "a naturally innate understanding and reason" (AC XVIII, 5), can choose all sorts of matters in this world, including how to work, to take in nourishment, to wear clothing, to build homes, and whether to marry. It can also choose to commit evils such as idolatry and murder. To be sure, no human being has the ability to make right choices apart from God's help, but choose he still can (AC XVIII, 4–6).

Moreover, human reason is of vital importance in the government. Those governments that are founded in accordance with the dictates of human reason (and thus restrain murder, theft, and the like) flourish better than those governments that allow vices to flourish. Although the benefits that flow from good and reasonable governments are only temporary ones, they are nonetheless blessings to be cherished by God (AE 1: 305; WA 42: 244–45).

In addition, Luther was willing to grant reason much credit in its discernment of the natural world. He turns to Aristotle (who was thought in Luther's day to have been the most keen scientist of history and the most reliable scholar when it came to explaining the universe) to understand the nature of the heavens. He agrees with Aristotle that the heavens must be made up of some unique inert material, or else the heavens would long since have collapsed inasmuch as the interaction between ordinary earthly materials inevitably brings about destruction. It is his experience that forces him to this particular viewpoint, although he does acknowledge that this description of the world may not be true in every particular instance. For example, experience teaches him that fire is a heavenly element (as can be seen in the stars and in lightning) and tends upward, but it can also be found in flint (AE 1: 26; WA 42: 21).

Even as he grants Aristotle and human reason its ability to discern the true nature of things, Luther limits the ability of reason in these matters by positing the following rule:

> Even if by his Word God has established and created all these things, nevertheless he is not bound to those rules in such a way that he cannot alter them according to his will. We see that neither grammar nor the other arts are so bound to rules that they do not have their exceptions. How much more can this happen in the instance of God's actions! Therefore even if we know from experience that those four elements are arranged in that order and have been assigned their positions, nevertheless God can go contrary to this arrangement and can have fire even in the midst of the sea and maintain it there, just as we see it hidden in the flint. (AE 1: 26; WA 42: 21)

Accordingly, one never finds Luther adopting all of Aristotle's notions about the physical universe. Aristotle, for example, was willing to grant that there must be an eternal First Cause (or Unmoved Mover) that governed the formation of the world. But Aristotle did not view this First Cause in the same way that Christians regard God, our Creator. Instead, he posited that the matter of the universe was coeternal with the First Cause and that the First Cause merely moved preexisting matter into the shape in which the universe now exists. But all of these notions are foreign to Luther.[11]

That is because Luther understands that after the fall human reason is a mixed blessing. Reason does, as Aristotle stated, "plead for the best" and leads to all the virtues. But its ability to see the best is limited. Reason is an invaluable tool, therefore, in "managing cattle, building a house, and sowing a field" (AE 1: 143; WA 42: 107). But because reason does not understand matters pertaining to God, it actually detests the will of God and opposes the gospel. Philipp Melanchthon taught the same thing in the Apology when he granted that human reason understands the law of God to some degree, but does not even understand fully the Decalogue because of some of the spiritual demands of that law (Ap IV, 7–8).

Thus, even when we grant human reason after the fall the ability to discern much in matters pertaining to the world around us and to basic civil righteousness, we must acknowledge that because reason cannot understand matters pertaining to the righteousness that avails before God, it must have a distorted picture even of civil righteousness. Nonetheless, we confess that reason was originally a great gift of God, intended by him to serve and bless mankind.

REASON: TOOL OF THE DEVIL AND THE FLESH

It is because human reason after the fall fails to discern the truths of God that Luther and the Lutheran Confessions excoriate the powers of reason. But the problem is not merely that human reason fails to grasp a particular truth or two. After all, the reasoning ability found in children often fails to grasp something that is immediately apparent to adults, but children may nonetheless trust what their parents tell them, even though they do not fully understand it. Thus, if human reason were merely ignorant of divine matters and unable to comprehend them, it would not in and of itself wreak as much havoc as reason now does. But reason is not willing to acknowledge its ignorance; rather, it states that whatever God has revealed to be true is false, if reason cannot fully understand the revelation.

Thus, before the fall there were some things that surpassed the ability of human reason to comprehend. Luther notes that Eve's reason (even before the fall) could not understand why God had commanded her not to eat the forbidden fruit. If she had been content simply to know that God had given the command, all would have been all right. But she insisted on knowing the answer, and she insisted on rejecting any notion that there

11. Aristotle, *Physics* 7.1 (242a); 8.1–2 (250b–253a); 8.5 (256a–258b); 8.10 (266a–267b)

were certain limits to her reason. Consequently, her inquisitiveness led to her downfall (AE 1: 157–158; WA 42: 118–119).

Hence, after the fall, human reason has become "the old witch" and "the grandmother of the *alloesis*" (FC SD VIII, 41). It actively fights against God and his revelation, with the consequence that there is nothing that reason can understand in spiritual matters (FC Ep II, 2). Hence, in the course of the Lutheran Confessions and Luther's Genesis commentary one can find nearly every doctrine mentioned as something that reason would deny. The three articles of the Creed that describe in broad outlines the sum of Christian doctrine (creation, redemption, and sanctification) are beyond the ken of human reason (LC III, 63–64; see FC Ep IX, 2).

The problem is not merely that reason fails to see certain truths, but that reason actively opposes instruction.

Even something as simple as the Christian doctrine of creation seems extraordinarily bizarre to human reason; in fact, the Christian teaching would have been enough to put Aristotle in stitches from laughter. Human reason says that a man comes from a woman, but Holy Scripture teaches that woman was created from the rib of man. Even more absurd to reason is the *creatio ex nihilo*. And even though the alternative explanation is to posit an infinite series of causes — something that the greatest philosophers could not explain and that led the Epicureans to believe that the world both comes into existence and dies without reason — nonetheless, reason mocks the Christian doctrine of creation (AE 1: 123–28; WA 42: 92–96).

Because human reason cannot understand God's act of creation of the world, one ought not to be surprised that it cannot understand God's providence and government of the world or his use of angels to protect his saints. In fact, it cannot even posit the existence of angels (AE 6: 89–90; 7: 246–47; WA 44: 66–69, 482). Because human reason does not know its Maker, how can it know the simplest truths about him, such as the holiness he demands (Ap IV, 8) or the love and favor he heaps upon mankind (LC III, 65)? And if reason does not know God's love toward us, how can it understand the incarnation, which was wrought for our salvation (FC SD VIII, 96)?

Since human reason rejects God's revelation and seeks to promote its own righteousness (which it deems to be more than sufficient), it rejects the holiness that God offers (AE 5: 213–14; WA 43: 576). And if it does not know about the faults of its own righteousness or about the value of the righteousness God offers, reason certainly can see no grounds for repenting as it should. It speaks idly as if original sin did not exist. It speaks nonsense about such things as contrition and attrition (SA III, III, 10). It cannot believe that God's judgment will be as severe as it is taught. Human reason did not believe that such a judgment would occur at the time of the Flood (AE 2: 64; WA 42: 307); nor does it view natural disasters (such as what befell Sodom) as a form of judgment, but attributes them to natural causes, and so reason remains in unbelief (AE 3: 220; WA 43: 33).

If human reason cannot understand — or better put, refuses to understand — the most elementary truths of the creation of the world, the holiness of God, and coming doom (all of which have the testimony of nature and conscience according to Romans 1:18–21; 2:14–16), it would be beyond expectation for reason to understand more esoteric truths. Thus, human reason cannot think about election in a comforting manner, but invariably thinks about the doctrine in either fatalistic or Epicurean terms (FC Ep XI, 9; XI, 16; FC SD XI, 25–26). It also dismisses the true doctrine of the Lord's Supper as an irrational Capernaitic eating (FC Ep VII, 42). It is not merely reason's logical arguments that reject Christ's words, but also the senses, which teach that bread is bread and nothing more (AE 7: 105; WA 44: 377). Hence Luther says that a Christian should simply close his eyes and all the arguments of the Sacramentarians will melt away. It now becomes apparent why we have defined reason in a broader sense to include not merely that part of reason that is unsullied by the data of the senses, but also the processing of information from the senses. Both "pure reason" and reason governed by the senses leads people astray.

As we previously have seen, the problem is not merely that reason fails to see certain truths, but that reason actively opposes instruction. Thus reason becomes a tool of the devil and the sinful flesh. We see this to be the case also outside of strictly theological matters. Potiphar was not an irrational beast, but whatever capacity his mind had for judicious thought was lost when his wife accused Joseph of raping her. Had Potiphar allowed Joseph to make a defense, and had Potiphar considered that rapists do not flee but rather enforce silence on their victims, Joseph would have been exonerated. Human beings may be rational creatures, but reason is altogether lost or forced into the service of evil when inflamed by anger (AE 7: 95–96; WA 44: 370).

Why does human reason go astray so often? Why does human reason so often actively serve Satan and the flesh? It ignores a fundamental truth upon which all theology must be based: God is the only trustworthy source of information. In ordinary matters Seneca's rule might well be followed: One ought to consider the content, not the speaker of the content. But in divine matters the opposite is the case. Since God alone is holy and omniscient and ever rational, one ought to trust that he knows what he is talking about and is not deceiving mankind. Beginning from this premise, we would not go astray. But such thinking is an affront to human reason, which believes that it is the only infallible guide (LC IV, 12–13; AE 4: 180; WA 43: 266). As is so often seen also in secular matters, those who know the least are the most insistent that they are correct. How much more so is this the case in divine matters!

But then since God cannot be trusted (according to our sinful way of reasoning), we have to turn to anything that might

impress us. Thus, we look for anything dazzling and ignore the clear words and commands of God, especially if the latter appear rather plain (AE 2: 78–79; WA 43: 317–18; see AE 4: 182; 6: 73–74; WA 43: 267; 44: 54). Even the faithful can fall into this trap. They are impressed by Hilary's lifelong disavowal of meat and milk, but do not consider that this feat, notable as it might be, has no basis in a command or promise from God (AE 2: 355; WA 42: 515–16). How much more is this the case when it comes to the reason of the heathen. They are awed by great men such as Themistocles and Regulus. They do not stop to think that such leaders did their heroic deeds partly out of a desire to receive praise and to advance their career. And even if people recognize the ambition of such men, they fail to realize that it is an affront to a holy God. Moreover, they fail to see that such men did their heroic feats apart from any worship of the true God and thus did not honor him as they should, thus meriting his just condemnation (AE 2: 125–28; WA 42: 350–53).

Because reason has been corrupted by the fall and seeks its own advancement rather than the glory of God, it must be viewed with suspicion, especially in divine matters. This is the case even for the saints, for they too retain their sinful nature. Nonetheless, if we criticize reason as sinful and unreliable in divine matters, we do so to drive ourselves to Christ, our Great Physician, over the objections of reason, which claims that it needs no help (AE 1: 143–44; WA 42: 107–8).

REASON: AN INSTRUMENT THAT CANNOT BE NEUTRAL

For most of the history of the Christian church there has been a positive interplay between theology and philosophy. Although sacred Scripture is sufficient for salvation and for understanding all that God wants revealed about himself in this life, it does not address all earthly matters. It is only natural then that Christians would turn to philosophy and secular learning in general for a better understanding of the created world and of our earthly vocations. Often it seems that theologians have learned more from the philosophers than vice versa. But Christian theology has a key insight to offer philosophy, especially in the post-Enlightenment era: reason is not a neutral tool, nor can it ever be. Instead, it is always influenced by several factors.[12]

We Christian theologians can teach our philosopher friends that reason is indeed a hallmark of humanity and is part of the image of God. But we must go on to note that our reasoning ability has been marred by the fall. Had we never fallen into sin, we would be fully rational creatures, not swayed in the least by wrong desires or subject to error. But now reason stumbles about so often in the dark because we do not know our limitations. To be sure, our reasoning ability is restored somewhat when we come to faith in Christ, for then we understand what natural man does not: Our reason has been corrupted by sin and is therefore not entirely reliable.[13] But to know that there are limitations does not free us from them. Even in believers reason remains liable to corruption (AE 1: 337–38; WA 42: 248; see SA III, I, 3; III, III, 10; FC SD I, 8).

Thus, human beings by nature are rational creatures and cannot stop reasoning, whether in divine or earthly matters. To deny reason a proper role in life would be to deny an essential part of human nature. At the same time, though, we recognize that the content of human reasoning is often wrong—or to speak more accurately, evil. Man has a mind and an imagination, Luther admits. But what does Scripture say about the thoughts of that mind and imagination? They are only evil, and that all the time (AE 2, 123; WA 42, 348). Luther draws an analogy from marriage to explain the state of reason after the fall. Marriage existed before the fall as well as after it; so too did reason. But after the fall, marriage is beset by all sorts of evils. Likewise, human reason is not what it once was, and yet man remains a rational being (AE 1: 142; WA 42: 107). Thus, faithful Christians will cultivate a life of reason, inasmuch as it remains a good gift from God. But they will at the same time realize that reason is an instrument quickly placed into use by our sinful flesh and thus not always to be trusted. This is especially the case in divine matters, where human reason is not to be trusted. In these matters, we are called to distrust our reason, and rely on God's revelation instead (AE 5: 72–73; WA 43: 479).

REASON IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

How does this play itself out in the life of a Christian? How does a Christian make use of reason while trusting in divine revelation? Here the lives of the patriarchs, as recorded in Genesis and commented upon by Luther, offer illumination.

Sometimes the patriarchs had no clear revelation from God and used reason to make appropriate decisions. For example, when Rebecca sent Jacob to Mesopotamia, she had no direct command from God to do so, but she intelligently saw the physical danger to Jacob. She also saw that there could possibly be some spiritual benefit if Jacob left, for then he would not take a heathenish, Canaanite wife. God blessed Rebecca's decision, even though it was based on sound reason and not on a direct revelation from God, for she was wisely not tempting God (AE 5: 174; WA 43: 548). An even clearer example of this is Abraham's decision to pass off Sarah as his sister when he sojourned in Abimelech's land. He had no clear revelation from God that his wife would be protected. Thus, he turned to common sense and took reasonable precautions, much as Elijah ran from Jezebel. Abraham and all the saints were mortal men who

12. This fact has been rediscovered by Postmodernism. While Postmodernism can degenerate into a denial of the existence of the truth or the knowability of the truth, it rightly serves as a corrective to Modernism, which assumed the possibility of a neutral, objective observer. Postmodernism reminds us that there is no neutral position possible. See James Voelz, *What Does This Mean? Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Post-Modern World*, Concordia Scholarship Today (St. Louis: Concordia, 1995), 11–12.

13. It is true that many philosophers understand the limits of reason, but they often ascribe it to a wrong cause. Plato, for example, ascribes mankind's lack of soundness of mind to his corporeal existence, as most evidence by his cave metaphor and by the myth of Er in books 7 and 10, respectively, of his *Republic*. In a similar vein, David Hume believes that reason errs when relying on the senses to judge causation. See Hume, *Human Nature*, book 1, part 3.

lived ordinary lives like their heathen neighbors, except when they had a clear word from God on a particular matter. Luther is worth quoting at length about this particular point:

> The saints are not always impelled by the prompting of the Holy Spirit. They have their desires and afflictions just as everybody else does. Therefore they, too, engage in ordinary pursuits: they sow, plow, build, etc. Reason and diligence are adequate for doing these things; and although the ungodly, too, do similar things, nevertheless, in the case of the godly, these things are pleasing to God because of the faith in which the godly live. Therefore they do nothing out of the ordinary except by special impulse of the Holy Spirit and when commanded by a definite word; otherwise they continue in and live with normal sentiments and endeavors. They do not engage in extraordinary works, as the pope's saints do, who regard a change of garment, a change of place, living alone, and separation from the remaining mass as saintliness, and who meanwhile pay no attention to the fear of God and the love of God, as they strain out a gnat and swallow a camel (Mt 23:24) (AE 3: 320–21; WA 43: 104–5).

Thus, Abraham's use of reason is fully justified and does not negate his faith. And Abraham's use of reason is far sounder than that of the papists who set aside the ordinary tasks commanded by reason and pursue deeds that seem more heroic. Theologically sound use of reason is not afraid to choose the ordinary over the seemingly grand.

Other times the patriarchs had a partial revelation on a certain matter, but had to rely on reason to fill in the gaps. For example, when Abraham encountered a famine in Canaan, he knew that he could not return to Mesopotamia, for God had called him to leave that land for good. But the famine compelled him to leave Canaan, not merely because he was seeking food, but because the Canaanites thought that his presence had caused the famine. Abraham reckoned that the reasonable thing to do was to go to Egypt (AE 2: 290–91; WA 42: 469). Luther grants that Abraham's faith may have wavered somewhat, but he still does not lose his faith or let reason overwhelm it (AE 2: 292–93; WA 42: 471). Similarly, Abraham later takes God's promise to protect him and reasons that God would then protect his servant on the journey to find a wife for Isaac. Although Abraham had no direct promise in this matter, he properly reasoned from a general promise to this specific situation (AE 4: 252–53; WA 43: 316).

Most illuminating are those occasions when faith in God's promises seems to contradict what reason is telling a patriarch, and the patriarch then must consider to what extent he must use reason and to what extent he must simply rely on the Lord. From Luther's comments on several passages in Genesis, it is clear that the correct answer is not simply a blind disavowal of any use of reason. Although reason cannot ultimately dictate the answer, genuine faith does not necessarily decline the advice of reason, as long as reason is made subject to divine revelation. Perhaps this is most clearly seen in Jacob's departure from Laban and his reunion with his brother Esau. Luther notes that because Jacob had God's promise, he could have left his father-in-law at any time. However, Jacob was no fool. He waited until Laban was busy shearing sheep so that Jacob could get a good head start. Luther adds that God has given us our reason and all the resources of creation to make use of them since God usually works through these means (AE 6: 24–25; WA 44: 17).

Sometimes the patriarchs had no clear revelation from God and used reason to make appropriate decisions.

Similarly, when Jacob divided his family into two groups as he neared Esau, this was also a stratagem devised entirely by his reason. Nonetheless, the Holy Spirit was pleased to use this plan. Of course, Jacob's reason told him that his brother Esau was still hostile to him—something that was not true. Thus, his reason was not altogether reliable. More importantly, though, Jacob did not fail to pray and thus he did not manage this reunion purely by human strength (AE 6: 106–7; WA 44: 78–79). As Luther comments, faith does not lead one to eschew the resources available:

> God must not be tempted but use must be made of the suggestions, means, remedies, and aids that are at hand, lest we become like the Turks. For it is the very worst of temptations to expose oneself to dangers with negligent hands and feet and not to flee them or avoid them when you can, and later to cast the blame on God's will (AE 6: 117; WA 44: 87).

And yet in the end reason could carry Jacob only so far. At last Jacob wrestles in prayer. Luther surmises that the man against whom he wrestled taunted him with such words as "You must die, Jacob, for you are not the man to whom God gave the promise" or "God does not want to keep even the promise that has been given." Nonetheless, Jacob clung to the promises of God, no matter what his reason or others might say (AE 6: 134–37; WA 44: 100–102). It is not that Jacob (or we, for that matter) conquers God in prayer; God has already been conquered when he gave us a promise; prayer simply invokes this promise (AE 6: 141; WA 44: 105).

