

Volume 2
Issue 1
2004

This issue was
published by

*The Centre for
Reformation Studies*

PERICHORESIS



The Theological Journal

published by

Emanuel University of Oradea

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Designer: Iulian G. Necea

ISSN: 1224-984X

Printed at SC SCILPRINT SRL, Aleșd, Bihor, Romania

A SURVEY OF THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN THE ROMANIAN PRINCIPALITIES FROM THE 17TH UNTIL THE 19TH CENTURIES: BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

Paul Negruț

Introduction

The expansion of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkan Peninsula and Central Europe during the 15th and 16th centuries deepened the already existing isolation of the Romanian principalities from the Western world. The first step towards that isolation was done during the 10th century when the churches of Dacia, under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Bulgarian Church, replaced the Latin language with the Slavonic language, and then became part of the Eastern Byzantine Church.

The second step was the political integration of the Principalities into the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century. So, both spiritually and politically, the life of the Principalities was dominated by the Eastern (Byzantine and Ottoman) world. Subsequently, the influences from the West were very limited, most of the time, to few religious books that were translated into Romanian under the influence of the Hussites or the Protestants. A different situation was present in Transylvania, which in spite of being under Turkish suzerainty since 1526, was allowed to continue its links with Western countries. Therefore the major changes that took place in the West during that time were reflected in Transylvania as well.

From the end of the 17th century, the political map of Europe began to change again, due on the one hand, to the decreasing of the Ottoman military power, and on the other to the emergence of the strong military powers of Austria, Russia, France and England. The Romanian Principalities, in spite of the fact that were and remained under Turkish suzerainty until the end of the 17th century (as, for instance, Transylvania), and to the end of the 19th century

(Moldavia and Wallachia), were interested to establish political links with Western countries. The Principalities also turned towards the West culturally. The offsprings of Romanian nobles studied in Vienna, Rome, Paris and other Western universities.

Transylvania, however, established its links with Western Europe through the Catholic Church, while Moldavia and Wallachia established their links with the secular political and cultural movements in Europe.¹ Subsequently, the ideas of the Enlightenment influenced much more the cultural life of Moldavia and Wallachia than that of the Romanians in Transylvania. Especially, what was then called „L'Europe française“ was reflected in the culture of the Principalities through the writings of Hugo, Grades, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, etc.²

After the Treaty of Adrianopol (1829) between Russia and the Porte, Romanian Principalities received a greater internal autonomy than before, and thus were able to develop economic relationships with the West. The Oriental way of life was replaced gradually by a Western style. The nobility of the two Principalities (Moldavia and Wallachia) began to replace the Slavonic or the Greek languages with the Romanian language, although a large number of nobles used French in their circles. Since this was for the first time in the history of Romania that the Western culture replaced, to a large degree, the Byzantine culture, it is important to see how this process was reflected in the life of the Church.

Three major events which took place during this time are relevant to this study. The first one was the encounter between the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church in Transylvania, which led to the decision of a large part of the Orthodox Church from Transylvania to unite with Rome thus forming the Uniate Church. The second was the conflict between the State and the Church in the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, which determined the State to bring the Church under its own control, and to secularize the property of the monasteries. And the third was the encounter between Protestantism and Orthodoxy, especially in the area of soteriology, which resulted in the emergence of the Protestant Church in the Romanian Principalities.

¹ George Călinescu, *Istoria literaturii române de la origini până în prezent* (București: Editura Minerva, 1986), 62.

² Vlad Georgescu, *The Romanians: A History* (London: Tauris, 1991), 111.

1. Between Byzantium and Rome: The Uniate Church

The Historical Context

Encouraged by the success of the Hungarian revolt against the Habsburg (1677-1683), the Ottomans thought that the time was ripe in 1683 to attack Vienna.³ But with help from Pope Innocent IX, Venice and Poland, Austria won the battle, and that victory marked the downfall of the Ottoman power. Austria liberated Hungary in 1686 and Transylvania in 1690 from the Turkish occupation troops. After the Treaty of Karlovitz (1699), Transylvania became a part of the Habsburg Empire.⁴ This event had significant consequences in the life of the Romanian population from Transylvania.

On the one side, under the rule of Catholic Austria, the Jesuits who had been expelled from Transylvania by the Protestant princes returned to Cluj and Alba Iulia (two important cities in Transylvania) and began to work among the Romanians. Although Emperor Leopold confirmed the four received religions (Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist and Unitarian) in Transylvania, he nevertheless favoured the Catholic Church. This attitude of the Emperor could be seen from the content of a decree issued in 1698, in which Leopold promised that the privileges of the four „received religions“ would be granted to those who joined one of them. In particular those who acknowledged the Pope as the head of the Church would enjoy the privileges of the Catholic clergy.⁵

On the other side, the Hungarian nobility from Transylvania and Hungary continued to revolt against the absolute monarchy of Austria, and therefore Vienna had to take measure against them.⁶ In this context Austria was interested to weaken the Hungarian local power by encouraging the Romanian element.

The special privileges of the Catholic clergy that were promised by the Emperor to those who would acknowledge the pope as the head of the Church were intended to attract the Romanian people to the Catholic faith, and thus,

³ P. Sugar (ed.), *A History of Hungary* (London: Tauris, 1990), 116.

⁴ Sugar, *A History*, 117.

⁵ Eric Tappe, „The Romanian Orthodox Church and the West“, in Derek Baker (ed.), *Studies in Church History*, vol. 13 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1976), 285, and Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria poporului românesc* (București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1985), 542.

⁶ Sugar, *A History*, 118-120.

once emancipated, the Romanians could counter the policy of the Hungarian nobles. So, the Romanians were in the position to choose between the Catholic faith, with all the privileges that were promised, including the (implicit) end of the oppression from the Hungarian landlords, and the Orthodox religion, but without any civil rights. In other words, the Romanian Orthodox from Transylvania had to choose between Rome and Constantinople. It was a difficult choice. If they were to choose Rome, they would get civil rights but the price would be „a total break with their past.”⁷ If they were to choose Constantinople, they would remain faithful to their past (identity), but they would remain serfs. How did the Romanians solve this tension?

The Union

Already from 1696 Baranyi, a Jesuit, published a Catholic catechism in Romanian, and spread it among the Romanians. In 1697 the Catholics asked the Romanians to accept the decisions of the Council of Florence (1439), that established the conditions for the union of the Churches of Rome and Constantinople. In spite of the fact that the Union achieved at Florence was short-lived, it proved that it is possible for the two Churches to merge. As another example for such possibility were the Ukrainian and Byelorussian Orthodox churches, which had returned to Rome in 1596.⁸

At the first synod (Cluj 1697) that discussed this issue, the Romanian Orthodox under the leadership of bishop Teofil stressed the theological difference between the two churches on the doctrine of purgatory and the procession of the Holy Spirit (*filioque*). Despite the fact that the synod did not come to a conclusion on the issue of union, it seems that bishop Teofil was finally inclined to accept the Union⁹ but he died in the same year and the decision was postponed until the appointment of a new bishop.

Teofil was succeeded by Atanasie Anghel in 1698 but according to the then existing rules of the Orthodox Church, Atanasie had to go to Wallachia to be consecrated. In Wallachia he was received with suspicion, and only after he

⁷ Sugar, *A History*, 123.

⁸ Georges Castellan, *A History of the Romanians* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 105.

⁹ C. C. Giurescu, *Istoria românilor* (Bucuresti, 1942), 327.

swore before the metropolitan of Wallachia and the patriarch of Jerusalem, present at Bucharest during that time, to preserve the Orthodox faith as it had been defined by Petru Movila,¹⁰ he received the consecration.¹¹

Once returned to Transylvania, Atanasie was informed by cardinal Kollonics, the primate of Hungary, about the four points that the Romanians would have to accept if they became united with Rome: firstly, the pope as the head of the church; secondly, the use of unleavened bread for the Eucharist; thirdly, the *filioque* clause in the creed; and fourthly, the doctrine of purgatory.¹²

Atanasie was more concerned about the political aspects of the Union, which would grant equal privileges with the Roman Church and civil rights for the members of his church, than the theological differences between the two churches. Therefore in 1698 Atanasie, supported by thirty-eight protopopes (archpriests), consented to the Union with Rome and thus recognized the authority of the Roman pope.¹³ Next year Emperor Leopold published a diploma which formally established the Romanian Uniate Church,¹⁴ whereby he granted them tax exemptions for the church properties and for the Uniate clergy.

On the 5th of September 1700 at the synod chaired by bishop Atanasie, 54 protopopes and 1563 Orthodox priests ratified the union and accepted the four dogmatic points, but they were not willing to break with their past. Therefore they decided to retain the Eastern rite, allow the priests to marry, have their distinctive hierarchy, keep the Julian calendar, and use the vernacular as liturgical language.¹⁵

After centuries of encounter between the Catholics and Orthodox in the Romanian principalities, this was the first time when the Catholic Church

¹⁰ Petru Movilă was one of the sons of a Moldavian ruling family, and after an unsuccessful attempt to seize the throne of Moldavia, he decided to become a monk. Later he was appointed Metropolitan of Kiev, and was very active to protect the Orthodox Church from Catholic and Protestant influences. In 1641 at the synod at Iași (Moldavia) Cyril Lucaris' confession of faith was replaced with Movilă's confession of Orthodox faith. See N. Iorga, *Istoria românilor* (București, 1920), 250; and Eric Tappe, „The Romanian Orthodox Church”, 283-284.

¹¹ Eric Tappe, „The Romanian Orthodox Church”, 284.

¹² Tappe, „The Romanian Orthodox Church”, 285, and Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, 327.

¹³ Castellan, *A History of the Romanians*, 105.

¹⁴ Tappe, „The Romanian Orthodox Church”, 285.

¹⁵ Castellan, *A History of the Romanians*, 105, and Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, 326.

succeeded to convert so many Orthodox Romanians. But it was only a partial success. What were the reactions of the Orthodox and Catholic Churches to the decision of the Romanian from Transylvania to unite with Rome?

The Orthodox Reaction

The first reaction against the union came from the Orthodox priests from Transylvania, who decided to remain faithful to their religion. They immediately appointed Ion Tirca as Orthodox bishop.¹⁶ Then, during the next sixty years the Orthodox priests and monks traveled through Romanian villages criticizing the union and encouraging the people to return to Orthodoxy.¹⁷ Those campaigns were very effective, especially when the Austrian authorities failed to grant the promised civil rights to the Uniates. Between 1716 and 1762 the number of the Uniate priests dropped from 2747 to 2253, while the number of the Orthodox priests rose from 456 to 1380.¹⁸

The second reaction came from the metropolitan of Wallachia and the patriarchs of Jerusalem of Constantinople, who anathematized Anghel and excommunicated him from the Orthodox Church. In the same time the Orthodox hierarchy from Wallachia provided support for those who opposed the union¹⁹ because the Orthodox were persecuted in Transylvania until 1769 when Empress Maria Theresa issued the Edict of Toleration. During the 19th century, especially under the leadership of metropolitan Andrei Șaguna (1809-1873), the Orthodox Church played an important role in the political and religious life of Transylvania.²⁰

The Catholic Response

For Rome, the Uniate Church was considered a natural bridge for the encounter with the Eastern Orthodox.²¹ But because the union had strong political aspects,

¹⁶ Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, 327.

¹⁷ Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, 327.

¹⁸ Tappe, „The Romanian Orthodox Church“, 286.

¹⁹ Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, 542-543, Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, 327, and Tappe, „The Romanian Orthodox Church“, 286.

²⁰ Miron Constantinescu (ed.), *Unification of the Romanian National State: The Union of Transylvania with Old Romania* (Bucharest: The Academy of Romania, 1971), 40-41.

²¹ Hubert Jedin and John Dolan (eds.), *The History of the Church: The Church Between Revolution and Restoration*, vol. 7 (London: Burns & Oates, 1981), 195.

for most of the time the Hungarian and Austrian Catholic hierarchy did not trust the Uniate Church. Consequently, for the following twenty years the Uniates were placed under the jurisdiction of the primate of Hungary. The Uniates themselves were not totally committed to Catholic faith, and when the political reasons that determined the union were not achieved, many Uniates returned to Orthodoxy. The lack of trust of the Hungarian and Austrian Roman Catholic Church in the Uniate Church was illustrated by another event.

In 1702 Atanasie was summoned to Vienna to appear before a judicial commission because of the tendency of the Uniate priests and believers to return to Orthodoxy. He was asked to break ties with Wallachia and accept a Jesuit as his assistant. Only after Anghel promised to accept the conditions, the primate of Hungary reconsecrated him as bishop.²²

After many conflicts between the Uniate bishops and the Hungarian Catholic bishops, in 1721 pope Innocent XIII moved the Uniate see from Alba Iulia to Făgăraș and established the first Romanian Uniate diocese of Făgăraș, directly under the jurisdiction of Rome.²³ But not even Rome was always committed to support the Uniates in their pursue for civil rights. For example, in 1744 when the Uniate synod proposed that the union should be cast off because the imperial promises were not fulfilled, bishop Inochenție Micu was summoned to Vienna to appear before a judicial commission to answer to eighty-two charges. Micu went to Rome to ask for help but the Church of Rome did not want to alienate the Hungarian nobles, and in 1751 Micu had to give up his see, and died in exile in Italy.²⁴

The Results of the Union

The two major motives considered by Romanians when they accepted the union with Rome were religious rights (received religion) and civil rights (recognized as „nation“). The first were granted by Leopold in 1699, when he formally established the Uniate Church. Following the decision of the Emperor, the

²² Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, 543, and Tappe, „The Romanian Orthodox Church“, 285.

²³ Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, 543.

²⁴ Castellan, *A History of the Romanians*, 107, Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, 544, and Tappe, „The Romanian Orthodox Church“, 286.

Uniate clergy enjoyed the same privileges as the Catholic clergy. The immediate result of this decision was the possibility of the Uniates to establish schools. Among many schools started by the Uniates, the theological seminary in Blaj developed over the years as the most influential school in Transylvania. It was also known as the „Școala ardeleană” and this school gave to the Romanian Principalities some of their best scholars during the 19th century.

The Catholic Church offered three scholarships to Rome and two scholarships to Vienna for every academic year to the best graduates of this school.²⁵ When those scholars came back to Transylvania, they encouraged the emergence of the Romanian learned society, which subsequently influenced not only the religious life but also the culture and the national consciousness.²⁶ Among the leaders of the Uniate movement the best known were Inochenție Micu (1692-1768), Samuel Micu (1745-1806), Gheorghe Șincai (1754-1816), Petru Maior (1775-1821), and Iosif Vulcan (1806-1839). As a result of the ministry of the Uniate clergy and schools, the Uniate Church became one of the strongest churches in Transylvania, which were essentially instrumental in the Union of Transylvania with Romania in the 20th century.

The second reason for the union was to obtain civil rights. They were promised to the Uniate laymen by a second Diploma issued by Emperor Leopold in 1701²⁷ but the Diet of Transylvania refused to recognize Romanians as the „fourth nation” on the grounds that in time Romanians would become too powerful and the interests of the Hungarian nobility would suffer.²⁸ So strong was the opposition of the Transylvanian Diet to the idea of the emancipation of Romanians, that all the attempts of the Uniate clergy to get the support of the enlightened Austrian monarchs as Maria Theresa (1740-1780) and Iosif II (1780-1790) failed. Only in 1848 the Romanians’ struggle for civil rights succeeded when the Austrian Emperor, Frantz Joseph, issued a new diploma that was

²⁵ Călinescu, *Istoria literaturii române*, 62.

²⁶ Uniate scholars proved with historical records and linguistic arguments that Romanians were the descendents of the Romans and therefore they had the historical rights to be a „nation”. See Castellán, *A History of the Romanians*, 112-113, Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, 549-552, and Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, 332-333.

²⁷ Tappe, „The Romanian Orthodox Church”, 285.

²⁸ Tappe, „The Romanian Orthodox Church”, 285, Castellán, *A History of the Romanians*, 105, 107.

finally accepted by the Transylvanian Diet in 1863.²⁹ Because the promise of civil rights did not become effective for one and a half century, many Uniates returned to Orthodoxy, especially after the Edict of Toleration issued by Maria Theresa in 1769, which gave a legal status to the Orthodox Church. In 1782 Josef II tried to clarify the situation by a proclamation which said that religious freedom did not mean to abandon the Catholic Church.³⁰

Conclusions

The emergence of the Uniate Church in Transylvania proved on the one hand that the members of the Orthodox Church could be converted to another religion, and on the other that political reasons, although very important, were not enough to keep the allegiance of the people to the church. The history of the Uniate Church in Transylvania also offers one of the best examples of the strategic role of the schools in the life of the church and the nation. The priests and the scholars that came out of the Uniate schools managed to develop a vigorous church over the years, which continued to survive underground after the decision of the Communist state in 1948 to outlaw the Uniate Church, confiscate its property and force the 1.5 million Uniates to return to Orthodoxy.³¹

2. The Conflict between Church and State in Romania

The Theory of the „Symphony“

When the Byzantine world tried to integrate the divine and secular realities, Justinian (527-565) introduced the concept of „symphony“ between divine and human affairs. He built up his model upon the reality of the Incarnation, which united in a perfect way the two natures of Christ, divine and human. Analyzing the further implications of the Incarnation as a type of perfect relationship between divine and human, the Byzantine Church came to the conclusion that Christ was the unique source for the ecclesiastical and civil authorities.³² If Christ

²⁹ Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, 365.

³⁰ Castellan, *A History of the Romanians*, 109.

³¹ Trevor Beeson, *Discretion and Valour: Religious Conditions in Russia and Eastern Europe* (Collins: Fontana Books, 1974), 309.

³² John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York:

is the unique source of authority for the ecclesiastical and civil realms, then the ideal model of relationship between divine and human that was given by the Incarnation could also find adequate manifestation in the Christian Empire. As such, when in 1397 Prince Basil of Moscow asked Patriarch Anthony IV of Constantinople if the Russian could omit the liturgical commemoration of the emperor and only mention the patriarch, Anthony replied:

It is not possible for Christians to have the Church and not to have the Empire; for Church and Empire form a great unity and community; it is not possible for them to be separated from one another.³³

But if church and state were to form a unity, what would be the specific role of each one of them? Bulgakov tried to answer this question when he said that when Emperor Constantine bowed before the Cross:

The Church drew near to the state and took upon itself the responsibility for the latter's destiny. This rapprochement made place for the Emperor in the Church. When he became a Christian sovereign, the Church poured out its gifts upon him, by means of unction. It loved the Anointed, not only as the head of the state but as one who bore a special charism, the charism of rule, as the bridegroom of the Church, possessing the image of Christ himself.³⁴

But, if the Emperor as the head of the state has a place in the Church what would be his role? Bulgakov continues:

It is difficult to determine exactly what that place was, for the imperial functions had many meanings. On the one hand, the Emperor was venerated as the bearer of a special charism; on the other, he represented, in the Church, the people, the laity, the elect nation, the "royal priesthood". Finally, as the holder of power, he was the first servant of the Church; in his person the state was crowned by the Cross.³⁵

At this point, Bulgakov also brings into his explanation of the church-state relationship the idea of „symphony“, the mutual harmony in which the state recognized the ecclesiastical law and the Church considered itself as under the

Fordham University Press, 1983), 213-214.

³³ Cited by Meyendorff in *Byzantine Theology*, 214.

³⁴ Sergius Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church* (New York: St. Vladimir's Press, 1988), 156.

³⁵ Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, 156-157.

state.³⁶ This was the model that was adopted by the Romanian Church, as the Romanian Orthodox Church itself acknowledged: „In keeping with the Byzantine model, princes [Romanian] were supposed to be or actually were God’s anointed.”³⁷

The Dedicated Monasteries

During the 15th to 17th centuries the princes of Moldavia and Wallachia acted more or less as God’s anointed, assuming both secular and ecclesiastical responsibilities. In that capacity they gave large gifts to the Church, erected many church buildings and founded monasteries. One special category of monasteries were the so-called „Dedicated Monasteries”. These monasteries were dedicated by the Romanian princes or nobles to certain Holy Places, such as Mount Athos, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Constantinople’s Patriarchate and Antioch. Those monasteries were intended to provide for charitable purposes as hospitals, schools, home for the aged, and only a certain percentage of their income was to be donated to the Holy Places.³⁸ Because almost every prince between the 15th to 17th centuries gave gifts to the church, the latter became very reach and influential. In the 18th century in both Principalities, the monasteries controlled about a quarter of the land, and the Dedicated Monasteries possessed about 11 percent of the land.³⁹

These monasteries came under the leadership of the Greek monks during the Phanariot rule between 1711-1821.⁴⁰ Under the Greek control the monasteries became centres of corruption, intelligence and the revenue was taken out of the country. Because the Phanariot period was economically and

³⁶ Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, 157.

³⁷ *The Romanian Orthodox Church: Yesterday and Today* (Bucharest: The Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, 1979), 18.

³⁸ Barbara, Jelavich, *Russia and the Formation of the Romanian National State, 1821-1879* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 130.

³⁹ Jelavich, *Russia*, 130.

⁴⁰ The Phanariote rule was the period when Moldavia and Wallachia lost their rights to elect their princes. During this time the rulers of the principalities called „hospodars” were appointed directly by the Sultan from the rich families of Greek settlers in Constantinople and who performed certain political services for the Porte. See C.C. Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, 306-326; and Vlad Georgescu, *The Romanians*, 73-121.

politically far more oppressive than the preceding period, it aroused the anti-Ottoman and anti-Greek feelings to the point of popular revolt during the first part of the 19th century.⁴¹

The Secularization of the Property of the Monasteries

The uprising from 1821 under the leadership of Tudor Vladimirescu did not only bring to an end the Phanariot period but also set up the nationalistic tendencies of the progressive nobility which was under the influence of the French Enlightenment at that time. This progressive party played an important role in the Revolution of 1848 and also in 1859 they succeeded in achieving the union of Moldavia with Wallachia and in electing prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza as the ruler of the new country of Romania.⁴²

The country was governed by the prince and the national assemblies of the two principalities. Prince Cuza (1859-1866) studied in Paris and together with a large part of the progressive nobility represented in the national assemblies was closely related to the leaders of the French Revolution of 1848. Subsequently they introduced in the country not only French ideas but also a Western style of parliamentary life.⁴³ One of the problems that the new government had to solve was the situation of the Dedicated Monasteries.

The issue came forward for the first time during the uprising of 1821 when the Romanian nationalists wanted to collect contributions from these monasteries but the problem remained unsolved because the Oecumenical Patriarchate asked the help of Russia and the Turks.⁴⁴ Although the Russian representative sympathized with the position of the Romanian government, he was determined to represent the interests of the Orthodox cause. Finally, the whole issue of the Dedicated Monasteries had to be discussed within an International Commission set up by England, France, Austria, Russia, Prussia, Sardinia, Italy, Constantinople and the Turks.⁴⁵

Although most Western countries were in favour of the Romanian

⁴¹ Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, 342.

⁴² Giurescu, *Istoria românilor*, 372-373.

⁴³ Castellan, *A History of the Romanians*, 123, 133.

⁴⁴ Jelevich, *Russia*, 131.

⁴⁵ Jelevich, *Russia*, 135.

government position to keep the revenue of the monasteries in the country, the Russian representative presented the point of view of the Church: „The Orthodox Church in all of the East has its principal resource in the Principalities. The ecclesiastical academy, the numerous schools, and the Greek and Arab press, all of the recent establishments of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, as well in Palestine as in Constantinople, the schools founded few years ago in Alexandria, in Cairo, and in several other localities are maintained by this single revenue.“⁴⁶

The situation became more complicated because it was not only the problem of the relationship between the Romanian government and the Romanian church which had to be taken into consideration but also the problem of the relationship between the Romanian government and the Oecumenical Patriarchate and the problem of the relationship between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Oecumenical Patriarchate. The presence of the International Commission added another dimension to the whole conflict. On the one hand, the relationship between Constantinople's Patriarchate and other states and, on the other, the relationship between Romania and the great political power who had not yet recognized the Union of the Principalities. How would the Romanian State solve the problem?

The principle of „symphony“ in the relationship between church and state introduced by Justinian (527-565) did not provide a clear answer for this type of problems. In the absence of a clear principle of the relationship between the Orthodox Church and the state even the International Commission could not reach a satisfactory decision between 1821 and 1863. In December 1863 the Romanian National Assembly decided to wait no more and voted for the secularization of the lands of all the monasteries, not only of the Dedicated Monasteries. Because the Romanian Church was under the jurisdiction of the Oecumenical Patriarchate and this decision increased the already existing tensions between Romania and Constantinople the next step taken by Romania was to declare in 1864 the independence of the Romanian Orthodox Church from Constantinople, a decision which was officially acknowledged by Constantinople only in 1885.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ „Protocols and Reports of the European Commission“, *Acte și documente*, VI, pt. 2, 399-672, cited by Jelewich, *Russia*, 135.

⁴⁷ B. J. Kidd, *The Churches of the Eastern Christendom from A.D. 451 to the Present Time* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1973), 348-349.

So dramatic was the breach between Romania and Constantinople that in 1882 the Romanian Church decided to prepare their own chrism which had been brought from Constantinople.⁴⁸ Until that time the chrism prepared at Constantinople had been the sign of the unity of the Holy Spirit in the Eastern Church.

The Romanian Orthodox Church: A Department of the State

The conflict between the church and the state in Romania over the issue of the property of the Dedicated Monasteries was only the external manifestation of a deeper crisis. The Church who had had its relationship with the state after the Byzantine model of „symphony“ for more than four hundred years was now confronted by a secular state influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment. The Church was not prepared for this encounter either theologically or practically. So far the theological foundation upon which the Orthodox church built up its relationship with the state, based upon the presupposition that the state can become intrinsically Christian and therefore is not necessary to reflect upon the risks that could be brought into the proposed „symphonic“ relationship by „fallen humanity“,⁴⁹ proved to be inadequate. Practically, the Orthodox priests were divided.⁵⁰

On the other hand, the state was determined to introduce a new type of relationship between church and state according to which the Church would be under the authority of the state. Vlad Georgescu (1936-1988), one of the most outstanding Romanian historians, described the process through which the State brought the Church under total control:

As early as 1854 princes, boyars (nobles), and scholars proposed curtailing the rights of the metropolitans and bishops in the general assemblies and administrating church properties through the Ministry of Religion. Two years later they recommended making priests salaried state employees and limiting the number of monks. In Moldavia the ad hoc assembly passed a resolution to make the church subordinate to the state, with its members of the hierarchy chosen by the assembly, a salaried clergy, and control of the monastery lands

⁴⁸ Adrian Fortescue, *The Orthodox Eastern Church* (New York: Books for Library Press, 1971), 331.

⁴⁹ John Meyendorf, *Byzantine Theology*, 213.

⁵⁰ Jeleovich, *Russia*, 133.

in government hands. Cuza's church laws in 1863, 1864, and 1865 succeeded in subjecting the church to the state over the opposition of some church leaders who demanded autonomy for the church as a national institution and part of the nationalist revival. Under the pressure of the ruling class, the Orthodox church yielded its considerable economic and political power unresistingly to lay authorities much as it had in Greece after 1821 and in Serbia after 1830.⁵¹

In 1872 the Romanian State decided that the Church would be a department of State under the Ministry of Education and accordingly the bishops would be elected by the Senate, the Chamber of Deputies and the ecclesiastical synod.

