

# LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

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# LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL REVIEW

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## STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS

- AE *Luther's Works*. American edition. 55 vols. St. Louis: Concordia, and Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958- .
- Bauer, Walter. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- BAG 1<sup>st</sup> ed., edited by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, 1957.
- BAGD 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., edited by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker, 1979.
- BDAG 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., edited by Frederick W. Danker, 2000.
- BELK *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*. 12 editions. [Cite edition used.] Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1930- .
- BHS *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1984.
- LW *Lutheran Worship*. St. Louis: Concordia, 1982.
- NA<sup>27</sup> *Novum Testamentum Graece*. Ed. Kurt and Barbara Aland, et al. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993.
- TDNT Kittel, Gerhard, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964- .
- TLH *The Lutheran Hymnal*. St. Louis: Concordia, 1941.
- W<sup>2</sup> Walch, Johann Georg, ed. *D. Martin Luthers sämtlichen Schriften*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ["St. Louis"] ed. 23 vols. St. Louis: Concordia, 1880-1910.
- WA *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. Weimarer Ausgabe. ["Weimar ed."] Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1883- .
- WA DB Weimarer Ausgabe Deutsche Bibel [German Bible]
- WA Br Weimarer Ausgabe Briefe [Letters]
- WA Tr Weimarer Ausgabe Tischreden [Table talk]

Abbreviations for the Lutheran confessional writings:

- AC Augsburg Confession
- Ap Apology of the Augsburg Confession
- SA Smalcald Articles
- Tr Tractate/Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope
- SC Small Catechism
- LC Large Catechism
- FC Ep Formula of Concord, Epitome
- FC SD Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration

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## EDITORIAL FOREWORD

This volume of *Lutheran Theological Review* brings us a wide variety of articles from theologians with a wide variety of experiences. While there is no overarching theme for the issue, there is clearly one that stands out for much of the issue, namely that of Lutheranism in the United Kingdom, past and present. Three of the articles are written by Lutheran pastors who are completing or have completed doctorates at the two great universities in the United Kingdom, Oxford and Cambridge. The short study is written by the deployed tutor to Westfield House in Cambridge. The book review is written by the pastor in Coventry.

Thomas Winger begins this issue with a short study on the importance and significance of the terms “for us men and for our salvation” and “became man” in the Nicene Creed. He argues that any attempt to use modern inclusive language to translate the creed will diminish its meaning, therefore the traditional wording must be maintained.

The major articles for this issue begin with an article by Frederic Baue, who summarizes the current discussions among Lutherans on the topic of predestination. He traces the history of the controversy from Reformation times, examining past and current views presented by Calvinists, Arminians, and Lutherans (with the Muslim view thrown in for good measure), concluding that the view of Lutheran Orthodoxy remains the best presentation of the view, preserving Election as pure Gospel and maintaining both universal grace and grace alone.

Next, Adam Francisco outlines the political and religious context of Christian–Islamic contact during the time of the Reformation, noting and summarizing several significant anti-Islamic polemical works of the time. Given the current political context and interest in Islam that has arisen as a result of this, this article provides the church with resources both to understand what Islam is all about and to provide a means of refuting its teachings from the perspective of an orthodox Christianity.

The next two articles deal with the Reformation in the United Kingdom. Jeffrey Leininger looks at the theology of William Tyndale, asking whether the great English reformer, the student and translator of Luther, was in fact “Lutheran” in his understanding of justification. Korey Maas then looks at the work of lesser-known Robert Barnes, and outlines Barnes’s contributions to the dissemination of Luther’s theology in England. As both Tyndale and Barnes were martyred for the faith, they demonstrate what it may mean to be truly confessing theologians.

The sermon by William Mundt points to the very heart of the Gospel: that our lives lived under grace are lives lived in freedom, in the face of our inborn tendencies to live by the Law.

Finally, Paul Landgraf reviews David Scaer's recent book, *Discourses in Matthew: Jesus Teaches the Church*, and finds this discussion of Matthew's Gospel, which connects the teachings of Jesus to His life, to be an excellent contribution to Matthean scholarship.

We trust that this issue will provide abundant food for thought as we come to grips with the challenges of being a confessional and confessing church in our time.

EGK

Wednesday of the Tenth Week after Pentecost 2005.

**SHORT STUDY:  
WHY MEN? ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE NICENE CREED**

*Thomas M. Winger*

*who for us **men**, and for our salvation,  
came down from heaven,  
and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary,  
and was made **man***

In the summer of July 2004 the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod gave convention approval to *Lutheran Service Book*, the culmination of almost a decade of hymnal revision work. At every stage representatives of Lutheran Church–Canada were involved, as it is likely that large numbers of LCC congregations will purchase the new book. During this lengthy process the Lutheran Hymnal Project conducted the most extensive field testing our churches have ever seen.<sup>1</sup>

One of the most contentious issues with which the LCMS Commission on Worship and its Liturgy Committee wrestled during the field testing process was the translation of the Nicene Creed (and to a lesser extent the Apostles’). Fierce reactions were received, both in favour of and opposed to various proposed changes. Ultimately the LCMS convention voted simply to retain the *LW* forms of the Nicene and Apostles’ Creeds. Considering the significance of these creeds to our church, this decision was probably for the best.

Ironically, it is perhaps the one change not made that will be most controversial in the future. For in retaining the *LW* translation, the convention chose to keep the contentious phrase “for us men”. In recent years many Christian churches have excluded or revised these words in updating the Nicene Creed, bowing to the argument that they offensively exclude women. On the other hand, in recommending the retention of these words, the LCMS Commission on Worship contended that no adequate alternative could be found.

If this is indeed to remain a contentious matter in our church, we need to be well resourced to answer the inevitable questions that will arise when *Lutheran Service Book* appears in our pews. The following short study is intended as such a resource. It brings together many of the arguments

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<sup>1</sup> To speak of field testing of *The Lutheran Hymnal* (1941) would be entirely anachronistic. Although in the 1960s and ’70s the LCMS had evaluated a whole series of contemporary worship proposals, what finally appeared in *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978) look very different indeed. And when this book was rejected by the LCMS in its 1979 convention, the rush to bring *Lutheran Worship* (1982) into print precluded any further field testing.

presented in favour of the traditional translation, while explaining why the alternatives were found to be unworkable. It is to be hoped that the publication of this material will foster understanding, and help our pastors to explain why our next hymnal will retain such language in the face of strong cultural pressure to the contrary.



The issue of inclusive language is a very complicated one, and for a general treatment I would refer the reader to the recent CTCR document, *Biblical Revelation and Inclusive Language* (1998). With regard to the specific question of the above phrases from the Nicene Creed, however, the historical circumstances of the Creed's origins and the theology it confesses concerning Christ and our salvation must be carefully considered before too hastily adopting one of the many modern alternatives. In this study, I shall begin by outlining the main contours of the issue, after which a detailed discussion of the translation of ἄνθρωπος will address the most important linguistic and theological issues.

## SUMMARY

1. The Nicene Creed is an historical document that is the inheritance of the entire Christian Church, and a confession to which the Lutheran Church is specifically committed by its inclusion in the Book of Concord. The original wording must be maintained as much as possible if we are to maintain the integrity of this commitment. This means, for instance, that we cannot simply drop the word "men" (as some have proposed) because it might offend modern sensibilities. Nevertheless, the question remains precisely how the original words are to be translated.
2. The traditional translation "for us men" was, of course, intended to be inclusive in meaning, just as the original Greek term was in this instance used inclusively. In traditional English usage, "men" and "man" could be used both of male individuals and generically of people without regard to gender. "For us men" certainly means "for us people", both male and female. Although English usage is changing, and the generic usage of "men" is declining, it would not be true to say that this usage has become obsolete or unintelligible. What I hope to demonstrate is that no other inclusive term in modern usage can be substituted without losing the meaning of this section of the Creed when viewed as a whole.
3. The two phrases "for us men" and "was made man" form "bookends" to a small section of the Creed that explains the incarnation of Christ (His conception and birth in human flesh). In the traditional translation the two phrases are connected to each other by the similar words "men/man".

This accurately reflects the original Greek of the Creed, which also applies the same root word to us and to Christ in this section. This was not accidental.

- Firstly, it confesses a connection between us and our Saviour that is thoroughly biblical. The Creed very carefully teaches us that when Christ was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, He took on the very same nature that we are. He became “man” for us “men”. Because He is true God and true Man, He is able to bridge the gap between God and men. St Paul writes: “For there is one God, and there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (I Tim. 2:5). This connection is very difficult to convey using modern patterns of inclusive language. But we must be absolutely clear that “men” does not exclude women when used in this way.
  - Secondly, the generic use of “men” in this section preserves a biblical link backwards to mankind’s common ancestor. “Men” means all those who are descended from the original man, Adam. The name “Adam” in Hebrew means “man”. We are called “men” because we are like him—both physically and spiritually. We have his flesh, and we have his sin. According to St Paul, it took a second Adam, a perfect Man, to solve this problem. “As one man’s trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one Man’s act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men” (Rom. 5:18).
  - Thirdly, the creeds were formed in an era of Christian history when this teaching concerning Christ was specifically under attack. In the early centuries of the Christian Church, the most common false teaching concerning Christ was the denial of His **human** nature (rather than His divine nature, as is commonly denied today). Greek philosophy and religion believed that material creation was essentially bad, and that the greatest goal in life was to be rid of the body and live on as a spirit. Therefore, they had great difficulty imagining that God (or a god) would wish to assume the lowly flesh of this world, or that He would have any interest in redeeming our flesh. It is likely that both the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds formulated their second articles specifically to combat these heresies. In many ways these false ideas still confront the Christian Church today, as modernists reject the resurrection of the body (both Christ’s and ours), and a general spiritualizing tendency pays little attention to Christ’s fleshliness and ours. The creeds’ teaching is therefore still vitally important.
4. A number of possible alternatives to the traditional translation have been proposed and considered. In each case the proposal clarifies the inclusive nature of the terms, but at the expense of the theological and historical

meaning we have just considered. In addition there remains a practical problem: If the generic use of “men” is removed from the creeds, then consistency would demand that the rest of the liturgy and hymns should be made to conform to the same principle. The scale of such a task is quite extraordinary, and the resulting loss of theological content and poetry would be tragic.

It has been argued that, since the Nicene Creed is an ecumenical text, we are obligated to use a version that is universally acknowledged by other Christian churches. There are a number of clear fallacies involved in such an argument. Firstly, our church is committed to the historic text of the creeds, and has no obligation to adopt a mistranslation, no matter how widely it is used. Secondly, it must be emphasized that, despite the valiant efforts of the International Consultation on English Texts (ICET) and the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC), no single modern version has emerged as “ecumenical” or universal in usage. In fact, there is as much diversity in usage of creedal translations as there is in biblical translations among English-speaking churches. The most “ecumenical” text, in the end, is probably the traditional text we are preserving, which stretches back 500 years to Thomas Cranmer, and has been used in every English hymnal of the LCMS.

In summary, the two phrases under discussion (“who for us men ... was made man”) emphasize at least three aspects of Christ’s person and work that any translation of the creed must seek to preserve:

- 1. Universality of Christ’s Work:** The word “men” is used in the Creed as inclusive of all males and females of the people that God created, and who subsequently became sinful through the first man, Adam. The Creed here emphasizes that Christ’s saving work is for the benefit of all people, not just a portion of them.
- 2. Nature of the Incarnation:** Christ became a “man”—a real, male individual of the human race. The Son of God took on human flesh in such a way that He is completely like us in all ways, except that He is without sin. As the Second Adam He reversed Adam’s sinful rebellion, and became the first-born of a new race of redeemed people. The parallel between “men” and “man” effectively conveys this important teaching.
- 3. Personal Applicability of Salvation:** Christ’s incarnation and saving work is specifically “for me”, as Luther stresses in the Small Catechism. “For us men” means “for me”, not merely for some other group of people, or even just for people in general.