In this light we are able to understand Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. At first glance, this seems to be an example *par excellence* of the dangerous irrationality of faith. God seems to be acting in a capricious manner, unbound by and hostile to any standard of rationality. Benedict XVI is appalled by the belief of the Muslim theologian Ibn Hazm that God could command idola-

try and mankind would have to worship idols,[14] but here in sacred Scripture is an event that seems as bizarre and irrational as anything Ibn Hazm could have dreamed up. However, Luther understands that this is not a question of God's behaving irrationally or demanding something irrational. What was rather at stake was the promise of God. It seemed as if God's earlier promise was being contradicted. Abraham did not believe that this was the case, but trusted that God would somehow or another fulfill his promise (AE 4: 95; WA 43: 204). Because Abraham trusted God's promise fully, he was convinced that this whole event was ultimately sport, not real death, no matter how it appeared to him at the time (AE 4: 116; WA 43: 218).

CONCLUSION

Reason is both a gift from God and a tool that has been corrupted. Consequently, a human being should both make great use of reason and recognize its limitations. In divine matters, the word of God shall govern. Reason will yield to God's word not because the Scriptures are irrational or because God is capricious. Instead, our reason will simply acknowledge humbly that it is not learned enough to comprehend all the divine truths. After all, in earthly matters we naturally defer to our intellectual superiors in matters outside our expertise, not because we are setting aside our use of reason but because we recognize the excellent reasoning ability of the expert. In the same way Christians defer to the wisdom of God in divine matters because they recognize that God's wisdom is far more rational than anything human beings can produce. We will also recognize that this is more easily said than done. Christians are always tempted to underestimate the degree to which we use reason, both inside and outside of theology, merely to serve our own advantage, no matter how unjust it may be.

In earthly matters we will especially make use of reason, since we understand that this is reason's most proper realm. Again, even in earthly matters we will recognize that reason does not always function in a benign and impartial manner. Nonetheless, we will understand that being authentically human requires us to make full use of reason in earthly matters. After all, if part of the image of God is our reasoning ability, Christians (who are having that image restored) should above all people be the most rational. In so doing, we give to the world a glimpse of what the resurrection life will be like.

As leaders of God's people, pastors should diligently cultivate a life of reason. They should do this not out of intellectual snobbery, as perhaps was done when pastors were one of the elite few to receive formal education. Rather we should do so because we can appreciate this gift as few others in our society can. We know that reason has been created by God. And as people particularly knowledgeable in both divine matters and the perversity of sin, we can easily recognize the flaws in reason.

Reason also will remain valuable to pastors as they manage the left-hand kingdom issues that inevitably arise in the course of their ministry. Reason cannot establish our doctrine, but it may often help us deal with contractors, government officials, and a host of other people we encounter while managing the business side of the church.

So, what are we to say to Benedict XVI? We sympathize with the pope's criticism of the ultimate irrationality of Enlightenment rationality. We concur with the idea that the modern scientific world has impoverished itself by positing the existence of only a material universe. And we agree that faith is not the realm exclusively of the subjective and the irrational. But how do we proceed to counteract these misunderstandings? The solution does not come about by merging Hellenic and Hebraic thought into an intellectual realm of sweetness and light. Nor does it come about by insisting that Christian theology be shaped by Platonic or Aristotelian philosophy. Rather, the solution lies in recognizing both the value and the limits of reason. LOGIA

14. Benedict, "Glaube," paragraph 4.20. This fact has been rediscovered by Postmodernism. While Postmodernism can degenerate into a denial of the existence of the truth or the knowability of the truth, it rightly serves as a corrective to Modernism, which assumed the possibility of a neutral, objective observer. Postmodernism reminds us that there is no neutral position possible. See James Voelz, *What Does This Mean? Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Post-Modern World*, Concordia Scholarship Today (St. Louis: Concordia, 1995), 11–12.

Wittenberg: What to Do with Aristotle?

Mark D. Nispel

The University of Wittenberg in the sixteenth century was critically important to early modern European history, not only in regard to religious reforms but also in regard to educational reforms. One of the most important reforms Luther and Melanchthon oversaw redefined the relationship between theology and natural philosophy in general and Aristotle in particular within the curriculum of the university and elsewhere. This article outlines these important changes and considers the new Lutheran natural philosophy that developed, and finally, takes a look at one area in particular within this new natural philosophy, astronomy and astrology.

THE GREEK INTELLECTUAL INHERITANCE IN THE LATIN WEST

In the first centuries after Christ, the Greek-speaking eastern half of the Roman Empire saw the publication of works by such recognized authors as Hero of Alexandria, Nicomachus, Menelaus, Galen, and Ptolemy (the *Almagest* and the *Tetrabiblos*). A tradition of commentaries and handbooks concerning Plato's *Timaeus* and Aristotle's natural philosophy also developed. These works built upon the efforts of the classical authors and in many ways represent the pinnacle of Greek scientific learning.

The Latin-speaking West, on the other hand, had a practical frame of mind and never contributed significantly to scientific theory. Earlier in Roman history there existed an appreciation of Greek creativeness. Authors such as Seneca (*Natural Questions*) and Pliny (*Natural History*) depended heavily upon the Greek discussions of natural phenomena, and amassed quotations from Greek authors. This sort of encyclopedic technique formed a literary tradition in the Latin West. But later the language barrier and the general skepticism of the early Latin church toward pagan philosophy served to limit the extent of the intellectual inheritance that might have been received from the Greek-speaking East.[1]

However, at two isolated points there was an ongoing need for the Western theologians to make use of natural philosophy, and in these matters there was exchange with the East. This limited tradition focused upon a discussion and calculation of the movements and positions of the heavenly bodies in order to calculate correctly the calendar and the date of Easter and to explain certain aspects of the Genesis account of creation.[2] This bit of inherited science was applied to education in the West, at least at a popular level, in the traditional *quadrivium* of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music.[3]

Scientific knowledge was of very limited scope in the early Middle Ages in the West, consisting of a couple of specific applications of a Christianized natural philosophy based on partial information received through the incomplete Latin inheritance of Greek learning. This was to change dramatically in the late Middle Ages under the influence of Arabic learning from Spain. The first contact with Islamic astronomy was at the end of the tenth century and had tremendous implications for the future of European learning.[4] This contact introduced new ideas related to astronomy to the West and brought with these ideas the first observational instruments to be used by Latin astronomers.[5]

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1. This general skepticism has its roots in the New Testament where Paul warns of being misled through "hollow and deceptive philosophy" (Col 2:8). This warning took root especially among the Latin authors such as Tertullian: "What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? What between heretics and Christians?" (*Praescr.* 7).
2. Pedersen considers the correct calculation of Easter in accordance with the rules given at the Council of Nicea (325) as the one serious accomplishment of Western astronomy in the main part of the Middle Ages. Bede's *De temporum ratione* "became the basis of the medieval science of *compotus*, an independent mathematical discipline of high standards and immediate practical relevance" (Olaf Pedersen, "Astronomy," in *Science in the Middle Ages*, ed. David C. Lindberg [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978], 307).
3. See Edward Grant, *The Foundations of Modern Science in the Middle Ages: Their Religious, Institutional, and Intellectual Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5–17. In particular, he states: "Popular science in the Roman West was nearly coextensive with the whole of science. There is no denying that a scientific dark age had descended upon Western Europe" (17).
4. "The first contact with Islamic astronomy was made in the last decades of the tenth century, when a few students from northern Europe crossed into Spain to study in monasteries on the southern slopes of the Pyrenees where Islamic influence could already be felt. With the return of these students to northern Europe, the schools in which they taught became centers for the dissemination of Greco-Arabic science" (Pedersen, "Astronomy," 309).
5. On Gerbert of Aurillac see Grant, *Foundations*, 19–20. The first instruments include the abacus, the armillary sphere, and the astrolabe. The astrolabe was a circular disk of brass or copper with a graduated circle and a sighting device (alidade). It measured the altitude of a heavenly body within an accuracy of a degree. The first recorded use of this instrument was in October 1092 by Walcher at the Abbey of Malvern. In 1108, he published an astronomical table for the period 1036–1112. This was the beginning of true astronomical literature in the West. In 1126, Adelard of Bath translated the Astronomical Tables of al-Khwarizmi, thus giving Western astronomers

This led to curiosity regarding other ancient scientific texts. Soon the pace of importing ancient texts picked up.[6] As a result, this period saw Latin Europe infused with new books and ideas from antiquity. And the result was the beginning of the university system and a scholasticism based on Aristotle's logic.

The resulting new organization and the culture of the medieval university are important to understand in order that the reforms undertaken in Wittenberg have something to which they can be compared. First, the university itself was divided into several faculties that granted various degrees. The lower degrees were conferred by the faculty of arts. The higher degrees were conferred by the faculties of medicine, law, and theology.[7] From the student's perspective, the programs of study in the medieval universities were broken down into an undergraduate degree, a master of arts degree, and the higher degrees of law, medicine, and theology.[8] The undergraduate and the master of arts student spent most of his time studying the seven liberal arts, which were divided into the *trivium* (grammar, dialectic, rhetoric) and the *quadrivium* (geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and music). Pursuing a master of arts degree usually included the study of natural philosophy through consideration of works like Aristotle's *Physics* or *On the Heavens* and works such as Ptolemy's *Almagest*. In order to pursue one of the higher degrees of law, medicine, or theology, the student first formed foundational skills in language and logic and then added a knowledge of natural philosophy and other advanced studies. Therefore, it is important to note, in the early European universities, natural philosophy was intended to be a subject that was a foundation for and applied directly to the study of problems existing in areas of law, medicine, and theology.[9]

REFORM OF NATURAL PHILOSOPHY AT WITTENBERG

It was in the midst of this medieval intellectual and social context that the University of Wittenberg was founded in 1502.[10] In its teaching format Wittenberg followed Tübingen. The statutes of the faculty of arts from 1504 were copied from Tübingen and stated that all Bachelor of Arts students must study specific works of Porphyry and Aristotle. The master's degree students heard lectures on Aristotle's *Physica*, *De caelo et mundo*, *De generatione et corruptione*, *De anima*, *Metaphysica*, *Ethica*, and *Parva naturalia* and prepared to participate in the disputations. Thus, for a bachelor's degree a mastery of logic was essential and knowledge of Aristotle as a whole was necessary for a master's degree.[11] Wittenberg was founded as a traditional scholastic university based on Aristotle's works with no hint of the massive changes that would occur in less than two decades.

Martin Luther matriculated at the University of Erfurt, where he graduated with his bachelor's degree in 1502, and later with his master's degree in February 1505. The faculty at Erfurt at that time was influenced by humanism. Two of Luther's main professors, Jodocus Trutvetter and Bartholomaeus von Usingen, while not humanists themselves, were under its influence and "frequently quoted the classics to support the points they wished to establish."[12] Trutvetter deplored hair-splitting scholasticism and apparently influenced Luther on this point. Usingen distinguished between Aristotle and the Bible as authorities in religious matters, thus influencing Luther.

Unexpectedly in 1505, Luther was admitted to the Hermits of St. Augustine in Erfurt. In the spring of 1507, he was ordained a priest and started his studies for a doctoral degree in theology. While pursuing this degree Luther was called to Wittenberg to lecture on moral philosophy (1508), and then was later called back to Erfurt and sent on his famous trip to Rome. In 1511, he was again called back to Wittenberg to lecture and was appointed to the chair of *lectura in Biblia* for life before getting his doctorate in October 1512.[13] Luther would quickly make his presence felt at the university and in the town of Wittenberg. In 1512, he was appointed the subprior of the Augustinian convent and the chief preacher of the convent. In 1514, he was appointed preacher of the city church in Wittenberg. Thus Luther was involved in almost every aspect of public life in Wittenberg, in the university, and among the Augustinians and the laity.

The first period of reform to be considered is the period from 1514 until the arrival of Philipp Melanchthon as a member of the faculty of arts in the chair of Professor of Greek. In this period, Luther already started pushing for serious reform of the university curriculum in accord with his developing theological views. Luther, in his new post, lectured on parts of Genesis from 1512 to 1513, and the Psalms from August 1513 to October 1515. He was starting his studies of the original biblical languages, Greek and Hebrew, and these, along with other materials from the humanists, were beginning to affect his thoughts concerning the standard scholastic methods of lecturing in theology.

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complete Arabic astronomical tables for the use of the astrolabe along with precepts for their use. By the end of the twelfth century, several such tables had been translated and modified for various European localities (Pedersen "Astronomy," 309–313). The reception of the new astronomy was often motivated by astrological interests. Adelard of Bath was one of the first to translate Arabic scientific works into Latin including, c. 1120, a work by Abū Ma'shar, a ninth-century Arabic astronomer of great reputation.

6. The twelfth and the thirteenth centuries saw Gerard of Cremona alone translate such important works as Galen's *Tegni*, Ptolemy's *Almagest*, and many of Aristotle's works such as *Physics*, *On the Heavens and World*, *On Generation and Corruption*, and the *Meteorology*. Other translators of the period such as Eugene the Emir translated works as important as Ptolemy's *Optics* I (Grant, *Foundations*, 22–26).
7. Not every university had each of the higher faculties.
8. Pearl Kibre and Nancy G. Siraisi, "The Institutional Setting: The Universities," in *Science*, ed. Lindberg, 126–127.
9. An example of this is application of natural philosophy to the discussion of the Real Presence in the Eucharist and the resulting Roman explanation in terms of substance and accidents, that is, Aristotelian categories.
10. Gustav Adolf Benrath, "Die Universität der Reformationszeit," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 57 (1966): 32–51. The University of Wittenberg was the newest of the German universities in comparison to Heidelberg (1386), Köln (1388), Erfurt (1392), Leipzig (1409), Rostock (1419), Greifswald (1456), Basel (1460), Freiburg (1460), Ingolstadt (1472), Trier (1473), Mainz (1477), and Tübingen (1477).
11. See Sachiko Kusukawa, *The Transformation of Natural Philosophy: The Case of Philip Melanchthon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 13–15.
12. Ernest Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times: The Reformation From a New Perspective* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 134–136.
13. Ibid., 145–149.

In his lectures on Romans from November 1515 to September 1516, Luther greatly changed the use of the *glossae* and *scholia* methodology, and in his lectures on Galatians, from October 1516 to March 1517, he abandoned them altogether. He rejected the standard medieval use of four senses of the biblical text, the literal, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical, and replaced them simply by literal and spiritual senses.[14]

Luther's increasingly critical opinion of medieval theology, both sources and methods, can be observed at this time. With a humanistic spirit, he was now turning to more ancient authorities, the Scriptures and the church fathers. This is reflected in minor matters as well as major. For example, in a letter of 24 August 1516, Luther, who was looking for information on the Apostle Bartholomew, wrote that more recent works were filled with "nonsense and lies" and that Jerome's fifth-century work, *On Famous Men*, should be consulted instead (AE 48: 17). Luther praised the "outstanding fathers" such as Cyprian, Gregory of Nazianzus, Irenaeus, Hilary, Ambrose. and, especially, Augustine. He praised Augustine above Jerome in theology and indicated that his reading of the esteemed father had helped him in his study of St. Paul and the question of what the apostle meant by righteousness based upon the law. While he praised Paul and Augustine, Luther criticized Aristotle, who believed that we are "made righteous by the doing of just deeds" (AE 48: 24–25).[15]

At the beginning of 1517, Luther stated that some of the things he was writing were seen by some as "blasphemies and reviling against Aristotle" (AE 48: 37). His criticism of Aristotle was also a criticism of contemporary theology, which made much use of the philosopher's logic, natural philosophy, and other ideas. Luther felt the use of Aristotle as an authority in theological studies was wrong. But even worse, according to Luther, the scholastic theologians used Aristotle and other ancient authors by means of commentaries (*glossae* and *scholia*) upon the original text, which were intended to explain terminology and interpret the meaning of the original author. This resulted in the medieval commentaries obscuring and dominating the classical authors and their original intent.[16] And so Luther disdained "Aristotle, Porphyry, [and] the masters of the Sentences" together and depicts the scholastic work dealing with these authors as "the hopeless studies which characterize our age" (AE 48: 37).[17] There was great pressure simply to accept the authority of this Aristotelian theology in silence, says Luther, but Aristotle, "this chief of all charlatans, insinuates and imposes on others, things which are so absurd that not even an ass or a stone could remain silent about them!" (AE 48: 37).[18] Thus, concludes Luther,

> it is false to say that without Aristotle one cannot become a theologian. The opposite is true, no one becomes a theologian unless it be without Aristotle, for the whole of Aristotle is related to theology as darkness is to light.[19]

This vigorous criticism of Aristotle, rooted in Luther's theological development and humanistic leanings, had tremendous implications for the university, as Luther already realized. Luther led a reform of Wittenberg's curriculum between 1517 and 1518. The question that immediately presented itself was, What should be the focus of theological studies, if not Aristotle? The first model Luther had in mind was a biblical humanism built upon the languages, Scripture, and the church fathers, especially Augustine.[20] By the spring of 1518, the style of the Aristotelian classes in the *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, and *Logic* had been altered to a humanistic approach and new classes in the classical authors were being offered.[21] In May of 1518, Luther requested that the university be allowed to establish a chair in Greek and a chair in Hebrew (AE 48: 63).

In August of 1518, Philipp Melanchthon, grandnephew of famed humanist John Reuchlin, came to Wittenberg to fill the new post of professor of Greek in the University's faculty of Arts. Philipp Melanchthon would work side by side with Luther throughout the Lutheran reform of theology and education. Together, Luther and Melanchthon altered the way Wittenberg taught its students. Luther wanted to eliminate Aristotelian studies, which he considered a waste of good students' time, from the curriculum, excepting perhaps only the philosopher's writings that supported basic learning such as the *Logic*, *Rhetoric*, and *Poetics*, and only if these were taught without all the scholastic commentaries and notes.[22] Melanchthon supported Luther's arguments.[23] During the 1520s, Melanchthon worked with Luther on the reforms of the medieval curriculum. He agreed concerning the exclusion of Aristotelian philosophy from theology and its subjection to theology.[24] Significantly,

14. Ibid., 280–285.
15. Luther's letters of this time contain many references to classical literature. See also Luther's letter of 1 March 1517 (AE 48: 40) for a further comparison of Jerome and Augustine.
16. Grant, *Foundations*, 40–41. This was a humanist idea applied to theological studies by Luther.
17. Peter Lombard's *Sentences* was a scholastic presentation of theology making use of quotes from the church fathers. It was a fundamental text for the teaching of scholastic theology.
18. Luther, in his typically blunt fashion, continued, "If Aristotle had not been flesh, I would not hesitate to claim that he was really a devil."
19. AE 31: 12, quoted in Schwiebert, *Luther*, 296.
20. In his letter of 18 May 1517, Luther says, "Our theology and St. Augustine are progressing well, and with God's help rule at our University. Aristotle is gradually falling from his throne, and his final doom is only a matter of time. It is amazing how the lectures on the *Sentences* are disdained. Indeed no one can expect to have any students if he does not want to teach this theology, that is, lecture on the Bible or on St. Augustine or another teacher of ecclesiastical eminence" (AE 48: 42).
21. By March of 1518, Luther could write that "our University is getting ahead. We expect before long to have lectures in two or three languages. New courses are to be given in Pliny, Quintilian, mathematics, and other subjects. The old courses in Petrus Hispanus, Tartaretus, and Aristotle are to be dropped" (WA Br 1: 226, quoted in Schwiebert, *Luther*, 297).
22. See his letters of 9 December 1518 (AE 48: 95–96), 7 February 1519 (AE 48: 107), and 13 March 1519 (AE 48: 111–113). See also *To the Christian Nobility* (AE 44: 201).
23. Kusukawa, *Transformations*, 43.
24. "Nec ego ignoro aliud doctrinae genus esse Philosphiam, aliud Theologiam. Nec ego illa ita misceri volo" (Philipp Melanchthon, *Corpus Reformatorum: Philippi Melanthonis Opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. C. B. Bretschneider and H. E. Bindseil [Halle: C. A. Schwetschke, 1834–1860], 11:282 [hereafter cited as *CR*]). Melanchthon, however, saw more agreement between philosophy and theology than did Luther. For Melanchthon adds that those who are ignorant of philosophy "non satis videant aut quid Theologia profiteatur, aut quatenus cum Philosophia consentiat."