Conclusions

The conflict of interests between the Romanian State and the Orthodox Church on the issue of the Dedicated Monasteries illustrate the fact that neither the Church (understood in her local or national form), nor the State will ever sacrifice their own interests for the sake of „harmony“. Therefore the church needs to develop its theology by taking into account not only the possibility of „harmony“ but also the possibility of „disharmony“ between the church and the state. The situation in which the Romanian Church was under the state control and its leadership had to be elected by an agency outside the church raised the problem of authority: What is the authority of the state? What is the authority of the church? How far can the church go in submitting itself to the government without risking to lose its own identity? What are the biblical principles for the relationship between the church and the state? These questions would be addressed in another paper but in the context of the Romanian Orthodox history is very important to notice that the new model of church-state relationship introduced by the Romanian government in 1864 affected the Church in the significant way. The Church became a political instrument in the hand of the government and the interests of different political parties played an important role in the election of the higher clergy.⁵² The lower rank clergy were underpaid and subsequently many of them neglected their responsibilities. B. J. Kidd describes the situation of the Orthodox believers after the church was

⁵¹ Georgescu, *The Romanians*, 180.

⁵² Kidd, *The Churches*, 350.

brought under the control of the state: "God is to them a very shadowy conception: Jesus Christ is worshipped rather from a distance; but they feel at home with their Saints Nicholas and Dimitri, Basil and Grigori, and especially the Holy Virgin."⁵³ And describing the further consequences of the decline in the Orthodox Church due to the interference of the government in her internal life, Kidd continues: „Today, many of the laymen and many of the clerics are deeply dissatisfied and some members of the well-educated classes especially among women turn to the Roman Catholics."⁵⁴

3. The Beginning of the Protestant Movement among Romanians

The Historical Context

During the 19th century and especially after the Treaty of Adrianopol (1829), the Romanian principalities were more open towards Western influences. Describing the new shift in the Romanian attitude toward the West, Castellan said that „Bucharest became a city open to all European philosophical and scientific currents."⁵⁵

On the political arena, France was very supportive of the independence and the union of the Principalities.⁵⁶ After the Crimean War (1853-1856), at the Treaty of Paris (1856), France influenced the other European powers to bring to an end the Russian protectorate over the Romanian principalities. At the same conference in Paris, the European powers decided to restore to Moldavia the territory of Basarabia, which had been annexed by Russia in 1812. The conference also decided to declare Danube a free zone for navigation under the supervision of a „European Commission for the Danube."⁵⁷ By this time Romania understood that the support for the national interests comes from the West. The political changes were followed by economic decisions, especially in the area of commerce with Western countries.

Under the influence of the ideas of the Enlightenment universities were established in Iași (1860) and Bucharest (1864), literary societies were founded,

⁵³ Kidd, *The Church*, 351.

⁵⁴ Kidd, *The Church*, 350.

⁵⁵ Castellan, *A History of the Romanians*, 133.

⁵⁶ Georgescu, *The Romanians*, 148.

⁵⁷ Castellan, *A History of the Romanians*, 125.

the circulation of the books increased considerably. All these contributed to the rising of the Romanian intelligentsia.⁵⁸ As a result of the influx of European ideas and the emergence of an intelligentsia, the old Byzantine values were gradually replaced by modern European values. In this context, the Romanian society, which became more pluralist, attracted from the West not only secular groups but also religious groups.

The Emergence of the Protestant Churches

The major changes in the political and cultural life of Romania were also reflected in the spiritual life of the people. When Dumitru Stăniloae analyzed the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in Europe, he said:

If, at an earlier period, man was satisfied to know an objective redemption within a collective framework and was content that this should be expressed by the earlier soteriological language of the universal destruction of sin and death with the prospect of the general resurrection to come, in Luther's time man awoke to the consciousness of his own individuality and began to seek above all else the assurance of an inner personal peace with God, the assurance that God turned towards him lovingly as to a separate person...⁵⁹

There are two observations in Dumitru Stăniloae's commentary which prove to be important to our study. The first is that man might come to a place where the old collectivist approach to spiritual problems does not satisfy him any longer, and the second is that man needs a personal assurance of his own relationship with God. That those were, to a large degree, the spiritual needs of the Romanian population by the end of the 19th century was illustrated by their response to Protestant teachings.

The first Protestants that came to Romania during that period were the Baptists and the Brethren. Baptists started their work in Romania as early as 1856 under the influence of the Continental Baptist movement led by Gerhard Onken.⁶⁰ Brethren missionaries that came to Romania during the late 1870s had

⁵⁸ Georgescu, *The Romanians*, 177-179.

⁵⁹ Dumitru Stăniloae, *Theology and the Church* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980), 184.

⁶⁰ Ron Davies, „Persecution and Growth: A Hundred Years of Baptist Life in Romania“, *Baptist Quarterly* XXXIII/6 (1990), 265.

their centre in Switzerland.⁶¹ Both groups started their work among the German, Hungarian, Russian and Jewish communities but very soon they began to spread their teachings among the Romanians as well.

The Protestants that came to Romania originated from the Pietist awakening in Europe after 1800, and in their personal life they emphasized the reading of the Bible, personal faith, and spiritual disciplines like prayer and meditation.⁶² In their relationships with other people, the Protestants were active in spreading their teachings by using different methods like, for instance, tract distribution, personal testimonies, Bible distribution, open discussions, Sunday school meetings, charity, etc.⁶³ Protestants received a substantial support from the British and Foreign Bible Society which (starting with 1878) opened an office in Bucharest to provide Bibles for Romania.⁶⁴

When the number of the people who were interested in their teaching began to grow, the Protestants established assemblies with a more permanent and organized religious programmes. The first Baptist church was established in Bucharest in 1863 although the Bible-study group started in 1856.⁶⁵ The Brethren opened their first assembly in Bucharest in 1880 under the leadership of Marc Petre.⁶⁶

In Transylvania, which was part of The Austrian-Hungarian Empire, the Baptist established their first church among the Hungarians in Salonta in 1875, while the Brethren opened their assemblies among the Saxons in Sibiu at approximately the same time. There are no exact records about the time when the Brethren started their first Romanian assemblies but it is generally agreed by church historians that it was between 1880 and 1890.⁶⁷

The Baptists started their first Romanian churches in 1885 in Cheşa, a

⁶¹ Fred A. Tatford, *Red Glow over Eastern Europe* (Avon: Echoes, 1986), 149.

⁶² Leon H. McBeth, *A Sourcebook for Baptist Heritage* (Nashville: Broadman, 1990), 347.

⁶³ Alexa Popovici, *Istoria baptiștilor din România, 1856-1919* (Chicago: Editura Bisericii Baptiste Române, 1980), 14.

⁶⁴ Popovici, *Istoria baptiștilor*, 20.

⁶⁵ The Scharschmidt couple who started the work in Bucharest were businessmen and it was only in 1863 that Onken sent August Liebig to Bucharest to baptize the converts and to formally establish the church. See Alexa Popovici, *Istoria baptiștilor*, 16.

⁶⁶ Tatford, *Red Glow*, 149.

⁶⁷ Tatford, *Red Glow*, 149.

village in Transylvania, and in 1912 in Bucharest.⁶⁸ In Transylvania, Mihai Cornya (1844-1917) who had been converted from the Calvinist faith to the Baptist faith in 1875 and subsequently ordained as a Baptist minister in 1877, was a successful evangelist among both Hungarians and Romanians. According to the existing records, more than 8000 people adopted the Baptist faith under his ministry.⁶⁹ Cornya also trained a large number of peasant preachers who became missionaries in other areas of the country.⁷⁰ Within a short period of time, the Protestant faith was spread in all the main areas of the country but it seems that they had a large audience especially among the peasants and the working class and very limited success among the educated people.⁷¹

The conversion of many Romanians to Protestantism attracted the opposition of both the Orthodox Church and the state. Thus, the leaders of the Protestant churches were brought before the police on the ground that they were spies, anarchists or „sectarians“.⁷² But in spite of the persecution, the Protestant movement continued to spread and by the first decades of the 20th century, they managed to establish small assemblies in all the major areas of the country.

Conclusions

The emergence of Baptists and Brethren churches in Romania represents the first significant step of the Protestants to spread their faith among the Romanians. Since the attempt of the Protestants to spread their teachings among the Romanians during the 16th century failed, it is important to understand why they succeeded during the 19th century.

A Sociological Explanation

If during the 16th century the Romanian Principalities were politically dominated by the Turks and culturally by the Byzantine world, during the 19th century

⁶⁸ Popovici, *Istoria baptiștilor*, 27 and Davies, „Persecution and Growth“, 266.

⁶⁹ Popovici, *Istoria baptiștilor*, 34-37.

⁷⁰ Davies, „Persecution and Growth“, 266.

⁷¹ See Tatford, *Red Glow*, 149, and Popovici, *Istoria baptiștilor*, 31.

⁷² Philip Walters, *World Christianity: Eastern Europe* (Eastbourne: MARK, 1988), 262, and Tatford, *Red Glow*, 150.

Romania was progressively oriented towards the Western world both politically and culturally. Moreover, the Orthodox Church, which had been very powerful during the 16th century, began to lose its influence during the 19th century due, on the one hand, to the fact that the state placed the Church under its control and secularized the properties of the monasteries, and on the other, to the religious decline in the internal life of the Church.

A Missiological Explanation

The Protestant movement of the 19th century in Romania was not associated with the state or with a particular nation and therefore did not need that kind of religious-political decisions that could create a political, nationalistic opposition in the first place. They did not penetrate the Romanian society on the institutional level but on the personal level. By the time the official church and the government became aware of their existence, they had already disseminated their teachings and established their assemblies. Another difference in comparison to the 16th century attempts was the fact that the Protestant movement of the 19th century had a strong missionary emphasis. For example, the Baptists took from Onken this slogan: „Every Baptist a missionary!”⁷³ The emphasis on the responsibility of every member of the Protestant churches to spread the faith explained to a large degree the rapid spread of their faith within the country. The following statistic records from Bihor county helps us understand their growth:

1886	1 Romanian Baptist church	5 members
1893	11 Romanian Baptist churches	634 members
1910	147 Romanian Baptist churches	2237 members

The main characteristic of the Protestant churches was not only the active involvement in mission but also the fellowship between the believers from the same church and the co-operation with other churches. They started youth ministries, women groups, prayer and Bible-study groups in homes. If in the Orthodox Church the main emphasis was laid upon the liturgy and the

⁷³ Popovici, *Istoria baptiștilor*, 15.

sacraments administered by the priest, there was very little left to do for the members of the church during the week. The Protestants, however, stressed the role of every member in the life of the church and created the environment in which they could practice what they learned. The practical aspect of this participation of every member in the life of the whole body was underlined by the special time set aside during the meetings for public prayer, hymns and testimonies from their experiences during the past week. If we tried to resume the differences between the approaches of the two churches on soteriological issues then the Orthodox Church displayed a church maximalism and a personal minimalism, while the Protestant Church emphasis a church minimalism and a personal maximalism.

A Theological Explanation

After the collapse of Byzantium, the Orthodox theology went through what became known as the „Western captivity“. The Greek students who were deprived of the opportunity to benefit from advanced studies in their own countries went abroad to universities in Western Europe. Their Western training „influenced the way in which Greek theologians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries approached and interpreted their faith.“⁷⁴ During that time, Orthodox theologians adopted Western theological categories, terminology, and forms of argument.

The Romanian Orthodox theologian Dumitru Staniloae shares the same opinion when he speaks about the doctrine of salvation: „For some time past, Orthodox theological manuals accepted Western usage and also used the term ‚redemption‘.“⁷⁵ But in spite of some theological concepts that the two churches might have in common, there is a significant difference between the two in the way they formulated their doctrine. It was particularly in the area of soteriology that the Protestant approach received a positive response from the Romanian people. Both churches would agree that salvation cannot be achieved by man as he needs God’s grace, the grace of Holy Spirit to compel him.⁷⁶ But the

⁷⁴ James Stamoolis, *Eastern Orthodox Mission Theology Today* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1986), 11-12.

⁷⁵ Stăniloae, *Theology and the Church*, 181.

⁷⁶ Wilhelm Niesel, *Reformed Symbolics: A Comparison of Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Protestantism*

difference arises when one asks: how can I receive this grace?

In the Orthodox Church the grace of salvation is appropriated through the sacraments. But the word „sacraments“ is another term for *mysterion*, which „underlines a mystical element, that side of the divine-human encounter which eludes rational analysis and regenerates body and soul without disclosing the *modus operandi*.“⁷⁷ Zernov attempted to explain what sacraments were:

The sacraments are corporate liturgical actions by which Christians [Church] invoke the blessings upon certain material objects like bread, wine, water and oil or upon people being married or set apart for some special service.⁷⁸

Although the Orthodox Church regarded most of its liturgical manifestations as sacramental, in recent years it borrowed from the West the idea of the „seven sacraments“. These are the following: baptism and Chrismation, the Eucharist, Penance, Holy Orders, Holy Unctions, and Marriage. But what happens when someone partakes in the sacraments? Zernov tried to disclose as much as possible from the mysteries of the divine-human encounter:

The Orthodox believe that the Church has the power to sanctify and purify all life, both matter and spirit, and that wherever and whenever she operates through the sacramental actions of her members, the matter receives the grace of the Holy Spirit and becomes the vehicle of His life-giving and saving influence.⁷⁹

Though in Orthodox theology salvation is a gradual development as man is gradually made righteous by infused grace,⁸⁰ nevertheless the process begins with baptism. The sacrament of baptism is the appropriation of the saving power of the redemptive work of Christ. It is the door into the Holy Church and into the Kingdom of God.

By contrast with the Orthodox approach, Protestant soteriology displayed a higher degree of simplicity and was more easily understood by common people. Onken provided the first doctrinal statements for the Continental Baptist. He

(London: Oliver and Boyd, 1962), 140.

⁷⁷ Nicolas Zernov, *Eastern Christendom* (New York: Putnam, 1961), 228.

⁷⁸ Zernov, *Eastern Christendom*, 247.

⁷⁹ Zernov, *Eastern Christendom*, 256.

⁸⁰ Niesel, *Reformed Symbolics*, 142.

formulated the doctrine of salvation as follows:

We believe that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the redeemer of the whole world. What was impossible for human kind in its alienation from God, God did in His love through the sinless man Jesus Christ. He sent Him to the earth in order that he should die for us a sacrificial death on the Calvary and bring to us the Risen One of the Easter morning the victory of the imperishable life. Therefore man is not justified before God through his own merits but through faith in the living Christ who forgives our sins, receives us into His living fellowship and will lead the anxious creature into the freedom of the children of God. We believe that God wills that all man be saved. Therefore He commands that every man repent. He who submits to God's judgement and acknowledges the salvation that is in Christ comes to the assurance that all his sins are forgiven him and is being born again to newness of life out of God. This deep transformation in the will and innermost being of the believer is a work of the Holy Spirit and signifies the beginning of the second, the new creation of God.⁸¹

As a result of this approach, Protestants emphasized the centrality of Scripture in order to understand the work of Christ and respond in faith. One might be helped by the church to understand the Scripture but salvation is appropriated by personal faith.

There are some important distinctions between the two approaches of the doctrine of salvation: In the Orthodox Church, salvation can be appropriated through the sacraments (baptism), administered by the Church; in the Protestant Church salvation is appropriated by faith (personal) and is not mediated by the church or any other agency. The sacraments work in a mysterious way, they do not disclose the *modus operandi*: personal faith is based upon revelation and a minimum understanding of the *modus operandi*. The personal experience of the believer is overlooked in the Orthodox Church but is strongly emphasized in the Protestant Church. In Orthodoxy, the believer depends on the Church for all the stages in the process of salvation; in Protestantism the believer has direct access to God for all the aspects of his life.

⁸¹ William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confession of Faith* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1989), 404.

MARTIN LUTHER ON MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

Carter Lindberg

Social historians of the Reformation have been reluctant to recognize theology as an agent of social change beyond endorsing an elite political agenda for social control and social disciplining.¹ And popular portrayals of Luther² tend to paint him as a conservative patriarch bent on limiting women to “church, kitchen, and kids” echo the conclusions of scholars who claim that the Reformation had a negative effect upon the position of women.

¹ See, for example, Joel Harrington, *Reordering Marriage and Society in Reformation Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 278 and passim. For the contrasting view see Steven Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), and his critique of some social historians in “The Social History of the Reformation: What Can We Learn from Pamphlets?” in Hans-Joachim Köhler, (ed.), *Flugschriften als Massenmedium der Reformationszeit* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1981), 171-203. See also, Luise Schorn-Schütte, “Gefährtin und Mitregenten. Die Rolle der Frau und der Pfarrfrau vom 16. bis 18. Jahrhundert” in Peter Freybe (ed.), *Frauen Mischen Sich Ein* (Wittenberg: Drei Kastanien Verlag, 1995), 8-23, here 8, and Scott Hendrix, “Luther on Marriage,” *Lutheran Quarterly* 14 (Autumn 2000), 335-50. For an overview of the state of recent research from the perspective of social history, see Merry Wiesner, “Family, Household, and Community” in Thomas A. Brady, Jr., Heiko A. Oberman, & James D. Tracy (eds.), *Handbook of European History 1400-1600* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994) vol. 1: 51-78; and her *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), especially 179-217. For the claim that Luther made no appreciable difference see Susan M. Johnson, “Luther’s Reformation and (Un)holy Matrimony,” *Journal of Family History* 17/3 (1992), 271-288. For the isogetical claim that Luther reinforced medieval patriarchalism, see Lyndal Roper, “Luther: Sex, Marriage and Motherhood,” *History Today* 33 (1983), 33-38; and *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). For a historiography of the literary renderings of Luther and the family, see Manfred Karnick, “‘Fructus germinis Lutheri’ oder Ehe und Unordnung” in Bernd Moeller (ed.), *Luther in der Neuzeit: Wissenschaftliche Symposion des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1983), 265-283. For a synoptic view of the social disciplining argument see Heinrich Richard Smith, *Konfessionalisierung im 16. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1992), 94-103. See also Susan Karant-Nunn, *Reformation of Ritual. An Interpretation of Early Modern Germany* (London: Routledge, 1997), 6-42.

² In this article, the following abbreviations are made in relation to Luther’s works: LW = Luther’s Works; WA = D. Martin Luthers Werke.

On the other hand, it may be argued that the marriage Luther himself entered into with Katharina von Bora, with its public protest against clerical celibacy, against the monastic vows of chastity, and against the Humanist movement's contempt of women, raised a historically effective sign in favor of what Karl Holl described as the "reconstruction of ethics."³ In contrast to the predominant attitudes of his day, Luther revalorized marriage and the family.⁴ Steven Ozment states: "No institutional change brought about by the Reformation was more visible, responsive to late medieval pleas for reform, and conducive to new social attitudes than the marriage of Protestant clergy. Nor was there another point in the Protestant program where theology and practice corresponded more successfully."⁵ Luther's application of evangelical theology to marriage and family desacramentalized marriage; desacralized the clergy and resacralized the life of the laity; opposed the maze of canonical impediments to marriage; strove to unravel the tangled skein of canon law, imperial law, and German customs,⁶ and joyfully affirmed God's good creation, including sexual relations. In return, Luther was in such demand as a marriage counselor that he often complained of the burden it imposed on him.⁷

Although his theological breakthrough preceded and influenced his theology of marriage and family, his own marriage and family also influenced his theological development.⁸ Luther dialectically related his experience of

³ Konrad Stock, *Gottes wahre Liebe. Theologische Phänomenologie der Liebe* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 47.

⁴ Gerta Scharffenorth, "Martin Luther zur Rolle von Mann und Frau," in Hans Süßmuth (ed.), *Das Luther-Erbe in Deutschland. Vermittlung zwischen Wissenschaft und Öffentlichkeit* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1985), 111-129, here 112.

⁵ Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform 1250-1550* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 381.

⁶ Albert Stein, "Luther über Eherecht und Juristen" in Helmar Junghans (ed.), *Leben und Werk Marti Luthers von 1526 bis 1546*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1983), 1: 171-185. Some of the difficulties in the transition from church courts to secular consistories are discussed in C. Scott Dixon, *The Reformation and Rural Society: The Parishes of Brandenburg-Ansbach-Kulmbach, 1528-1603* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 54-59, 118-128. See also John Witte, Jr., *From Sacrament to Contract. Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 42-73; and Helmar Junghans, "Die evangelische Ehe" in his *Spätmittelalter, Luthers Reformation, Kirche in Sachsen* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2001), 99-110.

⁷ Eberhard Winkler, "Luther als Seelsorger und Prediger" in Junghans, *Leben und Werk*, 1: 225-239, here 231-233.

⁸ William Lazareth, *Luther on the Christian Home* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), viii. Carter Lindberg, *Luther's Concept of Love*, unpublished dissertation (Iowa City: Univ. Iowa, 1965), 124-125.

fathering to his theology of God as Father.⁹ Luther's marriage and family also reinforced his experience that it is in the midst of life that one becomes a theologian: "It is through living, indeed through dying and being damned that one becomes a theologian, not through understanding, reading or speculation" (WA 5: 163, 28-29). Child care, for example, provided him with vivid illustrations of God's love. "In Luther's German, sins are said to be 'stinking.' *Das stinkt zum Himmel* ('that stinks to high heaven') is a way to express indignation over an offence. The association between the stench from soiled diapers and the sins of grown-ups was therefore not so far-fetched. Luther made it repeatedly. 'God the Father has to bear much worse stench from human beings than a father and a mother from their children,' and 'How our Lord God has to put up with many a murmur and stink from us, worse than a mother must endure from her child.'"¹⁰ For Luther the love of God could not be more emphatically expressed than by saying we are his children (WA 20: 694, 27-33). "But you say: The sins which we daily do offend God; thus we are not holy. I answer: Mother-love is much stronger than the excrement and scabs of the child. So is God's love stronger than our filth" (WA TR 1: 189, Nr. 437).

We often forget how Luther's marriage shocked his contemporaries, including his colleagues. The year he married (1525) witnessed the loss of significant humanist support through his break with Erasmus as well as the major upheaval of the Peasants' War. In this context, convinced of his imminent demise, he married to witness to his faith. His marriage he said "would please his father, rile the pope, make the angels laugh and the devils weep, and would seal his testimony."¹¹

Luther was, after all, one of the first priests in Western Christendom to marry. Even more startling was the fact that he married a nun. Indeed, according to Roman Catholic polemicists of the time, all disorder in the world – including the Peasants' War – is attributable to Luther's marriage. The marriage of a monk with a nun is harlotry, and its consequence is disorder in the sense of

⁹ Birgit Stolt, "Martin Luther on God as a Father," *Lutheran Quarterly* 8/4 (1994), 385-395, here 389-390.

¹⁰ Stolt, "Martin Luther on God as a Father," 391.

¹¹ WA Br 3, nos. 892, 900, 911. Cited by Roland Bainton, "Psychiatry and History: An Examination of Erikson's *Young Man Luther*" in Roger A. Johnson (ed.), *Psychohistory and Religion: The Case of Young Man Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 19-56, here 44.

offense against the divine foundation of this world.¹² Furthermore, an old proverb claimed that the Antichrist would arise from such a union. In this regard, however, Erasmus wryly remarked that if that were the case the world would be full of Antichrists.¹³

Thus Luther's marriage was not just ordinary run of the mill pathology; it was spiritual, indeed cosmic, pathology! How could this be explained? Why, by looking at his parents of course. Johannes Cochlaeus, one of Luther's more influential Catholic detractors, explained Luther's perversity by claiming that Luther's mother was a whore and his father a murderer. With a dysfunctional family like that what else could you expect than the Antichrist? In his *Commentary... on the Acts and Writings of Martin Luther* (1549), Cochlaeus affirmed the tale "that Luther was begotten of an unclean spirit under the appearance of an incubus."¹⁴ Cochlaeus's rather crude explanation remained influential into the early twentieth century and foreshadowed more sophisticated modern psychological efforts to explain Luther.¹⁵ Both the neo-freudian explanation of Norman O. Brown and the identity crisis theory of Erik Erikson continue pathological interpretations by convenient neglect of historical evidence.¹⁶

Medieval doctrine viewed the celibate life as a meritorious work for salvation. Pope Gregory VII (r.1073-1085) who mandated priestly celibacy reanimated patristic suspicions of sexuality as the expression of original sin. Indeed, Augustine's perspective on the matter suggests that original sin is the first sexually transmitted disease. Virginité was presented as the ideal state of the Christian life. As Jerome, that paragon of libido, put it: "Marriages fill the

¹² Karnick, "'Fructus germinis Lutheri,'" 265.

¹³ Erasmus's comment is cited by Martin Treu, *Katherina von Bora* (Wittenberg: Drei Kastanien, 1995), 35.

¹⁴ Ian D.K. Siggins, "Luther's Mother Margarethe," *Harvard Theological Review* 71 (1978), 125-150, here 134; see 129-136. See also, idem, *Luther and his Mother* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 32-44.

¹⁵ For the influence of Cochlaeus see Adolf Herte, *Das katholische Lutherbild im Bann der Lutherkommentar des Cochläus*, 3 vols. (Münster: Aschendorff, 1943).

¹⁶ See Carter Lindberg, *The European Reformations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1996), 15, 18-19; Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death: The Psychoanalytic Meaning of History* (New York: Vintage, 1959); Erik Erikson, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (New York: Norton, 1958). See also the essays in Johnson, *Psychohistory and Religion* and Roland Bainton, "Luther und seine Mutter," *Luther* (1973), 123-130.

earth; virginity [fills] heaven."¹⁷ These doctrinal developments, together with a catalogue of ecclesiastical marriage prohibitions for the laity, evoked a profound uncertainty – in spite of the sacramental character of marriage – concerning the meaning of marriage. The identification of sexual relations with sin and the high valuation of celibacy divided Christians into first and second-class citizens. If this oppressed the laity, it tormented the clergy.

Luther may have been one of the first priests to marry but he clearly was not the first Western priest to have sex. Medieval anti-clerical writings – as exaggerated and polemical as they may be – make it clear that celibacy was honored more in its breach than its observance. The practice of medieval priests having concubines and illegitimate children was neither unusual nor a particular obstacle to clerical advancement.

Indeed, clerical concubinage was a significant source of ecclesiastical revenue: the so-called "whore tax" (*hurenzins*).¹⁸ In his "Against the Spiritual Estate of the Pope and the Bishops Falsely So Called" (1522), Luther charged that the episcopal opposition to clerical marriage was primarily economic. "For bishops receive the greater part of all their annual interest rates in almost all religious foundations from nothing but the priests' whores. Whoever wants to keep a little whore must give one guilder a year to the bishop." And the fee increases with every child they bear (LW 39: 290-291). The bishopric of Constance "licensed" clerical concubinage for four gulden, and assessed each child of such unions an additional fee of four gulden. Since it is estimated that about 1,500 children were born annually in this situation, it is easy to appreciate the non-doctrinal reasons for Episcopal opposition to clerical marriage.¹⁹

On the other hand, such casuistry did not alleviate the guilt many priests experienced in these relationships. A contemporary described his struggles as follows: "So I am caught. I cannot be without a wife. If I am not permitted to have a wife, then I am forced to lead publicly a disgraceful life, which damages my soul and honor and leads other people, who are offended by me, to damnation. How can I preach about chastity and unchastity, adultery and depravity, when my whore comes openly to church and my bastards sit right in

¹⁷ Cited by Harrington, *Reordering Marriage*, 51. See Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

¹⁸ Ozment, "Social History," 193.

¹⁹ Lindberg, *The European Reformations*, 172-173.

front of me? How shall I conduct mass in this state?"²⁰

Luther's theology liberated the clergy who suffered such anguish and self-hatred over failing to remain celibate.²¹ Already in his "Address to the Christian Nobility" (1520), Luther asserted that "before God and the Holy Scriptures marriage of the clergy is no offense." Clerical celibacy is not God's law but the pope's, and "Christ has set us free from all man-made laws, especially when they are opposed to God and the salvation of souls..." Thus the pope has no more power to command celibacy than "he has to forbid eating, drinking, the natural movement of the bowels, or growing fat" (LW 44: 178; 39: 297-298).