**THE MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF ἄνθρωπος**

The two instances of translation that concern this study (“for us men” and “was made man”) cannot be considered in isolation from one another. They are vital elements within a unit of the Second Article that confesses the incarnation of Christ. We must investigate the content of this unit as a whole.

The following table sets out the original text and the most significant versions of this unit:

<b>The Incarnation of Christ in the Nicene Creed</b>	
<b>Original Greek text:</b> <i>Constantinople, AD 381</i>	τὸν δι’ ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν κατελθόντα ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ σαρκωθέντα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα
<b>Latin liturgical text:</b>	qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis, et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria virgine et homo factus est
<b>Traditional English text:</b> <i>BCP (1549ff.),<sup>2</sup> TLH (1941), LW (1982)</i>	who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man
<b>ICET text:</b> <i>e.g., Lutheran Book of Worship (1978)</i>	For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the and was made man. [virgin Mary,
<b>ELLC text:</b> <i>e.g., Christian Worship (1993); With One Voice (1995), p. 54</i>	For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly [or fully] human.

In passing we note one translation issue in this section that has been taken up by some modern versions, concerning the respective roles of the Holy Spirit and Mary in Christ’s conception. The original Greek text of the Nicene Creed does not distinguish their roles, simply confessing that Christ was incarnate “of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary”. The Latin liturgical text introduces a slight differentiation: “**by** the Holy Spirit **of** the Virgin Mary”. Our traditional English text follows the Latin, and there is no significant

<sup>2</sup> In addition to standard abbreviations, the following are used: *BCP*=[Anglican] *Book of Common Prayer*; *ICET*=International Consultation on English Texts; *ELLC*=English Language Liturgical Consultation.

reason to change it, even though the ELLC text is admittedly more faithful to the original Greek.<sup>3</sup>

The second area of contention, and the one that concerns this study specifically, is the modification of “men” and “man” towards some sort of inclusive language. The question is whether “for us **men**” excludes women, and whether “was made **man**” unduly emphasizes Christ’s maleness rather than His human nature. In both cases it is the meaning of the Greek word ἄνθρωπος that is at issue. It is often contended today that “man” is an incorrect translation of ἄνθρωπος, inasmuch as the Greek term simply means “human being” or “person”. Unfortunately, this is a case of anachronistically imposing modern ideas of “political correctness” upon an ancient text produced in a culture that simply did not think in such terms. The evidence shows that ἄνθρωπος in Greek (and indeed *homo* in Latin and *Mensch* in German) has almost precisely the same range of meanings as “man” in traditional English.<sup>4</sup> And despite the efforts of some academics to change our usage, most people continue to use the word in everyday English in all its rich variety of usage.<sup>5</sup>

The following summary illustrates the range of meanings that ἄνθρωπος handles in biblical usage, all of which can be, and traditionally have been, translated as “man”.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> At this point the ELLC text is a significant improvement over the ICET text. “By the **power** of the Holy Spirit” is an unwarranted change to the text, which either reduces the Holy Spirit to an impersonal “power” or reduces Christ’s conception to the level of ordinary human conceptions. For, since the Holy Spirit is the “Giver of Life”, all human conceptions are “by the power of the Holy Spirit”. Gerald Bray, *Creeds, Councils, and Christ* (Fearn: Mentor Press, 1984, 1997), 208, comments similarly: “In the original text, the Spirit’s parental function is clearly parallel to that of Mary, but here it is possible to maintain that Mary alone is the parent, whom God by the power of his Spirit enabled to bear a Son by parthenogenesis. The result would be no more than a miraculous or unusual *human* conception, which does not do justice to the Christian doctrine of the incarnation.”

<sup>4</sup> The fact that Greek and Latin also have more precise terms, ἀνὴρ and *vir*, does not mean that English is impoverished, for it has available the more precise term “male”. In all three languages, the more precise word tends to be used only when the sex is being particularly stressed—but that does not mean that the more general term has no denotation of sex.

<sup>5</sup> One observes that American television programming, a barometer of popular culture, still commonly uses “man” and “men” in the traditional sense, rarely accommodating itself to inclusive language. Quite to the contrary, such “political correctness” is now routinely ridiculed in popular culture. Furthermore, it appears that inclusive language is an almost exclusively American concern. Great Britain shows little interest, and continues with traditional forms of language even while championing sexual equality in society. Nor have other modern languages experienced such a movement. In French and German, for instance, where every household object has a gender, there would be no sense in objecting to our race being grammatically or conceptually male.

<sup>6</sup> The most helpful discussion of the various meanings of “man” with respect to biblical usage is Vernard Eller, *The Language of Canaan and The Grammar of Feminism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982). See also the CTCR document *Biblical Revelation and Inclusive*

1. “Man” (singular) as the entire human race rolled up into one representative person.

Examples: (a) “So God created man [אָדָם; LXX τὸν ἄνθρωπον] in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male [זָכָר; LXX ἄρσεν] and female He created them” (Gen. 1:27a). Here, Adam and Eve together are called “man” (singular).

(b) “Man [אָדָם; LXX ὁ ἄνθρωπος] does not live by bread alone” (Deut. 8:3).

(c) “Man [ἄνθρωπος] is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ” (Gal. 2:16). Again, both men and women are clearly included. Nevertheless, the Bible always imagines this “representative person” as male, for both grammatical and theological purposes.

2. “Men” (plural) as a collective term for all humans.

E.g. “[God] who desires all men [πάντας ἀνθρώπους] to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (I Tim. 2:4). In such instances, although “men” is grammatically male, it carries no restrictive implications of gender at all; i.e. both male and female people are clearly envisioned.

3. “Man” in contrast to “woman” in general.

E.g. “It is well for a man [ἀνθρώπῳ] not to touch a woman [γυναικὸς]” (I Cor. 7:1; cf. Mt. 19:5). Clearly, ἄνθρωπος here specifically means “male person” and does not include females (even though Paul’s teaching about celibacy could legitimately be applied also to women).

4. A “man” as one particular individual.

E.g. “And behold, there was a man [ἄνθρωπος] with a withered hand” (Mt. 12:10). In this case, it is always an adult male individual being referred to, but without giving any more particular details. Like “a man” in English, ἄνθρωπος cannot possibly refer in this context to a woman. That would be γυνή (e.g. Lk. 8:43).

Some of these meanings of ἄνθρωπος and “man” are inclusive of females and some are exclusive. Both English and Greek are flexible in this respect. If one insists that meanings three and four always overrule one and two (as if all uses of “man” or “men” automatically exclude females), one is imposing an ideology upon language rather than listening to what meaning arises from the context. Certainly there are instances where inclusive terms like “people” or “someone” may translate ἄνθρωπος without doing violence to the text. But extensive accommodation to inclusive language practices substitutes an alien context for that of the text and its world. For example, “human” or “human being” imposes scientific, biological language. “Person” has the ironic effect

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*Language* (St. Louis: CTR of the LCMS, 1998). Also Cameron A. MacKenzie, “The English Bible in A Postmodern Age”, in Paul T. McCain and John R. Stephenson, editors, *Mysteria Dei: Essays in Honor of Kurt Marquart*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Ft. Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 2000), 149-68.

of depersonalizing, since it is commonly used in English to deal with people as objects. Furthermore, one might question whether “people” and “person” are, in fact, synonyms of “men” or “humans”. Awkward expressions like “man or woman” and “he or she” merely call attention to the modern political agenda and distract from the message of the text itself. Although intended to include both sexes, such constructions tend rather to highlight sexual distinctions in texts that had no intention of doing so.

There is a linguistic richness available to all languages that use the same word for both individual and collective senses. Consider Neil Armstrong’s famous lunar line, “One small step for a man; one giant leap for mankind”—indicating succinctly and poetically how his trip to the moon was a triumph not of one individual but of the whole race. With Christian texts, however, our concern is not only poetic but also theological. Inclusive language in the context of the Second Article of the Creed destroys the scriptural teaching that joins together sin and salvation, sinner and Saviour, in a most personal way. Paul teaches in Romans 5 that all people were joined together in Adam, and with him sinned. We do not just inherit original sin as a sin committed by someone else, but we ourselves committed that sin in and with Adam. By the same theological logic, Paul can then say that in Christ we are all righteous. For Christ, the Second Adam, true Man, redeemed the flesh of all men. Paul’s argument hinges on the identity of nature between Adam, all men, and Christ, an identity that Paul expresses by using the same Greek word, ἄνθρωπος in each case. Note how beautifully this connection is made in English when the same word is used for each:

12 Therefore as sin came into the world through one **man** [ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου] and death through sin, and so death spread to all **men** [πάντας ἀνθρώπους] because all sinned ... 15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one **man’s** trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one **man** [ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου] Jesus Christ abounded for many. ... 17 If, because of one **man’s** trespass, death reigned through that one **man**, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one **man** Jesus Christ. 18 Then as one **man’s** trespass led to condemnation for all **men**, so one **man’s** act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all **men**. 19 For as by one **man’s** disobedience many were made sinners, so by one **man’s** obedience many will be made righteous. (Rom. 5:12-19 RSV; cf. I Cor. 15:21-22)

Lazarus Spengler’s great Reformation hymn, as translated by Matthias Loy, summarizes Paul succinctly:

As by one man all mankind fell  
And, born in sin, was doomed to hell,  
So by one Man, who took our place,  
We all received the gift of grace. (*TLH* 369/*LW* 363:5)

Notice how Loy has used the three distinct meanings of “man” in this one stanza in order to draw a connection between them.

Now, to return to the Creed, we find that this is precisely the teaching expressed in the centre of the Second Article. The Son of God “was made **man** [ἐνανθρωπήσαντα] ... for us **men** [ἀνθρώπους] and for our salvation.” “Men” is clearly used here in the sense of meaning two above: all members of the human race who are descended from the first man, Adam. The ICET and ELLC ecumenical versions, however, remove “men” on the grounds that it excludes women, and assume that it is enough simply to say “us”. But in so doing, they destroy the connection between Adam, us, and Christ, that the Creed has so carefully drawn. The problem is exacerbated when “man” as a description of Christ is replaced by a coldly biological and abstract term like “human”.

The point of the Creed is that Christ became what we are in order to redeem us and what we are. Only as true God and a real man could He be a true Mediator between both: “For there is one God, and there is one Mediator between God and men [ἀνθρώπων], the man [ἄνθρωπος] Christ Jesus” (I Tim. 2:5).<sup>7</sup> In the early centuries of the Christian Church, the most common false teaching concerning Christ was the denial of His **human** nature, rather than His divine nature (as is commonly denied today). Greek philosophy and religion, with its disdain for the material world, had difficulty imagining that God (or a god) would wish to assume the lowly flesh of this world. It is likely that both the Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds formulated their second articles specifically to combat these heresies. The anti-gnostic writings of Irenaeus, the 2<sup>nd</sup>-century Church Father, give us a contemporary insight into the meaning of this section of the Creed. In oft-quoted words that surely derive from I Tim. 2:5, Irenaeus explains:

... He caused man to become one with God. For unless a man had overcome the enemy of man, the enemy would not have been legitimately vanquished. ... And unless man had been joined to God, he could never have become a partaker of incorruptibility. For it was incumbent upon the Mediator between God and men, by His relationship to both, to bring both to friendship and concord, and present man to God, while He revealed God to man. For, in what way could we be partakers of the adoption of sons ... unless His Word, made flesh, had entered into communion with us? (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* III.xviii:7)

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<sup>7</sup> Even the NIV, which uses inclusive language extensively, retains “men” in this crucial passage. The new revision of the RSV, the English Standard Version [ESV], introduces the inclusive term “people” in I Tim. 2:4; but it is significant to note that it retains “men” and “man” in the next verse in order to maintain its meaning faithfully. At this point the ESV adds the explanatory note: “\*men and man render the same Greek word that is translated people in verses 1-4.”