Melanchthon, as important as he was to Lutheran theology and to Luther personally, was not at heart or by profession a theologian. He was an educator, and spent the majority of his career working to improve education at Wittenberg and in Germany. After the late 1520s, it was Melanchthon who was most responsible for the reforms in curriculum at the University of Wittenberg because Luther had already accomplished that which he desired, the diminution of Aristotle in theological studies.

In regard to natural philosophy, Luther approved of the study of those things that provided a true knowledge of nature, but he was of the opinion that "in [Aristotle's *Physics*] there is no real knowledge of the world of nature."[25] In Luther's theologically centered world, one could not even have a right knowledge of nature without first having at least some correct theological knowledge. Luther restricted natural philosophy into a role of explicating the doctrines of creation and divine providence.[26] According to Luther, Aristotle was of limited use even toward that end.[27] In principle, Luther was not against natural philosophy as long as it did not assert a place of arbitration in regard to articles of faith.[28] However, this general admission did not really bring about a positive action until the more radical reformers presented an example of what Wittenberg considered to be going too far.

Just as the Swiss and other radical reformers gave impetus to a counter reaction and, therefore, a balance within Luther's theology, the same occurred within Lutheran education. The Wittenberg chaos of 1521, the peasant unrest in the mid-1520s, and the encounter with the Swiss theologians were part of a process that brought a change of perspective to Wittenberg. In 1526, Luther wrote:

> We should not follow the imaginations of the interpreters who suppose that the knowledge of nature, the study of astronomy or of all philosophy, is being condemned here and who teach that such things are to be despised as vain and useless speculations. For the benefits of these arts are many and great, as is plain to see every day. In addition, there is not only utility, but also great pleasure in investigating the nature of things. Holy Scripture also points to things to show their properties and powers. . . . The Scriptures are all so full of such metaphors and parables taken from the nature of things that if someone were to remove these things from the Holy Scriptures, he would remove a great light. (AE 15: 9)

Melanchthon, too, began to point out that St. Paul's warning against philosophy did not mean that philosophy was bad, merely that one should not be misled by philosophy. In fact, natural philosophy should be respected because it investigates those things implanted in nature by God.[29] This change in attitude, which came about in the late 1520s, opened the way for the rest of Melanchthon's later efforts at developing a Lutheran natural philosophy.

Sachiko Kusukawa has shown that as part of this amazing career, Melanchthon developed a new and distinctive presentation of natural philosophy that fit within the context of the Lutheran theological system. Melanchthon felt it was shameful that in his time, the sciences were so poorly known, and he was especially interested in improving education in this regard.[30] With this starting point, and within the context of the theology articulated by the Lutheran theologians, Melanchthon the humanist spent his career changing the educational landscape of Germany and thereby gained for himself the title *praeceptor Germaniae*. After 1530, Melanchthon lectured on many works concerning natural philosophy and published many works of his own. In this process, Melanchthon developed a corpus of works, later known as the *Philippus*, which concerned varied topics from grammar to natural philosophy to theology, which were used for years in Germany's schools and universities. He gathered a dedicated group of students, who would influence education in Germany for decades to come as teachers and professors all over Germany.[31]

ASTRONOMY AND ASTROLOGY WITHIN THE NEW LUTHERAN NATURAL PHILOSOPHY

Melanchthon and his students had wide interests and did a remarkable amount of work related to the study of nature. Here I will focus on one area within the new Lutheran presentation of natural philosophy, astronomy and astrology. In antiquity and the Middle Ages, astronomical physics, mathematics, and astrology were closely related ideas. Physics was the study of change and causation in relation to objects. When applied to the heavens it was a study of the changes and forces relating to the motions of the heavenly bodies. Astronomical mathematics had developed into a specific science of predicting the movements and locations of the heavenly bodies. This science had found a use within the church throughout its history for the calculation of the ecclesiastical calendar, the date of Easter in particular. Astrology was built around the idea that the heavenly bodies wield a type of influence upon earthly inhabitants through some type of physical force. In its strongest pagan

25. Letter of 13 March 1519 (AE 48: 111–113).
26. Kusukawa, *Transformations*, 44–46.
27. Luther concludes: "Darumb, lieber Mensch, laß natürlich Kunst faren" (WA 111: 569).
28. For example, at the famous Marburg Colloquy, where Luther and Melanchthon discussed the doctrine of the Lord's Supper with the Swiss reformers, Luther repeatedly denied the applicability of mathematical considerations or philosophical definitions in deciding the correct doctrine of the Real Presence. In one place, it is reported Luther stated that "God is omnipotent and can maintain a body without a location; he is not only able to do this but in fact he actually does it. The universe, he said, is the greatest of all bodies and yet, even according to the view of science, it is not in a place because outside of the universe there is neither place nor time. Even the Aristotelians declare that the most distant planet is not in a place. Luther added: The debate concerning space and its nature belongs to the realm of mathematics; theology, however, deals, rather, with the omnipotence of God, which is above all mathematics. Therefore, he did not wish to dispute about mathematical concepts in this place and in a theological argument that has to do with divine omnipotence, although he would not refuse to engage in a debate of this kind in private at some other time" (AE 38: 75).
29. Kusukawa, *Transformation*, 66; *CR* 12:692–695.
30. B. T. Moran, "The Universe of Philip Melanchthon: Criticism and Use of the Copernican Theory," *Comitatus* 4 (1973): 6.
31. Ibid., 1.

forms, astrology yielded a doctrine of unavoidable fate. In its milder forms, still vaguely reflected in our daily newspapers, this force from the heavens was seen as influencing the health and lives of people on earth.

Within the developing Lutheran natural philosophy, physics continued to be the causal description of real objects and their movements or changes, just as Aristotle had defined physics. One way this continued to be applied was in the calculation of the positions and movements of the heavenly bodies. This use of astronomy Luther did not condemn or oppose. On the contrary, he gives it great praise:

> With the support of the mathematical disciplines—which no one can deny were divinely revealed—the human being, in his mind, soars high above the earth; and leaving behind those things that are on the earth, he concerns himself with heavenly things and explores them. Therefore man is a creature created to inhabit the celestial regions and to live an eternal life when, after a while, he has left the earth. For this is the meaning of the fact that he can not only speak and form judgments (things which belong to dialectics and rhetoric) but also learns all the sciences thoroughly. (AE 1: 46)

While he gives such strong praise, as has already been seen, Luther subjects astronomy, too, to the authority of theology and revelation. Thus, he understood astronomy especially in terms of Genesis 1:14, which states that God made the sun and stars for "signs and times, days and years." Although he understood the claims and predictive abilities of the mathematicians, he responded, "Let it be, as the mathematicians say, that these things happen naturally. Nevertheless, it is true that signs of this kind always portend a future evil" (WA 17, I: 482.33–483.1).[32] The sun and stars were made to give light and when they cease to do so it is a "divine sign."[33] And when, in 1531, a comet appeared in the skies over Wittenberg, Luther took note of the position of its tail in relation to the constellations and concluded that it signified "nothing good."[34]

However, although Luther interpreted the heavens in this fashion, he understood them in terms of divine indications of wrath and anger, not as objects that influence the earth through some type of physical force. Luther rejected the idea of any type of impeding influence of astrology. For God created the stars to serve the wise. And if they are to serve, how can they dominate?[35] He also rejected the practice of astrology, particularly the idea of a celestial fate.[36] His early works show an especially strong rejection of this common feature of daily life among medieval people. In his sermons, Luther decried "those splendid things of astrology and mathematics, which want so badly to be a science, but which cannot escape inborn foolishness." And he equates the "dreams of the astrologers" with the philosophers' "glosses on Aristotle."[37] As we have seen, for Luther, natural philosophy had to be excluded from theology along with the idea latent in astrology that the stars by necessity caused us to sin. This was unacceptable. The counterargument of the more moderate astrology, that the stars merely incline us to sin and do not cause us to sin by necessity, was just as unacceptable because "every evil inclination is not outside of us but in us, as Christ says."[38]

Luther's judgment of astrology did not change, but on the other hand, it was not nearly so harsh once astrology was completely out of the way of theology. In the middle of the 1530s, while lecturing on Genesis 1:14 he stated:

> I shall never be convinced that astrology should be numbered among the sciences. And I shall adhere to this opinion because astrology is entirely without proof. The appeal to experience has no effect on me (AE 1: 45).

Importantly, Luther was not speaking here of astrology in general, but instead specifically of the manner in which astrology, now excluded from theology together with all natural philosophy, was being included among the sciences of natural philosophy by Melanchthon at the university. Luther's criticism was mild. As long as the astrological ideas remained out of theology, Luther did not interfere.

On the other hand, within his overall emphasis on the sciences, Melanchthon specifically stressed the study of mathematics and the heavens. His students and he held disputations at the university not only on philosophy in general but on mathematics, geometry, and astronomy.[39] Although it was felt that the mathematical studies were useful to all parts of life,

32. Luther gives a specific example, "ut de Cometa, quando ea apparet, quo caudam vertit, ibi malum est futurum." Luther repeats the contemporary idea that the stars and the moon receive their light from the sun and that an eclipse is caused by the earth getting in between the light source and its object. See also AE 48: 41 and AE 22: 59.
33. "Ego simpliciter intelligo Eclipses qui hoc praeterito decennio frequentissime apparverunt. Non respicio ad mathematicos qui naturalem illam dicunt eclipsim. Ego dico: solis propria natura est splendere, si hunc amiserit, signum erit divinum" (WA 17, I: 450.19; see also WA 45: 338.11ff.).
34. "Apud nos cometa ad occidentem in angulo apparet (ut mea fert astronomia) tropici cancri et coluri aequinoctiorum, cuius cauda pertingit ad medium usque inter tropicum et ursae caudam. Nihil boni significat" (WA Br 6: 165.5). In 1535, he also notes another event, "nunc altera coniunctio transiit innoxia" (WA Br 7: 244.9).
35. He explicitly rejected Ptolomeus's idea of the influence of the stars on the basis of a theological argument. "Si in ministerium, quomodo in dominum? At subtiliter evadunt dicentes authoritate sui Magistri Ptolomei 'Sapiens dominatur astris, ideo praevernire et impedire postest influentias stellarum.' . . . Solus enim deus timendus est in omnibus. Caetera omnia ut ministeria in bonum electis opperantia esse debemus intelligere" (WA 1: 405.22–25, 39–40).
36. In his lectures on Romans, Luther says in regard to the prophecies of the Old Testament: "All this has been done so that when the promise of God has been fulfilled, it should in these words be apparent that it was his plan to act thus, so that we might recognize that the Christian religion is not the result of a blind accident or of a fate determined by stars, as many empty-headed people have arrogantly assumed" (AE 25: 145).
37. "Lauta illa Astrologia seu Mathematica, quae valde cupit esse scientia, sed non potest stulticiam ingenitam exuere" (WA 1: 404.1).
38. "Omnis mala inclinatio non extra nos, sed in nobis est, sicut ait Christus: De corde exeunt cogitationes malae" (WA 1: 404.24; AE 1: 45).
39. For example, see Melanchthon's disputation *De philosophia*, held in 1536 (*CR* 11:278–284). See the disputation by Joachim Rheticus, *Praef. In arithmeticen,* held in 1536, in which he defends the usefulness of mathematics (*CR* 11:284–292).

it was especially in the study of the heavens that mathematics was necessary for "there is no way into the studies of the heavens except through arithmetic and geometry."[40] Melanchthon's main argument for the study of the heavens was that it taught about God's providence over the world. Astronomy was part of natural philosophy's investigation and explanation of the creation. Melanchthon continued to understand the cosmos in terms of Aristotelian physics. Ancient physics included the idea of the influential force emanating from the heavenly bodies and affecting the earthly elements. For Melanchthon, a physical characteristic of the cosmos identified by the ancients was astrology.

Melanchthon knew that Europe had inherited much of its contemporary study of the stars from the Arabs. He rejected their curiosity into sorcery, fate, and other predictions that were not based on a proper causation. Nevertheless, Melanchthon found what he judged was a proper logical astrology taught by Ptolemy, Aristotle (*Meteora*), and in the Hippocratic Corpus. This was based on causation as taught by Aristotelian physics.[41]Thus, within the reformation of Wittenberg's natural philosophy, astrology was intended to be a part of physics. And there was a fair amount of effort put forward to accomplish this inclusion of astrology into natural philosophy such that it should be considered to be within the jurisdiction of the faculty of arts, which taught natural philosophy.[42]

At Wittenberg in 1535, Melanchthon's student Jacob Milich held a disputation on the dignity of astrology.[43] He argued that this astrology is useful to life in many ways, just as the medical diagnoses are. Astrology should not be rejected just because it cannot foresee everything, just as medical diagnoses do not foresee everything. He claims that since the "stars have some effects" it is to be conceded that astrology is a part of physics, like medical predictions.[44]

These arguments, proposed by a student of Melanchthon, reflect the very same arguments presented by Melanchthon himself in many places. In Melanchthon's mind, he was altering the contemporary landscape of natural philosophy by the inclusion of astrology as a logical consequence of physics.[45] In part of his influential and fundamental book *Initia doctrinae physicae*, which was used in Germany for years, Melanchthon discussed physics and its application to the movement of the stars. He asked whether all divination or astrology is prohibited by the Scriptures, which he answers in the negative. For he distinguished between those predictions which have physical causes and those which have no causes. Astrological predictions based on physical causes are the same as "such signs as the medics observe, as when they make a judgment from a fast or slow pulse of the arteries."[46] In other works, such as his *Interpretatio operis quadripartiti Claudii Ptolemaei de praeditionibus astronomicis*, he goes on at length to discuss specific effects of the stars upon the earth and people.[47] These ideas in the early works of Melanchthon continued for many years to wield influence upon the students at Wittenberg.

In 1539, one of Melanchthon's students who was particularly interested in astronomy, Joachim Rheticus, visited an aged Copernicus, who had been working with a new description of the solar system: a heliocentric model. He returned to Wittenberg with a copy of what is now known as *De revolutionibus* and desired to publish it. But the new model required replacing Aristotle's cosmocentric model with Copernicus's new model. Melanchthon resisted. Eventually Rheticus delivered the manuscript to Andreas Osiander in Nuremberg, who published it with an unauthorized foreword in 1543.

In summary, Luther and Melanchthon put forth great effort to redefine the place of Aristotle within the university. Luther saw to it that the philosopher was completely exiled from the discipline of theology except for a few basic skills like logic and dialectics. Melanchthon, as part of his overall attempt to construct a natural philosophy that was dedicated to explicating the doctrines of divine providence and creation, allowed Aristotle a larger role. As part of this natural philosophy Melanchthon inherited a logical basis for believing in astrology, based upon the idea that the heavens exerted a physical influence upon earthly inhabitants. Only later with the efforts of specialized astronomers like Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo, was Aristotle's physics dismissed as an astronomical model for the solar system. But even these continued to work within the model of Luther, in which the study of nature in general and the heavens in particular, were an effort to understand the doctrines of divine providence and divine creation. LOGIA

40. "Ad doctrinam de rebus coelestibus nullus aditus patet, nisi per Arithmeticam et Geometriam" (*CR* 11:287; Kusukawa, *Transformations*, 129).
41. Melanchthon was greatly influenced in this by his Tübingen professor, Johannes Stöffler (Moran, "Philipp Melanchthon," 8–9).
42. Traditionally in the universities astrology had been a subject taught by the faculty of medicine. It was viewed as a way to predict the future health of patients.
43. *CR* 11:261–266. He defines astrology as that "quae de syderum effectibus in natura inferiore disputat."
44. *CR* 11:262–264.
45. Melanchthon considered astrology a gift of God like the other sciences. Benrath states: "Selbst die Astrologie nahm Melanchthon ernst: sie war ihm eine Gabe Gottes an die Menschen, wie alle anderen Wissenschaften" (Benrath, "Universität," 43).
46. *CR* 13:335–337.
47. *CR* 18:2–118.

The Lutheran Mind and Its University

Martin R. Noland

Lutherans have supported higher education almost everywhere they have had enough funds and folk to make it feasible. The establishment of the sixteen by twenty-one-foot log cabin college in the Midwestern wilderness of Perry County, Missouri, is often set forth as proof of Lutheran support for higher education.[1] The Saxons were in Perry County only five months and had already started a full-fledged *Gymnasium* for their children, while their towns and barns were still waiting to be built. The Lutheran concern for higher education, however, did not start there, but over three-hundred years prior.

The Lutheran Reformation started as a reform of the university,[2] and its leaders were university men. Luther and Melanchthon made sure that the medieval universities in Lutheran lands were not abolished, but renewed and invigorated. This happened in the sixteenth century at Wittenberg, Erfurt, Tübingen, Leipzig, Frankfurt, Greifswald, Rostock, Copenhagen, and Uppsala. The following centuries saw the establishment of new Lutheran universities in northern Europe: Marburg (1527), Königsberg (1544), Jena (1558), Strasburg (1566), Helmstedt (1576), Altdorf (1578), Giessen (1607), Rinteln (1621), Dorpat (1632), Åbo (1640; later moved to Helsingfors), Kiel (1665), Lund (1666), Halle (1693), Göttingen (1734), and Erlangen (1743). The nineteenth century saw the founding of a Lutheran university at Christiania [Oslo] (1811), but also the closing of many others: Altdorf, Rinteln, Helmstedt, Erfurt, Frankfurt, and Wittenberg. The establishment of the University of Berlin in 1809 was not on a Lutheran basis, but on a generic Protestant basis. Future university establishments in Europe were modeled after Berlin or Bonn (1818), the latter of which combined Roman Catholic and Protestant faculties.