At this point it may be helpful to take a moment to set the record straight on some items which perennially arise. Luther did not initiate the Reformation in order to legitimate his marriage.²² The driving force throughout Luther's career was righteousness *coram Deo* not *sex coram hominibus*. He was not the first reformer to marry, nor was he eager to do so. Nor was his reforming movement a consequence of some pathology created in him by his father and mother. Indeed, his love for his parents was so strong that as a monk during his visit to Rome, Luther had wished them dead so he could have redeemed them from purgatory. "I ran through about a dozen Masses in Rome and was almost prostrated by the thought that my mother and father were still alive, because I should gladly have redeemed them from purgatory with my Masses and other excellent works and prayers. There is a saying in Rome: 'Blessed is the mother whose son reads a Mass on Saturday in St. John's!' How I should have liked to make my mother blessed! But it was too crowded, and I could not get in; so I ate a smoked herring instead" (LW 14: 6).

Furthermore, Luther's story is not mostly a male story. His mother, who came from the highly distinguished and educated Lindemann family, nourished his piety and learning.²³ Luther's love for his mother is evident not only in his

²⁰ Scott Hendrix, "Considering the Clergy's Side: A Multilateral View of Anticlericalism" in P. A. Dykema and H. A. Oberman (eds.), *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993), 449-459, here 456.

²¹ For other discussions of such self-hatred see Harrington, *Reordering Marriage*, 37 and Ozment, "Social History," 193.

²² For a discussion of this claim carried into our time by the Dominican, Heinrich Denifle, see Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Man between God and the Devil* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1989), 275-276.

²³ Siggins, "Luther's Mother;" idem, *Luther and his Mother*, and Bainton, "Luther und seine Mutter."

naming of his daughter after her, but also in the conclusion of the long letter of comfort he wrote her during her final illness. "The Father and God of all comfort grant you through his holy Word and Spirit a firm, joyous, and thankful faith that you may experience that it is the truth when he says, 'Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.' All my children and my Katy pray for you. Some cry, some eat and say, grandmother is very sick. God's grace be with us all, Amen. your dear son, Mart. Luther."²⁴ Luther's love and respect for his father is evident especially in his overcoming their rift over his entrance into the monastery. In dedicating his "On Monastic Vows" (1521; LW 44: 243-400) to his father, Luther credits his father for being correct in criticizing his decision to enter the monastery and thereby resolves their conflicts.²⁵

Luther was not a misogynist nor did he hold to a double standard for men and women. In response to the vulgar proverb that all women are alike with the lights out, Luther not only responded that so are men, but also took to task those who would insult women.²⁶ Luther stated that "Marriage does not only consist of sleeping with a woman – anybody can do that – but of keeping house and bringing up children" (LW 54: 441). Those who followed Luther saw in marriage not only a new joyous appreciation for sexual relations, but also a new respect for women as companions. Luther could not imagine life without women: "The home, cities, economic life and government would virtually disappear. Men can't do without women. Even if it were possible for men to beget and bear children, they still couldn't do without women" (LW 54: 161). For Luther this included the intelligence, piety, and ethics of women.

Luther sought to redefine what his society thought appropriate for male

²⁴ WA Br 6, No. 1820. Cited by Bainton, "Luther und seine Mutter," 129.

²⁵ Scott Hendrix, "Beyond Erikson: The Relational Luther," *Lutheran Theological Seminary Bulletin* (Gettysburg Lutheran Seminary, Winter 1995), 3-12. For the dedicatory letter see LW 48: 329-336.

²⁶ Scott Hendrix, "Christianizing Domestic Relations: Women and Marriage in Johann Freder's 'Dialogus dem Ehestand zu Ehren'," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 23/2 (1992), 251-266, here 258-259. Luther's rejection of medieval misogynist literature is discussed in Elisabeth Ahme, "Wertung und Bedeutung der Frau bei Martin Luther," *Luther* 35 (1964), 61-68, and Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled*, 3, 185. For a brief discussion of humanist misogyny and literature references see Stefan Rhein, "Katherina Melanchthon, geb. Krapp: Ein Wittenberger Frauenschicksal der Reformationszeit" in Stefan Oehmig (ed.), *700 Jahre Wittenberg: Stadt, Universität, Reformation* (Weimer: Böhlau, 1995), 501-518, here 506.

and female behavior. For example, medieval society and theology sanctioned prostitution and civic brothels. Prostitutes purified a town by draining off excess male sexual energy, like a sewer drained off waste.²⁷ The church tolerated prostitution because its gender values denigrated sex and also assumed that male lust was an anarchic, uncontrollable force which if not provided an outlet would pollute the town's respectable women. Public brothels were thought to prevent the greater evils of adultery and rape. Luther's criticism of this rationale attacked his culture's gender presupposition concerning males. In asserting equal responsibility for males and females, Luther criticized the double standard of his day as well as the existence of brothels.²⁸ Luther attempted to redefine his culture's understanding of male gender from uncontrollable impulse to social responsibility.

Luther's own marriage ought not be romanticized yet it expressed his conviction that faith is to be active in love.²⁹ The story of Luther's marriage to the nun, Katherine von Bora, who with eight other nuns had fled the Cistercian monastery in Nimbschen, is well known. Katy made it known that Martin was her man in spite of Luther's efforts to find her a husband. Luther, who had advocated clerical marriage, was under pressure from others to put his theology into practice. His supporters wanted a practical expression of his support for married priests, and his father wanted grandchildren. On 13 June 1525 Luther married Katy to please his father and to spite the pope (LW 29: 21). Now Luther affirmed marriage from experience as well as theory. It is, he claimed, a glimpse of what the lost Eden must have been like. Certainly he knew married life was not one long honeymoon, and commented that if we knew what lay in store for us, we probably would not get married. But celibacy, he believed, removed men and women from service to the neighbor, contravened the divine order, and denied the goodness of sexual relations. Marriage created a new awareness of

²⁷ Jacques Rossiard, *Medieval Prostitution* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 80-84, and passim.

²⁸ See LW 44: 214-215; LW 3: 259; Steven Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled*, 56; and Susan Karant-Nunn, "Continuity and Change: Some Aspects of the Reformation on the Women of Zwickau," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 13 (1982), 17-42, here 24.

²⁹ For discussions of Luther's marriage, home, and family see Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining the Reformation 1521-1532* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 195-204; Treu, *Katherina*; Heinrich Boehmer, "Luthers Ehe," *Luther-Jahrbuch* (1925), 40-76; and Walther von Loewenich, "Luthers Heirat: Geschehnis und Geschichte," *Luther* 47/2 (1976), 47-60.

human community. The father washing smelly diapers may be ridiculed by fools, but "God with all his angels and creatures is smiling – not because the father is washing diapers, but because he is doing so in Christian faith" (LW 45: 40).

For Luther the companionship of husband and wife is a marvelous thing. But the Luthers also knew firsthand the pain of the loss of children. Elizabeth died in infancy, and Magdelene died in his arms when she was only thirteen. "It's strange to know that she is surely at peace... and yet to grieve so much" (LW 54: 432). Altogether Martin and Katy had six children whom they loved dearly.³⁰ His children were Luther's great joy. He wrote the Christmas hymn "From Heaven Above I Come to You" (SBH 51; LW 53: 289-291) for his family Christmas just when his children were old enough to sing. "If we wish to train children," Luther wrote, "we must become children with them. Would to God such child's play were widely practiced" ("Preface to the German Mass," 1526; LW 53: 67).

Katy nurtured and scolded her husband through more than 25 years of what certainly must have been one of the most eventful marriages in history. Luther was convinced that God had come to his aid by giving them to each other. His marriage influenced his theology of human relations, especially in terms of the mutuality and reciprocity of love, and contributed to new perspectives on the dignity and responsibility of women.³¹

Luther viewed marriage and family as he did everything else – from the perspective of human righteousness before God as a gift rather than an achievement. That is, righteousness is received not achieved. Salvation is the source of life rather than the goal of life. Here is the freedom of the Christian. Once liberated from an otherworldly asceticism, from directing human energies and resources to acquisition of salvation, the Christian is free to direct energies and resources to social concerns in the world. Elsewhere I have belabored the

³⁰ Johannes (1526), Elisabeth (1527), Magdalena (1529), Martin (1531), Paul (1533), Margarete (1534). Oberman, *Luther*, 278. For the history of Luther's descendents see Johannes Luther, "Die Nachkommenschaft Martin Luthers des Reformators," *Luther-Jahrbuch* (1925), 123-138.

³¹ Lindberg, *The European Reformations*, 101-102; Gerta Scharffenorth, *Becoming Friends in Christ: The Relationship between Man and Woman as Seen by Luther* (Geneva: Lutheran World Federation, 1983).

significance of this "Copernican revolution" in theology for the development of new attitudes and programs for social welfare.³² Luther's fundamental theological shift also liberated the medieval world for a new appreciation of the roles of men and women, and marriage and family.³³

Thus Luther wrote in relation to Gal. 3:26-28 that "Every one of us ought to serve God freely with the gift he has, but we must all glory in what is common to us all, a simple virgin faith in the one and only Christ, in whom there is neither male nor female, and consequently neither married nor unmarried, neither widow nor spinster, but all are one in Christ" (LW 44: 308-309; cf. also 373).

With regard to Gen. 1:28, Luther's basic thesis is that man and woman are God's work and creatures; God created humankind so that there should be men and women (LW 45:17). Bodiliness and sexuality are God's gifts which deserve thanks and responsible use. God knows what humankind needs: "It is not good that a person be alone." In his tract "The Estate of Marriage" (1522; LW 45:13-49), Luther ventured a new understanding of creation that discussed the relationship between man and woman and between children and parents as well as his model of marriage and family. He later developed this in the *Large Catechism* in relation to the praxis of life presented in the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. His experiences as pastor, preacher, and university professor compelled him to think through the existential questions of persons in all classes. He discovered that scholastic theology was of little help in relating faith to life. He constantly sought ways to teach theology so that the proclamation of the gospel would be understandable to the laity.³⁴

Luther began his instruction on the estate of marriage with a critique of the

³² Carter Lindberg, *Beyond Charity: Reformation Initiatives for the Poor* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

³³ Liberation also extended to divorce and remarriage in cases of adultery, abandonment, and concealed antecedent impotence. See Thomas Safley, *Let No Man Put Asunder: The Control of Marriage in the German Southwest, A Comparative Study, 1550-1600* (Kirksville: Sixteenth Century Publishers, 1984), and idem, "Protestantism, Divorce, and The Breaking of The Modern Family" in Kyle Sessions and Philipp Bebb (eds.), *Pietas et Societas: New Trends in Reformation Social History. Essays in Memory of Harold J. Grimm* (Kirksville: Sixteenth Century Publishers, 1985), 35-56. See also Robert M. Kingdon, *Adultery and Divorce in Calvin's Geneva* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

³⁴ Scharffenorth, "Martin Luther," 115-119; cf. Gerhard Forde, *Theology is for Proclamation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990).

widespread judgments about it. "Now observe that when that clever harlot, our natural reason... takes a look at married life, she turns up her nose and says, 'Alas, must I rock the baby, wash its diapers, make its bed, smell its stench, stay up nights with it, take care of it when it cries, heal its rashes and sores, and on top of that care for my wife, provide for her, labor at my trade, take care of this and take care of that, do this and do that, endure this and endure that, and whatever else bitterness and drudgery married life involves? What, should I make such a prisoner of myself? O you poor, wretched fellow, have you taken a wife? Fie, fie, upon such wretchedness and bitterness! It is better to remain free and lead a peaceful, carefree life; I will become a priest or a nun and compel my children to do likewise'" (LW 45: 39). Such thoughts, Luther never tired of asserting, are those of the "blind heathen" who do not know that man and woman are God's creation.

The issue is not just that of the estate of marriage but that spouses find one another in marriage, esteem each other in their own individuality, receive and love each other. Among the "advantages and delights" in marriage are "that husband and wife cherish one another, become one, [and] serve one another" (LW 45: 43). Marriage includes effort, work, and suffering. But it provides the opportunity to complement one another and to stand by one another in the difficulties of life. The promise of marriage is fulfilled when husband and wife trust God's promises in the midst of their difficulties. To Luther marriage is not a static existence but a mutual, reciprocal process of common learning in the structures of life and the practising of faith. Being human is not mere biology but living in a community nourished by early experiences of attention and love in childhood. "No one can have real happiness in marriage who does not recognize in firm faith that this estate together with all its works, however insignificant, is pleasing to God and precious in his sight. These works are indeed insignificant and mean; yet it is from them that we all trace our origin, we have all had need of them. Without them no man would exist. For this reason they are pleasing to God who has so ordained them, and thereby graciously cares for us like a kind and loving mother" (LW 45: 42-43).

It is interesting that three years before he himself married, Luther the monk contemplated the miracle of childbirth and what it means for the husband to

participate in God's work of creation. The husband's relationship to himself changes. What emerges is the readiness to serve a helpless life; a realization that emerges in relationship to his wife. He can no longer disparage the feminine. He no longer desires to be lord over his wife, but rather to be her companion in their common tasks of childrearing. This new understanding makes him capable of relationship and gives him the freedom for activities which beforehand he had seen as women's work. "[W]hen a father goes ahead and washes diapers or performs some other mean task for his child, and someone ridicules him as an effeminate fool – though that father is acting in the spirit just described and in Christian faith – my dear fellow you tell me, which of the two is most keenly ridiculing the other? God, with all his angels and creatures, is smiling – not because that father is washing diapers, but because he is doing so in Christian faith" (LW 45: 40). In care for children Luther clearly saw how husbands and wives were able to do together what God commanded of them because God had created them in his image. To be human is to be open for others, to live with one another and mutually to bear burdens. The quality of their relationship is therefore significant for the experiencing of humanity by their children and relatives in the relations between generations.³⁵

The child is "God's creature" not the parents' possession. Therefore parents are responsible to enable the child to become an adult. In the strict patriarchal context of the sixteenth century, Luther mainly spoke of the responsibilities of the "house father"³⁶ (e.g., in the prefaces to the catechisms). Nevertheless, for Luther the "house mother" has co-responsibility. In his commentary on the Fourth Commandment, Luther speaks of the "Patres et Matres familias." To be parents is "the noblest and most precious work, because to God there can be nothing dearer than the salvation of souls. [Thus]... you can see how rich the estate of marriage is in good works. God has entrusted to its bosom souls begotten of its own body, on whom it can lavish all manner of Christian works.

³⁵ Scharfenorth, "Martin Luther," 121.

³⁶ Luther and his contemporaries generally did not use the word "family." The corresponding concepts were "house" (*Haus*) and "house-estate" (*Hausstand*). Hans Hattenhauer, "Luthers Bedeutung für Ehe und Familie" in Hartmut Löwe and Claus-Jürgen Roepke (eds.), *Luther und die Folgen: Beiträge zur sozialgeschichtlichen Bedeutung der lutherischen Reformation* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1983), 86-109, here 92-93.

Most certainly father and mother are apostles, bishops, priests to their children, for it is they who make them acquainted with the gospel... See therefore how good and great is God's work and ordinance" (LW 45: 46).

Luther does not distinguish between father and mother in relation to the authority and power of parenthood. Both are worthy of love, respect, and obedience in the same measure. "That the wife as housemother bears full co-responsibility is a revolutionary concept in this period."³⁷ Thus, the Protestant parsonage played a significant role in the development of modern German culture. In the words of Adolf von Harnack, "The evangelical parsonage, founded by Luther, became the model and blessing for the entire German nation, a nursery of piety and education, a place of social welfare and social equality. Without the German parsonage the history of Germany since the sixteenth century is inconceivable."³⁸

The *Large Catechism*, which Luther set forth as the "Summa of Holy Scripture," characterizes the basic outline of responsibility common to husband and wife. The church orders as well as many biographical sources reflect Luther's introduction of a change in thinking and relations. Steps toward the deconstruction of the contempt for women included establishment of schooling for girls, participation of women as teachers in catechetical instruction and worship, and the role of midwives as helpers in pastoral care. Yet the power of custom is a strong brake to the change of consciousness in fundamental existential questions. Therefore Luther constantly demanded the reading and learning of the catechism. The doctrines of justification and grace were to prepare the way to a changed consciousness in sexual relations. The proclamation that salvation is received not achieved undercut the perennial human temptation to control others. The good news is that we no longer have to be the captain of our ship and the master of our destiny. In certainty of the grace of God, Christians may breathe freely and in freedom fulfill their tasks in the community and church as "God's co-workers."³⁹

³⁷ Scharffenorth, "Martin Luther," 123.

³⁸ Cited by von Loewenich, "Luthers Heirat," 55. Harrington, *Reordering Marriage*, 83, makes a similar point: "By the end of the sixteenth century, the Protestant *Pfarrhaus* had become a well-established and influential ideological institution in Germany. Catholic reformers could match Lutheran and Calvinist recruitment, training, and disciplining of their respective clerics, but not the living spiritual authority that married ministers lent to the institution of marriage itself."

³⁹ Scharffenorth, "Martin Luther," 124.

Luther developed the office of parenting not only in the catechisms, but also in his writings on education as an instrument for change. He demanded priority of the estate of "parenthood" over other estates in the interest of community. Fathers and mothers must be challenged in their educational duties by the establishment of schools for boys and girls, and through the reform of existing schools. The future quality of political institutions and the leadership in all worldly tasks depends in large measure upon the education of the next generation. Luther developed this concept in his "Sermon On Keeping Children in School" (1530; LW 46: 209-258).

In his explanation of the First Commandment, Luther stated that God "gives us body, life, food, drink, nourishment, health, protection, peace, and all temporal and eternal blessings... Creatures are only the hands, channels, and means through which God bestows all blessings. For example, he gives to the mother breasts and milk for her infant, and he gives grain and all kinds of fruits from the earth for man's nourishment – things which no creature could produce for himself." People overlook this because they receive most gifts mediated through human work. But because God himself gives through these "creatures," "no one should presume to take or give anything except as God has commanded it. We must acknowledge everything as God's gifts and thank him for them, as this commandment requires." The explanation of the Fourth Commandment perceives parents as God's gift to us through whom God's command is laid on our hearts. "Hereby parents become a sacrament to us, the bodily signs of invisible grace."⁴⁰

Luther developed his classification of husband and wife as equally valued members of the church from his theological position that baptism abrogates human distinctions in relation to God. All members participate in the same manner in the gifts of grace. He affirmed this from his early sermons on the sacraments to his late writing "On the Councils and the Churches." "[A]ll baptized women are the spiritual sisters of all baptized men by virtue of their common baptism, sacrament, faith, Spirit, Lord, God, and eternal heritage" (LW 45:24). Therefore their lives are given a common goal to be reconciled with one

⁴⁰ Albrecht Peters, *Kommentar zu Luthers Katechismen*, Vol. 1: *Die Zehn Gebote* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 205.

another and to participate in the renewal of the world. "The knowledge of the necessary renewal of the relationship of man and woman grounded in the understanding of baptism corresponds to the fundamental Reformation insight that human relationships among Christians are not determined by power or control relations."⁴¹

I have sketched Luther's theology and experience of marriage and family. Does this resource have a future? I think so. Obviously the sixteenth century is in many ways far removed from us, and we cannot just re-pristiniate Luther's perspectives for our time. Yet Luther is a valuable resource for our own struggles with marriage and family.

First of all, the setting for Luther's reflections is that of pastoral care. Luther opposed theological abstractions, and practiced theology in the midst of life. His treatises on marriage and family developed from his sermons. His "The Estate of Marriage" (1522, LW 45:11-49) exemplifies his pastoral intention. "How I dread preaching on the estate of marriage! I am reluctant to do it because I am afraid if I once get really involved in the subject it will make a lot of work for me and for others... But timidity is no help in an emergency; I must proceed. I must try to instruct poor bewildered consciences..."⁴² Luther's discovery is what every pastor will discover once he or she gives permission for people to bring their concerns before the church. Once you preach about spouse abuse, for example, you will discover there is lots of abuse going on under your nose. Such abuse did not just happen after you preached about it! It has always been there, but now permission has been granted to bring it to light. Marriage, which Luther termed, an "external worldly thing," is relevant for piety, for the praxis of Christian life.⁴³

Second, again in contrast to his time as well as a salutary reminder to us,

⁴¹ Scharffenorth, "Martin Luther," 129.

⁴² LW 45: 11 cited by Oswald Bayer, "Luther's Ethics as Pastoral Care," *Lutheran Quarterly* 4/2 (1990), 125-142, here 126. On the important role of sermons, see Eileen Dugan, "The Funeral Sermon as a Key to Familial Values in Early Modern Nördlingen," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 20/4 (1989), 631-644.

⁴³ Eberhard Winkler, "'Weltlich Ding' oder 'Göttlicher Stand'? Die Ehe als Bewährungsfeld evangelischer Frömmigkeit," *Luther* 62 (1991), 126-140, here 128. See also Grethe Jacobsen, "Women, Marriage, and Magisterial Reformation: The Case of Malmø, Denmark" in Sessions and Bebb, *Pietas et Societas*, 57-77.

Luther understood sex to be part of God's good creation. "Christians who have been transformed by the gospel are not to avoid sex, but to dedicate their sexual gifts – like all others – both joyfully and shamelessly to the glory and service of God."⁴⁴ To be sure, Luther continued to affirm that ancient view that marriage is a "remedy against sin," but this view did not dominate him. For Luther sex is not a necessary evil, but marriage is necessary in order that sex not become evil.⁴⁵ The passion of the bride and bridegroom for each other is the greatest love people can have (WA 17/II: 350, 35-351,11). Sexual feeling and the admiration of the other sex is implanted in persons by God, and is expressed by sleeping together, kissing, and embracing.⁴⁶ Luther does not hesitate to speak of this I-thou relationship in the medieval mystical term for the relationship of God and the person, *Brautliebe*. "For there are many loves, but none is so passionate and fiery as the *Brautliebe* which a new bride has for her bridegroom and the bridegroom has for his bride. This love does not look for use [of the other], nor present, nor rule, nor golden rings and the like; but it looks only to the bridegroom. And if all these were given, still it would not look to them, but says, I will love you alone. And if in return it had nothing at all, still it regards him the same and will have him. That means right *Brautliebe*. But where one looks to use, that is whore's love [*Hurenliebe*] which does not see the person but the benefits; therefore, this love does not last long. The right *Brautliebe* God has delivered to us in Christ... Now as the bridegroom loves the bride, thus has Christ loved us, and we in return as we believe and are the right bride" (WA 13: 11, 4-7).

Luther's positive view of the erotic and its place in life stands against misogyny and the pornography that flows from it. It also stands against the equally destructive romanticism flowing from Hollywood that relativizes relationships on the subjective bases of feelings and desires for self-fulfillment. To the romantic Luther said: "You would gladly have a beautiful, good, and rich wife if you could. Indeed, we really ought to paint you one with red cheeks and white legs! These are the best, but they usually cook poorly and pray badly."⁴⁷ Marriage is an order of God's creation that in itself pleases God. The decisive

⁴⁴ Lazareth, *Luther on the Christian Home*, 226.

⁴⁵ Eberhard Winkler, "'Weltlich Ding' oder 'Göttlicher Stand'?" 130.

⁴⁶ Olavi Lähteenmäki, *Sexus und Ehe bei Luther* (Turku, 1955), 55-56, 136-137.

⁴⁷ WA TR 6: 6903 cited by Lazareth, *Luther on the Christian Home*, 226.

insight of Luther's marriage ethics is that marriage is not merely the affirmation of the partners but the affirmation of a form of life.⁴⁸ The foundation for marriage and family is thus faith from which flows the fruits of love.

Luther's point is that sexual compatibility, happiness, and self-fulfillment are consequences of faith and trust not their prerequisites. Self-fulfillment is an extremely fragile foundation for any human relationship let alone marriage and family.

Third, Luther's pastoral approach addressed an issue of his day that has some analogy to the present: the medieval practice of clandestine marriage. Luther's objection to clandestine marriage continues to have relevance for it stands against the contemporary privatization that assumes living together is a private affair without social and personal significance. To be sure, Luther agreed with canon law's point that "consent makes the marriage" (*consensus facit nuptias*), but he opposed the Roman church's sacramental view that personal covenant was all that was necessary. He spoke to this issue in his tract "That Parents Should Neither Compel nor Hinder Their Children and That Children Should Not Become Engaged Without Their Parents' Consent" (1524; LW 45: 379-393). Luther's effort to increase the parents' role in the marriage of their children intended to foster responsible decisions, not to constrict the children. "Together, members of the family worked to form marriages that preserved the material and moral interests of kin and community. In the matter of consent, then, the dialectic resolved itself in a higher truth, common interest, and cooperation."⁴⁹ Luther opposed secret betrothals without the consent of parents and the public support of the community because he saw that it is usually the woman and her children who are at risk of being discarded with no rights. In these arrangements to live together, the woman could not file suit for her rights if the man left her. Luther stated clearly: "Secret engagements should not be the basis of any marriage whatsoever. A secret engagement should yield to a public one" (LW 46: 267). "Marriages" without marriage certificates, according to

⁴⁸ Winkler, "'Weltlich Ding' oder Göttlicher Stand?" 130-131.

⁴⁹ Thomas M. Safley, "Civic Morality and the Domestic Economy" in R. Po-Chia Hsia (ed.), *The German People and the Reformation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 173-190, here 174.

Luther's experience led to legal, economic, and pastoral problems.⁵⁰ Such arrangements undercut the communal stake in family life. Furthermore, the theological perspective that marriage is based in faith and trust makes a "trial marriage" an oxymoron. Public marriage is difficult enough, secret marriages which lack legal and communal support are even more so. Every marriage is a risk, but a clandestine marriage based only on mutual good will exacerbates rather than minimizes the risk.

Fourth and finally, marriage and family is a Christian calling. Luther's sermons and catechisms made it clear in contrast to the theology and laws of the medieval church that home and discipleship are not mutually exclusive. To the contrary, it is precisely in marriage that chastity is possible, and religious vocation finds its realization. We have forgotten the explosive power of Luther's doctrine of vocation. To the medieval vocation was limited to priests, nuns, and monks. The thought that persons could serve God in marriage was revolutionary. Justification by grace alone apart from works liberated Christians from achieving salvation for service to the neighbour. And the neighbour is always the person encountered in the concrete situation, that is, parents, spouse, and children. It is often thought that Luther's exhortation to remain in one's calling merely reflects the patriarchal conservatism of his day. Precisely the opposite is the case. Luther was rejecting flight into self-chosen religious callings of clericalism, and calling people to serve others in the web of relationships where they live. We are to do what God commands, not what we fancy God would like. The perennial temptation is to desire to do "important" things rather than sweep the floor, change diapers, and do the dishes. But we are not called to self-chosen extraordinary tasks but to service in the world. Luther's point here is always timely, especially for religious folk like pastors. It is so easy to rationalize long days as the Lord's work; to rationalize absence from home in terms of discipleship. But then who will be spouse and parent? Not God; that is not his vocation, it's yours! Of course this applies to all areas of the church's work. It is often easier for church activity to interfere with marriage and family than one's job.

It is precisely in our vocations that the cross and resurrection are active, but we often try to choose our crosses elsewhere so they will be easier to bear.

⁵⁰ Hattenhauer, "Luthers Bedeutung," 92; Winkler, "'Weltlich Ding oder Göttlicher Stand?'" 128-129, 137.