Irenaeus sums up Paul’s teaching from Romans 5 in a similar fashion:

[W]hen He became incarnate, and was made man, He summed up and began afresh [lit. “recapitulated”] the long line of men, and furnished us, in a brief, comprehensive manner, with salvation; so that what we had lost in Adam—namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God—that we might recover in Christ Jesus. (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* IV.xviii:1)<sup>8</sup>

The Creed expresses this theology by framing its section on the Incarnation and salvation with forms of the word ἄνθρωπος—Christ became **man** to save us **men**.

Could not the same point be made using a more “inclusive” term like “human”? To a certain extent it could be. But the Creed confesses the Incarnation in a more precise way than simply saying that Christ became human. There is no generic “humanness” that exists apart from concrete people. To say that Christ became “human” is to confess the Incarnation far more weakly than to say He “was made man”. The ELLC text’s attempts to qualify “human” with “truly” or “fully” indicates their discomfort with the word. What the Creed confesses is that Christ became a man—both fully human and also a concrete male individual. The beauty of the word “man” is that it is capable of saying both things at once. Christ is “man” in the sense of both meanings one and four above. The feminist contention that Christ’s maleness limits salvation to males is not only contrary to the clear words of Scripture, but it is based on a linguistic misunderstanding. Furthermore, it neglects the vital significance of Adam. Christ became a man in order to

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<sup>8</sup> Irenaeus is particularly relevant for being the most significant writer from the era when the baptismal creeds were being formulated. The following additional citations from Irenaeus are also relevant:

For it was for this end that the Word of God was made man, and He who was the Son of God became the Son of man, that man, having been taken into the Word, and receiving the adoption, might become the son of God. For by no other means could we have attained to incorruptibility and immortality, unless we had been united to incorruptibility and immortality. But how could we be joined to incorruptibility and immortality, unless, first, incorruptibility and immortality had become that which we also are, so that the corruptible might be swallowed up by incorruptibility, and the mortal by immortality, that might receive the adoption of sons? (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* III.xix:1)

Now this is His Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, who in the last times was made a man among men, that He might join the end to the beginning, that is, man to God. (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* IV.xx:4)

[Christ] who, on account of His great love, became what we are, so that He might bring us to be what He Himself is. (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* V:Preface)

[T]he Word of God was made man, assimilating Himself to man, and man to Himself, so that by means of his resemblance to the Son, man might become precious to the Father. (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* V.xvi:2)

redeem all those who sinned in the first man, Adam—and that includes both males and females of our race. That is St Paul’s teaching.

In 1993 the Wisconsin Synod’s new hymnal *Christian Worship* adopted the ELLC text, reading “for us and for our salvation, he ... became fully human”. The editors argued that since the Nicene Creed is an ecumenical text, we should use the universally accepted translation. Unfortunately, despite all the efforts of these pan-denominational committees, none of the modern proposals has become standard. The ICET and ELLC texts themselves have gone through numerous revisions, and many hymnals have modified the texts for their own use.<sup>9</sup> A good example of this is the recent prayer book of the Church of England, *Common Worship* (2000). After extensive public debate on the translation of the Nicene Creed, the Church of England decided to amend the ELLC text at this one point, reverting to the traditional “and was made man”.<sup>10</sup> Although American Episcopalians have adopted both instances of inclusive language in their 1979 BCP, most English-speaking Roman Catholics continue to use the traditional wording. Hence, the ELLC “inclusive” text is in no way fully ecumenical, but rather sectarian in both theology and usage.<sup>11</sup>

The dilemma which our church has confronted over the translation of the creed is not entirely negative. For though we have found that none of the modern alternatives is entirely satisfactory, our reconsideration of the traditional translation presents us with a marvellous opportunity. With careful listening, objective judgement, and thorough catechesis, there is every hope that our church can come to a fuller understanding of the Gospel itself through deliberation on the beloved words of our creed.

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<sup>9</sup> The WELS hymnal, *Christian Worship* (1993), for example, modifies the ELLC text by changing “catholic” to “Christian”. The Lutheran Church of Australia has changed the ELLC’s “became fully human” to “became a human being” (*Logia* 3.1 [Jan. 1994]: 2).

<sup>10</sup> Mark Beach, in an official companion volume, comments on this change: “Though the Church of England has clear guidelines for gender-inclusive language (detailed in *Making Women Visible*, 1989) it was felt that ‘human’ or ‘fully’ or ‘truly human’ were unsatisfactory either for stylistic reasons or because of resonances of fallibility (‘he’s only human’).” *Using Common Worship: Holy Communion* (London: Church House Publishing, 2000), 8.

<sup>11</sup> A fuller discussion of this topic may be found in William C. Weinrich, “The New WELS Creed”, *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 56.2-3 (Apr.-Jul. 1992): 201-6; and Burnell F. Eckardt, Jr., “Who for Us Men”, *Logia* 5.3 (H. Trinity 1996): 77-78.

## THE CURRENT DEBATE ON PREDESTINATION

*Frederic W. Baue*

### INTRODUCTION

In 2003, *Reformation & Revival Journal* devoted an entire issue to the subject of Predestination—an indication that the controversy over this doctrine is still alive.<sup>1</sup> The articles featured Reformed and Arminian perspectives; the still, small Lutheran voice was present but not predominant. The purpose of this article is to trace the outline of the current debate on Predestination—including Islam—and offer a Lutheran contribution to the subject.

### LUTHERAN RELUCTANCE

The reluctance of Lutheran theologians—at least those in the conservative Missouri Synod—to weigh in on this subject may be due to the notorious Predestinarian Controversy that tore up the church in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

C. F. W. Walther (1811-1887), the father of the Missouri Synod, had from the beginning nurtured the dream of a united Lutheran church in the United States, one cleansed of the European compromises and built on the sure foundation of Scripture and the Confessions. In 1856 Walther initiated free conferences, inviting leaders of the various synods to work toward Lutheran unity. But the Lutherans in the General Synod, which included many of the congregations that had been overseen by Henry Melchior Muhlenberg (1711-1787), generally considered the father of Lutheranism in America, split in 1863 during the Civil War. This led in 1867 to the formation of the General Council—a synod that was unfortunately weak on chiliasm, secret societies, and other issues. Nevertheless the Synodical Conference was formed in 1872 as a further effort to work out doctrinal differences. As William Schmelder observes, “It was the concern for doctrinal unity that had brought the synods together; it was doctrinal disunity that caused the synods to conclude that they could not continue to walk together.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Reformation & Revival Journal* 12.2 (2003).

<sup>2</sup> William J. Schmelder, “The Predestinarian Controversy: Review and Reflection”, *Concordia Journal* 1.1 (1975): 22.

As Schmelder outlines the developments, the key questions were: Is predestination the cause of faith? Yes, said the Missouri Synod. Salvation is by grace alone. Not so, held the Iowa Synod and the Joint Synod of Ohio, arguing that faith is the cause of predestination. Predestination to salvation was *intuitu fidei*—“on account of faith”. This to the orthodox Lutheran mind was plain synergism, but the Methodist church was surging in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and Arminian theology—so congenial to the American spirit—was influencing even the Lutherans. Thus arose the Predestinarian Controversy in the Synodical Conference. The chief protagonist was F. A. Schmidt (1837-1928), who had been proposed for the St. Louis seminary faculty. He accused Missouri of crypto-Calvinism for teaching election by grace alone without the co-operation of man’s free will. Schmidt thus held the *intuitu fidei* position, and publicly opposed Walther on election.

Edward Busch, in *Currents in Theology and Mission*, argues in favour of predestination *intuitu fidei*.<sup>3</sup> In his view, the old Lutherans (Andrae, Johann Gerhard, Quenstedt, Baier, Hollaz) held that election was *intuitu fidei*, and that what brought about the Predestinarian Controversy “was that Walther was apparently changing his mind”.<sup>4</sup> Did Walther and the old Lutherans hold this view? According to Busch, they did. He goes on:

The concept of “in view of faith” or *intuitu fidei*, that God had elected people in view of their final faith, had originally been developed to safeguard the idea (against the Calvinists) that God sincerely used the means of grace to bring people to faith in Christ. Faith obviously was necessary before any “elect” could be saved. So the nineteenth-century knee-jerk reaction to any challenge to *intuitu fidei*, to anything that sounded as if faith wasn’t necessary, was to call that challenge, “Calvinistic.”<sup>5</sup>

But Schmelder, writing in 1977, presents conclusive evidence from primary sources that Walther rejected *intuitu fidei*—evidence that Busch, writing in 1982, completely and inexcusably ignores.

Walther responded to Schmidt’s accusations at a conference in Altenburg, Missouri, in 1877, where he said, “It is false and wrong to teach

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<sup>3</sup> Edward Busch “The Predestinarian Controversy One Hundred Years Later”, *Currents in Theology and Mission* 9.3 (1982): 133-34. *Currents* was the theological journal of Christ Seminary-Seminex, the breakaway school founded by liberal, ex-Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, faculty and students who participated in the 1974 Walkout. Both Schmelder and Busch draw on the Predestinarian controversy as a way to reflect on Seminex conflict, which was still current in the LCMS at the time they were writing. Not surprisingly, Busch dismisses the dogmatic issues in the Predestinarian controversy by saying, “This controversy was a complex combination of personality, theology, and inflamed tempers” (137). In his view, the Synodical Conference should never have broken up over the mere quibbling of theologians. Later in the article he advocates Gospel reductionism as basis for church fellowship (146).

<sup>4</sup> Busch, 134.

<sup>5</sup> Busch, 136.

that not the mercy of God and the most holy merit of Christ alone, but that also in us there is a cause of the election of God, for the sake of which God has elected us unto eternal life.”<sup>6</sup> Schmidt continued to agitate, however. Meetings were held in Chicago, September and October 1880, and Milwaukee, January 1881. Nothing was resolved. Finally in Fort Wayne, in May 1881, Walther laid down a definitive set of thirteen theses on predestination. The Synodical Conference met in Chicago, October 1882, and refused to seat Schmidt. As a result, the Ohio Synod withdrew from the Synodical conference. The Norwegian Synod withdrew in 1883. It has been said that the press of events surrounding the controversy is probably the reason why Walther never produced a systematic theology. Sadly, the Synodical Conference “never became the unifying agent her founders had envisioned”.<sup>7</sup> So painful was this controversy that Lutheran theologians have been hesitant to take up the doctrine of Predestination ever since.<sup>8</sup>

### THE CURRENT DEBATE

While the Lutherans in America have pretty much kept silent on Predestination, the Calvinists and Arminians have continued in controversy with each other. Both streams are represented in Evangelicalism in this country. Clark H. Pinnock, the Evangelical scholar who made a name for himself by espousing biblical inerrancy and later denying it, took up the subject of election in a 1989 collection of essays entitled *Grace Unlimited*.<sup>9</sup> As the title indicates, Pinnock and his fellow authors stake out a basically Arminian position and specifically oppose the Calvinist:

We are implacably opposed to any attempt to limit grace and the atonement. ... We are opposing a powerful effort in Protestant orthodoxy to limit the gospel and to cast a dark shadow over its universal availability and intention, manifesting itself most overtly in classical Calvinism. This theology which, in its dreadful doctrine of double predestination, calls into question God’s desire to save all sinners and which as a logical consequence denies Christ died to save the world at large, is simply unacceptable exegetically, theologically, and morally, and to it we must say an emphatic “No!”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Schmelder, 22.

<sup>7</sup> Schmelder, 27.

<sup>8</sup> I am indebted to Dr John Wohlrabe for the following observation: “It [the debate over election] continued to simmer through the 1920s (Free Conferences in the Midwest 1901-1905, the *Layenbewegung* of 1915, the Intersynodical Conferences through the 1920s). It was ignored after the death of Franz Pieper (1932) in subsequent talks with the American Lutheran Church (1930 formed from the Ohio, Iowa, and Buffalo Synods).”