In nineteenth-century North America, thirty-seven Lutheran colleges were established that remain today.[3] Thirteen more were founded in the twentieth century. Among colleges associated with the present Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Gettysburg College (1832) carries the distinction of being its "firstborn." Among colleges associated with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), Concordia University (1864) in River Forest, Illinois, carries the same distinction. Only one year thereafter, Northwestern University (1865) in Watertown, Wisconsin, was founded for the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). The Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) established its Bethany College (1922) at Mankato, Minnesota. Lutherans in Canada, Australia, Brazil, and many other countries also lay claim to colleges or universities founded in the twentieth century. Whatever one may say about Lutherans, you cannot accuse them as a group of being anti-intellectual.[4]

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THE PURPOSE OF A LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

This article focuses on the Lutheran universities located in North America. The term *university* here is intended to comprehend all efforts in higher education, whether that name is used, or not. In this context, with some exceptions, the Lutheran universities were originally founded to prepare pastors and teachers for professional church work. Later a secondary purpose was added, namely, to train Lutheran youth in the liberal arts for a multiplicity of careers. More recently, tertiary purposes have been added, for example, graduate degrees, distance learning, and online education. To many people, the Lutheran universities in North America now appear to be more and more like every other private university. Of course, appearances may be deceiving, but a thoughtful person cannot escape the hard question: *What is uniquely Lutheran about these universities?*

Let me put this question in the practical form that many people think about it: *Why should church bodies, alumni, and parents financially support these Lutheran universities? Why should Lutheran youth attend them?* Factors that push this question are the following: (1) there are plenty of excellent public and private universities in North America; (2) the costs of higher education escalate every year; (3) most students now

1. For the full story see C. S. Meyer, *Log Cabin to Luther Tower* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 1–22.
2. This point is made by Ernest G. Schwiebert, *The Reformation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 447–461. For Luther's own comments on the progress of reform at Wittenberg prior to the *Ninety-Five Theses*, see AE 48: 4–42, letter to John Lang, 18 May 1517.
3. See Richard W. Solberg, *Lutheran Higher Education in North America* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985). The numbers quoted here reflect only colleges that currently identify themselves as Lutheran and that are listed in Solberg, pp. 351–352.
4. In the classic study by Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Random House, 1962), Lutherans are only mentioned once. Hoftstadter notes the apparent Lutheran immunity to the influence of the anti-intellectual religion of American Evangelicalism (p. 87).

graduate with significant debt; and (4) *U.S. News and World Report*, and other consumer reports, often give poor grades to the Lutheran universities, by ranking them in the second, third, or fourth tier.[5]

These questions and factors are not intended to steer students, supporters, or funds away from the Lutheran universities. Far from it! My intent here is to answer these hard questions and thereby help rejuvenate the Lutheran universities in North America. My interest in these issues dates back to my own college years.[6] My thinking on the same has evolved through the reading of Roman Catholic (for example, Newman and Burtchaell),[7] Evangelical (for example, Marsden, Noll, and Holmes),[8] and secular authors (for example, Hutchins, Barzun, the Blooms, and Hanson and Heath).[9] Lutheran contributions on the subject have been sparse but helpful (for example, Jahsmann and Simmons).[10]

People often think that a university is a university, pure and simple. So they assume that it is fair to rank universities on the basis of criteria used to evaluate for-profit companies. On this subject, Richard John Neuhaus recently declares:

> There are—or there should be—different kinds of universities. At least that is the case if there is no such thing as a university pure and simple. John Henry Newman's much and rightly admired *The Idea of a University* is the idea of a university, which is a way of saying that a decision must be made, and constantly remade, to be a particular kind of university. It is sometimes said that a Christian university has a dual identity, one by virtue of being a university and another by virtue of being Christian. I suggest that this is seriously mistaken, since it assumes that the term *university* is neutral, or self-explanatory. Every university is, whether by careful deliberation or by accident, a university of a particular kind.[11]

This means that universities should not be compared to each other across the board, but only with those that share the same purposes. Thirty years of study on the subject has convinced me that there is only *one* purpose that justifies the particular existence of the *Lutheran* university. That purpose is *the Lutheran mind*. But this purpose, standing by itself, justifies every expense and sacrifice to support Lutheran education at both its lower and higher levels. Therefore in response to the questions posed above, I respond: *The Lutheran mind is what is uniquely Lutheran about the Lutheran university; and this mind needs a university to be transmitted effectively to the next generation.*

THE LUTHERAN MIND

What is the Lutheran mind? "The Lutheran mind" refers to a particular way of thinking about God, his work, and the world. Few people would question the thesis that Lutherans think in a different way than other people about God and his work. Lutheran theology would not exist if this were not the case. On the other hand, most people *will* question the thesis that Lutherans think in a different way about the *world*. Do Lutherans think in a different way than others about philosophy, language, history, society, government, law, education, psychology, science, the fine arts, and the vocational arts? Do Lutheran academicians think and teach in different ways than their secular peers? Some people heartily affirm that Lutherans think differently. Others heartily disagree.

I intend to make the case that Lutherans think differently about many important subjects, or at least they can and should. But the case may also be made for the Christian mind in general, of which the Lutheran is a subset. I am not the first to address this issue. C. S. Lewis wrote about the Christian medieval mind as "the whole organization of their theology, science, and history into a single, complex, harmonious mental Model of the Universe."[12] Lewis was an influence on James W. Sire, whose book *The Universe Next Door*[13] was a catalog of modern world-

5. For recent evaluations of North America universities, see *U.S. News and World Report* 143, no. 6 (August 27, 2007): 110–125; *Consumer's Digest* 45, no. 3 (May/June 2007): 32–40, 72; Marc Silver, ed., *America's Best Colleges: 2007 Edition* (Washington D.C.: *U.S. News and World Report*, 2006).
6. See the student newspaper of Concordia Teacher's College, River Forest, Illinois, *The Spectator* 60, no. 22 (May 18, 1979): 3, "Concordia Faces Identity Crisis." See also a more recent article, published in *Logia Forum*, in *Logia* 6, no. 3 (Trinity 1997): 71–72, "Whither Concordia?"
7. John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1960); and James Tunstead Burtchaell, *The Dying of the Light: The Disengagement of Colleges and Universities from their Christian Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmanns, 1998).
8. George M. Marsden, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmanns, 1994); Arthur F. Holmes, *The Idea of a Christian College* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmanns, 1975); and Arthur F. Holmes, *Building the Christian Academy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmanns, 2001).
9. Robert Maynard Hutchins, *The Great Conversation: The Substance of Liberal Education*, Great Books of the Western World, v. 1 (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952); Jacques Barzun, *The House of Intellect* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959); Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987); Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon: The Books and Schools of the Ages* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1994); and Victor D. Hanson and John Heath, *Who Killed Homer? The Demise of Classical Education and the Recovery of Greek Wisdom* (New York: Encounter Books, 2001).
10. See Allan Hart Jahsmann, *What's Lutheran in Education? Explorations into Principles and Practices* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960); and Ernest L. Simmons, *Lutheran Higher Education: An Introduction for Faculty* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1998). Jahsmann's book is most helpful for its comprehensive bibliography, which demonstrates that the Missouri Synod and the Synodical Conference churches have been discussing and debating the issues of Lutheran education since 1847. Books on the subject that need to be added to that bibliography are Walter Beck, *Lutheran Elementary Schools in the United States* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1939); Arthur C. Repp, *One-Hundred Years of Christian Education* (River Forest, IL: Lutheran Education Assocation, 1947); August C. Stellhorn, *Schools of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1963); Victor Krause, ed., *Lutheran Elementary Schools in Action* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1963); Milo Brekke, *How Different Are People Who Attended Lutheran Schools* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1974); and Wayne Schmidt, *The Lutheran Parochial School: Dates, Documents, Events, People* (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Publications, 2001).
11. Richard John Neuhaus, "A University of a Particular Kind," *First Things* no. 172 (April 2007): 31.
12. C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 11.
13. James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1976).

views. These worldviews, according to Sire, include Christian theism, deism, naturalism, nihilism, existentialism, Eastern pantheistic monism, and the "new consciousness."

Evangelical thinkers Francis Schaeffer and Arthur F. Holmes have both adopted Sire's language of *worldview* to explain the particular ways of thinking about God and the world that exist today. Schaeffer's explanation of *worldview* is the following:

> People have presuppositions, and they will live more consistently on the basis of these presuppositions than even they themselves may realize. By *presuppositions* we mean the basic way an individual looks at life, his basic world view, the grid through which he sees the world. Presuppositions rest upon that which a person considers to be the truth that exists. People's presuppositions lay a grid for all they bring forth into the external world. Their presuppositions also provide the basis for their values and therefore the basis for their decisions.[14]

C. S. Lewis's student, Harry Blamires, wrote a provocative book entitled *The Christian Mind: How Should a Christian Think?*[15] This book demonstrates that Christians and secularists think in quite different ways. Blamires argued that the marks of the Christian mind are its supernatural orientation, its awareness of evil, its conception of truth, its acceptance of authority, its concern for the person, and its sacramental cast. I believe that all of these characteristics apply to the Lutheran mind.

If there is a Christian mind that differs from secular and non-Christian minds, then there may also be a Lutheran mind that differs from other types of Christian minds. What are the other Christian minds? There are Roman Catholic minds, Eastern Orthodox, Evangelical, Calvinist, and Liberal Protestant minds, at the very least. Historically, each group has supported its own universities. The discussion which follows is not about those presuppositions which Lutherans share with other Christians, but about those which are unique to Lutherans. The unique presuppositions of the Lutheran mind justify the existence of, and support for, the Lutheran university.

THE LUTHERAN MIND AND THEOLOGY

The most important presupposition of the Lutheran mind is its perspective on and belief in the word of God. Lutherans believe that God has spoken through the prophets and apostles in the Bible, and that therefore the Bible is truthful, accurate,[16] and universal in its application. They believe that any literate layman of any age or culture can sit down with the Bible and understand it, as if the Bible were written especially for him. This idea comes straight from Luther. The prolific Evangelical author Alister McGrath recently called this "Christianity's Dangerous Idea,"[17] because it empowers the common man.

Not all Christians agree with this view of the Bible. The Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions have been suspicious of the populist ideas of Luther, especially as expressed in his views of the clarity and accessibility of the Bible. Liberal Protestants separate the Bible, which they consider outmoded, from the "word of God," construing the latter in numerous ways. Even conservative Protestants disagree with Lutherans on certain issues regarding the Bible. The most important issue concerns the matter of the clarity and genre of Scripture, which divided Luther and Zwingli at Marburg in 1529.

Zwingli published a sermon in September 1522 titled "Of the Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God." There he stated:

> Where is this clarity? If God wants his Word to be understood, why does he speak in parables and riddles? . . . The fact that in times past God taught by parables but in these last days has revealed himself fully by the Lord Jesus Christ indicates to us that God wished to give his message to man in a gentle and attractive way; for it is of the nature of that which is presented in parables and proverbs and riddles that it appeals to the understanding of men and brings them to knowledge and indeed increases that knowledge. . . . The heavenly and divine wisdom reveals its will to men in the form of sweet parables, so that those who might otherwise be dull and unwilling are persuaded to listen.[18]

On this point, Zwingli was not that far from his mentor, Erasmus, who attempted to use the "obscurity" of Scripture to demolish Luther's argument against free will.[19]

Zwingli viewed the genre of the Bible as, essentially, a series of divine oracles in figurative language. The oracles at Delphi were also presented in "parables, proverbs, and riddles." Unlike Erasmus's skepticism, Zwingli believed that the hidden meaning of the Bible *could* be opened up to the elect by the illumination and anointing of the Spirit. In the same sermon, he wrote:

> When the Word of God shines on the human understanding, it enlightens it in such a way that it understands and confesses the Word and knows the certainty of it. . . . This concurrent or prevenient clarity of the word found outward representation at the birth of Christ. . . . God's Word can be understood by a man without any human direction: not that this is due to man's own understanding, but to the light and Spirit of God, illuminating and inspiring the words in such a way that the light of the divine content is

14. Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live? The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1976), 19. See also Arthur F. Holmes, *Contours of a World View*, Studies in a Christian World View, v. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmanns, 1983).
15. Harry Blamires, *The Christian Mind: How Should a Christian Think?* (London: S.P.C.K., 1963).
16. See Luther's affirmation of Scriptural inerrancy in AE 32: 11.
17. See Alister E. McGrath, *Christianity's Dangerous Idea* (New York: HarperOne, 2007).
18. See Ulrich Zwingli, "Of the Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God," in *Zwingli and Bullinger*, ed. G. W. Bromiley, The Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1953), 72–73.
19. See Erasmus, "On the Freedom of the Will," in *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1969), 38–40.

> seen in his own light . . . . John says (1 John 2): "Ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." Now first note that this anointing is the same as the enlightenment and gift of the Holy Ghost. You will see, then, that once God has taught us with this anointing, that is, his Spirit, we do not need any other teacher, for there is no more error, but only the pure truth in which we are to abide. . . . You hear that? We do not need human interpreters, but his anointing, which is the Spirit, teaches us of all things—all things, notice—and therefore it is truth and is no lie.[20]

Zwingli taught that if you have the Holy Spirit, you do not need *any* teachers or interpreters, because the anointing of the Spirit teaches you *all things*. Of course, if you do not have the Spirit through God's election, the Bible remains an obscure book.

If Zwingli's view that the Bible was written in an oracular genre is true, then the Bible should be interpreted figuratively, not literally. Zwingli accused Luther of being ignorant of the figures of speech taught by rhetoric.[21] But Luther was not ignorant of rhetoric; he disagreed with Zwingli about the genre and language of Scripture. Luther believed that the vast majority of the statements in the Bible were in nonfigurative language. He believed that those texts that were obscure were due to our ignorance of ancient grammar and vocabulary (AE 33: 25–28). The use of figurative language in the Bible had to be determined by the context of the text in question, or by an article of faith, not by the arbitrary decision of the interpreter (AE 37: 32).

The Reformed view of the Sacrament of the Altar was based on Zwingli's belief that Scripture was written in an oracular genre and his belief that, therefore, Christ's words of institution were figurative. But the clash over the sacraments between Lutherans and Reformed was caused by an even more important presupposition: Zwingli did not believe that God *really* works through secondary causes. According to Zwingli, although God works *through* the sacraments and the word, they are not *true causes in themselves*. They only work when and where God wants to benefit his elect.

Here is the fundamental disagreement between Lutherans and the Reformed. Here is the reason that, in many respects, the Lutheran mind thinks differently than the Reformed mind. The Lutheran mind believes in secondary causes; the Reformed mind does not! This results in a different view of providence for both minds. Quoting the Stoic Seneca as a "divine authority" on the subject, Zwingli asserted:

> Secondary causes are not properly called causes. This is of fundamental importance for the understanding of Providence. . . . We learn that even the things which we call fortuitous or accidental are not fortuitous or random happenings, but are all effected by the order and regulation of the Deity. . . . [Seneca] declares that the Deity manipulates, performs, sets in motion, keeps in operation all that takes place with the matter of the universe. . . . Supported thus by divine oracles [that is, Seneca's philosophy], we must admit that there is only one true cause of all things. Other things are not truly causes any more than the representative of a potentate is truly the potentate, or than the chisel or hammer of the artificer is the cause of a drinking cup, the beast of burden of husbandry. . . . It is established, therefore, that secondary causes are not properly called causes. . . . Whatever means and instruments, therefore, are called causes, are not properly so called, but by metonymy, that is, derivatively from that one first cause of all that is.[22]

Up until the Reformation era, the Western world had been divided on the subject of secondary causes. Those thinkers who affirmed secondary causes included the ancient Greeks Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias; the Muslims al-Farabi, Avicenna, and Averroes; and the Christians Aquinas, Scotus, Ockham, Luther, and Melanchthon. Those thinkers who denied the efficacy or reality of secondary causes included the ancient Greek Stoics, such as Seneca; the Muslim al-Ghazali, and most Islamic thinkers thereafter; the humanist Pietro Pomponazzi; and the Christians Zwingli and Calvin.

The consequence of the denial of secondary causes for Reformed theology is that the word of God, the sacraments, and the ministry of the church are not true causes of salvation, but merely empty instruments which require God's intentional activation by the Spirit. According to Zwingli, the reason why some people hear the word of God, but are not converted or saved, is that God withheld his Spirit. The word has no real power in itself. Zwingli asserted:

> We see among all nations the outward preaching of apostles, evangelists, and bishops preceded faith, which nevertheless we attribute to the Spirit alone. For alas! We see very many who hear indeed the outward preaching of the Gospel, but believe not, because there is a lack of the Spirit.[23]

In a similar manner, the sacraments cannot convey grace, because they too are mere instruments. Zwingli asserted in the same treatise:

> I believe, indeed, know that all the sacraments are so far from conferring grace that they do not even convey or dispense it. . . . For as grace comes from or is given by the Divine Spirit . . . , so this gift pertains to the Spirit alone. Moreover, a channel or vehicle is not necessary to the

20. Zwingli, "Word of God," 75, 78, 82, 88.
21. Ulrich Zwingli, "On the Providence of God," in *On Providence and Other Essays* (American Society of Church History, 1922; reprint, Durham, NC: Labryinth Press, 1983), 167.
22. Ibid., 138, 150, 154–155.
23. Zwingli, "An Account of the Faith of Zwingli," in *On Providence and Other Essays*, 56.

> Spirit, for He Himself is the virtue and energy whereby all things are borne, and has no need of being borne.[24]

This is all based on Zwingli's rejection of secondary causes.

Although there were a number of differences between Zwingli and Calvin, they were united on the necessity of illumination for the interpretation and understanding of Scripture and on the rejection of secondary causes.[25] It is therefore fair to say that the Reformed mind and Lutheran mind approach the subject of God and his work from quite different standpoints. This is also the case in their approach to science.

THE LUTHERAN MIND AND SCIENCE

It is a commonplace of the modern world that religion and science are diametrically opposed, the former being based on faith and the latter on reason. The term *modern* is even defined as the rejection of a religious worldview and its replacement by a scientific world-view. More thoughtful people have examined the historical evidence and concluded that the relation between religion and science is more complicated.[26] Sometimes religion and science support each other, other times they fight, and most of the time they go their separate but complementary ways.

The discussion about religion and science is complicated by the ways in which the term *science* is commonly used. Evangelical historian Mark Noll observes that *science* can refer to

> (1) a methodological commitment to observation, induction, rigorous principles of falsification, and a scorn for speculative hypotheses; (2) generalizations about the natural world (or the human person and human society) that are thought to have been established by experts; or (3) a principle of reasoning amounting to an autonomous source of social, moral, or even political authority.[27]

Lutherans should embrace science when it fits the first definition, which we might call "science *per se*," but have good reasons to be skeptical of the second and third uses of the term *science*. The teaching of the scientific method, that is, science *per se*, should be in the curriculum of every Lutheran school, whether elementary, secondary, or higher. This is needed both so that Lutheran students understand science, and so that they can be properly critical of scientific assertions that are not science *per se*.

The Lutheran mind has a natural affinity for science, because of its acceptance of and interest in secondary causes. This affinity is not present in the Reformed mind. This does not mean that Lutherans can take credit for all discoveries in science since the Reformation. The growth of science has been an international phenomenon, in which all civilized nations have contributed. Nevertheless the growth of science in the sixteenth century in the German-speaking parts of northern Europe can be directly attributed to the leadership of Philipp Melanchthon at the Lutheran University of Wittenberg.