"Luther moved the theology of the cross from self-chosen piety to God-commanded works of love... The old person dies in self-offering for the neighbor; in this sacrifice he is united with the death of Christ and possesses the new life hidden under the death of self in service to others in the midst of earthly life... 'Vocation is the work of faith; vocation is worship in the realm of the world.'" ⁵¹ Hans Hillerbrand has identified this understanding of vocation as the expression of Lutheran spirituality that "begins and ends with the celebration of the mundane, the ordinary life as the vehicle for glorifying God... the doxology of the ordinary."⁵²

To say with Luther that spouses and their children are sinners instructed by forgiveness is no mere theological turn of phrase but a hard reality. But as long as families live from forgiveness, as "sinners and righteous at the same time," they may give to one another the forgiveness they receive from God. This is easier said than done, especially in a culture that constantly promotes idealistic and romantic images of self-fulfillment contingent on pleasure. What we hear from Luther is that marital bliss is not maintained without preparedness for suffering. The joy of marriage like everything else in life is a gift that we can only thankfully receive. But this joy may be quickly lost if it is not at the same time received as a task. What is at play here in Luther's terms is the dialectic of law and gospel. The gospel frees us from narcissistic preoccupation to give and receive love. But the law also calls forth this love, jolting us out of complacency and driving us ever anew to seek and to give forgiveness.⁵³ Marriage is both grace and work under cover of which God gives his gifts. Marriage and family is one of God's masks. "He could give children without using men and women. But He does not want to do this. Instead He joins man and woman so that it appears the work of man and woman, and yet He does it under the cover of such masks. We have the saying: 'God gives every good thing, but not just by waving a wand.' God gives all good gifts; but you must lend a hand and take the

⁵¹ Carter Lindberg, "Luther's Concept of Offering," *Dialog* 35/4 (1996), 251-257, here 254; citation from Vilmos Vajta, *Die Theologie des Gottesdienstes bei Luther* (Stockholm: Svenska Kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag, 1952), 314. See also Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), 4-10, 28, 120, 137-140, 228-229.

⁵² Hans J. Hillerbrand, "The Road Less Traveled? Reflections on the Enigma of Lutheran Spirituality" in Daniel N. Harmelink (ed.), *Let Christ be Christ. Theology, Ethics & World Religions in the Two Kingdoms. Essays in Honor of the Sixty-Fifth Birthday of Charles L. Manske* (Huntington Beach: Tentatio Press, 1999), 129-140, here 138, 140.

⁵³ Winkler, "Weltlich Ding' oder Göttlicher Stand?" 134-135.

bull by the horns; that is you must work and thus give God good cause and a mask" (LW 14: 114-115).

Here, too, the theology of the cross affirms that God deals with sinners on the basis of their sin, not on the basis of their achievements. The good news is that the gospel is for failures. The theology of glory (cheap grace) fails to comprehend that God is hidden under the cross and that faith is not based on empirical verification or signs and wonders. "God's gifts and benefits are so hidden under the cross that the godless can neither see nor recognize them but rather consider them to be only trouble and disaster..." (WA 31/I: 51, 21-24). In contrast to the theology of glory, with its self-chosen works, the theology of the cross propels personal engagement where God wills to be found⁵⁴ - in the neighbor who is our parent, spouse, and child.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ See the classic exposition of Luther's theology of the cross by Walther von Loewenich, *Luther's Theology of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976).

⁵⁵ This article is a revised version of "The Future of a Tradition: Luther and the Family" that appeared in Dean Wenthe, et al. (eds.), *All Theology is Christology. Essays in Honor of David P. Scaer* (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 2000), 133-51.

THE KENOTIC CHRISTOLOGY OF CHARLES GORE, P. T. FORSYTH AND H. R. MACKINTOSH

Adrian Giorgiov

Introduction

One of the most influential Christologies in the recent past was that based on the *kenosis* or divine self-emptying in Christ. Starting with Gottfried Thomasius in 1845 through P. T. Forsyth and H. R. Mackintosh in this century, men sought a key in the idea of *kenosis* for interpreting to the modern mind the traditional Christian affirmation that Christ is both human and divine.¹

Theologians used *kenosis* as a synonymous term for the Incarnation since the Patristic times, but nothing approaching an acceptance of a kenotic doctrine proper is found in the Church Fathers before the modern period.² There is no information that the Christians of the apostolic age considered this theological question, and elsewhere in the New Testament it is taken as a matter of course that Christ's knowledge was far higher than that of other men, in spite of a few passages that imply a limitation of that knowledge.³

The *kenosis* became a subject of controversy in the first part of the seventeenth century between the theologians of Giessen and those of Tübingen.⁴ The

¹ Donald G. Dawe, "A Fresh Look at the Kenotic Christologies." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 15, no. 3 (Dec. 1962): 337.

² Their 'kenosis' could mean a *krypto-kenosis*, a mere concealment or veiling of Christ's divine activities.

³ These passages reflect instances when Christ could be amazed (Matt. 8:10), when he is said to have learned (Luke 2:52), and the case when he stated categorically that he was ignorant of the time of the Parousia (Mark 13:32 = Matt. 24:36).

⁴ *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (hereafter cited as *CBTEL*), s.v. "Kenosis."

theory enjoyed something of a vogue in the nineteenth century, especially in Lutheran and English theology.

The kenotic Christology, as it was named, was believed to avoid docetism and permit the application of the full range of human predicates to Jesus, including limitation in knowledge.⁵

The orthodox Christology was stated in ontological terms and did not provide answers to the Western thought which had undergone a psychological revolution since the Patristic age. In the modern age the attention was focused on consciousness as a basic datum for thinking about reality. Kenotic theologians saw in the kenotic theory the means of relating the new conception of the personality of Christ to the orthodox doctrine of the two natures.⁶

The basic question was how and to what extent did the humanity of Jesus force him to empty himself of the divine, and at the same time how and to what extent did his divine powers remain? What happened to the person of God himself when divine powers were allowed in the man Jesus Christ? A number of nineteenth-century Lutheran theologians held that the divine Son abandoned his attributes of deity, such as omnipotence, omniscience, and cosmic sovereignty, in order to become man. A more moderate theory maintained that, within the sphere of the Incarnation, the deity so restrained its activity as to allow the existence in the Lord of a limited and genuinely human consciousness. Traditional orthodoxy has generally admitted a self-emptying of the Lord's deity only in the sense that, while remaining unimpaired, it accepted union with a physically limited humanity.⁷

By the time English kenoticists began to expound their views, kenoticism in Germany had been swept away by the flood of the Ritschlian theology. Macquarie thinks that the strength of kenoticism lay in its being essentially a mediating Christology and perhaps it was precisely this mediating character that commended it to *Ecclesia Anglicana*.⁸

The purpose of this article is to present and evaluate three outstanding British kenoticists, Charles Gore, P. T. Forsyth, and H. R. Mackintosh.

⁵ *A Handbook of Theological Terms*, s.v. "Kenosis."

⁶ Dawe, 342-3.

⁷ *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, s.v. "Kenotic Theories."

⁸ John Macquarie, "Kenoticism Reconsidered," *Theology* 77 (Mar. 1974): 116.

Definition and Meanings

The concept of *kenosis* is derived from the Greek word *κενόσις*, meaning "emptying". The word entered theological language from Phil. 2:7, "[Christ] emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men." In general terms, *kenosis* is the self-renunciation of the divine nature, at least in part, by Christ in the Incarnation.⁹ However, one can distinguish several particular interpretations of the concept in the available kenotic literature. "According to some, *kenosis* means that Christ divested himself of his divine attributes during his earthly career. According to others, the attributes were retained, although hidden from view [*krypto-kenosis*]."¹⁰ Another interpretation claims that the *kenosis* refers not to the subtraction of divinity, but the addition of humanity.¹¹ Some questioned whether Phil. 2:7 speaks of a diminution of the humanity of the Son of God, or of a diminution involving his divinity itself. A. H. Leitch presents the spectrum of five possible interpretations:

- (1) In the Incarnation, Christ gave up all divine attributes and, thus, ceased all cosmic functions and divine consciousness (Gess, Beecher, et al.).
- (2) A distinction is made between essential and relative attributes in God, and Christ in His Incarnation gave up not His essential attributes but only His relative attributes (Thomasius, Delitzsch, et al.).
- (3) In His obedience to His Father, Christ gave up no powers of the Deity but gave up their independent exercise.
- (4) His humanity was such that he did not exercise His divine powers at all (Martensen, Gore).
- (5) The divine nature united itself with His humanity only gradually, and His full deity was consummated finally at the resurrection. The Incarnation was process rather than act (Dorner).¹²

Factors Leading to the Kenotic Theory

The converging of various factors led to the development of kenotic Christologies. The creeds said that God truly was in Christ, very God, very man. If to be human is to learn, grow, and to be God is to be omniscient, how can

⁹ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.vv. "Kenosis, Kenotic, Kenotism."

¹⁰ *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*, s.v. "Kenosis."

¹¹ *Baker's Dictionary of Theology* (hereafter cited as *BDT*), s.v. "Kenosis," by John H. Gerstner.

¹² *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, s.v. "Kenosis," by A. H. Leitch.

these two be in one person? The theology of the Middle Ages so honoured the divine nature of Christ that it overlooked all limitation assumed in the union of that nature with the human.

In the nineteenth century, consciousness was a central category of psychology. Consequently, the reasoning was that if at our "center" is our consciousness, and if Jesus was both omniscient God and limited man, then he had two "centers" and was, thus, fundamentally not one of us.¹³

Another factor was the "Jesus of history" movement which sought through historical criticism of the Gospels to "rediscover" a supposed human Jesus beyond the Christological dogmas of the Church.¹⁴ Lutheran theology, starting from the premise of *communicatio idiomatum*, so divinized the human nature of Christ, that it produced a type of Monophysitism. The nineteenth-century Lutherans, led by Thomasius, proceeded to invert the *communicatio idiomatum* formula and asserted the communication of Christ's human attributes to his deity. In this way, Ralph Martin points out, they sought to safeguard the reality of his humanity at the expense of abolishing a continuance of his deity into his incarnate experience.

The Lutheran view was that through the *communicatio idiomatum* the Logos imparted divine attributes to Christ's human nature, so that even the baby Jesus could rule the world. Hence the "self-emptying" had reference not to the pre-existent, but to the incarnate Logos. The Reformed view, on the other hand, rejected the idea of *communicatio idiomatum*, and maintained that the "self-emptying" referred to the pre-existent Logos. Thus, in becoming incarnate, the Logos did not cease from his pre-incarnate activities, but continued to rule the world from a centre of consciousness, so to speak, "outside the flesh." The kenotic doctrine aimed to avoid these charges and countercharges.¹⁵ It

¹³ *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (hereafter cited as *EDT*), s.v. "Kenosis, Kenotic Theology," by Stephen M. Smith.

¹⁴ *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religion*, s.v. "Kenotic Theories," by T. Early. Opponents of this approach hold that it seems more like a pagan story of metamorphosis than like the Christian doctrine of Incarnation.

¹⁵ *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (hereafter cited as *NIDCC*), rev. ed., s.v. "Kenosis," by Ralph P. Martin. See also Philip S. Watson, "Books on the Person of Christ: The Kenosis Doctrine in H. R. Mackintosh's 'The Person of Jesus Christ.'" *The Expository Times* 64 (Dec. 1952):68-9.

attempted to preserve the two-natures doctrine of Christ. The motivation seems to have been a desire to emphasize Christ's humanity and, possibly, to maintain his ability to err.

The first to state the kenotic doctrine scientifically was Gottfried Thomasius (1802-75), a leader of the Erlangen school. His kenoticism was moderate.¹⁶ In light of the seventeenth-century argument between the theologians of Giessen and Tübingen, Thomasius said that Christ assumed a sleeplike unconsciousness of the divine nature during his earthly life, and the exclusion of the Son from the Trinity during that period.¹⁷ According to him, it was not the incarnate Christ who "emptied" himself of his divine properties but the divine Logos at the moment of Incarnation.

Thomasius set in motion what P. Henry called "the fourth great attempt at a theological explanation of Christ's being".¹⁸ In the following, this article will focus on the English model of the kenotic doctrine, taking a closer look at three of its outstanding representatives.

CHARLES GORE

Background

"Almost every book written on Christology within the past fifty years in the English-speaking world contains at least a reference to Gore's kenotic theory and, often as not, a critical assessment of it."¹⁹ Charles Gore (1853-1932) was an Anglican bishop, interested in social reform.²⁰ Norman Hope describes him as "an Anglo-Catholic of the most liberal kind who accepted the findings of evolutionary science and biblical criticism."²¹ His trilogy, *Belief in God* (1921), *Belief in Christ* (1922), and *The Holy Spirit and the Church* (1924), was widely read

¹⁶ More radical kenoticists, like Gess, insisted that the Son of God lost even his eternal self-consciousness in his descent into human flesh, and only gradually regained it during his earthly ministry.

¹⁷ *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, s.v. "Kenosis," by E. McChesney.

¹⁸ NIDCC.

¹⁹ James Carpenter, *Gore: A Study in Liberal Catholic Thought* (London: The Faith Press, 1960), 147.

²⁰ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed., s.v. "Gore, Charles."

²¹ *Who's Who in Christian History* (hereafter cited as *Who's Who*), s.v. "Gore, Charles," by Norman V. Hope.

and appreciated. These three works were reissued in a single volume as *The Reconstruction of Belief* (1926).

Kenosis

The event which put kenosis on the agenda for British theology was the publication, in 1889, of a collection of essays edited by Gore, entitled *Lux Mundi*. He won national notoriety and upset some of his friends with his editing and contribution to *Lux Mundi*.²² In his essay, "The Holy Spirit and Inspiration," Gore claims that it is not possible to determine the authorship of Old Testament books merely by referring to Jesus' comments on them, as Jesus' knowledge was limited. Gordon Crosse, one of his biographers, notes that long before his death Gore saw some of his statements in *Lux Mundi* accepted by all but the most extreme conservatives.²³

Gore maintained that the *kenosis* was the key to the Incarnation. He dealt with the subject of kenoticism in his Bampton Lectures published in *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (intended to a general audience) and more fully, in his essay, "The Consciousness of Our Lord in His Mortal Life" in *Dissertations on Subjects Connected with the Incarnation* (to a more strictly theological public).

Gore affirms that throughout the Incarnation Christ is both God and man. But, he points out, "the relation of the two natures is different at different epochs. Before the resurrection He, very God, acts under conditions of manhood; since his glorification, He, very man, is living under conditions of Godhead."²⁴

Christ's Consciousness

Gore's kenoticism revolves around the consciousness of Christ. Actually, the second part of his *Dissertations* is entirely dedicated to the topic of Christ's consciousness. He acknowledges that Paul himself does not in any way carry

²² One of his biographers, G. L. Prestige, titles the chapter on this work, "Lux Mundi: Stupor Mundi." See *The Life of Charles Gore* (London: William Heinemann, 1935.) The Oxford Anglican contributors to this volume wished to bring the Catholic faith into line with modern scholarship and moral problems.

²³ Gordon Crosse, *Charles Gore: A Biographical Sketch* (London: Mowbray, 1932), 36.

²⁴ Charles Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (New York: Scribner, 1891), 177.

out the idea of kenosis in detail. He does not apply it to Christ's consciousness in particular. He also makes it clear that Paul, in using these words (self-emptying, making himself poor), "is not thinking of any particular aspect of the human life of Jesus, such as the limitation of His knowledge; but he regards the Incarnation in itself as having involved in some sense the abandonment of 'riches' which belonged to the previous divine state of the Son."²⁵

Gore refrains from attributing to Christ a merely human consciousness. He writes that in the Gospels there always appears the *strictly* [italics added] divine consciousness. He also points out that "we must be content to sacrifice clearness of theory to fidelity to the facts."²⁶

The consciousness of divine sonship co-existed with a really human development of life. Gore points out that there is no doubt that Christ had a knowledge about his own eternal pre-existence and Sonship, but the consciousness is not allowed to interfere with the really human development of life.²⁷ He says that Christ did not teach out of an absolute divine omniscience, but rather as conditioned by human nature. His miraculous power was a gift of God to him as man. Gore gives the analogy of the prophets and apostles, who had supernatural illuminations.²⁸

Christ had a continuous personality, which carried with it a continuous consciousness. This was subjected to limitations by the human nature, but it was not defaced or distorted. We can hardly form any judgment *a priori* as to the attributes he retained or abandoned; but the record seems to assure us that Christ was not habitually living in the exercise of omniscience.²⁹

Gore does not want to put in juxtaposition the divine and human consciousness of Christ – which represents him as acting now as God and now as man, and which attributes to him simultaneously omniscience as God and limitation of knowledge as man. "It is no doubt true that as God He possessed

²⁵ Charles Gore, *The Reconstruction of Belief*, New ed. in one vol. (London: Murray, 1951), 521.

²⁶ Charles Gore, *Can We Then Believe?* (London: Murray, 1926), 195.

²⁷ Gore, *The Incarnation*, 158. Also see Charles Gore, *The New Theology and the Old Religion* (London: John Murray, 1907), 99.

²⁸ Later he uses the example of the prophet Jeremiah to demonstrate the possibility of having 'two lives,' marked by contrast, but not being incompatible. Visions from God and the life of intense personal trial and dismay were possible in the same person.

²⁹ Gore, *Incarnation*, 173.

potentially [italics added] at every moment the divine as well as the human consciousness and nature."³⁰ But he appears to refrain from the divine mode so that he may really enter into human experience.

It is not clear how Gore interpreted this limitation of consciousness, because in another work he writes that "[Christ] in His innermost consciousness knew Himself, and declared Himself to be, the final and infallible judge of all men, not in their outward acts only, but in their secret thoughts also."³¹

To the question whether the self-emptying is to be conceived of as a continual refusal to exercise the free divine consciousness which he possessed, or as something once for all involved in the original act by which he entered into the limiting conditions of manhood, Gore answers that "if we are wise we shall not attempt to answer the question."³²

Gore provides a provisional conclusion in his *Dissertation* which he reinforces as valid after giving a review of the history of Christian opinion, outside the canon, on the subject of Christ's human consciousness, starting with the Church Fathers. The conclusion is opposed to the view that Christ's human mind was filled with complete knowledge, so that he never could really grow in knowledge. The conclusion is also opposed to the view that the Son in becoming man ceased to be conscious of his own eternal sonship.³³

Gore is aware of the fact that there is little support for his theory in Christian tradition. In his conclusion, Gore acknowledges that the great bulk of the language of the ecclesiastical writers is against his theory of Christ's consciousness. However, he says that the theologians who refuse to recognize the real human limitations in the consciousness of Christ have said nothing which can alter his judgment, especially because "they have hardly attempted to examine continuously the intellectual phenomena of our Lord's human life during the period of His humiliation: they have at best but taken particular texts and explained them away in the light of an *a priori* assumption."³⁴

³⁰ Ch. Gore, *Dissertations on Subjects Connected with the Incarnation* (New York: Scribner, 1895), 97.

³¹ Gore, *New Theology*, 106.

³² Gore, *Reconstruction*, 522.

³³ Gore, *Dissertations*, 95.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 202.

Incarnate State and Cosmic Functions

Gore also notes that we must suppose "that in some manner the humiliation and the self-limitation of the incarnate state was compatible with the continued exercise of divine and cosmic functions in another sphere."³⁵ At the same time, he draws that attention to the fact that the New Testament is much more full and clear on the fact of human limitation. He also recognizes that our capacities for speculation about God are exceedingly limited.

Evaluation

Gore divides the attributes of deity into ethical and metaphysical characteristics, claiming that in the Incarnation the ethical attributes remain constant while there is an abandonment of the metaphysical.³⁶ However, he seems to contradict this distinction when he maintains that the attributes of God are not separable from one another.³⁷ Gore makes clear that the right way to understand the Incarnation is to contemplate it morally. "It is an act of moral self-denial such as can be an example to us men in our efforts at sympathy and self-sacrifice."³⁸

One feature of Gore's theory that has been severely attacked is his terminology. Sometimes he speaks of the Lord's *restraining* of prerogatives, other times of *abandonment* or *surrender*. In *Belief in Christ* (the second part of the trilogy *Reconstruction of Belief*), however, he says that there is no full answer whether the kenosis was continuous refusal to exercise the divine consciousness or something once for all involved in the act of entering into the conditions of manhood. Gore concludes his lecture on this subject saying that "after all, we shall not if we are wise, expect to understand the whole matter."³⁹

Carpenter, in his evaluation of Gore's kenotic theory, concludes that "from an intellectual standpoint Gore's theory is riddled with difficulties, but from a moral and devotional perspective it has vast appeal. It secures as no other theory can what is perhaps the most religiously appealing aspect of the mighty act of God in Christ – its costliness."⁴⁰

³⁵ Ibid., 93.

³⁶ Carpenter, *Gore*, 168.

³⁷ Gore, *Dissertations*, 219.

³⁸ Gore, *Incarnation*, 121.

³⁹ Ibid., 175.

⁴⁰ Carpenter, *Gore*, 171.

P. T. FORSYTH

Background

Peter Taylor Forsyth (1848-1921) was a congregational minister and theologian of Scottish birth and upbringing. He spent a year at Göttingen studying under Albrecht Ritschl. By 1896 he had turned his back on the liberalism of his younger days.⁴¹ He restated and redefined orthodoxy, acquiring the reputation as the prophet of what was to be called 'neo-orthodoxy'.⁴² Although he did not become a conservative evangelical, he did put at the center of his theology the revelation and grace of God in Christ.⁴³ *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ* was his greatest work; in it he made a creative contribution to Christology.

Kenosis

The preliminary assumption of Forsyth's kenotic theory is Christ's eternal pre-existence. He does not see any possibility to adjust that pre-existence to the historic Jesus without some doctrine of kenosis.⁴⁴

Forsyth contests that Christ's emptying of himself is not the loss of his true Godhead, but the condition of it. It was his superhuman power that made him able to limit his power. "Among the infinite powers of the Omnipotent must be the power to limit Himself... Incarnation is not impossible to the Infinite; it is necessary."⁴⁵ Otherwise God's infinitude would be limited by human nature in the sense of not being able to enter it. "God would be curtailed to the extent of His creation. And that would be a more fatal limitation to His power than any He could suffer from being in it."⁴⁶ Actually, he writes, Christ reconquered by moral conflict, a province, *even within himself*, which was always his by right.⁴⁷ He

⁴¹ *Who's Who*, s.v. "Forsyth, Peter Taylor," by Peter Toon.

⁴² *Dictionary of Scottish Church History & Theology*, (hereafter cited as *DSCHT*.) s.v. "Forsyth, Peter Taylor."

⁴³ *Who's Who*, s.v. "Forsyth."

⁴⁴ Forsyth notes that the alternative to a kenosis used to be a *krypsis*, or conscious concealment of the active divine glory, which had become an impossible idea. See Peter Taylor Forsyth, *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1909), 294.

⁴⁵ Peter Taylor Forsyth, *God the Holy Father*, new ed. (London: Independent Press, 1954), 33.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Forsyth, *Person of Christ*, 311.

also stresses the volitional nature of the kenosis, for it is this which is the key to a positive theology. "Christ never merely accepted His fate; He willed it."⁴⁸ Forsyth points out that if the humiliation was moral in its central feature, then the central feature of the Incarnation was not metaphysical but moral also.⁴⁹

Forsyth makes a distinction between the phrases, "He emptied Himself," and "He humbled Himself." The first took place before Jesus was born, before the foundation of the world; the second was the visible aspect of Christ's human life.⁵⁰

Self-Reduction

Forsyth points out that "self-emptying" is not the best way to describe the kenosis. He suggests that instead of speaking of certain attributes as renounced, it would be better to speak of a new mode of their being. The divine attributes were not discarded, only retracted or condensed. They are not destroyed when they are reduced to a potentiality. They are only concentrated. Instead of being actual, they became for a time only potential. Thus, "the self-reduction, or self-retraction, of God might be a better phrase than the self-emptying."⁵¹

Christ's Knowledge

Christ's knowledge of his divinity, no matter how partial, is a vital aspect in Forsyth's Christology. He writes that the Gospels reflect Christ's messianic sense of himself, not only as Judge and King, but also as Redeemer.⁵² However, there are instances when Christ's knowledge is limited. One example of Christ's limited knowledge, even about himself, is regarding the cross. He thinks that Christ was not sure that the cross was the Father's will till the very last.⁵³ Forsyth's theory is that, in the Incarnation, Christ's knowledge became discursive, successive, and progressive.⁵⁴

Forsyth gives some analogies in order to better understand Christ's self-reduction in knowledge. The problem for Forsyth is not whether there has, in

⁴⁸ Forsyth, *The Cruciality of the Cross* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1909), 38.

⁴⁹ Forsyth, *God the Holy Father*, 39.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁵¹ Forsyth, *Person of Christ*, 308.

⁵² Gwilym O. Griffith, *The Theology of P. T. Forsyth* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1948), 51.

⁵³ Forsyth, *Person of Christ*, 301.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 310-1.

fact, been such a kenosis but rather how we are to conceive of it.⁵⁵ When he uses four human analogies, he writes about a contraction of consciousness.⁵⁶ He notes one great difference between these analogies and Christ's experience – just because he was God, the self-dispowering of the Son was more complete than anything that could be described by human analogy.

By the contraction of consciousness, Christ could enter into the status of real humanity. One question related to this contraction of consciousness is the possibility for Christ to sin. Forsyth counters the question by asking, "What if his kenosis went so far that though the impossibility [of sinning] was there[,] he did not know of it?"⁵⁷

Plerosis

Forsyth regards kenotic theories deficient if they turn only on the descent and humiliation side of Christ's experience. While many theologians stop with kenosis, he insists that the self-humbling of Christ must be matched by an increasing fullness (or fulfillment), the *plerosis*. Through his entire lifetime, Christ is growing into what he actually is. If in his kenosis he represents God's movement toward man, in his plerosis he represents man's movement toward God.⁵⁸ Thus, man's religious experience shown in the two vertical movements – God seeking man and man seeking God – is embodied in Christ.⁵⁹

Evaluation

Forsyth does not deal with the question of the Logos during the Incarnation. Cocks thinks that Forsyth "seems to allow for the possibility that the Divine

⁵⁵ *A Handbook of Christian Theologians*, enlarged ed., s.v. "P. T. Forsyth," by Robert McAfee Brown.

⁵⁶ One analogy is of a student who has to lay aside his scholarly future because of the death of his father and take care of the family business. He gradually forgets most of what he once knew. Thus, a moral and sympathetic volition leads to a certain contraction of the consciousness.

⁵⁷ Forsyth, *Person of Christ*, 301.

⁵⁸ *Handbook of Theologians*.

⁵⁹ NIDCC, s.v. "Forsyth, Peter Taylor," by Haddon Willmer. See also Hunter, A. M., *P. T. Forsyth* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 68. Hunter writes that in this book Forsyth consciously goes "against the stream" of most liberals of his day, so that, in 1909, there were few to appraise it at its true greatness. H. R. Mackintosh, in his book on the *Person of Jesus Christ*, discerned the originality and power of Forsyth's volume; but it had to wait till 1925 for a just verdict on its worth. This came from the Anglican J. K. Mozley.

attributes exist in two modes – the infinite and the finite – concurrently.⁶⁰

Forsyth acknowledges that we cannot fully understand how the kenosis could happen, and how a divine consciousness could reduce itself by volition. "If we knew and could follow that secret we should be God and not man."⁶¹ As Cocks puts it, "Forsyth does us an immense service by reminding us of the need for the 'moralizing' of our theological thinking."⁶²

H. R. MACKINTOSH

Background

Hugh Ross Mackintosh (1870-1936) was regarded by many as the greatest British theologian of his generation. He studied in Edinburgh and at various German universities. He was appointed to the chair of systematic theology at New College, Edinburgh in 1904. Some think that he "made his positive theological contribution most distinctively in *The Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, in which he espoused a judicious kenoticism."⁶³

He had read widely in the German kenotic theologies of the nineteenth century, but he sought to move on from what he believed were their failed attempts to the true 'value of kenotic conception'.⁶⁴ He distanced himself from the representatives of the earlier forms of this theory (G. Thomasius, W. F. Gess) and identified more closely with the work of his fellow Scots (D. W. Forrest and especially with P. T. Forsyth).⁶⁵

Mackintosh himself thinks that the Fathers had not even begun to look in the direction of a kenotic theory. However, he draws attention to the fact that whenever the Church Fathers tried to shake off the haunting docetism and take

⁶⁰ Harry F. Lovell Cocks, "Books on the Person of Christ: P. T. Forsyth's 'The Person and Place of Jesus Christ.'" *The Expository Times* 64 (Apr. 1953): 197.