<sup>9</sup> Clark H. Pinnock, ed., *Grace Unlimited* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1989).

<sup>10</sup> Pinnock, 12.

In embracing “grace unlimited” to avoid double predestination, Pinnock falls off the other side of the horse into a quasi-universalism, failing to see that election is a doctrine of the Gospel, centred in Christ, and tied to the means of grace. He discusses predestination but does not see its connection to Christ. Hence Arminians and Calvinists share the same error—both focus on the inscrutable decree of God and ignore the cross. Pinnock errs further when he takes up predestination to salvation:

When the term predestination *is* used in relation to salvation, it concerns the believer’s future destiny which is to be conformed to Jesus Christ, not to his becoming a Christian. We are “predestined” to be conformed to “the image of his Son” (Rom. 8:29). There is no predestination to salvation or damnation in the bible. There is only a predestination for those who are already children of God with respect to certain privileges out ahead of them.<sup>11</sup>

Here he fails to note the comfort of this doctrine for the believer now in that it is a promise that God will help him persevere through all trials and temptations. If Pinnock is right, there is no practical use of the doctrine. It merely holds out the vague promise of pie in the sky when you die.

The Calvinists were not about to take this lying down, and fired back with two volumes of their own in 1995 under the title, *The Grace of God, the Bondage of the Will*, edited by Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware.<sup>12</sup> Here they specifically take issue with Pinnock and his 1989 defence of Arminianism:

The understanding of grace in these works is that grace is distributed equally to all people, and that is why it is unlimited. The “will of man” chooses whether to submit to grace given. In this scheme the human will plays the ultimate and decisive role in personal salvation. Our understanding of God’s saving grace is very different. We contend that Scripture does not teach that all people receive grace in equal measure .... God’s saving grace is set only upon some, namely those whom, in his great love, he elected long ago to save, and that this grace is necessarily effective in turning them to belief.<sup>13</sup>

Here is a clear expression of Calvinist thought. But we must ask, where is Christ Jesus? Where is the cross? There is only the attempt to peer into the mind of God and fathom his eternal decree. The authors must at least be given credit for adhering to standard Calvinistic double predestination when they say, “The grace of God is given effectively and savingly only to some. This is what theologians have meant when they spoke of irresistible grace.<sup>14</sup> But in so doing they repristinate Augustine’s error. They argue from

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<sup>11</sup> Pinnock, 18.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware, eds, *The Grace of God, the Bondage of the Will* 2 vols (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995).

<sup>13</sup> Schreiner, 12.

<sup>14</sup> Schreiner, 13.

observation, focusing on the *cur alii* question, rather than expounding Scripture. There seems to be a tendency in Calvinist theology (as in Roman Catholicism) to have a high view of human reason and follow it where Scripture is silent. Reliance upon reason, however, leads one into a hall of mirrors with an endless progression of questions, as Schreiner and Ware admit:

It should be granted that the logical difficulties raised pose legitimate and difficult questions for those who embrace Calvinism. The objections go something like this: If God chooses only some, then how can he be loving? If God's grace is irresistible, then what happens to human free will? If God saves those he has chosen, why pray or get involved in missions? If God is in control of the world, then why do anything at all? If God is sovereign, then why is there suffering in the world? If God governs all events, then why is evil our responsibility, not his?<sup>15</sup>

We prefer the simple teaching of the Bible.

The most recent literature on this topic shows that an attempt is being made by Calvinists to find a mediating position. In 2003, *Reformation & Revival Journal* devoted an entire issue to the subject of Predestination. In the Introduction, John H. Armstrong states that “Even the highest of high Calvinists will not use the term ‘fate’ to describe predestination .... Fatalism involves the notion of ‘an arbitrary decree.’”<sup>16</sup> We have seen that Calvin himself holds this view, centred in an arbitrary decree, but some try to pin the blame on Theodore Beza (1519-1605), Calvin's amanuensis and successor. Richard A. Muller, a Fuller Seminary professor, blames Beza for taking Calvin's doctrines of predestination “from their warm soteriological placement” in the Institutes and in an Aristotelian manner injecting them into the doctrine of God.<sup>17</sup> Thus Beza “destroyed the Christological balance of Calvin's thought and led to the development of a predestinarian metaphysic, or ‘decretal theology.’”<sup>18</sup> Muller uses the term “rigid” several times to describe “dead, Bezan orthodoxy”. Along the same lines, Greenbury observes that after Calvin—whom he describes as warm and evangelical—later Reformed theology, following Beza, adopted more scholastic methods, increasingly emphasized the role of reason, and lapsed into a period of dead orthodoxy.<sup>19</sup> Likewise Joel R. Beeke argues, “Since the 1960s many scholars have argued that the supposed Calvin-Calvinist cleavage finds its real culprit

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<sup>15</sup> Schreiner, 16.

<sup>16</sup> John H. Armstrong, “Introduction”, *Reformation & Revival Journal* 12.2 (2003): 7.

<sup>17</sup> Richard A. Muller, “The Myth of Decretal Theology”, *Calvin Theological Journal* 30.1 (1995): 159-67.

<sup>18</sup> Muller, 160.

<sup>19</sup> James Greenbury, “Calvin's Understanding of Predestination with Special Reference to the Institutes”, *Reformed Theological Review* 54.3 (1995): 133.

in Theodore Beza .... [T]he thesis is championed that Beza, as the father of Reformed scholasticism, spoiled Calvin's theology by reading him through Aristotelian spectacles."<sup>20</sup> Of course that's exactly what it is. Calvinists just don't seem to want to face up to the fact. John Hesselink correctly notes that the main issue is between the sovereignty of God and human freedom, a continuation of the old conflict between Calvin and Arminius.<sup>21</sup> He follows Calvinistic predestination through the Canons of Dort and the Westminster Confession, and labours to modify strict Calvinism in saying, "We do not have some kind of fatalistic determination but rather an acknowledgment that although our salvation is totally a matter of God's grace .... [I]t does not reduce us to automatons."<sup>22</sup> Thus he is arguing for both predestination and free will, and tries to conflate Arminianism and Calvinism: "[Salvation] is both/and, i.e., wholly a matter of God's grace and our own effort." Robert Lescelius continues along the same line of reasoning. First he affirms *intuitu fidei* in election: "Is God's election to salvation unconditional (Augustinianism, Calvinism) or conditional (semi-Pelagianism, Arminianism)? By 'conditional' the Arminian means that God foreknew the fact that the believer would respond to the Gospel, and thus he chose him as one of his own."<sup>23</sup> At the same time, like a true Calvinist he confuses foreknowledge with predestination: "That which makes anything certain in time is the divine will, thus foreknowledge and foreordination (predestination) are inseparable."<sup>24</sup>

It would seem as of this writing that the debate is swinging in favour of Arminianism, or at least that Arminianism is modifying Calvinist thought. This is perhaps not surprising, given the general affinity for Arminianism in American culture. We like to think that we have free will. We reject any notion that we cannot influence events, even in matters of salvation. The notion of our destiny having been settled from eternity by the arbitrary decree of God is alien to us.

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<sup>20</sup> Joel R. Beeke, "Theodore Beza's Supralapsarian Predestination", *Reformation & Revival Journal* 12.2 (2003): 69. We observe in passing that the Reformed seem to have their own period of so-called "dead orthodoxy", just like the Lutherans are said to have had in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In Lutheranism, Robert D. Preus explodes this myth in his *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism: A Study of Theological Prolegomena* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1970).

<sup>21</sup> I. John Hesselink, "Soveriegn [sic] Grace and Human Freedom", *Reformation & Revival Journal* 12.2 (2003): 11.

<sup>22</sup> Hesselink, 16.

<sup>23</sup> Robert H. Lescelius, "Foreknowledge: Prescience or Predestination?" *Reformation & Revival Journal* 12.2 (2003): 25.

<sup>24</sup> Lescelius, 36.

## ISLAM

Christianity is not the only religion that struggles with predestination. The *Qur'an* of Muhammad (570-632) posits a sovereign god who is above and beyond all creation. Allah rules with an absolute sway. All he foreknows must come to pass. All human action is predestined, for good or ill. Thus a fatalistic determinism is implicit in Islam. All human choice and action is ultimately insignificant.

As I have argued elsewhere, theological problems in Islam arise from its first premise, that there is no God but Allah:

Foremost of these is the problem of predestination. If there is one supreme Being who created the universe and rules over all things, then He must be all-powerful and all-knowing. Hence He knows everything that is going to happen, and since He knows everything that is going to happen, everything He knows must inevitably come to pass by His divine foreknowledge and eternal decree. Truly, Allah is great. In fact, Allah is so great in this context that man is nothing. He has no free will at all and is reduced to a mere puppet. Muslim theology attempts to solve this problem by moving Allah upstairs—that is, to consign His omnipotence to the realm of general, universal, and natural law, so as to leave room for human free will and action in this world below. As soon as this is done, however, another problem emerges. God becomes what Reformed theologian Karl Barth called *totaliter aliter* (totally other). That is, He is completely of a different nature and mind than that of human beings, and He cannot be known at all as He is in His essential being. He is remote, detached, a God who is unapproachable, who cannot be known, with whom one cannot have a personal relationship.<sup>25</sup>

Some passages in the *Qur'an* set forth a fatalistic predestination. Sura 54, “The Moon”, refers to the judgement of God against Pharaoh—a favourite example also for Christian theologians who espouse double predestination—and attributes human action to the will of Allah:

Truly those in sin are the ones straying in mind, and mad. The Day they will be dragged through the Fire on their faces, (they will hear:) “You taste the touch of Hell!” Verily, We have created all things in proportion and measure. And Our Command is but a single (Act)—like the twinkling of an eye. And (oft) in the past, We have destroyed gangs like you: then is there any that will receive admonition? All that they do is noted in (their) books (of deeds): Every matter, small and great, is on record.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Frederic W. Baue, *The Spiritual Society: What Lurks Beyond Postmodernism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001): 91.

<sup>26</sup> Abdullah Yusuf Ali, transl., *The Qur'an Translation*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition (Elmhurst, NY: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., 2001), Sura 54:47-53. All citations from this text. Abdullah Yusuf Ali's translation of the *Qur'an* into English was first published in Lahore, Pakistan in 1934. It is the

Other verses support free will: “We gave them guidance, but they preferred blindness (of heart) to Guidance: so the stunning Punishment of humiliation seized them, because of what they had earned” (41:17). And again, “Whatever misfortune happens to you, is because of the things your hands have wrought, and for many (of them) He grants forgiveness” (42:30).

Thus we see that Islam is like a Christianity reduced to the First Article. There is no grace, no mercy, no Gospel, no assurance of salvation, no way to have a relationship with a loving and merciful God. Predestination in this scheme of thought is doubled in intensity.

Not surprisingly, given the long exchange of ideas between Islamic and Christian thinkers, we find a current Muslim scholar drawing a parallel between the two religions on the subject of predestination. Ismail Mohamed, Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the National University of Malasia, in a 2000 English-language article in the London-based *Islamic Quarterly*, finds similar strains of thought between Aquinas, the Christian theologian, and Averroes (1126-1198),<sup>27</sup> the Muslim philosopher: “Predestination is a crucial problem not only in Islam but also in Christianity. There has been a long and continuous discussion by theologians on both sides.”<sup>28</sup> As Mohamed notes, the problem within Islam is whether or not man has free will. If he does not, then his action is controlled by an outside power. If he does, “God’s omnipotence is challenged”.<sup>29</sup> He cites Averroes to show that there is double predestination in Islam: “These were created for Paradise and they do work for the people of Paradise, and these were created for hell and they do work for the people of hell.”<sup>30</sup> And again, “Aquinas, like Averroes, recognizes that God separates men into two divisions, namely, to some God gives grace and guides them to his path, and the others he leaves in error.”<sup>31</sup> Mohamed explains by saying that “the first tradition [of Muhammad] shows that the cause of disbelief (Kufr) is one’s own environment, and the second points

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standard English translation of the Qur’an. I picked a free copy on a visit to the local mosque, Daar-ul-Islam, in St. Louis.