Sachiko Kusukawa, Fellow at Trinity College, Cambridge, has written and edited important new works in English about Melanchthon's academic career and accomplishments. In *The Transformation of Natural Philosophy: The Case of Philip Melanchthon*,[28] she demonstrates the many ways in which Melanchthon supported the cause of science at Wittenberg and elsewhere. Among other things, Melanchthon wrote a full textbook on science in 1549 titled *Initia doctrinae physicae dictate in Academia Vvitebergensi*. In this work Melanchthon defined *science*, known then as *natural philosophy*, in the following way:

> It is what inquires into and reveals the connection, qualities, motions of all bodies and species in nature, and the causes of generations and of corruptions and other motions in the elements and in other bodies, which arise from the mixture of the elements, insofar as is allowed to this weakness of the human mind.[29]

Here secondary causes are stated as being one of the primary subjects of science. Melanchthon explained, in the same work, that certainty in science may be achieved by three rules: principles of logic, experiences, and conclusions drawn from syllogistic reasoning from logic and experience. Finally he saw great use for science, because

> the whole nature of things is like a theatre for the human mind, which God wished to be watched and for this reason He placed in the minds of men the desire of considering things and the pleasure which accompanies this knowledge. These reasons invite healthy minds to the consideration of nature, even if no use followed.[30]

Kusukawa has also demonstrated how Melanchthon's and Zwingli's view of Providence differed, and how that affected Melanchthon's developments in science and moral philosophy.[31] Melanchthon's revision of the Wittenberg curriculum in 1545[32] reflected his growing appreciation for science.[33] Melanchthon's influence was also exerted in his appointment of faculty in the sciences, such as when he invited Georg Joachim Rheticus in 1536

24. Ibid., 46.
25. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford L. Battles (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1960), 1:278–281 (II. ii.19–II.ii.21); 1:198–201 (I.xvi.2–I.xvi.3); 1:207–208 (I.xvi.8).
26. For an excellent introduction to this topic, see Gary B. Ferngren, ed., *Science and Religion: A Historical Introduction* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).
27. Mark Noll, "Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism," in *Science and Religion*, ed. Ferngren, 264.
28. Sachiko Kusukawa, *The Transformation of Natural Philosophy: The Case of Philip Melanchthon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
29. Ibid., 145; for the original, see Philipp Melanchthon, *Corpus Reformatorum: Philippi Melanthonis Opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. C. B. Bretschneider and H. E. Bindseil (Halle: C. A. Schwetschke, 1834–1860), 13:179 (hereafter cited as *CR*).
30. Kusukawa, *Transformation*, 149–150; see *CR* 13:186–189.
31. Kusukawa, *Transformation*, 160–167.
32. For the curricular revisions in 1533–1536, see Schwiebert, *Reformation*, 481–492.
33. Kusukawa, *Transformation*, 175–188.

for the chair of mathematics. Rheticus took a leave of absence in 1539 to visit Nicolaus Copernicus, and persuaded the astronomer to publish his *De revolutionibus*.[34] Rheticus himself became an advocate for the new astronomical theory. The Lutheran astronomers that followed Rheticus included Reinhold, Peucer, Brahe, and Kepler, who were all preoccupied with understanding the regularities of secondary causes.[35] These Lutherans saw no conflict at all between their religion and science.

The bugbear for Lutheran scientists in the late modern era has been the rise and dominance of evolutionary science. Up until the rise of Darwinism, the Lutheran mind had a happy and fruitful relationship with science. Even so, I can say that in thirty years of study on this topic, I have found no *necessary* contradictions between the Bible and science *per se* as defined by Noll above. This is not because I subscribe to theistic evolution, the day-age theory, or other such speculative nonsense. It is because all of the processes claimed by evolutionary science have not passed the test of rigorous falsification. I do not think that they can, because they are historical in nature. Evolution, after all, is a discipline in natural history, not natural science. In any event, this area of research should bear fruitful results by Lutheran scientists in the future, because the Lutheran mind accepts both the literal historicity of Genesis and the regularity of secondary causes.

THE LUTHERAN MIND AND THE LIBERAL ARTS

Lutheran universities have claimed that they teach the liberal arts. The term *liberal arts* comes originally from the schools in the Roman Empire whose purpose was to prepare young "freemen" (*liberales*) to be productive members of that society. The same idea still applies today. Liberal arts schools are not vocational or trade schools. Their focus is on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed by youth, so that they may be prepared for a lifetime of participation in and service to society. Lutheran universities should also include preparation for a *lifetime* of participation in and service to the church, both for future church professionals and laymen.

The idea of the "liberal arts" has changed through history, as explained by Bruce A. Kimball in *Orators and Philosophers*. Although most of the subjects were originally taught by the Greeks, the "Seven Liberal Arts" were codified by Martianus Capella in the fifth century. They included grammar, dialectic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and musical harmony. The first three were called the *trivium*, the latter four the *quadrivium*. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century argued that this curriculum was insufficient and added natural philosophy, moral philosophy, and metaphysics.[36] Under natural philosophy he included physics, chemistry, geology, and biology as taught by Aristotle.

In the fourteenth century, the humanists advocated a radical restructuring of learning. The humanist Petrarch was not interested in dialectics, the *quadrivium*, natural philosophy, or metaphysics. Instead he encouraged the scholars to study the *studia humanitatis*, that is, ancient languages, grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, and moral philosophy.[37] The University of Wittenberg under Melanchthon followed the humanist program set forth by Petrarch, but also, as we have seen, renewed the study of science and math on the basis of logic and experience.[38] This was the basic pattern for the Lutheran universities in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries.

In the eighteenth century, the new philosophies of Descartes, Leibniz, and Newton set up math and science as the new ideal of knowledge, setting aside the *studia humanitatis*. In the nineteenth century, following the prototype of the Humboldt University in Berlin, metaphysics was banned, and natural science, "scientific" history, and positivist social science were set up as the founts of academic knowledge and research. Universities today generally follow the pattern established at Berlin.[39]

Under the pressure to conform to or compete with modern universities, shall the Lutheran universities abandon their original humanistic liberal arts ideas? Shall the *studia humanitatis*, that is, ancient languages, grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, and moral philosophy be abandoned for the study of natural science, so-called scientific history, and positivist social science? Shall all of these serious disciplines be squeezed out by the multicultural studies curriculum, gender and sexuality studies, and elective courses that cater more to entertainment than to education? These questions should be answered, not by looking at what other universities are doing, but by considering the needs of the Lutheran mind.

I concede the need for some vocational preparation in the undergraduate years. After all, Lutherans believe in a doctrine of vocation that supports *all* vocations, no matter how humble. Lutheran universities should realize that, because of their size, they cannot offer training in all vocations. The Concordia University system offers the opportunity for its member schools to cooperate by distributing different vocational training to different schools. In my mind, this distribution should include the church professional training programs, such as preseminary, teacher, DCE, and deaconess programs.

Having recognized the place for vocational training, what are the liberal arts that all undergraduates should master in the Lutheran university in order to be prepared for a lifetime of participation and leadership in the church, in family life, in community life, in business, and in the vital issues of the day? Using the well-known triad of "knowledge, skills, and

34. See Dennis Danielson, *The First Copernican: Georg Joachim Rheticus and the Rise of the Copernican Revolution* (New York: Walker & Co., 2006).
35. Peter Barker, "Astronomy, Providence, and the Lutheran Contribution to Science," in *Reading God's World: The Scientific Vocation*, ed. Angus Menuge (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004), 180; see Barker's fine essay in its entirety, pp. 157–187.
36. Bruce A. Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers: A History of the Idea of Liberal Education* (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1995), 22, 66–67.
37. Ibid., 76.
38. See various lectures and essays by Melanchthon on the liberal arts in Sachiko Kusukawa, ed., *Philip Melanchthon: Orations on Philosophy and Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); also Ralph Keen, ed., *A Melanchthon Reader* (New York: Peter Lang, 1988).
39. Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers*, 118, 146.

attitudes," I propose the following curriculum. In the area of attitudes, the Lutheran mind is shaped by the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore studies in Lutheran theology, Lutheran Confessions, Lutheran ethics, and Lutheran worship should be required at every Lutheran university.

In the area of skills, the Lutheran mind is prepared for leadership in no better way than the traditional *trivium*: grammar, rhetoric, and logic. *Grammar* in the university means the ability to write well in various genres. *Rhetoric* in the university means the ability to speak well and persuade an audience. "Logic" in the university includes both training in logic and a variety of research skills.

In the area of knowledge, the Lutheran mind needs to understand the civilization in which it exists and works. Here there is no need to reinvent the wheel, since the University of Chicago and Columbia University have been requiring courses in "Contemporary Civilization" from their undergraduates for many years.[40] The practical advantage of imitation here is that all of the original "classical" texts for these courses are now available in paperback, or in even more cost-effective "readers." For those unfamiliar with the "Contemporary Civilization" curriculum, it is similar to the "Great Books of the Western World" published by Encyclopedia Britannica and available in most libraries.[41] I would add one course in "Christian Civilization," studying the history of the Christian churches and some of the greatest literature of its theologians. This is because the Lutheran mind is not isolationist, but eager to engage all Christians in the "Greatest Conversation" about our common salvation and destiny.

Some scholars have argued that all schools need to recover the study of Greek and Roman texts in the original languages, as a basis for instructing youth in the morality of a civil society.[42] I am not persuaded that Greek or Latin language study is *necessary* for elementary or high school students, since there are many excellent translations of the classical Greek and Roman texts. On the other hand, a year or two of Greek or Latin will give a lifetime of benefit reading the *Loeb Classical Library*, the Greek New Testament, the Septuagint, and the works of the orthodox Christian and Lutheran theologians.

The argument for classical texts in the original languages should be broken down into two parts. First, the need for foreign-language study. Second, the need to study the Greeks and Romans. I agree that all undergraduates should take a year in a foreign language. There is nothing that teaches one better how to speak and write one's own language than trying to master another. The foreign language opens up another culture to the student, which helps protect him from cultural elitism. Men considering the pastoral ministry should automatically take Greek, and Latin if possible. Second, I agree that if one is able to expand the works studied in a "Contemporary Civilization" course, that the Greek and Roman authors should be the first choice, not because of their antiquity, but because of their superior wisdom. Only the Bible is superior in this respect. In any event, every Lutheran university should have a Classics department. If you want to debate this point, remember that the Greeks and Romans taught us how to debate!

Under the pressure to conform to or compete with modern universities, shall the Lutheran universities abandon their original humanistic liberal arts ideas?

Finally, something needs to be said for the Fine Arts. One course should cover the basics in the form of an "appreciation" course, which prepares the Lutheran for a lifetime of enjoyment of all the arts. Other arts courses should be electives. The exception should be choir. Lutherans believe that they sing the faith in worship. In other words, they pray through singing. Lutheran youth will be poorly prepared for a lifetime of regular worship, if they do not know how to sing well. If every graduate of a Lutheran university would know how to sing hymns and the liturgy, Lutheran congregations might once again become houses of prayerful song.

CONCLUSION

Is it possible for the Lutheran universities to retain, or in some cases recover, their particular mission to the church and society? It is possible if people believe that there is a particular Lutheran mind, and that this mind is most effectively nurtured in a particularly Lutheran university. Such an enterprise is not for the timid, but sons and daughters of Luther should not be cowed by any challenge. After all, they stand on the truth of God's word, which cannot lie or deceive, and they have the gospel in its clearest and truest form. That is enough foundation and inspiration for any challenge! LOGIA

40. In the 1980s at Columbia University, the "Contemporary Civilization" courses included readings in Plato's *Republic*, Aristotle's *Politics*, The Bible, Augustine's *City of God*, Aquinas's political writings, Machiavelli's *Prince* and *Discourses*, Descartes's *Discourse on Method* and *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Hobbes's *Leviathan*, Locke's *Two Treatises on Government*, Rousseau's *Second Discourse* and *Social Contract*, Kant's *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Hume's *Moral and Political Philosophy*, Paine's *Rights of Man*, Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*, Hegel's *Reason in History*, Marx's and Engels's writings, Mill's *Three Essays*, Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* and *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Lenin's *State and Revolution*, and Woolf's *Three Guineas*. These courses were complemented by courses in Literary Humanities, such as found in Harold Bloom's book on the Western canon.
41. For the list of works found in the "Great Books" series, see Hutchins, *Great Conversation*.
42. See for example, Hanson and Heath, *Who Killed Homer?*

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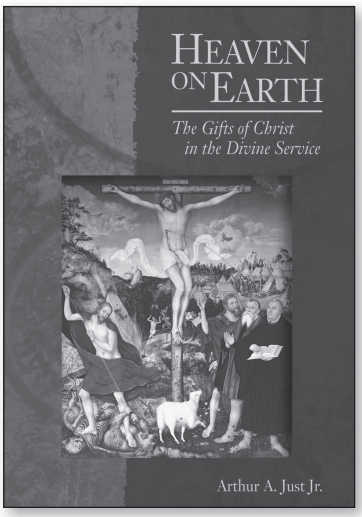

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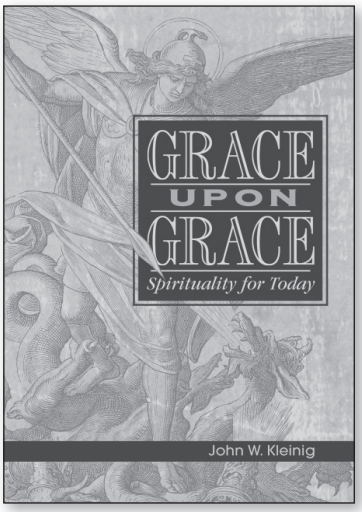

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Reviews

"It is not many books that make men learned . . . but it is a good book frequently read."
Martin Luther

Engaging the Doctrine of God: Contemporary Protestant Perspective. Edited by Bruce L. McCormack. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2008. 271 pages.

This volume presents eleven essays delivered at the eleventh Edinburgh Dogmatics Conference held in late summer of 2005 in Edinburgh, Scotland. While the title bills the book as offering Protestant perspectives, the reader needs to be aware that the authors are all either Reformed or Anglican (or sympathetic with those theological confessions). That said, there is enough ecumenical material here for an evangelical Lutheran to digest thoughtfully. The authors take seriously traditional views of God that honor God's aseity, impassibility, and essence as *actus purus*. Several authors affirm or reject contemporary, nontraditional views of God offered by Kantian and Hegelian-inspired thinkers such as Moltmann and Jüngel, in which the being of God is made contingent upon the creation, as well as the Open Theism perspective of some evangelicals: the view that God does not foreknow the future. The following six essays merit particular attention.

N. T. Wright presents the biblical origins for the Christian doctrine of God. Wright claims that the chief reason to defend the historical accuracy of the New Testament accounts of Jesus is not to affirm that the Bible is true after all, but to confess that "God really has become King on earth as in heaven" (25). It is through Jesus' path of discipleship that Christians are exhorted to "live within this [Jesus'] story," and thereby they will discover who the true God really is, what God is like, and what they must be like in consequence (27). Wright's thrust, similar to that of the Anabaptists, is claiming that Jesus offers a pacifist alternative to Roman military might and current political communities of violence, rather than a straightforward affirmation of Jesus' substitutionary atonement. Nevertheless, Wright does affirm that the point of Jesus' work is that in him, "God puts things to right" (36). Elsewhere, it is clear that Wright fails to understand that Jesus' mission was not just to incorporate Gentiles into the Jewish covenant, but to establish a new creation liberated from sin and death.

D. A. Carson (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) tackles the topic of the wrath of God in order to shed light on how God is love. Carson points out that the Scriptures affirm that God is love, but they never talk about God's "falling in love" (48). God is not controlled by his passions even though he is imminently engaged in all life, including his work to effectuate wrath on human sin. Carson also notes how the atonement must be tied to blood if it is to honor the structure of reality *post lapsum*. We feed on Jesus for our life. This means that either he has to die or we do (59).

Paul Helm (Regent College) examines Calvin's view of the hiddenness of God, in comparison with Barth's critique of Calvin. Attention is not given to Luther on this important topic. Helm argues that God's hiddenness is due, in part, to God's invisibility and incomprehensibility. Barth believes that he is offering a significant alternative to Calvin's view of God, who could, in principle, not have chosen to offer grace to the world. For Barth, there is no place for the Logos not to have become incarnate in Christ (76). Nevertheless, Helm indicates that even for Barth God wills his essence in the very act of his electing the man Jesus as the one in whom sin is condemned and new life for all is offered (79). Hence, choice at the heart of God's deity prevails for both thinkers.

John Webster (Aberdeen) offers a thoroughly Trinitarian account of God's aseity. God is from himself from all eternity (113), but this must be understood not as from an essence independent of the triune processions, but as the plentitude of the fullness of divine life as expressed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (115). He notes that the view of a divine *causa sui* (self-cause) is problematic when dealing with an orthodox view of God.

Henri Blocher (Wheaton College) helpfully recognizes that to speak of God's revelation *sub specie contraria*, as did Luther, does not mean the integration of the negative into God (as Hegelians would have it), as if the negative were somehow ontologically on a par with God, but instead to see how God acts against sin in the world (131). This truth, for Blocher, is important if we do not wish to give an ontological priority to evil in the face of the dependence of all created reality on God alone. In this regard, Blocher also offers fine critiques of Moltmann and Jüngel (140). Likewise, Blocher affirms that God cannot die in his own divine nature; only in the incarnate life of the Logos can we say that God has experienced death (136).

Bruce McCormack (Princeton), in comparing the theology of Barth with contemporary Open Theism, seeks to find room in Christian orthodoxy for both the monergism of Barth and the synergism of Open Theism. His warrant for this approach is that the early Western church after Augustine chose not to pit the view that we are saved due to God's gracious election against the view that we are elect in view of faith, as the Council of Orange might be read (207).

Overall, one will find meaty essays here on an important topic: the doctrine of God. The inroads of philosophical secularism in the academy have injured orthodox presentations of God by many Christians. This book can help thoughtful Christians, not because the essays are all equally consistent in upholding orthodoxy, but because they present the parameters of the discussion in engaging ways.

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Problems with the Atonement: The Origins of, and Controversy about, the Atonement Doctrine. By Stephen Finlan. A Michael Glazier Book. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2005. 144 pages. Paper.

Options on the Atonement in Christian Thought. By Stephen Finlan. A Michael Glazier Book. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2007. 147 pages. Paper.

When *Problems with the Atonement* was published (2005), Finlan was a research assistant with the *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* at Drew University. In the second book, *Options on the Atonement*, two years later, he is listed as a teacher of biblical studies at Fordham and Seton Hall Universities. His Roman Catholic credentials are strong, but his doctrine of the atonement is far from traditional. After reading *Problems*, one finds no surprises in *Options*. In fact one finds no surprises after reading the first few pages. Briefly, but accurately stated, Finlan finds no biblical support for Christ's atonement as vicarious satisfaction. "God does not need sacrifice or payment, any more than any loving parent does" (*Problems*, 124). In its place he puts *theosis*, salvation by God's indwelling in believers (*Problems*, 122–124), a thought that gives way to seeing Christian life as spiritual growth (*Options*, 128–132). Old Testament sacrifices, which have provided the framework for the atonement, have their value in that an animal's blood had a cleansing effect (*Problems*, 11–38).

Paul presents more of a challenge. His references to the saving benefits of Christ's death are no more than metaphors (*Problems*, 55–57). In place of the atonement as sacrifice, Finlan puts faith that attaches us to God (*Problems*, 60–61; *Options*, 132). This is a Protestant *sola fide* in the extreme. One wishes that Finlan was a bit more Catholic. Paul's metaphors are turned into doctrinal formulae in the Deutero-Pauline canon, which sets off a chain reaction concluding in Anselm, whose view on the atonement is called "the master-text of divine violence" (*Problems*, 71; cf. *Options*, ch. 2, "Paul's Cultic Metaphors," 18–42).

Taken into Reformation thought, the vicarious satisfaction is "appealing to the emotions of guilt and gratitude, [and] encourages an experience of repentance" (*Problems*, 82). If this were not enough, we learn that "the atonement doctrine is a font of anti-Semitism" (*Problems*, 84). Amazing, since in the third prediction, Jesus says that the Gentiles will put him to death. Restoration and participation in the deity and not ransom, propitiation, and redemption provide the real meaning of Christ's death. Irenaeus and Plato are credited with this *theosis* thinking. And why not? "It seems overly fastidious to try to banish all Platonic thought from theology" (*Problems*, 122). (Paul tried to banish Platonic thought from the resurrection and succeeded, so, in Finlan's terms, he was "overly fastidious.")