⁶¹ Forsyth, *Person of Christ*, 295.

⁶² Cocks, 198.

⁶³ *DSCHT*, s.v. "Mackintosh, Hugh Ross."

⁶⁴ Robert R. Redman, "H. R. Mackintosh's Contribution to Christology and Soteriology in the Twentieth Century," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 41 (1988): 517.

⁶⁵ *DSCHT*, s.v. "Christology," by Donald Macleod.

the idea of Incarnation seriously, it is to the side of kenosis that their best thoughts incline.⁶⁶

After giving a review of previous kenotic theories, Mackintosh attributes the reopening of the kenotic approach in England to a striking coincidence of results in a series of important works published in the last fifteen years, prior to his book on the person of Christ (1912).⁶⁷ At the same time, he states that "it would be foolish to say that anything like a movement has begun."⁶⁸

While there are still difficulties of interpretation, he insists that these should not stop anyone to surround the kenotic interpretation with neutralizing qualifications.⁶⁹ "There is a vast stake in the *kenosis* as a fact, whatever the difficulties as to its method may be. No human life of God is possible without a prior self-adjustment of deity."⁷⁰

Kenosis

According to Mackintosh, there are four elements that cannot be held together without the kenotic approach: (1) Christ is now divine; (2) his divinity is eternal, not acquired; (3) his earthly life was unequivocally human, and (4) we cannot predicate of him two consciousnesses or wills. Besides kenosis, the other possibilities are that he acquired Godhead – which is pagan; or that his deity was unmodified while living his earthly life – which is unhistoric. By excluding these options, the only remaining possibility is his self-reduction, the *kenosis*.⁷¹

Mackintosh claims that the doctrine does not depend upon a particular exegesis of Phil. 2:7 or any other Pauline passage. Christ put aside the *relative* attributes of deity, such as omnipresence and omniscience, while retaining such *essential* attributes as holiness and love. In fact, the divine attributes were not laid aside; they were just modified to function in new ways. Christ had these divine

⁶⁶ Hugh Ross Mackintosh, *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, 2d ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1913), 269. Mackintosh mentions several times the docetic heretic view; he seems to underline that his view is different from the docetic one.

⁶⁷ Mackintosh, *Doctrine of Christ*, 465-6. He mentions the works of Fairbairn, Forrest, Forsyth, Gore, Garvie, Walker, and Weston.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 463.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 465.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 470.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 470.

attributes within reach, though he took only what was essential to his vocation.⁷²

Mackintosh thinks that it is difficult to separate God's relative and essential attributes regarding the self-renunciation. The abandonment of this or that attribute is a conception too sharp and crude. Instead, he suggests, it is possible to conceive the Son as now possessing all the qualities of Godhead in the form of concentrated potency rather than of full actuality, *δύναμαι* rather than *ειεργέω*. So Christ, who had divine knowledge (omniscience) within reach, took only what was essential to his vocation. The same principle is true regarding omnipotence.

"This is no case of a mere man rising at last to Divine honours; throughout the Person in view is One whose life is continuous with the life of God, in whom, as an infinite fountain, there exists eternally all that Jesus is to grow to. What Christ is by potency, with a potentiality based in his personal uniqueness, God is actually for ever."⁷³ Watson considers Mackintosh's statement about God reducing his almightiness from actuality to potentiality to be misleading, for God in becoming incarnate does not limit, but exercises his power to do whatever Holy Love may will to do. But in that case, why talk of limitation, reduction? He concludes that the Incarnation is not a limitation, but a demonstration, of divine infinitude. If God could not become incarnate, clearly his power and love would be limited.⁷⁴

Ethics and Immutability

Mackintosh agrees with Forsyth concerning the moral as well as the theological necessity of the kenosis. He believes that the most profound motive operating in the kenotic theories is that sense of sacrifice on the part of the pre-existent Son.

He also agrees with Forrest regarding the divine elements in Christ's character, which are not metaphysical, but ethical and spiritual; thus, they are a reminder of the fact that the deepest qualities in God and man are akin.⁷⁵

He insists on the need to ethicize our concept of God's immutability. "The

⁷² *DSCHT*, s.v. "Christology."

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 479.

⁷⁴ Philip S. Watson, "Books on the Person of Christ: The Kenosis Doctrine in H. R. Mackintosh's 'The Person of Jesus Christ.'" *The Expository Times* 64 (Dec. 1952):71.

⁷⁵ Mackintosh, *Doctrine of Christ*, 265.

idea of the changelessness of the Absolute could be ... used to put the very idea of divine self-limitation out of court ... Christ reveals in God ... the infinite mobility of absolute grace... . What is immutable in God is the holy love which makes his essence.⁷⁶

Mackintosh explains that the kenosis and the plerosis (the development and culmination of Christ's person) are moral correlates. He who lost his life for our sake thereby regained it.⁷⁷

Christ's Consciousness

Mackintosh refuses to speculate some psychological theories as to how two streams of consciousness or will co-existed or mingled in the same personality. He says that it has never been proved that there are two streams. In his theory, Jesus had a filial consciousness, being in a perfect relationship with the Father, which relationship is intransferable by its nature.⁷⁸ "Jesus' knowledge of God was experimental in kind – mediated, that is, by the unmeasured gift to Him of the Spirit."⁷⁹ The mighty works of Jesus were not done out of independent personal resources, but through power received from God.⁸⁰ Occasions of exalted self-consciousness did not mean mental or spiritual duality. That was rather a profound intuition on Jesus' part of his own infinite significance both for God and man.⁸¹

He asserts that Jesus' life was wholly restrained within the bounds of manhood. 'His primary descent into the sphere of finitude had veiled in nescience his eternal relationship to the Father.'⁸² He suggests that, 'It can only have been in mature manhood and perhaps intermittently that Christ became aware of his divinity – which must have remained for him an object of faith to the very end.'⁸³ The veil must gradually have worn thinner until, at least in high moments of visitation, he knew himself the Son conditioned in and by

⁷⁶ *DSCHT*, s.v. "Christology." See also Mackintosh, *Doctrine of Christ*, 270.

⁷⁷ Mackintosh, *Doctrine of Christ*, 494.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 483.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 481.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

humanity.⁸⁴ Only his resurrection and exaltation has set free his influence from all limits, whether of place or time.

He suggests that pre-existence might have been a profound thought for Jesus' own mind, and as he grew, the consciousness of God as Father also grew. "If as He looked forward, gradually His eyes were opened to the destiny awaiting Him, He also looked backward and realized that behind or above Him lay a timeless unity with God in which earthly life formed an infinitely momentous episode. When such knowledge was attained, and through what media, we cannot tell."⁸⁵ This gradual eye-opening is somehow in tension with the human analogies Mackintosh gives regarding the limitation of omniscience (mainly borrowed from Forsyth). "We are constantly limiting our actually present knowledge without altering our personal identity."⁸⁶

Donald MacLeod considers this problem of consciousness to be the weakest link in Mackintosh's exposition. "How could someone with no consistent sense of divine identity be the supreme revelation of God?"⁸⁷

Incarnate State and Cosmic Function

Regarding the speculations of the Logos, incarnate and separately and simultaneously, the Logos sustaining the universe, Mackintosh says that the New Testament data are insufficient. Moreover, he wants to refrain from any tendency to ditheism.⁸⁸ In his treatment of the Logos concept, Mackintosh says that "coming forth from God, He took individuality as a man, in unbroken personal continuity with that which He was before."⁸⁹

Evaluation

Probably Mackintosh himself felt the force of the difficulties in his kenotic theory. It is interesting that there are no traces of kenoticism in his later work. While he touches the subject of Incarnation, he does not mention the kenosis

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 447.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 474.

⁸⁷ *DSCHT*, s.v. "Christology."

⁸⁸ Mackintosh, *Doctrine of Christ*, 484.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 119.

even once in *The Originality of the Christian Message*.⁹⁰ In *The Divine Initiative*, he only mentions "the self-abnegating love of the Eternal".⁹¹

James W. Leitch, in the preface to his doctoral dissertation on Mackintosh, *A Theology of Transition: H. R. Mackintosh as an Approach to Barth*, acknowledges that "it may seem a little strange that no special account is here given of Mackintosh's Christology, ...although these were two of his prime interests."⁹² Indeed, Leitch does not touch on the kenotic Christology of Mackintosh, not even when he gives an account of the important elements in the thoughts of Mackintosh in his introductory chapter.

Conclusion

Kenotic Christology has been questioned on two levels: (1) the theological questions that it raises; and (2) whether kenoticism is really implied by Phil. 2:7.

The attributes of omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence are in fact essential attributes of divinity... If Christ be divested of [them], ...it is difficult to see how the doctrine of his divinity could still be maintained... What became of the cosmic functions of the divine Word during the period of the Incarnation? Did the Word abandon them (as *kenosis* seems to imply)? Or was it rather that the divine Word which sustains the universe was both in him, living out the divine life in this human life, and also outside him? To resolve this dilemma the suggestion has been made that there may be some analogy between the conscious mind's relation to the unconscious mind and Jesus' relationship with the divine Word. The conscious mind is only partly aware of its own workings, yet nevertheless it continues to work unconsciously. In a similar way, perhaps Jesus was aware only of what he needed to be aware of as the son and servant of man.⁹³

Phil. 2:7 has been a source of many speculations and various attempts to explain the "emptying of Christ." Many critics of the doctrine of kenosis say that the only obvious message of this text is that the Son of God, while remaining what he was through eternity, in order to save fallen mankind assumed not only its creature-state, but even the state of a suffering and mortal creature.

⁹⁰ Hugh Ross Mackintosh, *The Originality of the Christian Message* (London: Duckworth, 1920) passim.

⁹¹ Hugh Ross Mackintosh, *The Divine Initiative* (London: Student Christian Movement, 1921), 51.

⁹² James W. Leitch, *A Theology of Transition: H. R. Mackintosh as an Approach to Barth* (London: Nisbet, 1952), ix-x.

⁹³ *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, s.v. "Empty," by C. Brown.

Brown says that neither the gospels nor Philippians 2 present the picture of the abandonment of any divine attributes. They do, however, show Jesus clearly accepting the status and role of a servant. As a servant, Jesus accepted the limitations that were the Father's will. Some theologians say that Phil. 2:5-11 is actually a hymn, which utilizes poetic language that was not intended to be used literally. Gerstner insists that the translation of kenosis as "emptied" is somewhat misleading because the verb in the New Testament is commonly used in the metaphorical rather than the literal meaning.⁹⁴

One interpretation related to this statement claims that Paul's intention is ethical rather than doctrinal. Thus, he gives to the Philippians Christ as the best example of selfless love and humility. Therefore, it would be a misuse of Scripture to support doctrinal matters.

Some objected to the kenotic theory that it interferes with the unchangeableness of God. Others have replied to this by saying that "any act on the part of God, affecting his existence internally or externally, that is in harmony with the divine will and being, is consistent with the divine immutability... . As the triune God, there is in his being the possibility for him to distinguish himself from himself also in time."⁹⁵

All three British theologians studied in this article operated with categories of consciousness rather than metaphysics. Consciousness became the essence of personality. Humphreys insists that in British kenotic Christology, the dominant issue was always Christ's knowledge.⁹⁶ Gore's kenotic proposal functions to reinforce his consistent and articulate defense of Chalcedonian orthodoxy. Forsyth sees his theory as a biblical alternative to a static, Greek, outmoded formula found in the Chalcedonian Definition.⁹⁷

All three theologians studied in this article developed their theory after the German theologians had redirected their discussions toward different Christological approaches. The British theologians tried to give better answers to some of the previously asked questions, and to defend the theory against the

⁹⁴ BDT.

⁹⁵ CBTEL.

⁹⁶ Fisher H. Humphreys "The Humanity of Christ in Some Modern Theologies" *Faith and Mission* 5 (Spr. 1988): 8.

⁹⁷ EDT.

attacks of the contemporary German theology (e.g. Ritschlian theology.) At the same time, new questions were raised, to which they could not find adequate and totally acceptable answers.

...the kenotic Christologies did initiate two lines of thought that have continued to shape Christian thought to this day. These have been the redefining of the absoluteness of God and rethinking the humanity of Jesus' mental and emotional life... Kenosis indicated the absolute Lordship of God over every realm of existence – even humanity in its finitude, suffering and death.⁹⁸

Macquarie's statement could be a summarizing evaluation of the work done by the kenoticists. He points out that their mistake was that they tried to determine (more or less) how much of the divine being can be brought within the limits of a human existence. But he confirms that they were right in affirming Christ's full deity and that, in him, God has uniquely descended into his creation, upholding this against minimizing tendencies of the more extreme humanistic Christologies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Dawe, 348.

⁹⁹ Macquarie, 122.

THE BIBLE AND THE CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF EUROPEAN REFORMATIONS

Christopher Ocker

1.

In 1978, Lawrence Duggan argued this in the *Sixteenth Century Journal*¹: those clergy who “toppled” the medieval church – from Marsiglio of Padua and Gerd Groote to Martin Luther, together with hundreds of other clergy who propagated their ideas – did so and did it effectively precisely “because the church had educated them in their responsibilities and brought them to expect great things of it.” He concluded: “For them, as for the laity, the church in the late Middle Ages had provided only too well.” The argument was posed as a corrective to commonly held views: that the Reformation was a pure act of rebellion or that it answered the spiritual decay of late medieval Christianity. Since then, the force of his argument has only grown. Few today would be so confident that the Protestants “toppled” anything, knowing from the study of church discipline and popular culture that it took decades to suppress Catholic rites and assumptions, while village society appears increasingly to have long resisted the best efforts of Protestant clergy in early modern confessional states.² After the debacle of the Schmalkald War, in some cases before, several centers of the Reformation returned to Catholicism (for example, Strasbourg, Augsburg, and Münster) or seemed to slip into a bi-confessional status quo (Erfurt and Magdeburg). The bi-confessional empire allowed by the Peace of Augsburg did

¹ Lawrence G. Duggan, “The Unresponsiveness of the Late Medieval Church: A Reconsideration,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 9(1978):3-26.

² Robert W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk. Popular Propoganda and the German Reformation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), passim, for culture. On the tenacity of village society, see for example C. Scott Dixon, *The Reformation and Rural Society. The Parishes of Brandenburg-Ansbach-Kulmbach, 1528-1603* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 143-202; Wiebe Bergsma, *Tussen Gideonsbende en publieke kerk: een studie over het gereformeerd protestantisme in Friesland, 1580-1650* (Leeuwarden: Fyske Akademy, 1999); Bruce Gordon, *Clerical Discipline and the Rural Reformation: the Synod in Zurich, 1532-1580* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992).

not separate all localities into one or another confession but in many places created a mix, while more purely Lutheran states, like Saxony or Württemberg, preferred peace with their Catholic neighbors to the demands of international Protestantism.³ In all of this, Catholicism was hardly lame, its vitality apparent not only in the reform movements of southern Europe but in its resilience in northern Europe, too, a fact acknowledged by anyone influenced by the claim that Catholic and Protestant reform each reflected aspects of broad, common currents in Europe.⁴ Yet this merely confirms Duggan's main point, the organic relation of sixteenth-century reforms to late medieval religion.

The idea of continuity is old in the historiography of the Reformation. It played an important role among those anxious to link Protestantism to the rise of modernity, a modernity dominated by an industrial north whose forms of social life, religion, and economy would spread throughout the world. The inconvenient fact that this dominance was only apparent in the nineteenth century led inevitably to the recognition of some continuity between the Reformation and the Middle Ages. It was, even a century ago, impossible to deny that many assumptions about the natural and supernatural worlds persisted through the early history of Protestantism, nor were the greatest economic, political, or social advances of the sixteenth century located in Protestant places exclusively, when at all.

So Protestant scholars took a more complicated approach, or rather, two broad approaches to the cultural significance of the Reformation (my distinction neglects many significant differences among these people, which for the present purpose I will ignore). Some believed the Reformation, at its core, contributed directly to the Enlightenment and the rise of modern culture (Karl Holl, Emmanuel Hirsch, and many scholars writing on this subject in the 1920's and 1930's). Martin Luther, they believed, stood in strong discontinuity with the

³ Consider Jill Raitt, *The Colloquy of Montbéliard. Religion and Politics in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁴ See especially the contributions by Hsia, Heckel, Venard, Conrad, Dickerhof, and Ziegler in *Die katholische Konfessionalisierung* (ed.) W. Reinhard, H. Schilling (Münster: Aschendorff, 1995), 158-65, 184-227, 258-95, 348-70, 405-18. Jean Delumeau, Thierry Wanegffelen, *Naissance et affirmation de la Réforme* 8th edition, (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1997), 346-53, 371-92. A.D. Wright, *The Counter-Reformation: Catholic Europe and the Non-Christian World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982).

medieval church, with only one qualification (Karl Holl's), the inspiration Luther received from medieval German mysticism.⁵ In the 1920's, Holl's views dominated the so-called "Luther Renaissance" and were closely associated with interwar attempts to reconstitute a sense of German national identity.⁶ It is perhaps understandable that after the World War II, the approach of Karl Holl seemed far less vulnerable to the attack on "culture-Protestantism," spearheaded by Karl Barth and very influential among Protestant theologians in England and North America. Ever since, the study of the Reformation by church historians and theologians, especially those writing in German and English, has concentrated so very much on the individual genius of the most famous reformers—Luther, John Calvin, and Philip Melancthon chief among them. Karl Holl's immediate successor, Hans Rückert, addressed the cultural significance of the Reformation in an essay called "Reformation: Medieval or Modern?"⁷ He concluded that the Reformation at its core was simply Martin Luther's individual religious consciousness. That alone marked a turning point, an end of the Middle Ages, no matter what Protestants did in the next two hundred years. This approach exerted a strong influence in Protestant theology up to about 1970, if in the "existential" form developed by Rückert's Tübingen successor, Gerhard Ebeling. By mid-century, the emphasis of the Luther Renaissance on Luther's peculiar form of subjectivity coincided with a liberal-Protestant consensus around existentialism and a purely theological definition of Protestant origins, or with a theological definition of the history of the church overall. It was Ebeling who taught us that Church History could be conceived as the history of the proclamation of the Word of God. Were his attention to historical detail not widely known, the point would have been easily dismissed as absurdly reductionistic.⁸ To anyone moved by what Wolfhart Pannenberg

⁵ Karl Holl, "Was verstand Luther unter Religion?" idem, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 1 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1932), 1-110. For this issue, see also Heiko A. Oberman, "Simul gemitus et raptus: Luther and Mysticism," in *The Reformation in Medieval Perspective* (ed.) S. Ozment (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971), 218-51. Kurt Leese, *Die Religion des protestantischen Menschen* (Munich: J.S. Federmann, 1948), remains an excellent review of this literature.

⁶ Joseph Stayer, Heinrich Assel.

⁷ Hans Rückert, "Reformation: Medieval or Modern?," trans. C.E. Carlson, *Journal for Theology and the Church* 2 (1965), 1-19.

⁸ Gerhard Ebeling, "Church History Is the History of the Exposition of Scripture," *The Word of God*

later called Karl Barth's postivism of revelation, it must have seemed an irresistible argument.⁹ It pointed emphatically to the theological character of the history of the church.¹⁰ Others added that John Calvin's theology, in improbable contrast with his immediate successors, was essentially a theology of the incarnate Word¹¹ or a mixture of a new theology of the incarnate Word and an older scholastic biblicism.¹²

If the approach of the Luther Renaissance and its aftermath was theological, there existed an alternative that its principal authors, Ernst Troeltsch and Max Weber, regarded as "sociological."¹³ They and others (Paul Wernle, Basel Professor of New Testament and Church History; Otto Scheel, Luther scholar at Tübingen and Kiel; and Heinrich Hermelink) argued that the influence of the Reformation was irregular, indirect, and only fully appreciated after the Enlightenment. They believed there to be a sharp distinction between an old and a new Protestantism, the old permeated with medieval assumptions and habits, the new giving rise, it was sometimes said, to no less than a new kind of humanity called "der Protestantische Mensch" (Kurt Leese).¹⁴ Whatever continuity existed between the Middle Ages and the Reformation, it was

and Tradition: Historical Studies Interpreting the Divisions of Christianity, trans. S. H. Hooke (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 11-31.

⁹ Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Wissenschaftstheorie und Theologie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973).

¹⁰ Even when the interpretation of scripture was located in the history of European culture in the broadest sense. Karlfried Froehlich, "Church History and the Bible," *Biblical Hermeneutics in Historical Perspective* (ed.) M. S. Burrows, P. Rorem (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 1-15.

¹¹ The principle expositor of this view was Wilhelm Niessel, *Die Theologie Calvins* (Munich: C. Kaiser, 1957).

¹² Edward Dowey, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952, revised edition Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994). Otto Ritschl had earlier placed the blame on Calvin for a biblicism in Protestant theology based on a rigid doctrine of inspiration. *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus*, 4 vols. (Leipzig: J. C. Heinrich, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1908-27), 1:174-92. Similar polarity of scholasticism and humanism in Calvin's thought was argued by William Bouwsma in *John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait* (New York: Oxford, 1988). While humanist rhetoric and method did much to shape Calvin's religious thought, it likewise shaped the thinking of those influenced by Calvin. See Olivier Millet, *Calvin et la dynamique de la parole* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1992) and Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin* (New York: Oxford, 2000), 39-78.

¹³ See Troeltsch's "Die Kulturbedeutung des Calvinismus," *Aufsätze zur Geistesgeschichte und Religionssoziologie* (ed.) H. Baron (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1925), 783-801.

¹⁴ Leese in note 5, above.

ultimately negative, yet Troeltsch and Weber's equivocation about the medieval legacy within Protestantism was enough to force Protestant scholars, even far off in North America, to temper a liberal, modernizing chauvinism.¹⁵ For example in the interwar period, a Cornell University historian, Preserved Smith, argued that neither Protestants nor Catholics could claim the Enlightenment as their own: "a tremendous battle between opposing faiths was once fought, with exhaustion as the result, ...the rationalists then succeeded in imposing on the two parties, convinced that neither could exterminate the other, respect for each other's rights."¹⁶ It looked rather different after World War II, when for example a Princeton church historian, James Hastings Nichols, conceded that although modern democratic movements received their forward motion from the Protestant Reformation, each strand of modern Christianity had its own impact on politics. Liberal democracy, he claimed in a Weberian bow to North American Anglo-Protestantism, was uniquely encouraged by the Calvinists, overagainst the "illiberal" democracies encouraged by Catholics, Marxists, Lutherans, and Russian Orthodox.¹⁷ In the late Cold War, the lines seemed blurrier again, if now to serve ecumenical consensus-building among the confessions. Brian Gerrish called attention to theologians affected by humanist and Enlightenment thought, where Hirsch had once emphasized the philosophers, tracing the lines of Reformation theology from Luther and Calvin to Friedrich Schleiermacher, while locating postwar neo-orthodoxy at the crossroads between neo-confessionalism and modernism (this cultural distinction now seemed more relevant than the nineteenth-century Protestant-Catholic divide).¹⁸

With regard to pre- and post-Reformation movements alike, the effect of Weber and Troeltsch's approach was the same: the picture of contrasting European currents, medieval versus modern or Catholic versus Protestant, has become convoluted and grey. Gone is the core of nineteenth-century modernism, the belief that Martin Luther's view of faith is amazingly similar to a Kantian ethic, the culmination of the Enlightenment's philosophy of the person,

¹⁵ This history was perhaps most convincingly portrayed by Hirsch, *Geschichte der neuern evangelischen Theologie*, 5 vols. (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1949; second edition Mohn, 1960).

¹⁶ Preserved Smith, *The Age of the Reformation* (New York: Henry Holt, 1920), 641.

¹⁷ James Hastings Nichols, *Democracy and the Churches* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1951).

¹⁸ Brian Gerrish, *The Old Protestantism and the New* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

as seen in the theology of Albrecht Ritschl and Wilhelm Hermann; gone too is the belief that Catholicism smothered the intellect, is fundamentally anti-modern, and is legalistic rather than ethical, as explained in the legal history of Rudolf Sohm, and the idea that the northern drift of Europe's cultural and economic center arose from rebellion against papal authority and, in England and Germany, with a "religious, Christian" secularism, according to Gerhard Ritter.¹⁹ The cumulative effect of the Troeltsch-Weber approach was to limit the claims of Protestant progress, a notion somewhat intellectualized by German theologians after World War I and uniquely persistent in North America, as the example of Nichols suggests.²⁰ Yet the Middle Ages was not altogether abandoned as a trope for the regressive, authoritarian, and superstitious elements of European culture and society. Such attitudes seem to have survived even among the social historians, as implied, for example, by Keith Thomas' association of the long Reformation with the decline of superstition.²¹ And even among the historical anthropologists, who like medievalists have a special appreciation for the grotesque and who have taught us that the marvelous in popular culture mutates rather than diminishes in the first half of the sixteenth-century, have often assumed a sharp contrast between the culture of the people from intellectual elites, the people from theologians, be it an undercurrent of paganism or an independent lay theology; but the contrast seems far weaker in the face of the devotional character of much late medieval and Reformation theology alike.²²

¹⁹ Rudolf Sohm, *Wesen und Ursprung des Katholizismus* (Berlin: B.G. Teubner, 1912). Albrecht Ritschl, *Theologie und Metaphysik: zur Verständigung und Abwehr* (Bonn: A. Marcus, 1881). Wilhelm Hermann, "Die Metaphysik in der Theologie," Wilhelm Hermann, *Schriften zur Grundlegung der Theologie* (ed.) P. Fischer-Appelt (Munich: C. Kaiser, 1966), 1:1-80 (first published in 1876). Gerhard Ritter, *Die Weltwirkungsk der Reformation* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1959), here 167.

²⁰ For postwar modifications in the idea of progress among theologians, see John Baillie, *The Belief in Progress* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951).

²¹ Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971). Similarly, Carlos M. N. Eire, *War Against the Idols: the Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

²² Consider the contributions by Lentjes, Ocker, Othenin-Girard, Pohl, and Zika in *Kulturelle Reformation: Sinnformationen im Umbruch*, edited by Bernhard Jussen, Craig Koslovsky (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1999), 29-68, 129-92, 239-84, 317-82; Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978); Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk*, 59-

Thus, the cultural significance of European reformations has, over the course of a century, involved the reassessment of a great many things: the vitality of Catholicism, the persistence of popular culture, the mixture of new and traditional elements in early Protestant thought, and some sense that these shaped and reshaped national and cultural differences within Europe.²³ Each of these areas of scholarship merit closer scrutiny than I can offer here. I would like in the remainder of this essay to focus on the third of these areas, the mixture of new and traditional elements in early Protestant thought, and on one central aspect of it. In recent decades, the search for strands of intellectual continuity between the Middle Ages and the Reformation was first preoccupied with a possible late medieval "Augustinian renaissance." When it proved impossible to trace out, within Martin Luther's religious order, the Order of Augustinian Hermits or among intellectuals in general, a persistent revival of Augustine's anti-Pelagian doctrines that aimed toward a Protestant doctrine of grace, attention turned to the devotional theologies of the fifteenth century, where a somewhat popularized mysticism and a preoccupation with personal faith seem to have led naturally to Protestant developments.²⁴ Earlier scholars, like Emmanuel Hirsch, Rudolf Hermann, and Gerhard Ebeling, had variously traced Luther's theological departure from Catholicism to his interpretation of the Bible.²⁵ The key, they determined, was the distinction of law and gospel and the

147; Bernard McGinn, *Meister Eckhart and the Beguine Mystics* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 1-14; Niklaus Largier, "Von Hedewijch, Mechthild und Dietrich zu Eckhart und Seuse?," *Deutsche Mystik im abendländischen Zusammenhang* (ed.) W. Haug, W. Schneider-Lastin (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 2000), 93-117; Berndt Hamm, "Normative Centering in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries: Observations on Religiosity, Theology, and Iconology," *Journal of Early Modern History* 3 (1999):307-54; Paul Freedman, Gabriele Spiegel, "Medievalisms Old and New: The Rediscovery of Alterity in North American Medieval Studies," *The American Historical Review* 103(1998): 677-705.