<sup>27</sup> <http://i-cias.com/e.o/averroes.htm>. Averroes (Arabic: Ibn Rushd) was born in Cordoba, Spain, 1126, and died in Marrakech, 1198. He was a Muslim thinker strongly influenced by Aristotle, and had frequent dialogue with Christian theologians.

<sup>28</sup> Ismail Mohamed, “Concept of Predestination in Islam and Christianity: Special Reference to Averroes and Aquinas”, *The Islamic Quarterly* 44.2 (2000): 393. This periodical seems to represent the more moderate strain in Muslim thought. Averroes in his day was certainly a progressive thinker. Little of his work is available in Arabic.

<sup>29</sup> Mohamed, 393.

<sup>30</sup> Mohamed, 394. The fn. citing Averroes’ work is incomplete. There are a number of typos and editorial errors in Mohamed’s article, possibly due to an Arabic-speaking staff producing an English-language journal.

<sup>31</sup> Mohamed, 403.

out that wickedness and disbelief are both caused by God and that man is compelled to follow them.”<sup>32</sup>

Averroes divides Muslims into two main groups regarding predestination. One, the Muctazilites, affirm free will in man, and with it, personal responsibility for sin and punishment for sin. The Jabarites, by contrast, “hold that man is under compulsion in his acts”.<sup>33</sup> The Ashcarites take a moderating view between the two extremes. Mohamed cites Jaroslav Pelikan in observing the influence of Augustine on the development of double predestination, and draws on Aquinas to support Averroes on this point.<sup>34</sup> He says, “Both Averroes and Aquinas recognize that God is omnipotent, His power is unlimited. There is no great difference in the way in which this matter is discussed by both.”<sup>35</sup> Of course God is omnipotent. But the doctrine of predestination, as Mohamed could not possibly understand (though Aquinas should have), is drawn from the Second Article, not the First. If we consider only the omnipotence of God, we can find only a fatalistic determinism for human action, and the capricious decree of God behind salvation and damnation. There can be no distinction between Law and Gospel in Islamic thought, because the *Qur’an* contains only Law. In arriving at these conclusions, Mohamed, like Calvin, confuses not only Law and Gospel but conflates God’s foreknowledge with His predestination: “Whatever happens in this world is under the providence of God; when God knows all things then all things must happen.”<sup>36</sup> Of course there is Gospel in Reformed theology because it is derived from the Bible. Nevertheless, the parallels between Islam and Calvinism are remarkable.

We note that there is no practical value to false doctrine concerning predestination. This is most certainly true in regard to Calvinism and Arminianism. Both theologies on predestination produce doubt in the believer. In Calvinism, the believer worries that perhaps God has predestined him to damnation, and he will be lost no matter how sincere his faith or active his church activity. In Arminianism, when difficulties arise in the believer’s life, he falls into despair because he thinks his faith is not strong enough, or that his decision for Christ wasn’t sincere enough or his emotional conversion not tearful enough. Not only are these false doctrines of no practical value, they are un-preachable. What Presbyterian minister would ever get up in the pulpit and preach double predestination? How could he tell his people that some of them, no matter how active in church, may be already damned by God’s immutable and arbitrary decree from eternity?

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<sup>32</sup> Mohamed, 394.

<sup>33</sup> Mohamed, 394.

<sup>34</sup> Mohamed, 395-97.

<sup>35</sup> Mohamed, 397.

<sup>36</sup> Mohamed, 404.

He'd soon find himself on the street. In fact, we may go so far as to say that one criterion for evaluating doctrine is the test of practicality. Of course the primary criterion is the doctrine's conformity to Holy Scripture. But I would suggest this criterion also, that we ask what practical use a given doctrine may be to the Christian—Does it bring him Gospel comfort? Does it sustain him in the midst of trials?—and also whether this doctrine can be preached to the edifying of God's holy people. The correct doctrine of predestination certainly meets these two practical criteria, as we will see.

### THE LUTHERAN VIEW ON PREDESTINATION

Lutherans affirm that their Confessions, contained in the Book of Concord (1580), are a true and faithful exposition of biblical doctrine. The Confessions address predestination in the Formula of Concord, Article XI. From this remove, it seems striking that there was at the time “no public conflict” concerning this doctrine.<sup>37</sup> That is, it was not the issue of controversy for the Lutheran confessors in the sixteenth century as it was to become for the Synodical Conference in the nineteenth century. Calvin had by that time articulated his doctrine of double predestination. His *Institutes* were published in 1559, the *Concordia* in 1580. Other issues held centre stage during that time, but the doctrine of election called for a clear confession.

The Formula distinguishes between God's foreknowledge and election. God knows all things before they happen, including evil things. But He is not the cause of evil. Moreover, He limits and regulates the evil of this world so that it ultimately serves the elect. This we have seen in Romans 8:28 and Ephesians 1:11. The most important example of this would be the crucifixion of our Lord—an execution by torture planned and carried out by evil men with evil motives, but whose result was the redemption of the world by the sinless Lamb of God. Election or predestination extends over the children of God and is the cause of their salvation. This election is to be found in the Word only, and not in the secret counsels of God, who wills that all men be saved. The FC stresses the practical importance of this doctrine—and this is solid teaching the pastor can take into the pulpit—for human reason when it applies itself to this doctrine invariably comes up with two errors: one, it assumes that if I am one of the elect, I can do whatever I wish (licence); and two, if I am not one of the elect, nothing can help effect my salvation (despair).<sup>38</sup> Over against these errors, the FC stresses that “we have

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<sup>37</sup> FC Ep XI:1. *The Book of Concord*, ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000): 517. All citations from this edition.

<sup>38</sup> FC Ep XI:9. Kolb-Wengert, 518.

a glorious consolation in this salutary teaching, that we know how we have been chosen for eternal life in Christ out of sheer grace, without any merit of our own, and that no one can tear us out of his hand [John 10:28-29].”<sup>39</sup> There are four errors regarding predestination that the FC rejects: one, the teaching that God does not want all men to repent; two, that God is not in earnest in calling men to repentance; three, pointing to the error of Zwingli and Calvin, that God arbitrarily predestines some to damnation; and four, that the cause of election is apart from Christ.

*The Bondage of the Will* by Martin Luther (1483-1546) appeared in 1526, almost half a century before the Book of Concord, but I place it here in the discussion because in Lutheran theology the Confessions take precedence over the writings of Luther, though several works of Luther—the Small and Large Catechisms and the Smalcald Articles—are included in the Book of Concord. **Simply put, Luther does not teach double predestination, though some scholars claim to see this idea in Luther’s work.** For example James Greenbury says that in the *Bondage of the Will*, “Luther went beyond Augustine in espousing double predestination.”<sup>40</sup> He tries to establish a first-rate pedigree for Calvin’s teaching as well by arguing that in the *Institutes*, “Calvin enlarged and codified the predestinarian insights of Augustine and Luther.”<sup>41</sup> Similarly Kyle A. Pasewark, in a very muddled argument, says he finds double predestination in Luther.<sup>42</sup> So does James McGoldrick, who tries to prove from the *Bondage of the Will* that Luther teaches double predestination, citing J. I. Packer’s translation: “God foresees, purposes, and does all things according to his own immutable, eternal, and infallible will.”<sup>43</sup> Well, yes, Luther says that, and yes, God does that, but this does not establish double predestination in either God or Luther. The Reformer here is talking about God’s general omnipotence, as we will see. Interestingly, McGoldrick says that *Bondage of the Will* “exerts far more influence among Reformed believers than among those who bear the name of its author.”<sup>44</sup>

Robert Kolb, one of the few Lutheran theologians to address this subject, gets it right when he notes that Staupitz pointed Luther to “the wounds of Christ and the blood that was shed for you. From these predestination will

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<sup>39</sup> FC Ep XI:13. Kolb-Wengert, 518.

<sup>40</sup> Greenbury, 121.

<sup>41</sup> Greenbury, 122.

<sup>42</sup> Kyle A. Pasewark, “Predestination as a Condition of Freedom”, *Lutheran Quarterly* 12.1 (1998): 57-78.

<sup>43</sup> James E. McGoldrick, “Luther’s Doctrine of Predestination”, *Reformation & Revival Journal* 8.1 (1999): 91.

<sup>44</sup> McGoldrick, 101.

shine.”<sup>45</sup> Kolb finds in Luther what the Calvinist interpreters missed, namely the proper distinction between Law and Gospel as a key to understanding all Christian teaching, particularly difficult doctrines such as election:

Luther’s proclamation of predestination is what the Swedish Reformation scholar Runne Soderlund has called a “broken” or asymmetrical doctrine of God’s election of his own people .... [T]he Wittenberg Reformer held God’s sovereignty and human responsibility in tension. He could do so because the distinction of Law and Gospel governed his use of God’s Word.”<sup>46</sup>

Here we see in Luther’s thought the true understanding of predestination—a comforting doctrine centred in Christ’s work on the cross. According to Kolb, Luther’s own *Anfechtung* was a contributing factor to his understanding of election:

Luther loathed speculation about God’s hidden will because of the despair he himself had endured when he had not been able to know what a distant and veiled God might have in store for him. He found comfort only in the blood and resurrection of Christ and in the promise of the Word in all its forms.<sup>47</sup>

*The Bondage of the Will* demolishes the grounds for double predestination. Calvinists who claim to find it there are reading into the text. The burden of Luther’s argument is taken up with refuting Erasmus, who propounded free will in his *Diatribes* (1524). This is not the same thing as election, though it relates to it. Luther in a famous analogy says basically that the idea of human free will is an illusion, that man is captive either to God or the devil:

In short, if we are under the god of this world, away from the work and Spirit of the true God, we are held captive to his will ... so that we cannot will anything but what he wills. ... But if a Stronger One comes who overcomes him and takes us as His spoil, then through his Spirit we are again slaves and captives—though this is royal freedom—so that we readily will and do what he wills. Thus the human will is placed between the two like a beast of burden. If God rides it, it wills and goes where God wills, as the psalm says: “I am become as a beast [before thee] and am always with thee” [Ps. 73:22 f.]. If Satan rides it, it wills and goes where Satan wills; nor can it choose to run to either of the two riders or to seek him out, but the riders themselves contend for the possession and control of it.<sup>48</sup>

Thus if man has no free will, salvation must be entirely by God’s grace through Jesus Christ. Salvation by works is rejected.

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<sup>45</sup> Robert Kolb, “Luther’s Proclamation of Predestination”, *Reformation & Revival Journal* 12.2 (2003): 47.

<sup>46</sup> Kolb, 48.

<sup>47</sup> Kolb, 50.

<sup>48</sup> *The Bondage of the Will* (1526), AE 33:65-66.

This does not mean that double predestination is thereby affirmed. Luther does refer to election in a few places in *Bondage*, but always and only in the context of the Gospel. For example, in the conclusion he says,

I will not here elaborate the very strong arguments that can be drawn from the purpose of grace, the promise of God, the meaning of the law, original sin, or divine election, any one of which would be sufficient by itself to do away completely with free choice. For if grace comes from the purpose or predestination of God, it comes by necessity and not by our effort or endeavor, as we have shown above. Moreover, if God promised grace before the law was given, as Paul argues here and in Galatians, then grace does not come from works or through the law; otherwise the promise means nothing.<sup>49</sup>

Luther's point is that when Scripture says in one place that we are saved by grace and in another that we are predestined unto salvation, it is saying the same thing.

Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560) takes up predestination in Locus 14 of his *Loci Communes* of 1543.<sup>50</sup> He notes the abuses that this poor doctrine has been subject to, especially by what he calls "Sententiarians".<sup>51</sup> But he quickly moves on to an exposition of the correct teaching under three propositions:

The first is that we must judge regarding our election not on the basis of the Law but on the basis of the Gospel. The second is that the entire number of those who are to be saved is chosen (*electus*) for the sake of Christ (*propter Christum*). For unless we hold to the knowledge of Christ, we cannot speak of election. The third is that we must seek no other cause for our justification or election.<sup>52</sup>

Here we see the author of the *Confessio Augustana* sweeping away the error of Augustine and Aquinas with one hand: the hand of the Gospel. He centres the doctrine of election in Christ, and Christ alone. He does not seek to probe into the mind of God in eternity. He does not speculate or find a cause in man for election. For Melanchthon, predestination is *solo Christo*. He also notes the essential connection between predestination and justification: "Just as when we speak about justification, we are governed by the Gospel or by our knowledge of the voice of the Gospel, so when we are going to speak about election, we must include the voice of the Gospel."<sup>53</sup> We note also that Melanchthon's argument is enriched by plentiful references to Holy Scripture, much more so than that of the more rationalistic Calvinist and

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<sup>49</sup> AE 33:272.

<sup>50</sup> Philip Melanchthon, *Loci Communes* (1543) trans. J. A. O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia, 1992): 172-75.

<sup>51</sup> Melanchthon, 172.

<sup>52</sup> Melanchthon, 172.

<sup>53</sup> Melanchthon, 172.

Arminian interpreters. He cites all the relevant passages from the New Testament, and wisely avoids speculation or reliance on historical examples (such as Jacob and Esau or Pharaoh, as does Calvin). He realizes the practical value of this doctrine in bringing comfort to struggling Christians, and in the same breath admonishes us not to “let our minds wander off and sink into the darkness by seeking an election outside the word, and thus leave Christ and omit His command to cling to His promise.”<sup>54</sup> For all this sweet comfort that is given to us, some are not saved. Why? Referring to the knotty passages in Romans 9, Melanchthon points out that

they were rejected because they were unwilling to hear the Son and assent to the promise. As a pretext, they used the fact that they were defending the righteousness of the law, because a relaxing of discipline seemed to take place, since it detracted glory from their works.<sup>55</sup>

A clear distinction between Law and Gospel clears up the matter. Melanchthon also helpfully observes,

Great is the darkness in the minds of men in their knowledge of God. Without this divine light, most men have either Epicurean or Stoic notion, that is, the great majority imagine that men are not of concern to God. Others dream up the idea that God is sitting in heaven and writing unchangeable decrees on the tablets of the Fates.<sup>56</sup>

Thus it is for those who rely on reason in considering predestination. Without the revelation of Holy Scripture, they end up thinking like pagans.

Johann Gerhard (1582-1637), in his great *Loci Theologici*, devotes an entire commonplace to the subject of predestination.<sup>57</sup> As do his orthodox predecessors and successors, Gerhard teaches predestination as a matter of the Gospel, and rejects double predestination out of hand. By the time of Gerhard, Calvin, Beza, and Zanch had spread their own teaching far and wide. Nonetheless, Gerhard argues for the discussion of predestination in the church.<sup>58</sup>

Gerhard provides some excellent word studies on the terms relating to this subject. He shows that the Greek word ἐκλέγεσθαι means

to pick out - also is transferred both to things and persons. When it is related to things, it means to prefer something ahead of the rest or even to destine it

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<sup>54</sup> Melanchthon, 174.

<sup>55</sup> Melanchthon, 175.

<sup>56</sup> Melanchthon, 175.

<sup>57</sup> Johann Gerhard, *Loci Theologici* [1657], (Berlin: Schlawitz, 1864). The 1995 translation by Richard Dinda is forthcoming from Concordia Publishing House in CD-ROM format. All citations are from Commonplace Seven, “On Election and Rejection”, and refer to paragraph numbers.

<sup>58</sup> Gerhard, para. 19-22.

for a more noble use. Gen. 13.11: “Lot ἐξελέξατο - chose for himself the region around the Jordan.”<sup>59</sup>

He goes on to say that in reference to persons, it is used to refer to the election of Christ as Redeemer by God from before the foundation of the world, and to refer also to the election of persons as well: “It is used to refer to the entire assembly of the church which God gathers for Himself through His Word from all assemblies or peoples and has selected to be His peculiar people ... or it is used about true members of the church and who persevere in Him until the end of life.”<sup>60</sup> Likewise he explains the word προορίζω/προορισμός, which means “to destine and to ordain for a definite end so that at the same time the means leading to that end are defined.”<sup>61</sup> That is to say, when God predestines us to eternal life, he always brings this about through the means of grace, that is, the Word and Sacraments. Thus when this word, normally translated “predestination”, is used to refer to persons, “it always signifies in Scripture their election to eternal life”. Here again Gerhard rejects double predestination: “Some assert without written proof that there is one predestination for life, another for death and the causes of eternal death.”<sup>62</sup>

Samuel Huber, the Swiss theologian, had put forth erroneous ideas concerning predestination. Gerhard says, “In our time, the Swiss Samuel Huber in 1592 began to teach and argue in favor of the universal election of all people.”<sup>63</sup> This of course is patent nonsense, and Gerhard notes that this idea was dealt with already in the Book of Concord. Huber’s teaching continued to have influence, however, and Walther refers to him in his Theses on Predestination of 1881.

Another false teaching was the notion of predestination *intuitu fidei*, “in view of faith”. Gerhard, on the basis of Eph. 1:4; 3:17; I Tim. 1:16; II Thess. 2:13, and many other passages says,

We profess with a loud voice that we claim that God has found nothing good in man in electing him for eternal life, that He has not considered good works nor the use of free will nor even faith itself in such a way as to choose some because of or on account of these impulses. We rather say that that is only and solely the merit of Christ, whose worth God has respected and made His decree of election purely out of grace.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Gerhard, para. 24.

<sup>60</sup> Gerhard, para. 24.

<sup>61</sup> Gerhard, para. 27.

<sup>62</sup> Gerhard, para. 28. Gerhard rejects double predestination in Beza, Zanch, and Piscator in para. 29. In para. 103 he rejects Calvin, who in the *Institutes*, Book 3, Chapter 23, Section 7, says of double predestination, “I admit that it is a horrible decree.”

<sup>63</sup> Gerhard, para. 201.

<sup>64</sup> Gerhard, para. 161.

Far from focusing on the *negativa*, Gerhard clearly sets forth a positive doctrine of predestination, and explains many of the passages that advocates of double predestination misinterpret. For example, in Malachi 1:2-3 it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.” Gerhard draws on Augustine, who pointed out that the Lord told Rebecca that there were two nations in her womb, and helpfully shows that we “cannot take that prophecy to refer to the person of Jacob but to his descendents.”<sup>65</sup> The Edomites, all descendents of Esau, were constantly in rebellion against the Lord.

Then there is the problem of the hardening of Pharaoh. The advocates of double predestination look at this passage and imagine that the hardening of Pharaoh was due to God’s antecedent will—some immutable decree from before the foundation of the world. Gerhard shows that this is a false interpretation, observing that it is “as a punishment, therefore, for that earlier wickedness and arrogance, the Lord says, Ex. 7:3: ‘I shall harden the Pharaoh’s heart.’ Consequently, hardening is related to the consequent will of God or to His just judgment by which He punishes sins which have been committed earlier.”<sup>66</sup> And what of the potter and the clay? St Paul says,

Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honoured use and another for dishonourable use? What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? (Romans 9:22-24).

Calvinists use this passage to try to prove double predestination. But Gerhard responds,

We should not make the following kind of application: as the potter creates out of the same lump some vessels for beauty and some for menial use, so God creates some people, predestined by an absolute decree, for salvation and, on the other hand, creates some people, rejected by an absolute decree, for damnation and destruction. Such an application is opposed, first, to the context of the apostle, for the apostle does not say that God makes vessels of wrath but that “he has endured with much patience the vessels of wrath made for destruction.” But now, what someone tolerates with much patience he does not himself create. Augustine says it neatly: “God does not make but comes upon vessels of wrath; He does not come upon but creates vessels of grace.”<sup>67</sup>

We have traced the development of the Predestinarian Controversy in the Missouri Synod and the Synodical Conference. Walther’s Theses on

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., para. 87.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., para. 95.

<sup>67</sup> Gerhard, para. 100.

Predestination, presented at the 1881 conference in Ft. Wayne, read as follows:

I We believe, teach and confess, that God loved the whole world from eternity, created all men unto salvation, none unto damnation, and that He earnestly wills the salvation of all men; and we therefore reject and condemn with all our heart the contrary Calvinistic doctrine.

II We believe, teach and confess, that the Son of God came into the world for all men, that He bore and expiated the sins of all men, and that He fully redeemed all men, none excepted; we therefore reject and condemn the contrary Calvinistic doctrine with all our heart.

III We believe, teach and confess, that God calls through the means of grace all men earnestly, that is, with the purpose that they should, through these means, be brought to repentance and faith, also be preserved therein unto their end, and thus be finally led to blessedness, conformable to which purpose God offers them through the means of grace the salvation wrought by Christ's atonement and the power to embrace this salvation by faith; and we therefore reject and condemn the contrary Calvinistic doctrine with all our heart.

IV We believe, teach and confess, that no one perishes because God was not willing that he be saved, passed him by with His grace, and because He had not also offered him the grace of perseverance and was not willing to bestow the same upon him. But all men who perish perish because of their own fault, because of their unbelief and because they contumaciously resist the Word and grace unto their end. The cause of this contempt of the Word is not God's foreknowledge (*vel praescientia vel praedestinatio*) but man's perverted will which rejects or perverts the means and the instrument of the Holy Spirit, which God offers unto it through the call, and it resists the Holy Spirit who would be efficacious and operate through the Word, as Christ says, Matt. 23:37, "How often would I have gathered you together, and ye would not" (Formula of Concord, p. 718, par. 41). Therefore we reject and condemn the contrary Calvinistic doctrine with all our heart.

V We believe, teach and confess, that elect or predestinated persons are the only true believers, who truly believe unto their end or at the end of their life; we reject therefore and condemn the error of Huber, that election is not particular, but universal and pertains to all men.

VI We believe, teach and confess, that the divine decree of election is unchangeable and that therefore no elect person can become a reprobate and perish, but that every one of the elect will surely be saved; and we therefore reject and condemn the contrary doctrine as an injurious fanatic notion with all our heart.

VII We believe, teach and confess, that it is foolish and soul-endangering, leads either to carnal security or despair to endeavor to become or to be sure of our own election or eternal happiness by means of searching out the

eternal secret decree of God; and we reject and condemn the contrary doctrine as an injurious fanatic notion with all our heart.

VIII We believe, teach and confess, that a true believer ought to endeavor to become sure of his election from God's revealed will; and we therefore reject and condemn with our heart the opposite Papistical error, that one may become or be sure of his election and salvation only by means of a new immediate revelation.

IX We believe, teach and confess: 1. That election does not consist in the mere fact that God foresaw which men will secure salvation; 2. That election is also not the mere purpose of God to redeem and save men, which would make it universal and extend in general to all men; 3. That election does not embrace those "which believe for a while" (Luke 8:13). 4. That election is not a mere decree of God to lead to bliss all those who would believe unto their end; we therefore reject and condemn the opposite errors of the Rationalists, Huberians and Arminians with all our heart.

X We believe, teach and confess, that the cause which moved God to elect, is alone His grace and the merit of Jesus Christ, and not anything good foreseen by God in the elect, not even faith foreseen in them by God; and we therefore reject and condemn the opposite doctrines of the Pelagians, Semi-Pelagians and Synergists as blasphemous, dreadful errors which subvert the Gospel and therefore the whole Christian religion.

XI We believe, teach and confess, that election is not the mere divine foresight or prescience of the salvation of the elect, but also a cause of their salvation and of whatever pertains to it; and we therefore reject and condemn the opposite doctrines of the Arminians, Socinians, and of all Synergists with all our heart.