It seems as if for Finlan the atonement cannot be found in the Gospels. Well, not quite. "Even despite the partial interest of two of the evangelists (Mark and John) in promoting doctrines of the atonement, we find hardly a hint of the atonement in their chronicling of Jesus' statements foretelling his death" (*Problems*, 109). So the hints are there. And how about Matthew 20:28 and 26:28? Without atonement what then does Jesus' death mean? Not much. "The killing of Jesus was very much like the killing of other honest men and women throughout time." Hence God is removed from the equation. "Let's stop blaming God for the atrocities we humans commit" (*Options*, 41). Not surprisingly Luther falls beneath Finlan's ax (*Options*, 61, 72). Without Christ's death as sacrifice, the Eucharist devolves into a community covenant, a view advanced primarily by reference to the *Didache* (*Options*, 39-40). Nothing wrong with this, as long as this document (ca. 100) plays second fiddle to the Gospels.

Finlan is faithful to his bias and includes and excludes biblical references to serve his purposes. Two Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod clergy, Douglas Judisch and Burnell Eckardt, are included in the bibliography. Both books are copyrighted by the Order of St. Benedict in Collegeville, Minnesota. Since the inquisition is no longer active, this might be a matter for the Society of Propagation of the Faith or whoever handles such matters for the Holy See.

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Liberty: Rethinking an Imperiled Ideal. By Glenn Tinder. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2007. 407 pages.

All too often, academics feel accountable only to their guild and not to the wider American public, which is, usually, paying their salary. This is not the case with Glenn Tinder, who is a good example of a "public intellectual," one who seeks to challenge well-intended, thoughtful people to greater participation in civic life. This book is an extended discussion of liberty, as it has developed from the Enlightenment theory of liberalism. Here, liberalism does not mean the opposite of social conservatism. Rather it affirms that individuals are free to govern their own lives on the basis of ideals that they have freely embraced. This, of course, is the core ideology of North America and Europe, and has been widely spread throughout the world.

As a Protestant, Tinder both affirms the value of the individual, which this tradition highlights, and critiques those un-

desirable features that have arisen with this political outlook. To secure the freedom of the individual, he argues, does not guarantee individuals who will do good. For Tinder, freedom of choice is a requirement for authentic community. People are not free to do the right thing unless they are free to do the wrong. By the same token, Tinder believes that governments and social workers, overall, should not be nannies, and should interfere as little as possible. Not only does the latter tactic interfere with individual freedom, but it also inhibits people from learning from their mistakes. Tinder notes that

> pride, liberated, causes individuals to pay little heed to values such as justice, truth, and beauty. Hence the stark inequalities and the desolate scenes associated with the rise of industrialism. . . . Liberating the individual, it [liberalism] liberates all that is worst—as well as all that is best . . . —in the human race (43).

Where Tinder comes across as a social conservative is that his humanism is significantly tamed. Throughout the book he appeals to Kant's conviction that the human is plagued by "radical evil," that is, that we are predisposed to do evil even when we know that we should do good (xi, 34). Liberalism must recognize that its approach opens a world with little coercive power to stop drug abuse, the breakdown of marriages and families, degrading popular culture, greed, and social inequalities (2). Humans are subject to pride (self-deification) and distraction (34–35). As finite beings, humans are inherently insecure and act out such insecurity in ways that harm themselves and others.

The Christian sanction for working within, if not actually endorsing, the liberal paradigm is found in the theological conviction that the individual has dignity and inherent worth due to God's creation, redemption, and promise of eternal life to that individual (110–111). Throughout the book, Tinder appeals to a Protestant view of the doctrine of justification:

> To feel justified is to feel that your life and being are warranted, or valid. . . . The connection with liberty is plain: to feel unjustified is to be unready for liberty. The sense of justification, on the other hand, carries the sense of being rightfully free (89).

This is not a textbook in theology, and those seeking theological finesse here from the perspective of orthodox Lutheranism will be disappointed. This is a book in political philosophy, albeit one accessible to pastors and educated laity. Given the trend to make the church into a countercultural movement, so prevalent today, from both perspectives of the left and the right, a trend that moralizes the gospel, Tinder can help thoughtful Lutherans affirm the best in our current political arrangements. By doing so, he helps us to look back to that hero at Worms who held his conscience accountable to Scripture, a crack in the dike who unleashed a world that increasingly becomes democratic and, in that sense, liberal.

Mark Mattes

Imaging the Journey . . . of Contemplation, Meditation, Reflection, and Adventure. By Mark C. Mattes and Ronald R. Darge. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Lutheran University Press, 2006. 119 pages.

Luther once commented: "Let him who wants to contemplate in the right way reflect on his Baptism; let him read his Bible, hear sermons, honor father and mother, and come to the aid of a brother in distress. But let him not shut himself up in a nook . . . and there entertain himself with his devotions and thus suppose that he is sitting in God's bosom and has fellowship with God without Christ, without the Word, without the sacraments" (AE 3: 275).

Lutheran spirituality does not draw one out of creation but more deeply into creation, for God masks himself in the flesh of Mary's Son to be our Brother and Savior. By the creaturely means of words uttered by human lips, the water of baptism, and the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper, God comes to us bodily. And he receives our service behind the masks of countless neighbors who look to us for good. Indeed we are daily bread one to another to borrow Luther's words. Contemplation does not transport us to some far away heavenly realm nor does it lead us to the depths of the interior life. For Lutherans, spirituality, while embracing all three articles of the Creed, is grounded in the earthly.

Here of late, when Lutherans take an interest in spirituality they have often been tempted to look to sources outside of their own heritage. Some have turned to the spiritual disciplines shaped by monasticism, while others have embraced sundry liberationist mysticisms tainted with New Age ideology or the more pragmatic approaches of recent American Evangelicalism. While both Christian and secular bookstores are overflowing with devotional books and guides to the meditative life, a pitifully small number fit with the vibrant themes that are dear to the Lutheran heart: justification by faith alone, the theology of the cross, law and gospel, God hidden and revealed, preaching and the sacraments, and vocation. Lutheran theologian Mark C. Mattes has joined with his Grand View College colleague Ronald R. Darge to provide a volume that can be described as nothing less than exquisite in both appearance and content.

Darge has provided photographic images, many from the campus of Grand View College in Des Moines, that invite the reader to reflect and ponder on Mattes's well-crafted prose. Short, thematic prayers by Ronald Taylor conclude meditations. The meditations are arranged around seven crucial themes: a spirituality of communication, the newness of the new life, fragmentation and wholeness, ministry as service, renewal in the midst of conflict, vocation, and Alpha and Omega. As Grand View College has its origin in Danish-American Lutheranism it is fitting that the volume bears the imprint of the hymnody of Nickolai F. S. Grundtvig (1783–1872) and his appreciation of creation and the Christian who is freed by Christ to be at home in the world without making the world an idol. *Imaging the Journey* brings to mind the wonderful observation of Werner Elert that "delight in creation is a prerogative

of faith," for knowing the truth of that creation is the Father's gift, to be received with thanksgiving, and enlivens us to enjoy creaturely gifts with a good conscience.

With his earlier book, *The Role of Justification in Contemporary Theology* (Eerdmans, 2004), Mattes has demonstrated himself to be a Lutheran theologian of the first order. Now he allows that theology to shape these devotional reflections. The attentive reader will hear echoes of Martin Luther in these pages as well as two of the most prominent and promising expositors of contemporary Lutheran theology: Gerhard Forde and Oswald Bayer. Forde's commitment to the theology of the cross and Bayer's insistence on the authorial character of God and his self-giving in the bodily word inform and nuance Mattes's work. But this is not a book of academic theology; it is a book of meditation and prayer shaped by bedrock Lutheran themes and centered in Christ Jesus, crucified and raised from the dead.

Mattes's writing is well-crafted and memorable. For example, on worship he writes:

> In worship, we are restored to creation. In worship God is serving us. Worship must never convey the economic system of the shopping mall. The mall promises only a materialistic utopia. Its sensuality is an empty, false imitation of the abundant blessings of God. The mall glorifies human control over creation. It worships our excesses. In contrast, worship shaped by Jesus' cross acknowledges all things as gracious gifts of a merciful God (18).

Lutheran spirituality is churchly rather than individualistic. Mattes captures this as he writes:

> In the life of the church, we are many. In baptism, however we share a common story and identity in Christ. God's pool and people are never stagnant. They are alive, active, fresh, and free-flowing (60).

Spirituality is not merely about God's presence but his presence for us tied to a word of promise:

> God is everywhere present and giving, but God is not everywhere present and giving *for* us. Many think that they can worship God apart from church, on a golf course, for instance. The golf course, however, does not speak a word of forgiveness or mercy. Furthermore, the golf course is a place where lighting strikes. How can that assure us that God is for us? (58).

Writing on vocation, Mattes observes:

> We are far more interdependent on each other than we recognize. The fact that we have never met the farmers who have raised our daily bread does not mean that we have no connection to them. Quite the opposite is true. Even in such anonymity we are dependent on their good graces and sense of responsibility" (84).

Imaging the Journey contains dozens of similar citations that take us to the heart of the Lutheran way, inviting readers to ponder the good news that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself in the blood of the cross and the significance of this gospel for our vocation in the world.

In short, *Imaging the Journey* is a delight to the eye and to the heart. Both pastors and laity will find in this handsome book, at once both restful and invigorating, a fine tool to hone praying and living in Jesus' name. I intend to return to it often.

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Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible: The Social and Literary Context. By David Instone-Brewer. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2002. 355 pages.

A survey of Lutheran pastors regarding their views on divorce and remarriage would probably yield a less than unified field of results. This can be said not only in the American context: the questions, rather, are widespread. Disputed topics include especially the possibility and validity of divorce, the criteria under which either might be asserted, and, given a divorce, the question of a right to remarriage, and the same question of criteria.

While some might call certain of these opinions a departure from the historic teaching of the church catholic, it will remain incumbent upon them to answer the question of when that departure occurred, if indeed it did. Both Luther and Walther espouse views that allow for remarriage even when the previous spouse is still living, which would suggest that already Luther had departed from tradition. Melanchthon's remark in the Treatise (Kolb-Wengert, 342–343) has also, without a doubt, provided some consternation to those Lutherans who would seek to remain in line with tradition by maintaining a more conservative point of view.

Instone-Brewer, a Baptist clergyman and currently a research fellow at Tyndale House in Cambridge, England, sheds a significant amount of light on the issue. The very existence of his book *Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible* (or his practical follow-up volume one year later, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Church*), reminds us that we are not the only area of Christianity engaging this discussion. His book offers its academic readership a carefully executed historical and exegetical analysis of the subject, beginning with the practices in the Ancient Near East and continuing on to the present day. His discussion of divorce and remarriage is coherent and easy to follow. He presents an obviously qualified treatment of texts ranging from ancient Babylonian marriage contracts through the relevant pericopes of the Old and New Testaments and into the writings of the teachers of the church and the forms of more recent marriage covenants in the English-speaking world. Though his conclusions will certainly not be agreeable to all, he contributes

greatly to the discussion by bringing all this material and his analysis together in one place.

Those conclusions he presents already, in brief, in his introduction (ix):

- Both Jesus and Paul condemned divorce without valid grounds and discouraged divorce even for valid grounds.
- Both Jesus and Paul affirmed the Old Testament grounds for divorce.
- The Old Testament allowed divorce for adultery and for neglect or abuse.
- Both Jesus and Paul condemned remarriage after an invalid divorce, but not after a valid divorce.

Instone-Brewer's discussion is arranged chronologically. His argument for the permission of divorce and remarriage, though developed over several chapters, can nevertheless be briefly summarized as follows. Jesus, in Mark 10 and Matthew 19, was speaking to a discussion that was already being waged between rabbinic scholars of the Hillelite and Shammaite schools. Although Jewish readers contemporary to the writing of the Gospels would have assumed these debates and understood the context of Jesus' comments, anyone reading the gospels after 70 A.D. would have been left in the dark. A reconstruction of the debate that fills in the holes for today's readers is offered on pages 175–177. The missing background centers around the phrases "any matter" and "matter of indecency." Properly understanding the rabbinical use of these phrases allows the reader to recognize that Jesus' denial that a divorce be permitted "for any matter" is not a denial also of the right to a divorce on the basis of adultery, but a denial of the right to a divorce for an arbitrary reason, as opposed to the stipulation that it be caused by persistent adultery. A corollary to this is that someone divorced on valid grounds is free to remarry.

After establishing his argument and reaching his conclusions as outlined above, Instone-Brewer offers a helpful discussion of Paul and of the church's reception of the scriptural teachings. It is his contention, as we have seen, that the lack of clarity in the Gospel texts led to the church's harsher than appropriate teaching on divorce and remarriage. He concludes with some consideration of how the ship might be turned, now that the proper understanding has been made available.

Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible is a book that ought not be overlooked. Instone-Brewer's arguments are well-founded and deserve the critical analysis of his peers. His subtitle, "The Social and Literary Context," reminds us that the lack of systematic-theological treatment of his subject is not a weakness. His book is not conclusive, but is not intended to be. The effect of understanding marriage as an order of creation on the idea of *remarriage* when the spouse is still living, for example, is not addressed. Where this might indeed be perceived as a weakness, Instone-Brewer offers at least one unanticipated gem. Chapter 3, "The Later Prophets," where he discusses the various depictions of God's faithfulness to his people, even as they are his unfaithful bride, is a fine review of the use of marriage as an analogy in the Old Testament.

Instone-Brewer does not close the book on the marriage discussions, at least not for this reviewer. But he does set the discussion squarely into its historical context, and the significance of this deserves further consideration. For this, we may thank him for his contribution.

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Lag och evangelium som tal om Gud—en analys av synen på lag och evangelium hos några nutida lutherske teologer: Pannenberg, Wingren og Scaer (Law and Gospel as Talk about God—an analysis of the view of Law and Gospel in some contemporary Lutheran theologians: Pannenberg, Wingren, and Scaer). By Tomas Nygren. Malmø: Artos & Norma Bokförlag, 2007. 277 pages.

This thesis, written by a Swedish theologian, was presented as a doctoral dissertation at the Lutheran School of Theology, Oslo, in 2007. Its starting point is the observation that the distinction between law and gospel is essential both in Lutheran theology and within other traditions. Still, Lutheran theologians apply the distinction in different ways. Nygren wants to contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between law and gospel by analyzing the views of three contemporary Lutheran theologians coming from geographically and doctrinally different traditions (the German Wolfhart Pannenberg, the Scandinavian [Swedish] Gustaf Wingren and the North American David P. Scaer). His main source for Scaer's view is his book *Law and Gospel*, just recently published as volume eight in *Confessional Lutheran Dogmatics*.

Nygren starts by presenting Wingren, who has a dichotomous view, considering law and gospel as opposites. The law is considered as God's reaction toward sin and is not an expression of his original will. The law thus both forces the sinner to do good in spite of himself or herself and accuses the sinner before God. One meets the law through life in general; the existential dimension is thus more important than the cognitive dimension. As he considers law and gospel as opposites, there is no abiding (third) use of the law for the believer; he still speaks of an ethically relevant information given by the gospel, though.

Nygren then proceeds by presenting Scaer, who considers the relationship between law and gospel as dialectical. This is related to the fact that Scaer considers the law as representative of God's original intention, the antagonism between law and gospel thus being subsequent to the fall and not inherent in the law itself. As the original expression of God's will, the law retains its meaning for the believer, with Scaer thus defending the third use of the law. He also emphasizes the cognitive aspect of the law to a considerably greater extent than Wingren.

Pannenberg represents a salvation-historical perspective that considers law and gospel as characteristic of subsequent periods of salvation history. For New Testament Christians, the gospel then replaces the law. He thus criticizes the traditional Lutheran view both of the second and third use of the law,

though he retains some equivalent of the first use even in the gospel part of the history.

Nygren then tries to establish the correlation between these different views of the law-gospel relationship and other parts of Christian doctrine. Are they, for example, correlated to three equally distinctive views of justification? He finds that they are not, and after having discussed some other candidates (anthropology and the doctrine of atonement) he finds that they correspond most closely to the doctrine of God's attributes. Following a suggestion from Gustaf Aulén, Nygren primarily discusses God's dimension of power (for example, omnipotence and omniscience), relationship (love and goodness), and reaction (for example, righteousness and holiness, resulting in wrath against sin). In Nygren's analysis, Pannenberg merges the dimension of power and reaction into the dimension of relationship. He thus has a one-dimensional view of God that corresponds to his view of the civic use of the law as the only one. Wingren has a two-dimensional view, focusing on power and relationship, corresponding to his view of the two uses of the law. Scaer, finally, gives equal importance to the three dimensions of God, and has a corresponding view of the three uses of the law. The logic behind this correspondence Nygren finds in the fact that Wingren's view of the law as God's opposition against sin is basically related to the power dimension (God forces the sinner to work for the good). On the contrary, Scaer's greater emphasis also on the dimension of reaction allows for a view of the law as essentially good (God reacts against the sinner because he or she does what is wrong) that enables one to see it even as the guiding principle of the believer.

The objective view of the atonement is similarly dependent on a positive view of the dimension of reaction in the view of God. There is thus according to Nygren even a correspondence between the objective view of atonement and the third use of the law. Having presented the three views and related them to the overall framework of Christian doctrine, Nygren wants to investigate which of them presents the greatest theological potential according to three criteria: biblical exegesis, internal coherence, and relevance in relation to contemporary theological and cultural issues. Pannenberg uses these three criteria when he criticizes the traditional Lutheran understanding of law and gospel, but Nygren concludes that whereas Pannenberg's system is consistent in itself, it does not succeed in demonstrating the inconsistency of Wingren's and Scaer's. Exegetically, Pannenberg refers, among others, to Sanders and the so-called new perspective on Paul as an argument for his own view, but according to Nygren, the research of Westerholm and others convincingly shows the one-sidedness of Sanders's approach. Concerning the contemporary relevance, Nygren refers to the extensive use of law-gospel dialectics in contemporary homiletics both within and outside the Lutheran tradition, and argues that Pannenberg thus is wrong when he maintains its cultural irrelevance.

Nygren then compares Wingren's and Scaer's perspectives, whereby the discussion of the third use of the law becomes central. He argues that this discussion is closely related to the view of the function of the law within the overall theological context. Wingren, arguing from the principle that the law always accuses, thus considers the law-gospel dichotomy as the basic organizing principle in theology in a way that rules out the possibility of an originally good function of the law. On the other hand Scaer demonstrates that when one argues from the authority of the Bible and Christology as the fundamentals of theology, it is possible to maintain a positive function of the law without becoming inconsistent.

In his discussion of which of these views represent the greatest theological potential, Nygren draws on the recent discussion in North America between representatives for Evangelical Catholics (Yeago, Hütter, and Meilaender; according to Nygren these are close to Scaer's view), Gospel Reductionism (Bouman and Schroeder, close to Wingren's view), and Radical Lutheranism (Forde and Mattes; somewhere in between). He concludes that whereas Evangelical Catholics may not be right when they find antinomianism and gnosticism among the Gospel Reductionists, they nevertheless are correct in pointing to a practical antinomianism as its natural consequence. On the other hand, Gospel Reductionists are not correct when they accuse Evangelical Catholics of legalism and unfaithfulness toward the Lutheran tradition. To avoid outright antinomianism, Gospel Reductionists have to consider even the gospel as ethically informative for Christians, thus possibly reintroducing the coalescence of law and gospel Lutheranism is supposed to get rid of.