²³ For this last matter, see Thomas A. Brady, *The Protestant Reformation in German History*, Occasional Paper 22 (Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, 1998).

²⁴ Berndt Hamm, *Frömmigkeitstheologie am Anfang des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1982). C. Ocker, "Augustinianism in Fourteenth-Century Theology," *Augustinian Studies* 18(1987): 81-106, and Hamm in note 22.

²⁵ Fritz Beisser, *Claritas scripturae bei Martin Luther*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1966), 23-24, 38-54, 70-73, for the relation of Luther's figurative interpretation to medieval exegesis. The problem of Luther's doctrine of the Word touches on the distinction between the "external" and the "internal" Word and the degree of importance to be rendered to each (Beisser stressing the external word in opposition to Rudolf Hermann, "Von der Klarheit der Heiligen Schrift. Untersuchungen

discovery of justification by faith alone in Luther's Christological interpretation of the Psalms (he adapted, Hirsch argued, the medieval hermeneutics of the

und Erörterungen über Luthers Lehre von der Schrift in 'De servo arbitrio,'" in *Studien zur Theologie Luthers und des Luthertums*, v. 2 of *Gesammelte und nachgelassene Werke*, [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1981], 170-255). On this, consider *De servo arbitrio*, WA 18: 605-09. For figurative exegesis, see also David Steinmetz, "Luther and the Ascent of Jacob's Ladder," *Church History*, 55 (1986): 179-92. Karl Holl, "Luthers Bedeutung für den Fortschritt der Auslegungskunst," *Luther*, v. 1 of *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1932), 544-82, dated Luther's hermeneutical breakthrough between 1516 and 1519, and Gerhard Ebeling, *Evangelische Evangelienauslegung. Eine Untersuchung zu Luthers Hermeneutik*, (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1942; reprinted Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1962), 274ff and idem, "Die Anfänge von Luthers Hermeneutik," *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 48(1951):172-230, reprinted in idem, *Lutherstudien*, 3 vols., (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1971-1989), 1:1-68, dated a preliminary hermeneutical breakthrough between 1513 and 1515. Ebeling very provocatively formulated the interpretive significance of the dichotomy of letter and spirit in the *Dictata super Psalterium*. J. S. Preus later adapted this, when he argued that Luther departed from "medieval" interpretation by perceiving people in the Old Testament as Christians under the promise of future salvation. *From Shadow to Promise: Old Testament Interpretation from Augustine to the Young Luther* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1969), 171-73, 200-11, which presents the essence of Ebeling's position in terms of law and promise, as a criticism of Ebeling, at p. 200 n. 1; consider also 148, 181 n. 12. It was Ebeling who pointed out that the terms of an evangelical, Lutheran dichotomy pertain to both Old and New Testaments as a dichotomy of testaments (i.e. covenants). "Anfänge," 45. The same was found in Luther's 1517/18 lectures on Hebrews. Kenneth Hagen, *A Theology of Testament in the Young Luther. The Lectures on Hebrews* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), esp. 68-70. The clearest statement of Luther's literal interpretation may be found in *De servo arbitrio*, WA 18:699-703, for which see also Hermann, "Klarheit," 233-38. Immanuel Hirsch, "Initium theologiae Lutheri," in *Lutherstudien*, 2 vols., (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1954; written in 1918 and first published in 1920), 9-35, esp. 29-35, traces Luther's discovery of passive justification to his first lectures on the Psalms (1513-15), where the discovery is facilitated by an adaptation of medieval tropology. Ebeling had to concede that Luther's distinction between law and gospel coexisted with the four-fold sense in the *Dictata* ("Anfänge," 51, 53), but insisted that his use of allegory was innovative, in that it was measured by a theology of the cross (ibid., 46), which is probably an exaggerated claim, given the fact that christological interpretations (including those focussed on the passion of Christ) were commonly taken as the allegorical meanings of scriptural texts. Preus believed that a change of viewpoint can be observed at Luther's expositions of Pss. 129 and 142, where there is an equivalence of Old Testament Jews and Christians (*Shadow*, 171-73). Both scholars are merely describing allegories that are no longer distinguished from the literal sense, which had been commonplace for about two hundred and fifty years. Such cannot be taken as evidence of a "hermeneutische Wende," although they manifest the emerging tendencies of Luther's theology. For the relation of Ebeling's understanding of the dichotomy to his own adaptation of Heidegger, Miikka Ruokanen, *Hermeneutics as an Ecumenical Method in the Theology of Gerhard Ebeling* (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola Society, 1982), 64ff. All these other guys. Moeller on preaching, Brecht on Luther and Bible.

four-fold sense), from which Luther progressed to a total collapse of theological meaning into the literal sense of scripture. It seems to me that just as there was a broad continuity of attitudes between Protestants and their Catholic with regard to "devotional theology," so too there was a broad continuity of attitude toward the text of the Bible. The evidence is a late medieval tendency to collapse spiritual into literal meaning, which erodes the semantic basis of the four-fold sense. This can be seen as intrinsic to a "textual attitude" developed in late medieval scholasticism, reinforced by humanist rhetoric, and adapted by Protestant scholars.

2.

I begin with the obvious. The medieval approach to the Bible involved, as the famous Catholic church historian and theologian, Henri de Lubac, explained in depth, the four-fold sense of scripture.²⁶ In medieval Europe and in much of modern Europe, it was believed that the Bible has a literal sense upon which three spiritual, non-literal senses are founded: allegorical (about beliefs), tropological (about morals), and anagogical (about aims and expectations). The foundation of this division of scriptural meaning rested upon a metaphysical premise given its classic medieval formulation in the twelfth century by the theologian-Bible scholars of the abbey of St. Victor in Paris. That premise was frequently summed up in a phrase that appears in several of their writings: *non solum voces sed et res significativae sunt*, "not only words but also things are representational."²⁷ The word "Jerusalem" represents to the mind a thing, a place, to be exact – the ancient city of the Jews. This thing, the ancient city of the Jews, represents to the mind other things more relevant to the soul in its quest for truth: the means of salvation established in the church (allegory), the human soul itself (tropology), or the eternal communion of saints (anagogy). A textual narrative thus conveys something like common-sense knowledge of the world, "things" that are physical objects or tangible (historical) experiences. The

²⁶ Henri de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale: les quatre sens de l'Écriture*, 4 vols. (Paris: Aubier, 1954-64).

²⁷ *Excerptiones*, ii.3, PL 177:205; *De scripturis et scriptoribus sacris*, xiv, PL 175:20f. Ohly, "Vom geistigen Sinn des Wortes im Mittelalter," 4-5 and n. 6, 30-31. Consider also Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana* books one and two.

Victorine semantics of the Bible assumed a schema of *verbum res res*, linked together to produce meaning within a hierarchy. *Verbum* belongs to the realm of human convention. It serves as a sign of *res*. *Res* belongs to the realm of divine artifice, revelation, and as such one *res* can represent other more celestial *res*.²⁸ Thus revelation was associated with the knowledge of things because things, as part of creation, are intrinsically revelatory.

This distinguished spiritual senses from metaphor. Spiritual sense arose from the factual association of an abstract idea with the intrinsic qualities of a created thing, whereas metaphor rested upon the "improper" reference of words.²⁹ The one was real, and the other contrived. Understanding occurs when successions of *res* provoked by texts are possessed by the mind, and the greater the affinity between these things and eternal truth, the greater the quality of understanding. People have, Hugh of St. Victor said, "eyes" of cognition – fleshly, rational, and contemplative – by which one may proceed from phenomena to rational contemplation, and from reason to the contemplation of God.³⁰ Likewise, there is a progression of textual reading from letter to sense to abstract thought, from the finite and definite to the infinite and "undefined," culminating in meditation.³¹

Wherever an observer may be along that train of representations, whether at the first level (a thing signified by a text) or at a further level (a thing signified by a thing), the object of knowledge is a thing itself, a *res* within the intellect.³² The text or "letter" of the Bible presents rudimentary objects to the mind in the

²⁸ Hugh of St. Victor, *De scripturis et scriptoribus sacris praenotatiunculae*, xiv. PL 175:20-21. Idem, *Didascalicon* v.3, trans. J. Taylor, *The Didascalicon of Hugh of St. Victor* (New York: Columbia, 1961), 121-22. Yves Delègue, *Les machines du sens. Fragments d'une sémiologie médiévale* (Paris: Éditions des Cendres, 1987), 45, 57.

²⁹ Consider Paul Vincent Spade, "The Semantics of Terms," CHLMP, 188-196, here 192-95.

³⁰ *De sacramentis*, x; PL 176:328-29. Elizabeth Gössmann, *Glaube und Gotteserkenntnis im Mittelalter*, vol. 1/2b of *Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 4 vols. and numerous parts, edited by Michael Schmaus et al., (Freiburg: Herder, 1971-1990+), 28-30.

³¹ *Didascalicon* iii.8-10, trans. Taylor, 91-92.

³² For the *res* theory of language, Nuchelmans, "The Semantics of Propositions," CHLMP, 197-210, here 201-02; idem, *Theories of the Proposition*, 177-94. Brinkmann presents a thorough examination of this form of interpretation, in *Mittelalterliche Hermeneutik*, 3-51 for the philosophical background, 74-153 for an overview of varieties of semantics of things, 277-434, for an overview of the practice of interpretation in non-biblical commentaries.

form of a history³³; but it was more important to comprehend objects indicated by the first object, which required intimate knowledge of that primary object and its characteristics – hence the importance of the “literal” or “historical” meaning, undergirded by the liberal arts (tools for analysis of things) as the foundation of spiritual interpretation. Although Andrew of St. Victor could focus almost exclusively on the literal sense and others, including Hugh of St. Victor, reveal a fascination with historical understanding before moving on to spiritual senses, the purpose of these monastic scholars working at the dawn of scholasticism was to explain precisely the progression from literal to spiritual, the former clearly of lesser value than the latter.³⁴ Multiple representations were built upon what were considered to be the natural associations between terms and two sets of subsequent objects, factual associations intrinsic to the objects under consideration, and as such, witness to the rational coherence of the created universe. The associations thus constituted a formal interdependence of exegesis (or natural philosophy) with theology, secular knowledge with revelation.

³³ Christian Schütz, *Deus absconditus, Deus manifestus. Die Lehre Hugos von St. Viktor über die Offenbarung Gottes*, vol. 56 of *Studia Anselmiana*, (Rome: Pontificium Institutum S. Anselmi, 1967), 167-252. These are the same assumptions behind the extensive study of the properties of “natural” phenomena, like stones and numbers, as the basis of allegorical interpretations. See Friedrich Ohly’s introduction to *Schriften*, ix-xxxiv, esp. xiv-xxii for literature up to 1977; Heinz Meyer, *Die Zahlenallegorese im Mittelalter, Methode und Gebrauch*, v. 25 of *Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften*, (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1975), 40ff; Heinz Meyer and Rudolf Suntrup, *Lexikon der mittelalterlichen Zahlenbedeutungen*, v. 56 of *Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften*, (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1987), xiii-xxxviii; C. Meier, “Argumentationsformen,” 119-20.

³⁴ Marie-Dominique Chenu once noted how the role of literal exegesis was to resolve a problem inherited from Carolingian exegesis – the control of spiritual meanings. *La théologie au douzième siècle*, vol. 45 of *Études de philosophie médiévale*, (Paris: J. Vrin, 1957), 199-201, esp. 205-09. This implies, however, a more positive relation of the two forms of interpretation than is often recognized. See also de Lubac, *Exégèse médiévale*, 2/2:140; Ohly, “Sinn,” 14; and Margaret Gibson’s observations on the importance of non-literal exegesis, “The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 39(1988): 230-32, here 231. Contrast Beryl Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, 83-186; eadem, “Problems of Exegesis in the Fourteenth Century,” 266-74, here 273-74; Herman Hailperin, *Rashi and the Christian Scholars*, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963), 263; Evans, *Language and Logic*, 1:78-79 and passim; Feld, *Anfänge*. These studies try to find evidence of medieval historical criticism as background to Renaissance and modern historicism. I wish to argue the semantic and exegetical evidence for a gradual shift toward rhetorical analysis of texts, a different kind of background to humanist exegesis, be it Protestant or Catholic. For the continuity of interpretive method to the Enlightenment, consider Meier, “Argumentationsformen kritischer Reflexion,” 116-59.

Hugh of St. Victor argued, as I have already mentioned, that the revelatory quality of the Bible has to do with the progression of understanding from literal to spiritual. In other words, revelation is not associated with the literal sense per se, a point that markedly distinguishes the Victorine view from late medieval, scholastic approaches.³⁵ To comprehend involved meditation. The intellect could only focus its attention on what creation is communicating to it. This attitude (it was more than an epistemology) allowed twelfth-century intellectuals to describe a rational system for acquiring knowledge while preserving a characteristically monastic, mystical concern to limit the human mind, since according to these assumptions, sure knowledge of any kind, including that gained through reading and exegesis, involves a kind of submissive insight into God's creativity in nature.³⁶ The division of the biblical meaning into literal and spiritual realms belonged to a way of conceptualizing the entire world.

The polemics of the early Reformation looked at medieval biblical interpretation as so much disingenuous Bible reading. As Matthias Flacius Illyricus, author of an enormous guide (over 2,000 columns) to biblical interpretation in the mid-sixteenth century, the *Clavis scripturae sacrae*, said, there were two eras of medieval interpretation, one governed by authorities and another governed by monks and theologians stirring "various superstitions and the ignorant thorniness of corrupt philosophy" into their expositions.³⁷ But how did the new theologians differ? "At last in our time, by God's enormous kindness, the sacred scriptures began to be greatly prized and diligently studied by many, and their meaning began to be preached to the people of God, and

³⁵ Schütz, *Deus absconditus*, 130-62. Marie-Dominique Chenu touched on this difference when he contrasted the Victorine stress on the "historical" basis of spiritual meanings (the "first age" of allegory) with approaches first achieving prominence in the thirteenth century (the "second age" of allegory), in which the meaning of the Bible was conceived as spiritual alone and by which there was a synthesis of scriptural and nature allegories. "Les deux âges de l'allégorisme scripturaire au moyen âge," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 18(1951): 19-28. But rather than represent "une extrapolation permanente du contenu littéral de la Bible" and "une évacuation de l'économie historique dont elle raconte les épisodes," second-age allegory can be seen as an attempt to reduce spiritual interpretations to literal meaning.

³⁶ Consider Chenu, *Théologie*, 379. Bernard of Clairvaux provides a fine example of the synergy of rationalism and intellectual disability. See Gössmann, *Glaube und Gotteserkenntnis*, 22.

³⁷ It was of course very pejoratively said. From the preface, Matthias Flacius, *Clavis scripturae sanctae*, (Basel: Sebastian Henricpetri, 1567), 1:a5 verso. See also Moldaenke, *Schriftverständnis*, 124.

their mysteries, profitably expounded."³⁸ Flacius attributed the inferiority of previous interpretation to the inferiority of their auxiliary sciences, to bad translations and a bad understanding of Aristotle, which led interpreters to confuse the "words" and the "things" of the mystical books: they could not understand what is vocalized by "sin," "justice," "faith," "justification," "law," "gospel," "good work," "flesh," "free will," not even "custom"; nor could they understand what pertains to "reason," or what "intellect" can know, and what volition can will of the good.³⁹ This crime – for it obscured the voice of salvation – was very useful to Flacius because it undermined the legitimacy of Catholic authority, it relegated its practices to useless superstitions and flaccid arguments. Having taken great pains to assure his readers that he or she have the equipment to overcome the old debilities in over two thousand columns of his *Clavis sacrae scripturae, Key to Sacred Scripture*, he associates the work of exegesis with preaching, with the function of the Bible among Protestants. Embedded in this polemic are the convictions that scholars are now beginning to recognize as predominant features of sixteenth-century humanism, as it was used in Protestant theology: a new philology, a "correction" of Aristotelian logic, and "true" preaching.⁴⁰ If Flacius and his contemporaries succeeded in eliminating the exegetical role of some institutionally defined, non-exegetical sources (for example, the papal court and canon law), it was not to compromise the existence of an abstract universe in which prophets, apostles, professors, and preachers all say the same things.

It is absolutely clear that the exegesis of the Reformation involved a basic assumption that the literal sense and spiritual truth are inseparable. A humanist like Erasmus, for whom philology was the vehicle of Christian understanding, insisted on the priority of spiritual meaning.⁴¹ When Martin Luther discovered

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., a4 recto.

⁴⁰ Millet, *La dynamique de la Parole*, 113-81. Consider also Grafton and Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities*, 122-200.

⁴¹ S. Dresden's introduction to the *Paraphrasis in tertium Psalmum Domine quid multiplicati*, v. 5/2 of *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterdami*, (Amsterdam/New York/Oxford: North-Holland, 1985), 87-88. See also Erasmus' letter to Martin Dorp of 1515 defending *The Praise of Folly*, trans. John C. Olin, *Christian Humanism and the Reformation*, 3rd ed., (New York: Fordham University Press, 1987), 68-96, esp. 87-88; John W. O'Malley, "Grammar and Rhetoric in the *pietas* of Erasmus," *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 1(1988): 81-98.

his key critical doctrine, the doctrine of justification by faith alone, just before the Reformation in his first commentary on the Psalms, the *Dictata super Psalterium*, he was encouraged by his use of the medieval four-fold sense. When Luther finally did reject the four-fold sense, it was to affirm the spirituality of the letter.⁴² John Calvin neatly laid out the doctrinal *scopos* of books of the Bible in the introductions to his commentaries (a practice not entirely unlike late medieval discussions of the main themes of particular parts and genres of biblical literature)⁴³; the theology therein is always strikingly consistent with a mostly unequivocal "genuine sense" of scripture, an integration of doctrine and exegesis closely wedded to his rhetoric. Scholars have given special regard to his doctrinal interests, and they have seen historical study thoroughly subordinate to religious purposes.⁴⁴ Theological designs are seen in the commentaries of Martin Bucer, as well, and in truly late medieval fashion, he crowded his expositions with digressions.⁴⁵ A number of studies have uncovered in the works of Luther, Calvin, and others interpretations of specific Bible passages that modify specific medieval traditions or draw from the same patristic sources, and to that extent interpreters of the early sixteenth century also prove to occupy the same conceptual universe as their immediate predecessors.⁴⁶

⁴² Hirsch, "Initium theologiae Lutheri," 29-35; Ebeling, "Anfänge," 46, 51, 53.

⁴³ Christopher Ocker, *Biblical Poetics before Humanism and Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 184-213.

⁴⁴ For doctrine in commentaries, see T.H.L. Parker, *Calvin's New Testament Commentaries*, (London: SCM Press, 1971), 49-68; Benoit Girardin, *Rhétorique et théologique. Calvin, Le commentaire de l'Épître aux Romains*, v. 54 of *Théologie historique*, (Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1979), 312-19, but noting that Calvin's practice of theological interpretation depended more upon philology, rhetoric, and ethics than that of Bucer and Oecolampad at Strasbourg and Basel, respectively; Barbara Pitkin, "Imitation of David: David as a Paradigm for Faith in Calvin's Exegesis of the Psalms," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 24(1993): 843-63. Olivier Millet has demonstrated the rhetorical context of Calvin's particular view of divine speech, which again emphasizes the continuity of humanism and theological interpretation. Olivier Millet, *Calvin et la dynamique de la parole. Etude de rhétorique réformée*, (Geneva: Editions Slatkine, 1992), 185-256, 555-92. See also Shuger, *Renaissance Bible*, 22-23.

⁴⁵ Johannes Müller, *Martin Bucers Hermeneutik*, (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1965), 239-42.

⁴⁶ David Steinmetz, "Luther and the Ascent of Jacob's Ladder," *Church History* 55(1986): 179-92; idem, "Calvin among the Thomists," *Biblical Hermeneutics in Historical Perspective*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 198-214. See also the essays collected in *Biblical Interpretation in the Era of the Reformation*, ed. by Richard A. Muller, John L. Thompson, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) and Susan E. Schreiner, *Where Shall Wisdom Be Found. Calvin's Exegesis of Job from Medieval and Modern Perspectives* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1994).

What, in the conceptualization of the text embedded here, has happened to the metaphysical assumptions and the spirituality of ascent in the Victorine view of biblical knowledge? When Flacius mentioned the distinction between sign and thing, he was not thinking in terms of a Victorine biblical semantics and its conjunction of *signum res res*. He was rather thinking in terms that we might call rhetorical, of significations limited to words, or as Erasmus said at the beginning of his *De ratione studii*, "since things are learnt only by the sounds we attach to them, a person who is not skilled in the force of language is, of necessity, short-sighted, deluded, and unbalanced in his judgement of things as well."⁴⁷

I mean to suggest that this elevation of the role of language in knowledge marks a fundamental difference between Protestant conceptualisations of the biblical text and Victorine ones. It was much encouraged by the revival of rhetoric begun by Lorenzo Valla and so much promoted by Erasmus, and also by the reframing of dialectics in rhetorical terms by Rudolf Agricola and the popular Agricolan handbook writers, Philip Melanchthon, Jean Sturm, and Bartholomaeus Latomus.⁴⁸ But as a sense of biblical textuality related to the elevation of the role of language in knowledge, it was, in fact, not unique to the Reformation and not produced by the influence of humanism alone. It has its basis in semantic trends that began in the thirteenth century and in exegetical practices of the late Middle Ages.

First, the semantic trends. It is easy to assume that a late medieval elevation of the role of language must be the effect of nominalism. This puts the cart before the horse. An entire generation of the history of philosophy has made it absolutely clear that there was very strong resistance to nominalism and its influence was restricted to just a few intellectuals and that nominalism, in any event, was related to broader, more influential trends in logic.⁴⁹ It is to those broader trends that we must turn to find a clue to the elevation of language in knowledge. We can find it in beliefs about the proposition, the simple declarative sentence, and its relation to objects of knowledge that arise in the

⁴⁷ *Collected Works of Erasmus*, 2A:666.

⁴⁸ Ocker, *Biblical Poetics*, 184-213.

⁴⁹ For this, see Ocker, *Biblical Poetics*, 31-71.

thirteenth century, are promoted by mendicant theologians, most importantly Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas, which coincide with the dominance of "speculative grammar" in European Arts faculties in the second half of the thirteenth century, and which inspire the intense reconsideration of the connection between mental action, words, objects of knowledge, and states of knowing, the intense reconsiderations that gave rise to nominalism and another more influential theory associated with Pierre Aureol and Gregory of Rimini and the phrase *complexum significabile*. In the twelfth-century, it was commonly assumed, with very few exceptions, that the object of knowledge was a thing, a *res* in the intellect. The Victorine theory of biblical signification simply distinguished between higher and lower *res*, things. Since the mid-thirteenth century, most theologians assumed in one way or another that the object of knowledge is the product of mental action, a mental proposition, that could be represented in words. In fact, the only theories of language that they knew were theories of the proposition, ideal speech-acts that represent precisely these products of mental action. Ordinary speech was, in their minds, corrupt language that needed to be converted into these ideal speech acts, and that is precisely what scholars assumed in the interpretation of the Bible.

Since the 1960's and the work of Albert Lang,⁵⁰ historians of late medieval theology have known that late medieval theology, since the time of William of Auvergne in the early thirteenth century, had a firm conviction of the Bible's primacy in theological argument, according to the literal sense, as Thomas Aquinas argued and most theologians after him assumed. Given the elevation of the role of language in knowledge, we might not be surprised. Late medieval Bible commentaries show how these assumptions infringed upon the old distinction of literal and spiritual sense in several ways, of which I will only mention two. First, interpreters reframed revelation within the biblical letter, not beyond it, which led them to saturate their literal exegesis with theological observations and digressions, as I have discovered in commentaries by Aquinas, Bonaventure, John Baconthorpe, Meister Eckhart, Robert Holcot, Johannes Michael, Johannes Klenkok, Jan Mili Kromerice, John Wyclif, Jan Hus, Denys the

⁵⁰ Albert Lang, *Die theologische Prinzipienlehre der mittelalterlichen Scholastik* (Freiburg: Herder, 1964).

Carthusian, Wendelin Steinbach, Martin Luther, and others.⁵¹ Interpreters had difficulty with an old notion of the historicity of the biblical text, the Victorine distinction between historical, human agency in the Bible's literal sense and divine agency in spiritual senses. All late thirteenth-century definitions of the Bible and those offered by Nicholas Gorran, Nicholas of Lyra, Pierre Aureol, Johann Michael, Heinrich of Langenstein, and others, assume divine-human co-agency in biblical texts and a self-conscious recognition of prophetic meanings among biblical writers, which makes it virtually impossible to distinguish between literal, historical meanings intended by human authors (the significations they attribute to words) and allegorical meanings that exceed those significations in a cosmic realm of nature. Second, interpreters discovered rhetorical ways of explaining indirect language, metaphor, which can be seen in the crude analysis of rhetorical tropes that appears in most late medieval commentaries, including the early commentaries of Martin Luther. The most eloquent witness to such experimentation is a *Compend on the Four Senses of Scripture* by the Augustinian friar and teacher at the cathedral school in Würzburg, Hermann of Schildesche, half of which is devoted to literal explanations of figurative language.

These techniques involve a very different conceptualisation of the biblical text than that taught in the twelfth century, which is largely identical with the textuality assumed by Protestant Reformers, then I think you may want to conclude as I have that Protestant biblicism must be seen within the framework of larger continuities, continuities in the conceptualisation of nature as much as texts. At one time, the ambivalence of metaphor proved the need for supernatural explanations of textual meaning. But in the late Middle Ages, the extra-textual, metaphysical qualities of metaphor diminished, and lost its unparalleled claim to move the mind from matter to non-material things. Divine speech became human speech in scripture, as Jerome taught and as all late medieval theologians realized. It was an accommodated language, transparent to faith, expressing matters plainly that were infinitely good. Interpreters were most accustomed to see this transfigured letter within the frame of theological discourse, where it conditioned and was conditioned by the strings of comments

⁵¹ Ocker, *Biblical Poetics*, 112-83.

and debates, quotations and syllogisms, and devout affirmations and longings that filled theology classrooms. In their commentaries, the letter communicated with a variety of other influential works: Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, the canon law, the Ordinary Gloss, the *Historia scholastica*, patristic and other sacred literature (variously codified in the previous works), and pagan, usually philosophical, writings. By thinking of the literal meaning of the Bible in the context of theological problems, theologians created interactions between these diverse texts, which their definitions of the Bible and their confidence in the coordinated wills of prophets, apostles, saints, and good scholars reinforced. If there was something odd about the ancient past, something remote and exotic in the rites of Israel (which some but not all theologians believed), Jewish difference nevertheless reinforced the validity of the text for a Christian present, and this was betrayed by the covenantal conditions of biblical literature. Dialectical adaptations of rhetoric by early Protestants reinforced the biblical quality of the present moment. They offered textual frameworks for creating the same kind of intellectual context, in which a godly communion of ancient and modern people participate in sacred deeds and events. Protestants expressed more deliberately than their predecessors the coinherence of scripture and theological *literature*, and the immediacy that before was known in sanctity, they invested in faith. But both before and after the Reformation, the wonder of contemplative reading was being transposed into the literal sense.