XII We believe, teach and confess, that God has also concealed and kept secret many things concerning the mystery of election and reserved them for His wisdom and knowledge alone, into which no human being is able and ought to search; and we therefore reject every attempt to inquire curiously also into these things which have not been revealed, and to harmonize with our reason those things which seem contradictory to our reason, may such attempts be made by Calvinistic or Pelagianistic or Synergistic doctrines of men.

XIII We believe, teach and confess, that it is not only not useless, much less injurious, but necessary and salutary that the mysterious doctrine of election, in so far as it is clearly revealed in God's Word, be presented also publicly to Christian people, and we therefore do not agree with those who hold that entire silence should be kept thereon, or that its discussion should only be indulged in by learned theologians.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Cited in Schmelder, 25-26.

In these theses Walther draws not only upon the theology of the Lutheran Confessions, but also upon the teaching of Luther, Melancthon, and Gerhard. The line of orthodox Lutheran theology on predestination is continued by Walther's disciple, Francis Pieper (1852-1931).

Pieper sums up the teaching of the Church on predestination in a succinct and elegant way. He observes that "God does not seize His elect by the ears or the neck, but took hold of them in eternity ... by means of the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, in the same way as He lays hold of them here in time."<sup>69</sup> Here he is obviously alluding to II Thessalonians 2:13, which we discussed previously, in tying predestination to Christ and to the sacraments of the church. Pieper draws on the Solid Declaration in showing that eternal election is not identical with God's foreknowledge. We have touched on this before. According to His divine nature, God is omniscient and knows all things before they happen. However, many if not most of the things that happen in this fallen world are not His will. It is not His will that any should perish, but that all men should repent and come to the knowledge of the truth. Yet many if not most refuse to repent and are lost for eternity, even though it breaks God's heart to have to damn them. Election concerns only the elect, the redeemed, the children of God, the communion of saints. Those are the ones He has chosen from eternity, and arranged all things to bring them to faith and cause them to persevere in it.

Along this line, Pieper helpfully notes that "in eternity faith was neither anterior or posterior to God's decree of election."<sup>70</sup> Here he refutes theologians who assert that God chose only those whom He foresaw would one day believe, as well as Calvin who taught that faith follows election as part of an absolute decree of God. The truth is that God did not choose arbitrarily or absolutely, but chose through the means of grace, the "sanctification of the spirit" referred to in II Thessalonians 2:13.

In Pieper we see the same pastoral concern for souls as we did in the Confessors. The purpose of the doctrine of election is to confirm *sola gratia* and thus bring comfort to Christians who are often beset by weakness, troubles, and sins on every side. The elect is just as bad a sinner as the unbeliever, except that he is forgiven and saved by grace alone. Thus the doctrine of predestination leads to gratitude and penitence, and acts as a curb to prevent the Christian from becoming a complacent and self-righteous Pharisee.

Calvin, Pieper shows, has no scriptural support for his doctrine of double predestination. In all cases, those who are lost are responsible for their own

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<sup>69</sup> Francis Pieper, "Eternal Election," in *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. 3 [1920] trans. Walter W. F. Albrecht (St. Louis: Concordia, 1953): 476-77.

<sup>70</sup> Pieper, 3:485.

damnation. The hardening of Pharaoh's heart was due to his own sin, not God's predestination. The "vessels of wrath" in Romans 9:22-23 had ample opportunity to repent; God sought to save them before consigning them to perdition. Pieper demonstrates that in Romans 9:22 the active voice is used in referring to salvation, the passive voice in damnation. God is the active agent of salvation, and damns a man only as a last alternative and as a result of his obduracy:

Calvin and his followers commit the folly of attempting to extract a doctrine of predestination to damnation from the historical facts which Scripture expressly declares to be incomprehensible and unfathomable for us. They pretend to have a knowledge which they cannot possibly have.<sup>71</sup>

Pieper sums up by saying:

Whoever is saved, is saved by God's grace alone; whoever is lost, is lost solely by his own fault. This mystery is taught also by the Lutheran dogmaticians of the sixteenth century before the *intuitu fidei* theory appeared. This mystery the Missouri Synod as well as the entire Synodical Conference taught in the controversy on the doctrines of conversion and election, and thus, on the one hand, it upheld the *universalis gratia* over against Calvinism, and, on the other hand, it resisted the denial of the *sola gratia* inherent in the opposite contention, that conversion and salvation, and therefore also eternal election, depend not only on God's grace, but are contingent on the different conduct and lesser guilt of man.<sup>72</sup>

Robert Preus (1924 -1995) took up this topic in a slim volume of 1978, *A Contemporary Look at the Formula of Concord*. His observations, though brief, are worthy of note, particularly in the historical perspective he provides. He points out that the doctrine of election or predestination was prominent in Luther's *Bondage of the Will* and in the first edition of Melancthon's *Loci*, not as a central doctrine pertaining to salvation but "as part of a polemic against freedom of the will".<sup>73</sup> However, in the intervening years between those publications and the Formula of Concord, Calvin had included a section on double predestination in his *Institutes*, and Beza had gone even beyond Calvin with his supralapsarian doctrine.<sup>74</sup> Therefore a clear statement on this teaching was required of the confessors. Preus argues that FC Articles I and II on the Bondage of the Will and Original Sin must be considered together with election, and that all are related to the central doctrine of the Christian religion, justification by faith.<sup>75</sup> So by 1580 election

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<sup>71</sup> Pieper, 3:499.

<sup>72</sup> Pieper, 3:502.

<sup>73</sup> Robert Preus, "Predestination and Election," in Robert D. Preus and Wilbert H. Rosin, eds, *A Contemporary Look at the Formula of Concord* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1978), 271.

<sup>74</sup> Preus, 272.

<sup>75</sup> Preus, 272.

had become a central article of faith. Preus recapitulates the teaching of the earlier dogmatists in saying that God's foreknowledge is connected to divine providence, and sets limits on evil and controls all things to God's glory, but is not the cause of evil. Predestination "effects, foreordains, and causes everything that pertains to the salvation of individual sinners", but it must be seen only in the light of the Gospel and the Means of Grace.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, "since election is part of the Gospel, there is no predestination to damnation."<sup>77</sup> This of course excludes all works righteousness. It also excludes election *intuitu fidei* "in view of faith", foreseen by God in eternity, an idea first introduced by Aegidius Hunnius (1550-1603).<sup>78</sup>

## CONCLUSION

As we have seen, it was this notion of *intuitu fidei* that F. A. Schmidt accepted and on account of which he opposed Walther and the Synodical Conference—a false teaching that Busch tried to minimize in his 1982 article on the Predestinarian Controversy, attempting to reduce a substantial doctrinal controversy to a personality clash between Walther and Schmidt, with the clear implication that the Seminex controversy was likewise a personality clash between J. A. O. Preus and John Tietjen. The Predestinarian Controversy thus becomes a paradigm for modern theological conflicts—doctrine doesn't matter all that much; controversy stems from ivory tower theologians who squabble and argue and talk past each other. In this view, all denominations teach pretty much the same thing—something about Jesus—so we can minimize doctrinal differences for the sake of external unity in the church. As a result, liberal church bodies like the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A and the Episcopal Church U.S.A. have entered into altar and pulpit fellowship with one another.

Conservative church bodies take doctrine more seriously. They recognize that external unity can only be achieved by internal unity—that is, full agreement on all points of Christian doctrine. Of course one point of doctrine over which there is serious disagreement is Predestination. Arminians and Calvinists and Lutherans have markedly different interpretations, with each group insisting that it is interpreting the Bible correctly. I hope that the Lutheran contribution to this topic might be helpful in helping to resolve this controversy and furthering Christian understanding and unity.

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<sup>76</sup> Preus, 273.

<sup>77</sup> Preus, 274.

<sup>78</sup> Preus, 275.

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## POLEMICAL WORKS AGAINST ISLAM IN THE EARLY REFORMATION ERA, 1529-1543

Adam S. Francisco

### INTRODUCTION

“Let us now prepare ourselves against Muhammad”, urged Martin Luther in the pages of what one scholar has described as the first Encyclopaedia of Islam entitled *The Life, Teachings, and Qur’ân of Muhammad, the Prince of the Saracens*.<sup>1</sup> At the time of its publication in 1543, the Muslim Turks had been threatening the borders of the Habsburg Empire for over a decade in the “great *jihad par excellence*” on Latin Christendom.<sup>2</sup> Accompanying this grave political and military danger was an equally ominous religious threat. The early Protestant theologians henceforth began adapting and fashioning arguments against Islam in order to ensure the survival of Christianity (in case the Turks penetrated Western Europe). This essay will illustrate that in the early years of the Reformation, Protestant theologians were laying the foundation for Christian responses to Islam through the publication of several apologetic and polemical works.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther, “Alcoranun Praefatio”, in *Machumetis Saracenorum Principis, Eiusque Successorum Vitae, ac Doctrina, Ipseque Alcoran ...*, ed. Theodore Bibliander (Basel: Johannes Oporinus, 1543), ?2r. Cf. Vorrede zu *Theodor Biblianders Koranausgabe*, WA 53:572. Pierre Manuel described this massive volume of texts on Islam and the Turks as an *Encyclopaedia* in his essay “Une encyclopedie de l’islam. Le recueil de Bibliander 1543 et 1550”, *En terre de l’islam* 21.3 (1946): 31-37; see also Hartmut Bobzin, *Der Koran im Zeitalter der Reformation* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1995), 215.

<sup>2</sup> Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 10.

<sup>3</sup> There are several bibliographical sources for sixteenth century literature prompted by the arrival of the Turks in Europe. For example, see vols. 1 & 2 of Carl Göllner’s *Turcica: Die europäischen Türkendrucke des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Bibliotheca Bibliographica Aureliana, 1961 and Baden: BBA, 1968) and K. M. Kertbeny’s *Ungarn betreffende deutsche Erstlings-Drucke, 1454-1600* (Budapest: Universitäts-Buchdruckerei, 1881). See also John Bohnstedt’s “The Infidel Scourge of God: The Turkish Menace as Seen by the German Pamphleteers of the Reformation Era”, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 58.9 (December 1968) and Gregory Miller’s unpublished doctoral dissertation “Holy War and Holy Terror: Views of Islam in German Pamphlet Literature, 1520-1545” (Boston University, 1994). We are only concerned here with polemical and apologetic material that confronts Islam and the Qur’ân directly.

### THE EXPANSION OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

At the very beginning of the fourteenth century the Ottoman Turks began their steady ascent to power. Originating as a small *ghazi* emirate located in Anatolia, they eventually came to dominate the Middle East and the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>4</sup> Following the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and the annexation of the Arab Mamlûk Empire in 1517, the Turks were ready to begin enveloping central and western Europe into the sphere of Islam (*dâr al-Islâm*).

Sultan Süleyman I (1520-1566) led the charge. By 1526 he made his way into the plains of Hungary and, after decimating the Hungarian army at Mohács, continued up the Danube River, capturing Buda and Pest ten days later. Fortunately for Hungary and the rest of Europe, a Shî'a revolt in Anatolia forced him to recall his troops, but not before appointing the native prince John Zapolya as vassal king (24 September 1526). Seizing the opportunity to annexe an unstable Hungary for the Habsburgs, Archduke Ferdinand occupied the capital of Buda. Angry and uncomfortable with Charles V's empire encroaching upon the Ottoman Balkans, Süleyman responded the following year. By late fall 1528 he regained Buda and all of central Hungary. Less than a year later he continued his assault upon Europe by marching his army to Vienna and laying siege on the imperial city from 27 September to 15 October 1529. With winter fast approaching and the Austrians showing no sign of surrender, though, the Ottomans had to return to Istanbul lest they run out of troops and supplies. Before they withdrew, a detachment of Turkish raiders managed to cross the Alps, ravaging Bavaria and Bohemia, which consequently sent Europe into a panic. In retrospect, had Süleyman continued the assault a little while longer, Stanford Shaw posits that "his forces might well have broken into Vienna, where they could have remained for the winter before pushing onward" into western Europe.<sup>5</sup> A contemporary account suggests the same idea, for the city was seen to be the "gate and key to German lands".<sup>6</sup>

"To destroy the German Empire and make it clear that the sultan of the Ottomans was the supreme ruler of all the world", Süleyman returned to Hungary the following year.<sup>7</sup> Although no territorial expansion was achieved, the show of power frightened Austria and the Habsburgs so much

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<sup>4</sup> For a good overview, see vol. 1 of Stanford Shaw's *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

<sup>5</sup> Shaw, *History*, 93.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Stern, *Warhafftige handlung Wie und welcher massen der Türck die stat Ofen und Wien belegert ...* (n.p., 1530), a2v.