According to Nygren, it is thus on the whole the view of Scaer and the Evangelical Catholics that represents the greatest theological potential. Concerning the exegetical criterion, the New Testament exhortations are here well integrated. The view is internally consistent, faithful to the Lutheran tradition (Nygren here refers to Luther's view of an originally positive function of the law in the commentary on Genesis) and relevant in a contemporary perspective as it allows for a broader and more natural discussion of sanctification and paves the way for the church's criticism of contemporary culture in a meaningful way. It is thus the broadest perspective on God's attributes, giving equal importance to all three dimensions, that leads to the view of the relationship between law and gospel that presents the greatest theological potential.

In my view, Nygren has succeeded in writing a thesis that is informative, balanced, and well argued. His insistence on seeing the law-gospel relationship in close connection with the overall view of Christian doctrine is helpful, and he is able to point out the stronger and weaker sides of the different views without being openly partial in a way that lets the reader trust him as a competent guide in the matters at hand. His carefully argued way of analysis necessarily leads to some repetitions, and here and there some of his readers will want a point argued more forcefully and insistently. His analysis, for example, of the relationship of the law-gospel debate to the discussion of God's attributes may not be broad enough to be entirely convincing; still, he succeeds in opening a perspective that seems rewarding and thus could be fruitful for further research. And he undoubtedly succeeds in demonstrating that the Europeans, by recently leaving the discussion of law and gospel more or less to the Americans, have lost out on something important,

and has thus in a very meaningful way contributed to bringing together contemporary Lutheran theology on both sides of the Atlantic. His careful analysis of the recent American discussion would obviously have found more readers if it was not written in Swedish. But the book contains quite detailed summaries both in English and German, and thus even has something to contribute to the international discussion as it is.

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Christian Charity in the Ancient Church. By Johann Gerhard Wilhelm Uhlhorn. Translated from German, with a Preface by Matthew C. Harrison. St. Louis, Missouri: LCMS World Relief and Human Care, 2007. $14.99.

"Behold, I am making all things new" (Rev 21:5). It might seem that the *eschaton* has been extended to book publishing as well. Despite the publication date of 2007, this is not a new book. Some may wonder what merits the reissuing of a book that appeared in English translation 125 years ago. As a review of this book from 1883 says, "It is an important contribution to the knowledge of the social and practical Christianity of the early Church. No other volume in the English language quite takes its place" (*The American Church Review* 42 [1883], 584). Over thirty years after its publication in English, the book remained as recommended reading for ministers (*The Biblical World* 45 [1915], 99–105). No doubt many generations of church historians have come across this work. Outside the realm of church historians and specialists, this work has largely been forgotten and inaccessible.

"For the world before Christ came was a world without love," writes Gerhard Uhlhorn. This striking statement appears on the first page and highlights that Christian charity was vastly different than other forms of human aid in the ancient world. Regarding how Christian charity was different, Uhlhorn writes:

> The fundamental distinction between the ancient *liberalitas* and the Christian *caritas* lies in this, that the latter always keeps in view the welfare of the poor and needy; to help them is its only object; whereas the Roman, who exercises the virtue of liberality, considers in reality himself alone (I do not mean always in a bad sense), and exercises his liberality as a bribe wherewith to win the favours of the multitude. Nor does he always exercise it in the spirit of common vanity, but in order that it may be the means of displaying and increasing the splendour of his name, of his position, and of his house, or, what he considered of just as much importance, the splendours of his native city, and of the municipal community. Christian charity is self-denying; heathen *liberalitas* is at bottom self-seeking, even although personal selfishness be limited by the interests of the commonwealth, for the sake of which Greek and Roman alike were at all times prepared to make a sacrifice. That a sense of one's duty to the poor, such as has been introduced by the Christian *caritas*, could not grow up out of the heathen *liberalitas*, is sufficiently clear. (8–9)

While there were acts of "pity" in the ancient world, the motivation was not love but a demonstration of the benevolence or freedom (*liberalitas*) of the individual or the state. The ancient concept of *liberalitas* did not seek out those in need; rather it sought to please the individual. Consequently, rich and poor alike received handouts from the Roman Emperor so that they would see his greatness. Despite the high praise of Aristotle's *Ethics* by the Renaissance and Reformation humanists, including Philipp Melanchthon, Uhlhorn writes, "We seek in vain for charity amongst the virtues enumerated by Aristotle in his *Ethics*" (33). What is found in Aristotle is the virtue of "generosity." Yet according to Aristotle one only gives because generosity is beautiful. Unlike the reasons those in the ancient world had to show pity or to give, the Christian has a different motivation, that of love. Christ brought the love for the neighbor into the world. Hence before Christ the world was without love.

According to Uhlhorn, the cross "is the beginning and the never-failing source of charity amid his followers" (56–57). The cross of Christ, that is, justification, is the source of the Christian's love for his neighbor. The Christian loves his neighbor and those in need because Christ loved us first. To those of us who are accustomed to nearly 2,000 years of Western civilization, we fail to see how radical the love of Christ for his people and his people's love for the neighbor was in the ancient world. Uhlhorn's work helps the modern (nineteenth-century) and contemporary (postmodern, twenty-first-century) reader see how unusual Christian charity was in the ancient world. It also serves to remind the church today of its role in showing mercy to those in need.

The book was originally published in 1881 as *Die christliche Liebesthätigkeit*. The book was divided into three parts: Christian Charity in the Ancient World, Christian Charity in the Middle Ages, and Christian Charity since the Reformation. With the consent of the author, the first part was published in English in 1883, of which this volume is a reprint. *Christian Charity in the Ancient Church* is divided into three books: The Old and the New, The Age of Conflict, and After the Victory.

Johann Gerhard Wilhelm Uhlhorn was born in 1826 in Paris and died in 1901 in Hannover. He was a lecturer at Göttingen at the age of twenty-three. He became the chief preacher in Hannover and found the favor of King George v. From 1878 until his death, he was the abbot of the monastery in Loccum. Uhlhorn was dedicated to Lutheranism, and greatly improved the seminary at which he taught in Loccum. *Christian Charity in the Ancient Church* cost $2.90 when it was published in 1883, which in 2006 purchasing power is equivalent to $58 (five cents to the dollar). At $14.99, the reissued version hard-cover volume with attractive dust jacket is truly a bargain and a great service to pastors and the church.

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The God Who is Triune: Revisioning the Christian Doctrine of God. By Allan Coppedge. Downer's Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2007.

For almost seventy years, since Karl Barth's appropriation of it as a narrative restructuring for the presentation of Christian dogmatics, the doctrine of the Trinity has received significant attention. Subsequent theologians have sought to draw out the implications of the economic Trinity (God at work for our salvation) as a way to speak of God's immanence with the world, a God affected by the world's plight. We see some of these trends in Coppedge's book, in which his view of the Trinity is informed by his confessional stance: Arminian, Wesleyan, Holiness. For Coppedge, the will is not bound *coram deo*, and this governs his soteriology, which likewise then affects his view of the economic Trinity.

Much is helpful in this book. The exegetical work of grounding the Trinity in Scripture is handled with care, as is the survey of the historical development of the doctrine in the ancient church. The book contains several helpful charts, such as "Key terms of Trinitarian Theology" (112); "The Triune God and Our Life in Him" (123); the relation between God's Holiness and Love (137 and 138); Roles of the Triune God (218), and Subroles of the Triune God (220); and Roles of the Economic Trinity (229–230).

A noteworthy feature of the book is Coppedge's critique of Open Theism. This view, in counterdistinction to "classical theism," holds that classical theism is wrong to maintain that if an omnipotent God foreknows future events that are evil, then God is responsible for them. But that conclusion falls short of the truth that God is love. Open Theists maintain that God does not know everything in the future. Hence, God cannot be held accountable for the evil and pain suffered in the world. With the Open Theists, Coppedge axiomatically affirms human freedom.

Scripture passages that imply God expects persons to respond in freedom confirm the capacity for freedom that all persons, whether divine or human, possess. To be a person means to have freedom of choice. In Scripture, the tri-personed God repeatedly addresses men and women, expecting them freely to respond to his directions and invitations. The key to understanding foreknowledge, then, is to begin with a Trinitarian rather than a classical understanding of God. With this beginning point, God may foreknow something that he does not forecause. He may know the free choices of persons without foreordaining those choices (198).

There is much good in this volume. However, Lutherans will maintain that if God is the sole cause of our eternal salvation, then the human will with respect to God is not free but bound. The problems of theodicy (why apparently innocent people suffer) can be endured only in light of grace, that God has saving mercy on any one, when, in truth, no one deserves it. And, the issue of why only some are saved, will, like that of theodic concerns, be answered only in eternal glory.

Mark C. Mattes

Logia Forum

Short Studies and Commentary

A Tribute: What We Have Learned from *Issues, Etc.*

On Tuesday of Holy Week (2008) the very popular, most faithful, and remarkably missional radio program "Issues, Etc." was yanked from the airwaves. In addition, its host, the Rev. Todd Wilken and producer, Mr. Jeff Schwarz were given their pink slips. When news about this spread on Holy Tuesday the following words of Jesus came to mind:

> *"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you"* (*Mt 5:10–12*).

In addition, that very day I prayed Dr. Luther's hymn "O Lord Look Down From Heaven, Behold," (TLH 260). *Check it out. It is so good you will want to pray it every day. What follows is a wonderful tribute to the program by Mr. Mark Dowell of Columbia, Illinois.*

We were taught not be ashamed of the gospel "for it is the power of God." We learned that good sermons teach the truths of God faithfully and clearly. Listening to Christ-centered, cross-focused sermons from Rev. Bill Cwirla, Rev. Will Weedon, and Dr. David Scaer were favored by all. When we applied the sermon diagnostic tool to the Christ-less sermons so prevalent today we were appalled. We now know what we believe, teach, and confess as Lutherans because of Dr. Lawrence White, Dr. Karl Barth, Rev. Peter Bender, and Dr. Ken Schurb who provided catechetical instruction grounded in God's Word. Instruction in the proper distinction between Law and Gospel was provided by Dr. Carl Fickenscher, Dr. Tom Baker, Dr. Cory Maas, and Dr. Richard Eyer. They brought to bear the teachings and C. F. W. Walther. There was a battle for the Bible during the 1970s. Thanks to Dr. Zimmerman and Dr. Barth we now know what was at stake. And as I speak we are seeing first hand history repeat.

Life issues such as stem cell research, abortion, and euthanasia were addressed by Wesley Smith, Scott Klusendorf, Greg Koukl and Dr. Jim Lamb. We were taught and equipped to "defend life from beginning to end."

We are more informed about Islam and other world religions thanks to scholars such as Dr. Alvin Schmidt and Dr. John Warwick Montgomery. We now know the two faces of Islam: one when in the minority and another when in the majority. We studied many hymns including "What Child is This" and "Stricken Smitten and Afflicted" with Dr. Art Just and Pastor Henry Gerike. Lutherans gave the church hymns because hymns teach us doctrine. Through hymns we praise God by telling everyone what he has done.

We unpacked the myths about Luther and worship with Rev. Will Weedon and Dr. Ken Schurb, and in so doing learned that worship is not about what we do for God, but about receiving his gifts and hearing God's Word.

The doctrine of vocation was thoroughly explored by Dr. Gene Edward Veith and Dr. Steven Hein. The purpose of vocation is to serve and love one another; we are all masks of God. "God does not need our good works. But our neighbor does." We were taught "Why Bad Things Happen" by Rev. Matt Harrison. We learned how suffering is the Lord's alien work as Martin Luther would say. Suffering drives us to Jesus for he is the way.

The Missouri Synod's seminaries were well represented by Dr. Jeff Gibbs, Dr. Larry Rast, Dr. Cameron MacKenzie, Dr. David Adams and many others. They spoke on such topics as Scripture and tradition, the bodily resurrection of Jesus, Fundamentalism, and civil religion.

Where would we be without a clear understanding of how doctrine and practice affect one another? Rev. Klemet Preus's book *The Fire and the Staff* and numerous discussions were

invaluable. True. doctrine is what you believe about Jesus: his life and death and their meaning to you.

Articles of faith such as repentance, prayer and the Person and work of the Holy Spirit were clearly expressed by Dr. Rod Rosenbladt, Dr. Andrew Steinman, and Dr. Richard Schuta. We believe faith in Jesus Christ is a gift from God, given by the power of the Holy Spirit; thus all the glory belongs to God alone—it is not something we merit. Justification is the doctrine on which the church stands or falls and sanctification not rightly understood can turn into law. Dr. Daniel Preus, Dr. Steve Hein and Dr. Carl Fickenscher clearly explained from Scripture how God works to save.

We were introduced to a new generation of defenders of the faith including Rev. Brain Wolfmueller, Rev. Steven Parks, and Chris Rosebrough who addressed important topics like baptism, God and suffering, and "Christ-less" Christianity. We studied books of the Bible with Dr. John Seleska and Tim Seleska including the Psalms. Each week we prepared for our Sunday school lesson with Deaconess Pam Nielson. What important insights and knowledge we were able to glean. History was another topic often discussed with Dr. Paul Maier and Dr. Martin Noland. The topics included the events surrounding the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Reformation, Roman Catholicism, and the early Christian historian Eusebuis.

The errors of Pietism and the Church Growth Movement were exposed by Aaron Wolf, Dr. Larry Rast, Rev. Rod Zwonitzer, Craig Parton, and Chris Rosebrough. We learned what the true marks of a church involve: the means of grace and salvation, the proclamation of the gospel and administration of the sacraments. We may never have known of such great theologians as Dr. Norman Nagel, Dr. Louis Brighton, and Dr. Ron Feuerhahn who were eager to share their insightful instruction on eternal life, the presence of God, the Lord's Supper, and papal authority and Roman Catholic doctrine.

Luther's explanation in the Heidelberg Disputation of the theology of the cross was clearly conveyed by Dr. Paul Grime, Dr. Steven Hein, and Dr. R. Scott Clark. "That person deserves to be called a theologian who comprehends what is visible of God through suffering and the cross."

Culturally relevant topics were discussed by Dr. Mike Horton and Dr. Laurence White. They involved American Evangelicalism, Christianity and pop culture, and the secularization of the church. We were taught that there is no such thing as Lutheran substance expressed via "Evangelical style." "It is not style or substance; its style forms substance." In the church, what we believe establishes what we do and who we are. And let us not forget the thought provoking and educational articles published in the *Issue Etc. Journal* including: "Locus and Focus," "Purpose Driven or Forgiveness Given," and "Mere Monotheism."

Such a wide range of topics were discussed on each and every show with guests including Ed Meese, John Shelby Spong, Dr. Alveda King, Bishop N.T. Wright, Dr. Albert Mohler, and Robert Schuller. This speaks to Jeff Schawrz's dedication and abilities as the *Issues, Etc.* producer to compile a guest list with the likes of these. I would be remiss in not recognizing the invaluable contribution of Pastor Todd Wilken. Not only were his questions insightful and probing, but the fact that he, too, was able to address all of the topics mentioned from a scriptural and cultural perspective was nothing short of astounding.

Thanks to *Issues, Etc.* I do not want to be "emergent," "purpose-driven," or to "become a better me." I want Jesus, only Jesus, nothing but Jesus who lived a perfect life and died for me. This list is by no means exhaustive, yet I hope it conveys the blessing received from *Issues, Etc.* There is much appreciation especially from the laity who received an education worthy of a degree. While this "voice in the wilderness" has been silenced for now, "God works all things together for good for those who are called according to his purpose" and I can't wait to see how.

[*Issues, Etc.* began broadcasting again June thirtieth after a "spring break." You can listen live at piratechristianradio.com/ or download programs at issuesetc.org/]

Things That Make You Go "Hmmmm"

"The Mandated Element of Wine" was presented to the Lutheran Church of Canada East District Pastors' Conference on 13 November 2007 by the Rev. Dr. Thomas M. Winger. It was received with nearly unanimous consent. The footnotes from the original paper have been moved into the text parenthetically.

The use of grape juice in the Lord's Supper at a congregation of our district has recently caused scandal, and threatens our fellowship in the place where it is most intimately expressed. The pastors' conference is surely the appropriate place to discuss, inform, strengthen one another in our common practice. For our historic common practice is the exclusive use of natural bread and natural wine, as the following anecdote from Luther's *Table Talk* illustrates:

> When somebody inquired whether, when a sick person wished to have the sacrament but could not tolerate wine on account of nausea, something else should be given in place of the wine, the doctor [Martin Luther] replied, "This question has often been put to me and I have always given this answer: One should not use anything else than wine. If a person cannot tolerate wine, omit it [the sacrament] altogether in order that no innovation may be made or introduced." (Winter of 1542–1543, AE 54:438)

This story explodes our modern myopia that presumes we are the first to have such pastoral concerns. But it begs the basic question of precisely why this is our common practice. What is the biblical and historical basis for our church's

insistence on the exclusive use of natural wine? The following is an exposition of the historical, scriptural, and confessional data and logic that support it.

The Lord instituted his Supper during the last celebration of the Passover with his disciples. Though higher critics have disputed this setting, it is the clear teaching of the Synoptic Gospels (Joachim Jeremias has decisively proven that the Synoptics are to be trusted on this point. See *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, pp. 15–88.) The Passover meal is the historical context in which to investigate the Sacrament's institution. Unfortunately for our investigation, the Old Testament knows nothing of a cup of wine in the Passover. Exodus 12 speaks only of unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and a lamb or goat. For an explanation of the cups, we need to turn to rabbinic sources.

The Mishna, compiled in the second century A.D. on the basis of long-standing oral tradition, teaches: "Even the poorest in Israel must not eat unless he sits down to table, and they must not give them less than four cups of wine to drink, even if it is from the [Paupers'] Dish" (Moed, Pesahim, 10:1). Throughout the discussion the content of the cups is consistently called "wine" (יַיִן; *yayin*). It is sometimes referred to as "mixed," that is, diluted with water. The third cup, known as the "cup of blessing," is thought to be the cup our Lord blessed. It is called the "cup of blessing" because of the action of the *pater familias* at that point: "After they have mixed for him the third cup he says the Benediction over his meal" (10:7).

Tosefta Moed, a later commentary on the Mishna, elaborates that the cups must contain "a volume of a quarter-*log*, whether this is straight or mixed, whether this is new or old. R. Judah says, 'But this is one condition that it has the taste and appearance of wine'" (10:1). Lacking a scientific framework, this is the closest they can come to saying that, though it may be old or new wine, good or bad, mixed or straight, it must be real wine, and this fact must be obvious to all participants. (A *log* is usually defined as about 300 ml. Thus a quarter *log* is about 75 ml.) Jeremias, 67–68, addresses the question of whether each participant at the Passover had his own cup, or whether one cup was shared around the table. Later rabbinic literature (the Talmud) could be interpreted as describing the former [individual cups], in which case each person drank seventy-five milliliters per cup. But Jeremias argues that earlier Jewish practice was to share one common cup, in which case 75 ml would barely suffice for a sip each. More likely the cup was filled up and shared. In any case, the New Testament account is unequivocal that at the institution of the Lord's Supper Jesus gave one common cup to be shared by all (Mt 26:27; Mk 14:23; Lk 22:17, 20; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:25–27).