What is the cultural significance of the transposition of contemplative reading into the literal sense? It suggests that Protestant innovations were specific, not only with regard to doctrines but also with regard to a particular deployment of humanism to articulate and to reinforce a conviction of the utter consistency of their new confession with biblical narratives. But this presupposition of consistency as such was neither new nor unique. It implied a well known continuity between ancient sacred writers, ancient lives and dilemmas, and life in the present, which appears in late medieval commentaries, too. Although the Protestants undermined the hierarchical definition of church, priesthood, and sacramental power, they upheld the old assumption of a communion of interpreters and the inescapability of biblical truth among them. Late medieval and early modern Catholic theologians, appealing to the magisterial office of bishops and pope or even lacing their commentaries with

citations of the canon law, were understandably horrified that a Protestant theologian would set his interpretation, his personal conviction, against the long stream of biblical consensus represented in the holy fathers and the apostolic see (they also believed in the constancy of meaning), and Protestants denied any transgression of evangelical consensus, as is well known. This supervening expectation and attitude of the consensus of godly minds, attached to the universal, scriptural source of Christian theology in late medieval and early modern Europe, is worthy of as much attention as the parallels between Catholic and Protestant disciplinary institutions or the various processes of "christianization" made famous by Heinz Schilling and Jean Delumeau. The continuity implies that both Catholicism and Protestantism were instructed by trends in late medieval religious culture to render God self-evident in written narratives (as in images), and to do so by emphasizing the accessibility of knowledge and grace in the present, however distinct the various Catholic and Protestant means of access were.

If both sets of movements, Catholic and Protestant, were predicated upon the growth of subjectivity, we can hardly claim, as Ernst Troeltsch once did, that the "secularization" of asceticism was more characteristic of one movement than the other. It is likely that the fusion of biblical signs with theological truth took place alongside a wider fusion of external conduct and internal experience in European religious attitudes, and surely that fusion contributed to various refashionings of Christianity in the sixteenth century. Beneath the particular sanctities of distinct groups (be it the rapture of mystics or the virtues of sermon-going citizens and Bible readers), there was an extension and vernacularization of sanctity that may have been more indicative of the problems of religious cultures in modern Europe than the particular confessions and sects of the sixteenth century. The semantic and rhetorical content of that extension of sanctity is as evident in the works of learned theologians as it is in popular religious practices and attitudes. One should remember that Protestant theologians never denied the existence of saints, they just redefined their activities (and hoped that their congregations would be full of them); like the ardent members of Jesuit sodalities and revived confraternities, they emphasized the acquisition and promotion of holiness among ordinary people,

which we know from upbeat and harrowing sermons as well as from the gloomy and much researched records of church courts. For that matter, they never really denied the fellowship of the living with the dead; they always believed their churches belonged to the true communion of saints, including those souls who not only have gone before but were still alive in heaven. There, the gracious dead lived in the presence of the same Jesus shared before Lutheran altars and around Calvinist tables (whether spiritually and corporeally or only spiritually) in churches on earth, and well disciplined Christians warmly conversed with him in a biblical garden of pleasure. What distinguished the Protestants, and the various sects among them, was the redefinition of the forms and methods of mediation, but not the desire to permeate the walls separating external signs and internal truths.

The stubbornness of traditional beliefs and practices that we have come to associate with popular culture in outwardly Protestant places throughout the sixteenth century, as study after study confirms, suggests more modest claims for the European Reformations than were once commonly asserted by church historians. The church historians were anxious to show the relation of Protestant or, to be more specific, Martin Luther's doctrine to one or another vision of modern society.⁵² An alternative is to argue that Martin Luther's teaching or, more broadly, the particular teachings and church governments created in the early sixteenth century were the substance of the division between Protestants and Catholics, rather than culture overall. This would encourage, with regard to the Reformation, a new emphasis on the separating doctrines of authority and tradition, grace and human ability, the transmission and actuality of sacramental power, and the role of the saints and the nature of religious communion. It

⁵² This does not require a simplistic notion of the Reformation as in-breaking of modernity. As Bernd Moeller has recently reminded us, since the days of Albrecht Ritschl, it has been very widely accepted among Luther scholars that Martin Luther's theological genius was neither well understood nor appreciated by his contemporaries and those who immediately succeeded him. B. Moeller, "Die Rezeption Luthers in der frühen Reformation," B. Hamm, B. Moeller, D. Wendebourg, *Reformationstheorien. Ein kirchenhistorischer Disput über Einheit und Vielfalt der Reformation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1995), 12. Rather than focus on Luther's reception as a key to defining the Reformation, as Moeller convincingly does, theologians as diverse as Wilhelm Hermann, Ernst Troeltsch, Karl Holl, and Hans Rückert insisted that the full force of Luther's theology was only felt within the context of a later culture.

would also emphasize the importance of the iconoclastic, institutional revolutions that *tried* to obliterate monasticism and convert the clergy into a civic body. But beyond the restricted Reformation, in a broader frame, were the transformations of culture, not uniquely "Reformation." The issues of culture – such as the steady advance of interiority in prayer and its attendant notions of the self, the role of poverty in the refashioning of social groups, or the moral framework of the iconography of witchcraft – evade the distinction between the time before and the time after October 1517.⁵³ By shaping time in two ways, one restricts the scope of the Reformation and relativizes it within the softer if longer shape of European cultures and societies. We would thereby distinguish the refashioning of differences by Protestants and Catholics in the Reformation from the attitudes common to both learned and popular cultures in late medieval and early modern Europe.

In this study, I have taken for granted the refashioning of theological differences in the early sixteenth century, in particular, the well known Protestant doctrines of scripture and the Catholic doctrines of the coordination of biblical authority and ecclesiastical tradition. Ignoring late medieval arguments over translation and lay reading (which must be studied again free of old Protestant cliches), I have emphasized in the work of theologians the coalescence of what were previously believed to be two qualitatively distinct ways of knowing – literal and spiritual. Seen within the distinct philosophical contexts of the late Middle Ages and the early Reformation, two things become clear. Semantic doctrine before the Reformation was not sufficient to account for the theologian's crucial and inevitable work as interpreter of the Bible, and the forms of dialectic that shaped theological method in the early Reformation seemed to resolve this inadequacy. The refashioning of dialectics thus stood within a greater and, it seems to me, culturally more significant shape of time, where God and saints came much closer to the everyday experiences of souls traversing biblical narratives.

⁵³ See the contributions of Thomas Lentjes, myself, and Charles Zika in *Kulturelle Reformation*.

ULRICH ZWINGLI AND HIS DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION: A SHORT PRESENTATION

Corneliu C. Simuț

The starting point in Zwingli's doctrine of justification is the person of Christ, who is described as God. Christ is the centre between creation and the end of the world. Justification is identified with the person of Christ and Zwingli clearly says that Christ is our justification.¹ This provides a unified soteriology, in the sense that both the Old Testament people and the New Testament people are saved by the work of Christ. In this particular context, the concept of faith is introduced in order to show the way the work of Christ was applied for the salvation of humanity. For Zwingli, the people of the Old Testament were saved by faith in the Christ who was to come and the people of the New Testament were saved by the Christ who had come. Although the people before Christ offered sacrifices for their salvation, these sacrifices were performed for the only true God, who accepted them on the basis of the faith manifested by those who brought the sacrifices. Accordingly, their sacrifices are related to the unique sacrifice of Christ. Thus, it is not important whether anyone lived historically before or after the ministry of Christ on earth and it is not important whether anyone was a Jew or a Gentile before the ministry of Christ because this distinction was not important during and after the ministry of Christ either. Salvation is by faith, not on the basis of ethnical affiliation. It should be said here that, in Zwingli, the particular language of justification is oftentimes mixed with the more general terminology of salvation. Thus, he speaks primarily about salvation, rather than justification, but the latter may often be inferred.²

The Jews were truly justified by their faith when they offered sacrifices to

¹ Ulrich Zwingli, *The Sixty-seven Theses*, XXII, in G. R. Potter (ed.), *Huldrych Zwingli* (London: Edward Arnold Publishers, 1978), 23.

² W. P. Stephens, *Zwingli. An Introduction to his Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 54-55.

God and the Gentiles or the godly pagans were also justified when they accomplished the law by grace or by faith or by the Spirit of God. For Zwingli, these three are the same. It is the Spirit of Christ who justifies anybody who exercises his faith in his relationship to God. Our salvation or justification is necessarily based on the death of Christ. Nevertheless, justification does not depend on the proclamation of Christ and his saving death in word and sacrament, like in Luther's theology. Justification totally depends on the sovereignty of God in election and is fundamentally based on the atoning death of Christ. God's sovereignty is not limited historically to Israel. God created the whole world, not only Israel, but he only produces a true piety in those he elected, whoever they are. In this case, justification applies to the Gentiles, in the sense that a Gentile is a Christian even if he does not know Christ. Nevertheless, the person and the work of Christ are essential to salvation and justification. Zwingli's theological training in the spirit of patristic and medieval theology is obvious. The dominant note in Zwingli's doctrine of justification is anselmian. Like Anselm, he believed that Christ died in order to save us from the bondage of Satan. By our sins, we rightfully belong to Satan, but God sent Christ to die so that he could pay the ransom to the devil, with the specific purpose of getting us back. Following Abélard, Zwingli wrote about the compelling power of God's love shown in Jesus Christ. Christ recapitulated everything that happened in Adam and, in this respect, Zwingli promoted the theology of Irenaeus. Then, following Athanasius, he held the view that Christ became human, so that we might become divine.³

Zwingli presented the death of Christ as a victory over or a liberation from sin, death and the devil. In Zwingli's opinion, humans failed to keep God's law. Moreover, we cannot keep God's law because we are sinners. Therefore, we all deserve God's punishment. God is righteous and he must punish sin. But God is also merciful; this is why he sent his Son to accomplish God's will and to die for us, in order to satisfy God's righteousness. The righteousness of God or of Christ is actually the righteousness that Christ obtained by dying and making satisfaction for us. This particular righteousness becomes ours by faith, which is

³ For more details, see Stephens, *Zwingli*, 56-67, and Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers* (Leicester: Apollos, 1988), 146.

the gift of God through the Spirit of God. By the righteousness of Christ at the cross we are righteous and reputed righteous before God. The righteousness of Christians is to trust in Christ and to be therefore adopted into him. The righteousness whereby we stand before God is the righteousness of faith. This righteousness is never simply imputed but also imparted. Christ does not only teach true righteousness, but he also bestows it to us. The righteousness imparted to us by Christ is an inward righteousness, which is the same with the Holy Spirit. Christ also gives us an outward righteousness, which flows from the inward righteousness. Thus, the righteousness of Christ is not only the atonement for our sins but also the initial and the continuing source of our life, which must grow to be like the life of Christ.⁴

Within the larger theme of salvation, justification and election, the concept of the righteousness of God must necessarily be related to the idea of the justice of God. Zwingli clearly presented the idea that it was God's goodness that he elected whom he willed, but it was because of his justice that he adopted and united the elect with himself through his Son, who was made a victim to satisfy the divine justice for us. In this respect, justification is equalled with reconciliation, because the sacrificial death of Christ is the way God established for the reconciliation of the world with himself. Salvation totally depends on Christ, because he is both God and man. Because he is God, Christ can fulfil the will of God and because he is man, Christ can be a sacrifice for the satisfaction of God's righteousness. God cannot suffer; this is why humanity was necessary to salvation.⁵

The doctrine of salvation and justification in the theology of Zwingli has a distinct pneumatological dimension. Salvation is by faith but the source of faith is the Holy Spirit. Thus, the spirit creates faith in whomever he wills. Moreover, faith is the confirmation of election, a complete trust in Christ and a protection against our own sinful nature:

For he that has real faith trusts the Lord and fears not what all the assaults of flesh will do unto him. He, then, who is thus protected by the shield of faith knows that he is elect of God by the very security based on his faith. And this

⁴ W. P. Stephens, *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 160.

⁵ Stephens, *Zwingli*, 57.

is the pledge by which the Spirit binds our souls to himself, so that we give to him our love, our reverence and our trust [...] For they that possess the light and power of this faith are sure that neither death nor life can take from them that treasure for which they have sacrificed all to buy it. And their election is such that it is known not only to God, but also to the elect themselves.⁶

Very early in his theological career, Zwingli advanced the view that it was God who remitted sin only through Jesus Christ, his Son, our Lord. It is common knowledge that, concerning justification, Luther firmly attacked works as false means of obtaining God's favour. In this respect, Zwingli launched a fierce attack on idolatry. Should anyone ascribe salvation to the creature and not to God, he would deprive God of his glory, which is a veritable idolatry and obviously includes works.⁷

Thus, Zwingli reiterated the idea that salvation and justification are by faith, not by works. Faith must always be placed in God, not in idolatrous images, processions and pilgrimages, because they all make Christ and his death secondary and even dispensable. Again, true faith always includes a genuine trust, is the source of justification and the confirmation of election:

Christ and the apostles make the whole aim of their teaching to show that there is no other justification or absolution than that of faith. Those who have faith are the heirs of the everlasting glory. By all these we learn that faith is given to those who have been elected. And those who have faith are justified, that is, absolved, so that no damnation awaits them. Not as if faith were a work to which forgiveness of sins was due as a reward, but because those who have faith in God know beyond all question that God has become reconciled to them through his son and the record of their sin has been blotted out, for it is only sin which precludes and shuts us out from entering upon the heritage. If that be taken away, we return into favour with God, just as bodies of water rush together if the space or barrier between them be removed.⁸

For Zwingli, faith is utterly a gift of God, which is obvious as he wrote that:

⁶ Ulrich Zwingli, *Early Writings* (Durham: The Labyrinth Press, 1987), 199.

⁷ Zwingli had a good reason to attack idolatry and this must be understood within the historical context of Zürich, where, at that time, a significant increase of images, processions and pilgrimages was recorded. Stephens, *Zwingli*, 68.

⁸ Zwingli, *Early Writings*, 198.

"Mercifully and freely are we made whole and kept whole through faith and belief (which God has mercifully wrought in us), and that too not from us: it is a gift of God, not from our works, so that no one could boast."⁹

Salvation is totally from God and realized in God. Thus, salvation begins with God's election and depends on his will and purpose. Our will and our purpose have nothing to do with salvation. Nevertheless, God's election is in Christ, which is a direct reference to the divine Christ who lived in history. For Zwingli, faith is fundamentally faith in God and faith in Christ, as opposed to faith in anyone or anything that is not God. True faith has two dimensions. Firstly, there is a historical faith, whereby we believe that Christ was born, suffered and then was raised. By the historical faith, we also believe that Christ was the Son of God. Secondly, there is a justifying or a saving faith, which comes only from the Spirit of God.¹⁰

The initiative of salvation belongs entirely to God, because man would have never turned to God by his own accord. Because of God's initiative in salvation, man sees both the predicament of his sinful condition and the grace of God. In this respect, God's initiative was realized in Christ and by the death of Christ on the cross. Nobody can satisfy God's righteousness; it is only God who found a proper way for this, namely by the death of Christ. Christ is both man's creator and restorer. Man's sins are forgiven in Christ's name and when man receives this news by faith, he is actually saved. Forgiveness of sins must be accompanied by repentance, which comes from the Holy Spirit. Repentance presupposes a complete change of life according to the example of Christ and must be a constant feature of a normal Christian life.¹¹

Thus, Christ was born, suffered, died, rose and ascended to heaven for the salvation of mankind. For Zwingli, this is the objective side of salvation. As far as the subjective side of salvation is concerned, this is not accomplished in us until the Spirit leads us to faith. In Zwingli, salvation is entirely the work of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit in both his aspects, objective and subjective. The

⁹ Ulrich Zwingli, *On Providence and Other Essays* (Durham: The Labyrinth Press, 1983), 170. See also Gottfried Locher, *Zwingli's Thought: New Perspectives* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), 167.

¹⁰ Stephens, *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli*, 158.

¹¹ Stephens, *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli*, 154-155.

importance of faith is stated again as the right basis for our salvation or for our standing before God. Works are totally irrelevant as sources of salvation, but they do matter as confirmation of salvation. Living faith must necessarily produce good works, as every Christian believer must follow the example of Christ. Our works are good if they are done in Christ. Therefore, our works are good to the extent that they are gifts of God and are done from the Spirit of God. Zwingli is very careful to mention that good work are only the sign of genuine faith.¹²

For Zwingli, who stands in the humanist tradition, the example of Christ is extremely important for the life of the Christian, which must be ethically pure, in accordance with the example of Christ. The ethical dimension is essential to Zwingli's theology. Faith makes the believer righteous, which is a clear indication of the importance of moral integrity. The righteousness of faith must be based on the obedience to God. Furthermore, the righteousness of faith, which comes from God, is always in contrast with the self-righteousness of the man who does not believe. Zwingli rarely used the term "justification" and he preferred to work with the concept of "right belief". The man who has a right belief is justified. But right belief necessarily leads to a moral life. Hence, justification is apparently subordinated to regeneration. In this respect, Zwingli is really concerned with the new moral character of the person who was born again (*wiedergeborene und neue Mensch*).¹³

Thus, the life of a true Christian should be nothing else than a sincere acknowledgement of his sinful nature, a firm trust in the mercy of God through Christ and a continuous building of holiness and innocence according to the example of Christ.¹⁴ Zwingli even wrote about the reality that a true believer was deified or changed into God.¹⁵ In salvation, the believer is actually united with Christ.¹⁶ The example of Christ is important for the doctrine of sanctification and the righteousness of Christ is important for the doctrine of justification. Nonetheless, this is only a didactic distinction, because, in reality, sanctification

¹² Stephens, *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli*, 158.

¹³ Cf. Alister McGrath, *Justitia Dei. A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification from 1500 to the Present Day*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 33.

¹⁴ Stephens, *Zwingli*, 70-71.

¹⁵ Stephens, *The Theology of Huldrych Zwingli*, 157.

¹⁶ Locher, *Zwingli's Thought*, 165.

and justification are very closely connected. Unlike Luther, for whom justification consists in the imputation of Christ's righteousness, Zwingli believed that justification consisted in the impartation of Christ's righteousness. This means that the righteousness of Christ is not only considered to be ours, so that we might be reckoned righteous, but it is truly imparted to us or given to us, so that we might follow the example of Christ. The very fact that justification and sanctification are so closely related in Zwingli's theology leads to the conclusion that we are justified when we are made righteous.¹⁷ Thus, faith leads to justification, which consists of the forgiveness of sins, worked out by God for the sake of Christ. All these are to the benefit of the believing sinner who is given eternal life. This is why Zwingli wrote that "faith is the grounds of salvation. He who believes shall not see death forevermore."¹⁸

¹⁷ Stephens, *Zwingli*, 71.

¹⁸ Ulrich Zwingli, *Archeteles*, LXX, in *Early Writings*, 281-282. Further bibliography on justification in the theology of Zwingli: Dennis Janz (ed.), *A Reformation Reader. Primary Texts with Introductions* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 151-164; Jean Rilliet, *Zwingli: Third Man of the Reformation* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1964), 105-111; Geoffrey W. Bromiley (ed.), *Zwingli and Bullinger* (London: SCM Press, 1953), 31-40; E. J. Furcha (ed.), *Huldrych Zwingli, 1484-1531. A Legacy of Radical Reform* (FRC/ARC, 1984); E. J. Furcha (ed.), *Prophet, Pastor, Protestant* (Pennsylvania: Pickwick Publications, 1984); Ulrich Gäbler, *Huldrych Zwingli. His Life and Work* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986).

TWO EARLY SERMONS BY MARTIN LUTHER: AN EXAMINATION OF THE THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE DATING OF LUTHER'S *SERMON ON THREE KINDS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS* AND HIS *SERMON ON TWO KINDS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS*

Daniel E. Keen

Introduction

Contemporary scholars have witnessed a resurgence of interest concerning the order of events surrounding Martin Luther's sermons entitled *Three Kinds of Righteousness*¹ (hereafter referred to as *Three*) and *Two Kinds of Righteousness*² (hereafter referred to as *Two*). Perhaps the most obvious reason for this interest derives from the fact that these sermons were produced at such a volatile time, and therefore hold much value for one who is trying to understand this fascinating period of church history. There is, however, another issue which has much appeal for those scholars who are concerned to trace the theological pilgrimage which was so characteristic of the life of Martin Luther. Fortunately for such individuals, these sermons provide an intriguing vantage point from which to observe the unfolding of Luther's theological pilgrimage, for in these two sermons – which were produced very close in time to one another – Luther considered the issue of righteousness from two divergent points of view.

Along with this resurgence in interest has also arisen differences of opinion regarding these two pieces. Although scholars have debated a number of issues

¹ *Dr. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, (Weimar: Böhlau, 1883-), 2:41.43-47 [Here after WA]. The only available English translation has been prepared by Glen E. Zweck in *Let Christ Be Christ: Theology, Ethics, and World Religions in the Two Kingdoms – Essays in Honor of the Sixty-Fifth Birthday of Charles Manske* (Huntington Beach: Tentatio Press, 1999), 353-358.

² WA 2:145-152; the English translation consulted for this paper may be found in *Luther's Works* (Saint Louis and Philadelphia: Concordia and Fortress, 1957-1985), 31:297-306 [Here after LW].

surrounding these two works of Martin Luther, the most significant of these disagreements is concerned with discovering the chronological order of these sermons. While on the surface such a debate may seem relatively pedantic, one must understand that much more is at stake than chronological precision, for those who are engaged in this debate are interested in establishing more than a mere timeline for Luther's works. Rather, they seek to show the progression of Luther's theological understanding particularly with regard to the doctrine of justification. Although for years it was believed that *Three* was the later of the sermons, and therefore presented Luther's mature position on justification, this paper will explore how recent scholarship has shed doubt upon this previously uncontested opinion, thereby once again uniting Luther with his central reformational doctrine of forensic justification.

Difficulty in providing a definitive date for these two sermons is magnified by several issues. First of all, there is very little, if any, uncontested evidence to which the scholar may appeal when dating these works. Consequently, the historian must piece together various clues which arguably may be considered in a number of viable scenarios. Additional difficulty is encountered because of the ever-developing nature of Luther's theology. As a reformer of the church, Luther was undergoing a perpetual revision of his thinking in countless areas of doctrine. Unfortunately for the modern-day scholar, this process was extremely fluid, and it is therefore oftentimes difficult to reconstruct some five hundred years later. Finally, one finds in each sermon what would appear to be theological advancement as well as regression. That is to say that neither piece definitively reflects what is currently understood as Luther's mature position concerning justification.

Divergent Opinions on the Date of Luther's Sermons

Out of this morass of divergent data, scholars have presented two basic theses concerning the dating of these two texts. The prevailing view³ has suggested for

³ According to Glen E. Zweck, in his "Commentary on Luther's Sermon on Three Kinds of Righteousness," the prevailing view is best represented by the following: Martin Brecht in *Martin Luther: His Road to the Reformation 1483-1521*, trans. James L. Schaff (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985) 229-231; Kurt Aland in *Der Weg zur Reformation: Zeitpunkt und Charakter des reformatorischen*

nearly a hundred years that *Two* was the earlier of the sermons, and was most likely preached on March 28, 1518. As Whitelaw explains, such a date is arrived at based upon Luther's pericope for this sermon (Philippians 2:5ff), which coincides with the Epistle reading for Palm Sunday in the quadragesimal liturgy for Lent and Holy Week.⁴ According to the prevailing view, *Three* was the later of the two sermons, and was likely preached several days or months after *Two*.

Opposition to this chronology has arisen within the last several decades, finding its genesis in Lowell Green's work entitled *How Melancthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel*.⁵ Proponents of the alternate position instead suggest that *Three* was first of the two sermons and was likely preached sometime in the fall of 1518. According to this view, it is only after the preaching of *Three* that *Two* was introduced, likely being issued in the early months of the year 1519. Reasoning for this succession of events is derived largely from an understanding of the theological development which occurred during Luther's career as a reformer of the church.

Obviously, both of the aforesaid theses cannot be true. Therefore, we must seek to understand which of the two positions best squares with the historical record. While it is true that conclusive evidence remains to be discovered concerning the precise dating of these sermons, there exists a number of clues concerning the chronology of events which are currently available to the diligent scholar.

Erlebnisse Martin Luthers (München: Theologisches Existenz Heute, 1965), 123; Daniel Oliver in "les deux sermons sur la double et triple justice," *Oecumenia* (1968) 39-69. Additionally, see David Whitelaw's article "An Examination of Two Early Sermons of Martin Luther: the *Sermo de duplici iustitia* and the *Sermo de triplici iustitia*" in *Theologia Evangelica* 17:3 (1984), 24-35.

⁴ David Whitelaw, *An Examination of Two Early Sermons of Martin Luther*, 32.

⁵ Lowell C. Green, *How Melancthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel: The Doctrine of Justification and the Reformation* (Fallbrook: Verdict Publishers, 1980). Subsequent support for Green's dating of Luther's sermons is provided by the following: Glenn E. Zweck in his *Commentary to Luther's Sermon on Three Kinds of Righteousness*, 353; David A. Lumpp, "Luther's Two Kinds of Righteousness: A Brief Historical Introduction," in *Concordia Journal* 23:1 (1997), 30; Robert Kolb, "Luther on the Two Kinds of Righteousness: Reflections on His Two-Dimensional Definition of Humanity at the Heart of His Theology," in *Lutheran Quarterly* 13:4 (Winter 1999), 457.

Theological Roots for the Prevailing View: Pietism and Analytic Justification

Due to the sketchy evidence available for dating these two sermons in question, it is necessary for the scholar to make a number of assumptions which provide an historical and intellectual framework within which he may conduct his studies. Such starting points must be evaluated in light of the historical record to discover whether or not they are merited. In the estimation of the minority opinion, proponents of the prevailing view have placed undue emphasis upon the assumption that Luther's mature position regarding justification was analytic in nature. In other words, such scholars want to insist that justification is not a gift imputed to the believer from outside himself, but is a process that occurs within the believer.⁶ As a result, it is believed that the prevailing view has infelicitously argued from this presupposition to their conclusion, and has therefore misrepresented the true historical record when asserting that *Three* is the later of Luther's sermons.

Commenting on this situation, Glen Zweck writes:

For most of the twentieth century the consensus was that the *Sermon on Three Kinds of Righteousness* comes later than the *Sermon on Two Kinds of Righteousness*. I am convinced that this has come about solely and entirely because its proponents refuse to accept the verdict of the Lutheran Confessions that the belief in forensic justification, as set out in the *Sermon on Two Kinds of Righteousness* was Luther's reformational theology. Instead, they want to insist that it was only Melancthon who had a forensic doctrine of justification, and they want to show that, like themselves, Luther had an analytic doctrine of justification, not synthetic.⁷

In order for Zweck's assertion to be merited, one must be able to demonstrate that the prevailing view has a vested interest in proving that the mature Luther held to the theological position espoused in *Three*. According to Zweck, it is because of strong ties to the theology of the Pietist movement of 18th century – particularly regarding its understanding of justification – that those holding to the prevailing view do indeed have such a reason for suggesting that

⁶ Glen E. Zweck, *Luther Threefold* (E-mail to Daniel Keen, November 22, 2001).

⁷ Ibid.

Three represents Luther's more mature theological position. As Alister McGrath explains, "The term 'Pietism' is particularly applied to the movement within Lutheranism... characterized by its insistence upon the active nature of faith, and its critique of the Orthodox doctrine of forensic justification."⁸ It is precisely this critique of the Orthodox doctrine of justification which makes it desirable for the Pietistic scholar to suggest that *Three* was the later of the sermons, for its teaching is far more consonant with an analytic view of justification than is *Two*.

According to McGrath, four primary modifications were made by Pietistic Lutherans which have necessitated a move away from forensic justification. First of all, as McGrath explains, Pietists have understood faith to be active, rather than passive, in justification. Secondly, since the central doctrine of Christian perfection was excluded by the Orthodox understanding of justification, it was necessary for Pietists instead to espouse an analytic view. Thirdly, McGrath points out, Pietists reject the concept of vicarious satisfaction, believing that it is detrimental to personal piety. Finally, the Pietist is forced to reject the Orthodox view of imputed righteousness, for they consider this doctrine to be destructive to Christian piety.⁹

Being that many of the scholars who support the prevailing view are deeply influenced by Pietism,¹⁰ and are therefore in favor of an analytic view of justification, it should come as no surprise that such individuals desire for *Three* to be recognized as the later of Luther's sermons. When one adds to this the fact that the prevailing thesis does not appear to square with the historical record concerning Luther's mature teaching on justification – an issue that will be addressed the following portion of this paper – one begins to understand why there has been a renewed interest to reconsider all relevant data in order to

⁸ Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 2:51.

⁹ McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, 2:51-52. Lowell Green has also made a compelling case for this point in his work *How Melancthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel*.

¹⁰ Of the scholars who have been mentioned as supporting the prevailing view, Zweck sees Oliver as being the most attached to the analytic view of justification. Zweck writes, "... there is a manifest concern by some that *Three* be acknowledged as presenting Luther's mature doctrine of justification. This is very obviously the case in Oliver's presentation." Glen Zweck, "Commentary on Luther's Sermon on Three Kinds of Righteousness," 349.

discover whether another thesis may be more consonant with the historical record.¹¹

Theological Roots for the Opposing View: Luther's Mature Position on Justification

Thus far we have merely cast doubt upon the prevailing thesis by suggesting that its adherents' theological bent may have unduly influenced their understanding of the historical record. In order further to build a case against the prevailing view, it is necessary to consider what is understood to be Luther's mature teaching on the doctrine of justification. If one is able to understand the historical development of Luther's position on the doctrine of justification, he then has further grounds for asserting that the sermon which is most consonant with the mature Luther was the later of the pieces.

In an attempt to discover the central theme of Luther's mature writings, David Lumppp has suggested that Luther's distinction between two kinds of righteousness plays a central role in his later works. "In short," Lumppp writes, "the two kinds of righteousness work nicely as a heuristic device around which one can outline Luther's theology in terms of its essential content, its structure, and its internal development."¹² In order to show that this assertion is merited, one need only consider the following words from Luther, penned in his 1535 edition of *Lectures on Galatians*:

This is our theology, by which we teach a precise distinction between these two kinds of righteousness, the active and the passive, so that morality and faith, works and grace, secular society and religion may not be confused. Both are necessary, but both must be kept within their limits. Christian righteousness applies to the new man, and the righteousness of the Law applies to the old man, who is born of flesh and blood.¹³

¹¹ According to Glen Zweck, this bias has not only appeared in the dating of *Three*, but may also be observed in the German translation of this piece. Zweck writes, "The idea that the St. Louis edition makes Luther sound more Lutheran in his early works than he was is something that occurred to me one afternoon when a colleague was translating from the St. Louis edition and I was translating from the Weimar edition... I suspect that some of the St. Louis translators felt they 'knew' what Luther had to have written." Glen Zweck, *Luther Threefold*.

¹² David Lumppp, "Luther's Two Kinds of Righteousness," 28.

¹³ Martin Luther, "Lectures on Galatians – 1535." WA 40, 1:45.24-27; LW 26:7.

By associating this "precise distinction between active and passive righteousness" with "our theology," Luther has clearly given the theme of twofold righteousness a place of great priority in his theological system. Accordingly, Lumppp has written, "It might not go too far to suggest that this brief 'Argument' is the best available introduction to the mature Luther's theology from his own hand."¹⁴ While some may indeed disagree with Lumppp's assertion, one can not disagree with the priority that Luther has given this theme in his theological system. What is perhaps most interesting for the purposes of this paper is the date at which the above-quoted assertion was made.

Additional support for the thesis that Luther's mature position was one of forensic justification can be found in the *Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther's Latin Writings* wherein Luther recalls:

... I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives as a gift of God, namely, by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness is revealed by the gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live." Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise again through open gates. There a totally other face of the entire Scripture showed itself to me. Thereupon I ran through the Scriptures from memory. I also found in other terms an analogy, as, the work of God, that is, what God does in us, the power of God, with which he makes us strong, the wisdom of God, with which he makes us wise, the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God. And I treasured the word that had become the sweetest of all words for me with a love as great as the hatred with which I had previously hated the word "righteousness of God." Thus that passage in Paul was for me truly the gate to paradise.¹⁵

Yet again, one finds in this 1545 passage – which was produced just one year prior to Luther's death – a number of themes which relate to forensic justification. This text, as well as those words taken from his *Lectures on Galatians*, affirm that by the end of his life Martin Luther held firmly to a forensic view of

¹⁴ David Lumppp, "Luther's Two Kinds of Righteousness," 27, fn. 1.

¹⁵ Martin Luther, "Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther's Latin Writings." WA 54:186.3-16; LW 34:337.

justification. Based upon Luther's mature teaching on this issue, Bernhard Lohse explains that "from the very first the Lutheran doctrine of justification has been reduced to the following classical summary formulation: (1) a sinner, (2) is justified [saved], (3) by grace, (4) for Christ's sake, (5) through faith."¹⁶ If this classical summary formulation fairly represents Luther's mature teaching, then one must understand *Two* as being most consonant with his mature position regarding justification. Based upon this conclusion, it seems tenable to oppose the dogmatism of the prevailing thesis by suggesting the possibility that *Two* was, in fact, the later of the sermons preached by Martin Luther.

Content of Luther's Sermons on Righteousness

Upon considering the content of these two sermons, one encounters perhaps the most difficult aspect of this debate, for there is at once significant similarity and dissimilarity between the pieces under consideration. Furthermore, in these pieces one finds Luther moving away from the model of justification held by the Roman Church, yet also clinging dearly to some of her central teachings regarding this vital doctrine of the Reformation. Although it is true that a consideration of the content of these sermons may perhaps blur the distinctions between the two, from the following study there is one point that will clearly emerge. In both of these sermons we see Luther – sometimes in small steps, sometimes in leaps and bounds – steadily moving away from the Roman model of justification. While it is certainly true that remnants of his theological heritage remain in both sermons, there are nonetheless justifiable grounds for asserting that these sermons represent a significant break with his past, and consequently helped to lay the foundation upon which he would later build his mature doctrine of forensic justification.

Proponents of the prevailing view look to *Three* as the later of the sermons, and therefore understand this homily as presenting Luther's more mature position on justification. Quite interesting, however, are the significant advances which *Three* makes away from a view which conceives of justification as a process which occurs within the believer. As Green points out, there are three

¹⁶ Bernhard Lohse, *Martin Luther: An Introduction to his Life and Work*, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 27.

positive developments which may be observed in *Three*: (1) Luther views justification as a gift of God in Christ, (2) he asserts that the believer can be certain he will be saved, and (3) a clear distinction is made between alien and active righteousness.¹⁷ Based upon these advances, it seems difficult to assert that *Three* was disinterested in considering justification from a forensic standpoint.

There remain, however, significant remnants of a cooperative model of justification, for in *Three* Luther has retained a scholastic analysis of the concept of sin and justification. Perhaps this is best illustrated from the following quote:

What works are to be done above all? I reply: especially those which promote the chief righteousness and decrease original sin. Thus is it necessary for each and every one to make the appropriate examination of his own situation, because original sin attacks one person so, and another thus. The general things to be done are prayers, alms, fasting. Indeed Romans 12 says it more beautifully than anywhere else. Elsewhere: *Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature* [Colossians 3:5]. Because from that third righteousness nothing else is sought, than that original sin be overcome, and the body of sin destroyed, and thus the reigning righteousness itself be a merit, not however because the doing acquires merit, but increases the merit.¹⁸

When one considers the divergent data that is provided by *Three*, he quickly becomes aware of the problem which results from asserting that one sermon provides a look at the mature Luther, while the other represents the earlier stages of his thinking. The fact is, although each of the sermons do indeed exhibit a certain tendency – with *Three* leaning towards the early Luther and *Two* moving in the direction of the more mature reformer – both represent the musing of a mind in transition.

Evidence of such transitional thinking is again exhibited when one considers the advances which Green has discovered in *Two*. In this sermon, Luther (1) abolishes the notion of degrees of sin, instead asserting that transgression takes the form either of inherited sin or actual sin, (2) asserts that there are only two kinds of righteousness, namely alien and proper, (3) no longer sees Christ

¹⁷ Lowell Green, *How Melancthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel*, 166-167.

¹⁸ Martin Luther, "Sermon on Three Kinds of Righteousness," 357-358; WA 2:46.

merely as a great example, but now considers Him to be One who shares gifts with the believer, and (4) develops the idea of bridal mysticism, thereby laying the groundwork for his concept of the *frölicher Wechsel*.¹⁹

Based solely upon this data, one might rightly assert that by the time of *Two*, Luther had clearly broken with a synergistic understanding of justification. However, as one reads further in *Two*, he realizes that such a clear distinction is not merited. When concluding his discussion of alien righteousness, Luther makes the following comment which exposes the continued influence of the Roman mindset upon his thinking: "Christ daily drives out the old Adam more and more in accordance with the extent to which faith and knowledge grow. For alien righteousness is not instilled all at once, but it begins, makes progress, and is finally perfected at the end through death."²⁰ It is therefore clear that while *Two*, in general terms, is most consonant with Luther's mature teaching on justification, it nonetheless retains vestiges of Luther's medieval inheritance.²¹

Conclusion

Having now considered all of the relevant data relating to these early sermons of Martin Luther, we may make several observations concerning these pieces. To begin, it appears that the current evidence available regarding the dating of these sermons must be understood as inconclusive. Although Whitelaw and others have suggested March 28, 1518 as a likely date for *Two*, this hypothesis must be viewed as circumstantial at best. It very well may be the case that Luther did preach this sermon on the date which Whitelaw has proposed, yet until further evidence is uncovered, this thesis must remain as mere speculation.

Secondly, it does not appear that providing a concrete date for these two sermons is of manifold importance after all. As we have shown, neither *Three* nor *Two* represent a thoroughgoing view of Luther's mature doctrine of

¹⁹ Lowell Green, *How Melancthon Helped Luther Discover the Gospel*, 169. For more information concerning the connection between Luther's ideas on righteousness and his notion of the "Great Exchange," consult Lump's article entitled "Luther's Two Kinds of Righteousness," 32-34.

²⁰ Martin Luther, "Two Kinds of Righteousness." *WA* 2:147; *LW* 31:299.

²¹ For a helpful discussion concerning Luther's struggle to break with the Roman model of justification, see Glen Zweck, "Commentary on Luther's Sermon on Three Kinds of Righteousness," 351-353.

justification. Even if the prevailing view was shown to be correct, such a dating would not verify the ancillary thesis that Luther advocated an analytic model of justification. On the contrary, the preponderance of evidence exhibits the fact that the mature Luther had made a definite break with the Roman model, and by the end of his life was clearly advocating a forensic understanding of justification.

Thirdly, after having considered the evidence, one seems justified in concurring with Zweck that the prevailing view has misrepresented the facts, thereby attempting a judicious rewriting of the historical record. Although Luther did, in fact, exhibit tendencies towards a synergistic model of justification in *Three*, such a proclivity is neither unique to this sermon, nor is it to be unexpected. The truth of the matter is that throughout Luther's career as a reformer he struggled to cast off his Medieval inheritance. It should therefore come as no surprise that in these early years of 1518-1519 one observes remnants of such thinking. The existence of these remnants in no way validates the claim of the prevailing view that Luther's mature position was one of analytic justification. Any attempt to make such an assertion must be viewed as wishful thinking at best, and outright deceit at worst.

Much work remains to be done concerning the order of events surrounding Martin Luther's Reformation breakthrough. When seeking to understand that process, however, one must always keep in mind that Luther was an individual in transition, and was therefore continually modifying his position in light of his ever-growing knowledge of Scripture. If one is to understand Luther correctly, he must not consider passages of his writing in isolation, but should instead seek to understand: (1) what his most mature writings taught, (2) what the vast majority of his writings taught, and (3) what historic, Orthodox Lutheranism has understood him to be saying. By working from such a triad, the responsible scholar will avoid the errors of many who have come before him, and may move ever-closer to understanding Luther's fascinating spiritual pilgrimage which contributed so heavily to the reformation of the church.

MATTHIAS FLACIUS: AN UNDERRATED SLAVIC REFORMER

Luka Ilić

Childhood and Education

Matija Vlačić Ilirik (Matthias Flacius Illyricus) was born as the youngest of six children in Albona (now Labin), close to the Adriatic Sea on the Istrian Peninsula in present-day Croatia, on March 3, 1520. His mother was Jacobea Luciani, daughter of a wealthy and powerful Albonian family. His father was Andrija Vlačić, a small landowner who died when Matthias was twelve years old. At the age of sixteen Flacius departed for Venice where he spent the next three years under the teaching of Egnatio (Giambattista Cipelli, 1473-1553).¹ Egnatio was a humanist and a friend of Erasmus, with whom he kept correspondence. While Flacius was studying for the priesthood in Italy, his uncle, Baldo Lupetina gave him to read Lutheran literature.²

Flacius' education continued in Basel, where he enrolled at the university on May 1, 1539 as "*Matheus de Franciscis de Albona Polensi Diocesi in Illyrico sub Venetorum ditione, pauper*" - the last adjective exempting him from paying registration and tuition fees. Because he arrived in Basel with very little money, professor Simon Grynäeus (1493-1541) took him into his home. Even though Flacius stayed only one year in Basel, the influence of his professors upon him was profound. Johann Oporinus taught him Greek and a new love for linguistics was born in Flacius; in Professor Oswald Myconius he saw deep faith and in Prof. Grynäeus he saw practical love and commitment to the students

¹ Christine Marie Marshall, *Echo of the Protestant Reformation among South Slavs and their contribution to it in the person of Matija Vlačić Ilirik* (unpublished MA thesis, University of Washington, 1977), 62.

² Baldo Lupetina (1502-1556) was a Catholic friar on the island of Cres and later on a Franciscan presbyter in Venice. He converted to Lutheranism and advised Flacius to go to Germany and study theology. Lupetina was imprisoned in 1542 for his Protestant faith and died as a martyr, being drowned by the Inquisition. See Oliver K. Olson, "Baldo Lupetino, Venetian Martyr", *Lutheran Quarterly* 7 (Spring 1993), 7-18.

and the reformation cause. From Basel he moved on to study at Tübingen. He was received into the house of a fellow countryman, Matija Grbac (Matthias Garbitus Illyricus)³, who was a professor of Greek. After hearing only German for a full year, Flacius was now able to converse in his mother tongue and to talk about his childhood, his beloved home country and its natural beauties. Grbac introduced Flacius to many important people, among others to Joachim Camerarius, who was a close friend and the first biographer of Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560). Camerarius and Grbac saw a tremendous potential in Flacius. Together they decided to send him to Wittenberg to continue his studies there. It was not only that other people recognized the call of God for ministry in Flacius, but he also experienced it personally at an early age as he himself testifies: "Even before I learned Luther's doctrine I felt in myself the peace of conscience and the joy in the Holy Spirit, loved the religion and the Holy Scripture and often with my whole heart wished to contribute something in theology, so that I could advance in the Holy Scripture and serve the church of Christ some time and then be able to return to the Lord."⁴

The Disciple of Luther

Flacius met Martin Luther for the first time when he was 22 years old. He came to Wittenberg as a student in 1541 to study for a master's degree in the Greek and Hebrew languages. In his own autobiographical writing called *Apologia* he explains what happened when he first met Luther face to face:

At the end of my third year, when I was living in the house of Dr. Friedrich Backofen in Wittenberg, who was then a church deacon, evil was encroaching upon me and I was sure that I would die soon; he noticed that because of my internal anxiety I could not study at all. He urged me to confide in him and tell him what bothered me until I told him what was

³ Matthias Garbitus Illyricus (1511-1559) is the first known Protestant from the Balkans. He came to Germany as a teenager to study at the newly founded gymnasium in Nürnberg under Camerarius. From there he went to the University of Heidelberg, and in the year 1534 he was Melanchthon's student in Wittenberg. After receiving a master's degree, Melanchthon recommended him as professor to the newly founded University of Tübingen, where he stayed until his death.

⁴ *Entschuldigung, geschrieben an die Universität zu Wittenberg, der Mittelding halben* (Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger, 1549), D iij v. Also quoted in O. K. Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2002), 28-29.

wrong with me. He affirmed me with counsel and prayer and then succeeded in convincing Doctor Pomeranus⁵ to take me to D.D. Martin Luther. Luther then comforted me by sharing his own example as well as through the word of God, and when the assembly [at St. Mary's Church in Wittenberg]⁶ had prayed for me, the torment lessened from day to day until a year later I was well again.⁷

By the time young Flacius met Luther he had already been in Germany for three years, far away from his beloved Istria, learning German and struggling to adjust to a completely different culture and climate. He had many doubts about his newly acquired Lutheran faith and as he did not share his internal struggles with anyone, he grew disillusioned. He experienced something similar to what Luther calls "Anfechtung," thinking that God was angry with him and that He wanted only to judge him because of his sin. In the above mentioned *Apologia* he says that he thought constantly of death and felt the wrath of God upon himself, also experiencing the power of the devil upon him. It was in such a state of mind that he first met Luther personally. Later on in his life Flacius said that this encounter with Luther eye to eye in his study changed him completely. He saw in Luther a man like himself, with human doubts and insecurities, which troubled him just like they haunted him. Luther was not a man above others for him anymore; he was different from what he was behind the pulpit or in the classroom. Flacius saw in him simplicity of faith and a desire to help and pastor others. Most importantly, he felt that he was becoming more confident in himself after that first meeting with Luther.

As a student, Flacius lived between his room, school and church and became known for his utter devotion to research and serious scholarship. In Wittenberg he had the reputation of a lonely man but always kind and helpful

⁵ Pomeranus is the nickname of Dr. Johannes Bugenhagen (1485-1558), who was a city pastor and a professor at Wittenberg University. He was born in the Pomeranian village of Wollin, near Szczecin in today's Poland, and is considered to be the third most famous Wittenberg reformer, immediately after Luther and Melanchthon. He performed the marriage of Luther to Katharina von Bora on June 13, 1525. Luther had a deep friendship with Pomeranus.

⁶ Oliver K. Olson, "Matthias Flacius", in Carter Lindberg (ed.), *Reformation Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Early Modern Period* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2002), 85.

⁷ *Apologia Matthiae Flacii Illyrici ad Scholam Wittenbergensem in Adiaphorum causa* (1549). Also quoted in Mijo Mirković, *Matija Vlačić Ilirik*, vol. I (Pula and Rijeka: Liburnija, 1980), 94.

to his colleagues. Luther had hopes that Flacius was the one who would continue his work, and wrote of him in 1543: "nostris notissimus homo et magnae fidei," (He is a man well-known to me and of great faith).⁸

In 1544 Flacius received his appointment to the chair of Hebrew language at the faculty of philosophy in Wittenberg. A year later he married the daughter of Pastor Michael Faust from Dabrun, near Wittenberg. Luther attended his wedding and that meant recognition and respect for Flacius. He felt that from now on his family was under the shelter of the most important man in the city. Unfortunately for Flacius, four months after his wedding, Luther died (in February 1546).

In Wittenberg Flacius "became a confirmed Lutheran and entered into a new period of his life, a period characterized by a violent hatred of the papacy and a passionate defense of what he considered to be the pure Lutheran doctrine."⁹ He stayed loyal to the teachings of Luther for the rest of his life, often at the price of bitter fights with anyone who he thought had departed from the orthodoxy of the great reformer. He was involved in many theological controversies with, among others, Philip Melanchthon, Andreas Osiander, Caspar von Schwenckfeld and Victorin Striegel. The issues ranged from the doctrine of justification by faith, original sin, and religious compromise, which Melanchthon was willing to make with the Roman Catholic Church, the so-called "adiaphora," which means indifferent matters. Throughout his life Flacius "was persecuted by his enemies and forsaken by his friends, moving from one place to another,"¹⁰ and often with his big family (he married twice and had eighteen children) in order to stay alive and out of prison.

Ministry, Writings and Wanderings

Flacius became professor of Hebrew and Greek in Wittenberg at only 24 and stayed there teaching for five years. As a relatively young man and as a foreigner he claimed a very high social status, receiving a good salary and having a stable

⁸ Wilhelm Preger, *Matthias Flacius Illyricus und seine Zeit*, Book I (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, and Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1964), 24.

⁹ Hohl, C. L., Jr. "Flacius Illyricus Matthias" in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume V (New York, 1967), 954.

¹⁰ Natterer, M. L., "The Flacian Controversy" in *The Concordia Lutheran* (Sept./Oct., 1995).

job. This certainly increased his self-confidence and security. He married a pastor's daughter, a woman born in a Lutheran family who proved to be a great support to him during the nineteen years of their marriage. She died while giving birth to the twelfth of her children, of whom eight survived.

He published his first theological work at the age of 29. The title was "De vocabulo fidei" (about the word 'faith'), a treatment of the term on the basis of its Hebrew derivation. The foreword to the book was written by Melanchthon himself. It was a modest work, which he kept revising and to which he added new materials. The fourth edition from 1563 included an explanation of the doctrine of justification by faith alone.

As a result of the Augsburg and Leipzig Interims, which were religious laws imposed by the emperor Charles V on the Lutheran territories, Flacius resigned his professorship at Wittenberg and left for Magdeburg, which was at the time not occupied by the imperial army. There he started publishing pamphlets and books against Melanchthon and his followers, who had signed the Interim law. Flacius stayed in Magdeburg for eight years, where he began the first great Protestant work on the history of the church, called "Magdeburg Centuries". The project was done by a group of Lutheran scholars gathered around him and the work was divided by centuries. The first three volumes were published in 1559, while volume XIII came out in 1574. Unfortunately, Flacius died the following year so volumes XIV and XV were never published. His second major work was a compilation about various Christian witnesses who stayed true to the Scriptures and opposed the papacy. His "Catalogus testium veritatis" was first published in Basel by Oporinus in 1556. Apart from writing these two works of lasting value, Flacius became a leader of all those Lutherans who were dissatisfied with the compromise, which Melanchthon had made with the Catholic Church. Melanchthon's concessions included a major departure in Protestant understanding of soteriology and ecclesiology. The Interim "document taught that man's love, his good works, play a role in justification, and it taught that the bishop of Rome held supreme power in the church."¹¹ Another issue that was important for Flacius was the independence of the

¹¹ Robert Kolb, *Nikolaus von Amsdorf (1483-1565): Popular Polemics in the Preservation of Luther's Legacy* (Nieuwkoop: B. De Graaf, 1978), 77.

church from the secular authorities. The Imperial Interim stated that the government had the right to decide what constituted church practices. Flacius believed that the church should be free from state control and argued for the separation of church and state. He published several pamphlets opposing Melancthon and the Interim law, which put him at the helm of an emerging resistance movement. His followers were nicknamed Flacians or Gnesio-Lutherans (which means "True Lutherans"). The opposing party, the Philippists, accused Flacius of being a false brother and a seducer of souls. Melancthon called him the "Illyrian Viper"¹².

Flacius always emphasized the importance of holding on to one's principles uncompromisingly and was zealous for the right doctrine, which he understood to be the backbone of the Church. Contrary to what is often taught, Flacians were not alone in attacking the Augsburg Interim. John Calvin also wrote against it and "when in mid-1549 Melancthon became embroiled in the adiaphoristic controversy, Calvin sent Melancthon a less than friendly letter. Calvin insisted that so many things ought not to be conceded to the papists."¹³

During Easter in 1557, Flacius moved to Jena in order to start a new faculty of theology. He had been asked by the dukes of Weimar to establish a university that would match the one in Wittenberg. Apart from having professorial responsibilities, Flacius also became a general superintendent for the churches in the whole of Thuringia. He brought three theologians to Jena with him, who were his friends and co-workers for the colossal work of the *Ecclesiastica historia*. Immediately at the beginning of his new job, Flacius started having problems with the two professors, who were residents of Jena and were assigned to teach alongside of Flacius and his colleagues. Reasons for friction varied, but the two main ones were that Flacius' salary, as well as that of his three friends, was almost double what the two local lecturers were earning. His enemies also constantly used against him the fact that he was a Slav.¹⁴ Neither was Flacius

¹² Corpus Reformatorum VII, *Philippi Melanthonis Opera quae Supersunt Omnia*. Carolus Gottlieb Bretschneider, ed. (Halle/Braunschweig: Schwetschke, 1840), col. 532.

¹³ Timothy Wengert, "We Will Feast Together in Heaven Forever: The Epistolary Friendship of John Calvin and Philip Melancthon", in Karin Maag (ed.), *Melancthon in Europe: His Work and Influence Beyond Wittenberg* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 35-36.

¹⁴ D. Rudolf Herman, *Thüringische Kirchengeschichte*, II (Weimar, 1947), 146.: "Er war ein Slave, was

German, nor were any of the three professors he had invited Thuringian. This created enmity at the university. In the five years he spent in Jena, Flacius did not write any significant work and almost everything that he tried to accomplish failed. In the end he was dismissed from his job and prohibited from teaching further in the territories of Thuringia and Saxony.

Consequently, Flacius needed to move, and this time he went south to Regensburg. While there, he published his theology of original sin and free will under the title "Disputatio de Originali Peccato et Libero Arbitrio." He also wrote probably his greatest and most systematic work, "Clavis Scripturae Sacrae" (Key to Sacred Scripture); about which philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey said that it is the "first scientific work of biblical interpretation since the days of disputes between Alexandrian and Antiochian theologians,"¹⁵ while H.-G. Gadamer called it "the first important work of hermeneutics."¹⁶ During this time Flacius also published some works in the Croatian and Slovenian languages together with his former student in Jena, Sebastijan Krelj, who was a preacher in Ljubljana.¹⁷

In 1566 Emperor Maximilian II ordered the city of Regensburg to cancel their asylum to Flacius, so he took to the road once again. However, his family stayed behind. This time he went to Antwerp, where he became an advisor to the Lutheran movement in church matters. He was invited by the city's senate, with the knowledge of Prince William of Orange, but his stay in Antwerp lasted only a short time. While he went to collect his family the city was taken over by a Catholic army and all Lutherans were forced to leave. The following year, in 1567, he changed places of residence three times: he was in the Netherlands until March, then in Frankfurt am Main until December, and finally he settled in Strasbourg, where he spent the following five years.

Flacius' last great work, published in 1570, is the Greek text of the New Testament. His redaction was placed alongside Erasmus' Latin translation with

ihm von seinen Gegnern häufig vorgehalten wurde." Quoted in Mirković, 241.

¹⁵ Wilhelm Dilthey, *Studien zur Geschichte des deutschen Geistes*. Gesammelte Schriften. Book III (Leipzig and Berlin: Tuebner, 1927), 219. See also Ivan Kordić, *Hermeneutika Matije Vlačića Ilirika* (Zagreb: August Šenoa, 1992), 161.

¹⁶ Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Die Universalität des hermeneutischen Problems", *Philosophisches Jahrbuch* LXXIII (1966), 215. Also quoted in O. K. Olson, 'Matthias Flacius', 89.

¹⁷ Vlado Deutsch, *Flacijevci u slovenskoj reformaciji* (Zagreb: Duhovna stvarnost, 1988), 113.

corrections and supplements written by Flacius. Three years later the Strasbourg city council decided to refuse further hospitality to him because of theological controversies that surrounded him and he was expelled. He found a hiding place in a women's cloister in Frankfurt am Main, where he died on March 11, 1575 surrounded by his family and a few friends. The place of his grave is unknown.

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