The Tosefta goes on to explain the meaning of wine as an element of the Passover:

> For the wine is what causes the blessing of the day to be said. . . . A. It is a religious duty for a man to bring joy to his children and dependents on the festival. B. And how does he give them joy? C. With wine, since it says, . . . *wine to gladden the heart of man* (Ps. 104:15). (10:3–4)

The emphasis on joy demonstrates that the key feature of wine is its alcoholic content, its ability to inebriate, which is further emphasized by the requirement of taking no less than four cups of wine. What of the weak, who could not handle this? Rabbi Judah says, "[One gives to] women what is suitable for them, and to children what is suitable to them" (Tosefta Moed 10:4). He offers no further explanation of what this means, but since he has previously referred to the possibility of diluting the wine with water, this would seem to be what he has in mind.

Joachim Jeremias points out that "In everyday life water was drunk. The daily breakfast consisted of 'bread with salt, and a tankard of water', and even at the main meal bread and water were the chief ingredients" (Jeremias, 51). Jesus' words to the woman at the well (Jn 4) confirm that water was the basic staple of life. Wine thus served a different function. Aside from the Last Supper, only twice is it reported that Jesus drank wine: in Matthew 11:19 (in which Jesus' festive meals with tax collectors and sinners are reported), and in John 2 (in which Jesus provides copious amounts of high quality wine for the wedding at Cana). Jeremias assumes rightly that Jesus would have drunk wine at the festive meals to which he was invited, but otherwise would have drunk water in the customary fashion. But the Last Supper was different. Here, as we have seen, it was the duty of every participant to drink wine: four cups, according to the Mishna. There can be no doubt that Jesus and his disciples observed this rule in their final observance of the Passover. The content of the cup Jesus blessed and distributed was wine.

It may also be possible that the use of wine carried medicinal connotations, as it was normally applied together with oil to effect cleansing and healing (Lk 10:34). Certainly the gift of wine was prophesied (for example, Jer 31:12; Hos 2:22; Joel 2:19, 24; 3:18; Amos 9:13) as a feature of the Messianic age to which the Passover pointed, whose fulfillment began with Christ's gift at Cana and continues in the Lord's Supper.

What kind of wine Christ used cannot be determined with precision. Jeremias makes the assumption that it must have been red wine because he holds to a symbolic view of the Lord's Supper. If it represents blood, it must have been red wine, he concludes (Jeremias, 53). We Lutherans have no sympathy for this view. In fact, as Jeremias demonstrates from the Talmud, white, red, and "black" wine were readily available. Some later rabbinic sources lay down the rule that only red wine may be used at the Passover, but it is uncertain whether this held for the early first century. Thus, there can be no requirement that a particular color of wine be used for the Lord's Supper. (Indeed, prior to modern times, Lutheran practice was almost universally to use white wine: first, because that was what was normally available in Germany; second, because it functioned confessionally against a symbolic view of the sacrament.)

We have established that Jesus most certainly used wine in instituting the Lord's Supper. What should we make of the fact that he speaks of the cup containing "the fruit of the vine"? Some have asserted that Jesus thereby permits us to use

grape juice, but this conclusion is illegitimate. First, Jesus does not use the normal word for "fruit," καρπός, which might be used of something like grapes. (The common Greek words for the grape or a bunch of grapes are σταφυλή, and βότρυς.) Instead he uses the noun γένημα, from the verb γίνομαι, which might better be translated "product." Thus, we should translate "product of the vine," which more naturally refers to something like wine that is "produced." Second, Jesus did not invent this phrase, but quotes a standard, rabbinic technical term used in blessing the wine in the Passover cup. Thus, any Jew would recognize "product of the vine" as a liturgical phrase referring to wine. Third, it is a basic linguistic and logical error to conclude that, because Jesus referred to the contents of the cup as "product of the vine," he was permitting us to use any "product of the vine." By this logic we would be as justified in using pumpkin juice as grape juice, for it, too, is "product of the vine." By this logic, when our Lord on the cross said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son" (Jn 19:26), he was permitting each and every "woman" to take John as her son. No, he was referring to one particular woman, Mary. So also at the Last Supper Jesus did not say, "You may take anything that is 'product of the vine' and use it in the repetition of this meal." No, he took a cup of wine, referred to it by an established technical term as "product of the vine," and mandated that we do what he did.

The Formula of Concord is therefore on solid historical and theological ground when it concludes:

> For since Christ gave this command at table and during supper, there can be no doubt that he was speaking of true, natural bread and natural wine as well as of oral eating and drinking, (*von rechtem, natürlichen Brot und von natürlichen Wein* [FC SD 7:48]).

The second edition of the Apology [as printed in Kolb-Wengert, p. 226], rejects the false teaching of the Encratites, who "abstained from wine even during the Lord's Supper" [Ap XV:21]. One must ask even today whether objections to wine stem from a false spirituality that rejects the goodness of God's created gifts. Such words, which are binding on Lutheran pastors, exclude all substitutions. Neither grape juice, nor so-called de-alcoholized wine satisfy these criteria. For though the latter was surely wine once, with the alcohol removed it is wine no longer. (Use of de-alcoholized wine is akin to ordaining a transsexual [a "woman" who used to be a man,] and believing that Christ's mandate has been satisfied.) Some have argued that de-alcoholized wine is chemically identical to natural wine, albeit with a lower amount of alcohol, usually 0.5 percent. (See, for example, "Is 'Non-Alcoholic Wine' Really Wine?" *Concordia Journal* [Jan. 1991]: 4–6, which cautiously approves the use of this product, though it provides no scriptural, confessional, or historical data to support this opinion. This is, however, a contradiction in terms, for the essential meaning of the word "wine" [יַיִן in Hebrew; οἶνος in Greek] is fermentation and the presence of alcohol. [In Greek there is a different word for unfermented grape juice or "must" out of which wine is made: τρύξ (see BDAG/3e (2000), p. 701).] That fermentation is the key component of meaning is clear from the fact that fermented beverages made from fruits other than grapes can still be called wine, such as peach or dandelion wine, though they are not included in Christ's mandate to use what he used, and so may not be used in the Lord's Supper. Neither is grape juice or de-alcoholized grape wine included in his mandate, since they are not natural wine.) If we do what the Lord did, if we use what he used, the Formula of Concord concludes, we will have no doubt. The substitution of different elements introduces considerable doubt that we have the gifts the Lord intends to give us. And faith is the very opposite of doubt. Faith clings only to that which is sure and certain.

Ultimately, then, we are left with a theological and hermeneutical question that takes us beyond these questions of history. The Lord's Supper is called the "Lord's" because he instituted it and gave it to us for our good. He instructed us to carry it out in his church according to his mandate. His mandate is that we do it as he did it, that men who represent him in the Holy Office of the Ministry should take bread and wine, consecrating them with the words he gave us, and giving them to repentant and believing Christians to eat and drink for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Because it is the Lord's Supper, not man's supper, we may not change it to conform to our desires, weaknesses, or unfaith (1 Cor 11:20). For it is indeed unfaith to believe that our Lord would give us something that would harm us. We confess with Luther in the Large Catechism:

> We must never regard the sacrament as a harmful thing from which we should flee, but as a pure, wholesome, soothing medicine which aids and quickens us in both soul and body. For where the soul is healed, the body has benefited also. Why, then, do we act as if the sacrament were a poison which would kill us if we ate of it? (LC V: 68).

If such fears lead us to alter what Christ has given, we risk losing entirely his benefits:

> For we must believe and be sure of this, . . . that the Sacrament does not belong to us but to Christ, . . . Therefore we cannot make anything else out of it but must act according to His command and hold it. However, if we alter or "improve" on it, then it becomes a nothing and Christ is no longer present, nor is His order (Luther, *Concerning the Private Mass and the Ordination of Priests* [1533], WA 38:240.24; AE 38:200).

On the other hand, where faith clings to the word of Christ and the sacrament is kept as one undivided whole as he mandated it, it is filled with rich blessings:

> See, then, what a beautiful, great, marvelous thing this is, how everything meshes together in one sacramental reality. The words are the first thing, for without the words

the cup and the bread would be nothing. Further, without bread and cup, the body and blood of Christ would not be there. Without the body and blood of Christ, the new testament would not be there. Without the new testament, forgiveness of sins would not be there. Without forgiveness of sins, life and salvation would not be there. Thus the words first connect the bread and cup to the sacrament; bread and cup embrace the body and blood of Christ; body and blood of Christ embrace the new testament; the new testament embraces the forgiveness of sins; forgiveness of sins embraces eternal life and salvation. See, all this the words of the Supper offer and give us, and we embrace it by faith. Ought not the devil, then, hate such a Supper and rouse fanatics against it?" (Luther, *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* [1528], AE 37:338).

Disappearing through Anthropomorphism

With what sight and vision do we view our present reality? This question has gnawed at my personal theological and sociological underpinnings for many years. In 2 Timothy 4:1, Paul testifies to Timothy "ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ." Popular translations include "in the presence (and in view) of God and of Christ" and "in the sight of God and Christ Jesus." But from which direction should this viewing or sight take place? From an exegetical standpoint, the focus of the passage appears to center on God, specifically Christ Jesus, the judge, and his kingdom. But what happens when our translations or explanations center on Paul's view? When the emphasis is rather placed on Paul's sight, his vision, or his view, God and Christ Jesus no longer remain at the center. As such, the very nature and work of God disappears through an anthropocentric view of Scripture and revelation, ultimately affecting the doctrine and practice of our faith.

Though almost eighteen years after its first printing, *Disappearing Through the Skylight* (New York, Penguin Books, 1989) remains a popular text for many colleges and universities, especially in the liberal arts arena. While not a theological text, the suggestions for how one should view our present reality is staggering to us who cling to a Judeo-Christian worldview. Author O. B. Hardison, Jr. theorizes that "today, nature has slipped, perhaps finally, beyond our field of vision." Nature is reality. So in simple summary, reality can no longer be truly viewed or ascertained

> because the changes have been fundamental, the concepts — and even the vocabularies and images in which the concepts tend to be framed — no longer seem to objectify a real world. It is as though progress were making the real world invisible.

What do we learn from Hardison? Truth, nature, reality: it is all relative. It can longer be defined as absolute.

Now apply, if you will, these very suppositions to our doctrine and practice as orthodox Lutherans. It would be easy to diverge here into another paper addressing the humanistic tendencies during Luther's time, found even specifically in the suppositions of Erasmus. But our focus here revolves around our present reality, this current earthly realm. If similar questions have gnawed at you as well, I would encourage a reading of *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture* by Gene Edward Veith, Jr. (Wheaton, IL, Crossway Books, 1994). Contained therein is a much greater treatment of the postmodern thought upon Christianity. And I would challenge, or earnestly testify (as Paul did to young Timothy) that Christianity has been shaken to its very core by anthropocentrism at its very best. God's Word prophetically resonates loud and clear: "a form of godliness but having denied the power therein: and from these turn yourself away" (2 Tim 3:5).

What appears to be at work within the Christian church today, and especially within the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, is a tendency to view the work of the gospel and even the means of grace from a human perspective. Rather than standing in God's presence, as we confess actually occurs in the divine service, the tendency is to focus on our perception, our view, our understanding. Thus even the divine service has been cast aside in favor of worship elements that are vague or generalized, generally coined "seeker sensitive." And now we get to the heart of the issue at hand. Are we anthropocentric or theocentric in what believe and practice? And a further question that I will address is this: what has become of our christocentric view? This must not be neglected.

Anthropocentrism as defined by the *Free Dictionary*: an inclination to evaluate reality exclusively in terms of human values. Conversely, theocentrism is defined as the belief that God is the center of all truth in the universe. My first call out of seminary was to a young congregation that had been planted just a few years prior. There was much confusion about style, substance, and so on They had practiced, in some shape or form, various parts of the divine service. But they had also practiced, to the same degree, rituals that are foreign to Lutheran worship: laying on of hands for the sick, troubled, and even for the pastor before a sermon, anointing with oil, contemporary and charismatic music, etc. The congregation was located in an area where such practices were the norm, rather than the exception. And according to demographics, this was the group to target! And so their worship was designed around the needs or views of the local population. Even the Constitution and By-laws of this LCMS congregation were written so as to require contemporary worship and a relationship with Jesus as one's "personal" Lord and Savior. Shortly after my ordination and installation, one of the requirements by the district was that my wife and I attend "Mission Planter's Institute." It was felt that such training could better equip us to grow this congregation and to be missional in our attempts to "reach the lost." We were told

repeatedly that, "it is easier to give birth than to raise the dead." Thus the goal of planting and developing new churches would be the best way to be missional because churches that are not focused on the views and perceptions of the culture around them are dead. And here I was, a pastor of a church that told me they wanted to be Lutheran, yet practiced their faith anthropocentrically and not theocentrically. I was truly between the proverbial rock and a hard place. My wife and I had so many questions regarding worship style and substance, but the largest shock came in what we heard over and over again, namely that "our call (yes, you heard correctly) was to seek and save the lost." Truth be told, there appeared to be an identity crisis occurring. And this was taking place not only at my particular congregation, but within the larger LCMS realm as well—readily apparent within the mission planting arena. Did Christ not do this through his sacrificial life, death and resurrection? Was what we were taught regarding objective justification just a farce? These questions plagued our minds as we struggled to grasp the present reality of planting churches in this new LCMS way. We were also worried about our future, as many friends from seminary were no longer pastors or had become worker-priests. So many churches undergoing divisions from within, many, if not most, dealing with issues of worship style. Yes, it would be difficult, we were told, but "the souls of many people in your area are at stake." It seemed to us that the sight and vision for the future of God's church depended upon the model that my wife and I would develop for this mission plant. It seemed very clear that the way to view "church" was from an anthropocentric perspective.

Yet this is not the direction that God's Holy Word directs us. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight" (Pr 3:5–6). We labored for three and a half years, struggling to change the perspective of this small church plant. And do not be mistaken, God worked through his Word and sacraments, creating and sustaining faith. And implementing a liturgical order to worship was even accomplished in baby steps. However, the biggest challenge remained in removing the contemporary music, which for the most part, was very anthropocentric. A few hymns could be tolerated, but the diet that had been supplied for five years previous had lead to a severe misunderstanding and lack of appreciation for theocentric, much less christocentric hymnody. Alas, my space in this first article here for you is insufficient in flushing out the musical aspect of our church's "mission." Suffice it to say that the view for contemporary music is more often man-centered than God-centered.

I will close this article with a "mission moment" that my wife and I had while attending MPI in Irvine, CA. We were half way through an all-day session and a devotional break was being held. We began to sing "Come, Holy Spirit! Fall afresh on me." We sang this song over and over and over again. The harmony was pretty cool, but my wife and I kept thinking: "when is the Spirit going to come? Isn't he here yet?" It led me, a trained and ordained LCMS pastor to question whether the Spirit was really given in Baptism, like I confessed and had been taught to believe, or even in his Word. Perspective, perspective, perspective—it appears to this young pastor that true biblical theocentrism (and christrocentrism as well) is disappearing through anthropocentrism. Perhaps, within the LCMS, Hardison's quote could be changed theologically to read: "today, God and Christ has slipped, perhaps finally, beyond our field of vision." May we cry out together, "Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed" (Ps 57:1).

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Luther, Lutherans, and the Philosophers

As the gospel became clearer and clearer to Dr. Luther, his relationship to Aristotle changed. The philosophers taught that to be right was to do right. Practice makes perfect. The scholastics, influenced by such thinking, added God's grace as the performance enhancing drug, giving the free will a boost, to practice the habits of faith hope and love. Thus: do your best (*facere quod in se est*) and make sure that your faith gets formed by your loving God so that such grace perfects your nature. One could not be a theologian in the church without Aristotle and his presuppositions.

But as early as 1517 in his *Disputation Against Scholastic Theology* (AE 31:9–16), Dr. Luther scandalously rejects the Greek philosophers regarding justification *coram Deo*. Here is just a taste taken from points 40–41, 43–44, 50 (AE 31:12):

> We do not become righteous by doing righteous deeds, but having been made righteous, we do righteous deeds. This in opposition to the philosophers. Virtually the entire *Ethics* of Aristotle is the worst enemy of grace. This in opposition to the scholastics. It is an error to say that no man can become a theologian without Aristotle. This in opposition to common opinion. . . . Indeed, no one can become a theologian unless he becomes one without Aristotle. . . . Briefly, the whole Aristotle is to theology as darkness is to light. This in opposition to the scholastics.

Plato's God is the highest and most perfect being. In *The Republic* Plato speaks of God as supreme beauty and perfect happiness. God is "the least liable to change or alteration by an external cause." He cannot be "changed by time and other influences." In fact, God finds it "impossible that he should even want to change."

Aristotle piggybacks on Plato in Book 12 of his *Metaphysics*. Since God cannot change as the unmoved Mover, his activity consists of gazing at himself and thinking himself. He is thought thinking thought. Aristotle's God is like the *Saturday*

Night Live character Fernando Lamas played by Billy Crystal who looks in the mirror and says: "You rook maa-velous!" Aristotle protects God from anything outside himself like the history of the world, its misery, and a world full of miserable sinners. He does not love anything or anyone outside himself. That is not much of a God for you. In fact, it is no God at all. Dr. Luther remarks that such a God is "the most miserable being," (WTr 1:73, #155).

Aristotle's God who does not care about us sinners is like a maid that sleeps and snores (AE 33:171) on the couch in a drunken stupor and does not even notice that the baby has fallen out of the crib (WTr 1:73; also AE 34:143). And yet the most high God comes to his fallen creation in the flesh of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, in whom the fullness of the deity dwells in bodily form. God in the flesh Jesus who for us men and for our salvation takes in his body the sin of the world (Jn 1:29; 2 Cor 5:21), suffers its damnation as sinner (Mt 27:46; Gal. 3:13), and dies! In that body he rises from the dead and now sits at the Father's right hand whereby He lords the benefits
of his Good Friday and Easter Sunday over sinners in a physical word hooked with physical elements. And where there is forgiveness of sins in this incarnate, dead, buried, risen and ascended God Jesus and his creaturely gifts, there is also life and salvation that culminates in the resurrection of the body on the last day. To such a God faith simply says: "Amen. Thanks so much!"

BWK

More Verses to Two Hymns

The Rev. William Cwirla offers the following additional stanzas for "Amazing Grace" and "Beautiful Savior."

Amazing Grace

All thanks to Christ, whose death in love
Grace to the world revealed,
By water and the Word, His Body and Blood,
His grace to me is sealed.

Beautiful Savior (Auch auf Deutsch!)

You are so faithful, And present with us
Through Your Word and Sacrament;
Jesus, I pray You, Be gracious to us,
Now and until our final end.

Du bist wahrhaftig, bei uns gegenwärtig
durch dein Wort und Sakrament;
Jesu, dich bitt ich, sei du uns gnädig
jetzt und an unserm letzten End.

The Return from Egypt

A medieval woodcut depicting Bible narratives from 2 Samuel 2:1–4, Matthew 2:19–23, and Genesis 31:1–17 is the basis for the following poem. It is reprinted with the publisher's permission from Rich in Grace: The Bible of the Poor for Twenty-First-Century Christians; Meditations in Verse on the Triptychs of Biblia Pauperum, © 2007 American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, 2007.

The Lord told David to return
when wicked Saul had died;
God's angel summoned Joseph back
with Jesus by his side;
God even summoned Jacob back,
the one who stole and lied.

With worldly wealth was Jacob crowned,
with cattle, wives, and sons;
And David got his royal crown
when his reign was begun;
But Jesus wore a crown of thorns
before his work was done.
The crown he wore, the cross he bore,
the blood he freely shed
Have paved the way for our return
when, rising from the dead,
With joy we heed the trumpet's call
and meet our glorious Head.

Kathryn Ann Hill

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