<sup>7</sup> Shaw, *History*, 94.

that they agreed to a cease-fire under terms established by the sultan. This proved to be a wise move as a period of relative peace followed.

When the treaty was broken a decade later, though, Süleyman responded angrily by invading Hungary for a fourth time, finally claiming all the lands south of the Danube as Ottoman territory (1541). Meanwhile, the Habsburgs managed to rally enough support for a massive response the following year, but having been tipped off by the French, the Turks were able to stave off their retaliation. The following year Süleyman moved north and took possession of the rest of independent Hungary (1543). The Islamic Ottomans and Catholic Habsburgs were now neighbours.

Fortunately for Archduke Ferdinand and his brother Emperor Charles V, the French were persuaded to break off their long-held ties with the Ottomans, and entered into a European alliance against the Turks. When Süleyman received the news, he was forced to reconsider his plans to demolish Vienna and continue westward. He finally agreed to a temporary truce on 10 November 1545 and then a permanent peace on 13 June 1547.<sup>8</sup> This was, of course, not the end of Ottoman-Habsburg conflict, but there would be a lull in military activities between the two for over a decade.

## RESPONSES TO OTTOMAN EXPANSION

The expansion of the Ottoman Empire towards the borders of Habsburg Germany was met by a variety of responses, ranging from crusades to resolute pacifism and everything in between. Appeals for a crusade to reconquer Constantinople (and even the Holy Land) were put forward immediately after the fall of the ancient Byzantine capital in the middle of the fifteenth century. The sixteenth century was no different. At the first session of the Fifth Lateran Council (1512-1517), the Archbishop of Spalato summarised the nature of Turkish aggression before the assemblage of ecclesiastical and imperial officials.

Within the confines of Europe they have usurped no mean dominion with the effusion of much Christian blood. They could easily transport themselves to the gates of Rome in the space of one night from their domain in Dalmatia .... Not one among them has learned respect for the female sex, for the piety of youth, or compassion for the aged .... They snatch children from the arms of their parents and infants from the breast of their mothers; they violate wives in front of their husbands, they snatch virgins from the embrace of their mothers in wild lust, they cut down aged parents as though useless, in

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<sup>8</sup> Shaw, *History*, 102-3. Cf. Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age* (London: Phoenix, 1973), 37.

full view of their children; they yoke youths to the plough as if they were oxen and they destroy the cultivated land.<sup>9</sup>

It was clear to the Catholic mind that a crusade was more than justified. Hence, by the closing session of the council Pope Leo X and the Church had resolved to do everything within their power to launch a holy war against the Turks.<sup>10</sup>

Coincidentally, in 1518 an anonymous booklet was published entitled *A Project for a Campaign against the Turks*, which optimistically predicted that the re-conquest of Constantinople and the Holy Land as well as the conversion of the Muslim world would only take one year. The author, probably a Franciscan, wrote, "I hope to God Almighty that we will, in a short year, have the Holy Grave and the Turkish dog under us Christians so that we can bring them back to the Christian faith."<sup>11</sup> He even offered, in painstaking detail, suggestions for amassing troops and funds from the various religious orders such that a total of 19 468 092 *gulden* and 140 000 men could be gathered for the task. However, in spite of its suggestions and several other attempts to rally support, the call for a crusade fell largely upon deaf ears.<sup>12</sup>

An alternative to crusades, but a military response nonetheless, was suggested by several of Europe's political leaders, many who were influenced by Lutheranism. A crusade, according to the weighty opinion of Luther, was utterly blasphemous and misguided. The duty of fighting wars fell to the emperor as governor of the secular realm (and not as head of Christendom or defender of the Gospel). Further, this was limited to defensive action and campaigns to liberate illegally occupied and oppressed lands.<sup>13</sup> In his preface to a historical study of the Ottomans, Luther's colleague Philip Melanchthon wrote, "Secular kings and princes are responsible with all their power to drive out all wickedness."<sup>14</sup> War against the Turks on the basis of their false religion was completely unjustified,

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<sup>9</sup> Max Kortepeter, "The Turkish Question in the Era of the Fifth Lateran Council (1512-1517)", in *Essays on Islamic Civilization*, ed. Little (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976), 162-63.

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth Setton, "Pope Leo X and the Turkish Peril", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 113.6 (1969): 402-3; Norman Housley, *The Later Crusades, 1274-1580* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 125-26; Kortepeter, "The Turkish Question", 170-71.

<sup>11</sup> *Das ist ein anschlag eyns zugs wider die Türckenn Unnd alle die wyder den christenlichen Glawbenn seyndt* (Nürnberg: Gutknecht, 1518), b2r.

<sup>12</sup> Attesting to its popularity, the *Anschlag eyns zugs wider die Türckenn* underwent several republications from 1518 to 1542. Setton notes that it was printed in as early as 1474 ("Leo X," 414n180). Cf. Bohnstedt, "The Infidel Scourge", 9.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, the suggestions of the Lutheran knight Hartmut Cronberg in his *Eyn sendbrieff an Bapst Adrianum* (Wittenberg, 1523).

<sup>14</sup> Philip Melanchthon, *Ursprung des Turkishcen Reichs bis auff den itzigen Solymen* (Augsburg: Steiner, 1538), b4r-b4v.

though, according to the Lutherans. “Although the Turks are non-Christians”, wrote Justus Jonas, “there would not be just cause to make war on them if they maintained the peace.”<sup>15</sup> So it was put forward that Europe should respond to the Turks not in order to regain Constantinople and subjugate the Turks, but to defend the empire and its people.

In addition to military action, there were some authors, usually radical Protestants, who rejected any form of armed response—defensive or otherwise—against the Turks. This was, in part, a political manoeuvre, for the Turks were much more tolerant of Protestantism in all its forms than, for example, Catholic inquisitors attempting to stamp out the Reformation movement. The primary reason behind suggestions of pacifism, however, was theological. For example, Luther’s early nemesis Thomas Müntzer considered Muslims potentially to be part of the “universal church of the elect” (*allgemeine Kirche der Auserwählten*) made up of all “dispersions, races, and religions,” who conformed to the “inner word” revealed to all creatures.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, true Christians, that is those who have responded to the voice of God within, should allow the Turks entry into Germany so that they might seek out fellow believers amongst them and by their exemplary life bring about their full conversion.<sup>17</sup> The ex-Lutheran turned spiritualist, Sebastian Franck, posited similar reasons. He saw his version of Christian spiritualism as a fourth and final movement of God that would “draw together an invisible, spiritual church in the unity of the spirit and faith from among all people.”<sup>18</sup> This *geystlich kirchen* included all people for, according to Franck, there is “now neither Turk nor Christian”.<sup>19</sup> There was no reason to fear a Turkish conquest of Europe. In fact, it ought to be welcomed as a fulfilment of God’s activity in history.

One response to the early sixteenth century *Türkenfurcht* that every sixteenth century author was agreed upon was so-called spiritual warfare, that is, prayer and repentance.<sup>20</sup> There was, however, a subtle difference in

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<sup>15</sup> Justus Jonas, *Das siebend Capitel Danielis von des Türcken Gottes lesterung und schrecklicher morderey mit untrricht* (Wittenberg: Luft, 1529), 33.

<sup>16</sup> George Hunston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal, 1992), 1266.

<sup>17</sup> D. Fauth, “Das Türkenbild bei Thomas Müntzer”, *Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift* 11.1 (1994): 11.

<sup>18</sup> Sebastian Franck, *Chronica unnd beschreibung der Türckey* (Nürnberg: Friedrich Peypus, 1530), Kiii.

<sup>19</sup> Franck, *Chronica*, Oiii. Also see his “Letter to John Campanus,” in *Spiritual and Anabaptist Writers*, eds. Williams & Mergal (London: SCM, 1957), 156.

<sup>20</sup> Miller notes that the “sermons, hymns, and prayers that admonished spiritual exercises in the face of the Turkish threat are so numerous that they almost form a distinct category of Reformation-era religious publication” (“Holy War”, 251-52). Cf. Bohnstedt, “The Infidel Scourge”, 17.

emphases between Catholic and Protestant writers.<sup>21</sup> Catholics encouraged, and mandated in some cases, various spiritual and liturgical disciplines with hopes to gain God's favour for both the protection and propagation of Christendom as well as the successes of the military in warding off and capturing the enemy. Lutherans also urged spiritual responses, but as a means to a different end. They exhorted all Christians to prayer and repentance for the mere survival of Christendom. Following Luther's lead in his *Army Sermon against the Turk*, the Habsburg-Ottoman war was viewed as an eschatological struggle between the true church—submitted to Christ and the scriptures—and the false church—led by delusions introduced by Satan (Turks, Papists, Anabaptists, etc).<sup>22</sup> The Turks, although they were powerful, could only be externally successful. They could conquer Europe, as Scripture seemed to suggest, and even enslave (or kill) its Christian peoples, but they could not take individual Christian souls. Therefore, the “best weapon”, read an anonymous protestant broadsheet from 1531, is for Christians to “hope in God alone”, “trust in his word”, and “build entirely upon Christ, who has overcome the world. Though him [Christians] would be victorious and in the end obtain salvation.”<sup>23</sup>

On account of the apocalyptic motifs thought to be behind current events, Protestants were generally pessimistic about the near future. The decline of Turkish power seemed a long way off. Thus, conquest seemed imminent. What this meant at the basic pastoral level was that Islam would eventually make its way into Europe and seduce its Christians into apostasy. Luther wrote,

Now that we have the Turk and his religion in our vicinity we must warn our people in case that they are moved by the splendour of their religion and the appearances of their customs—or offended by the simplicity of our faith and deficiencies in our customs—and they reject their Christ and follow Muhammad .... There is danger that many of us will become Muslims.<sup>24</sup>

According to Luther's estimation it was imperative that Christians learn about Islam so that they could respond to Muslims should the occasion arise.

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<sup>21</sup> See Miller, “Holy War”, 253-59.

<sup>22</sup> *Eine Heerpredigt widder den Türcken* is located in WA 30.2:160-97. Luther set the Turkish war in terms of Daniel's vision of four world empires (esp. chapter 7). Following this publication the Lutherans began consistently identifying the Turks (alongside the papacy) as enemies of Christ and the embodiment of prophetic figures signifying the beginning of the apocalypse. See Kenneth Setton, “Lutheranism and the Turkish Peril”, *Balkan Studies* 3 (1962), 152-54; Bohnstedt, “The Infidel Scourge”, 12.

<sup>23</sup> *Ein spruch wie man dem Türcken macht widerstehen auch wie sich die Christen solcher nott sollen halten* (n.p., 1531).

<sup>24</sup> Luther, *Libellus de ritu et moribus turcorum* (Wittenberg: Lufft, 1530), 3-4. Also in WA 30.2:207. I've translated “Turci” here as “Muslim” for in this case the terms are synonymous.

Consequently, Protestant theologians took up the apologetic task and began to produce polemical works against Islam.

### THE BEGINNINGS OF ANTI-ISLAMIC POLEMICS AND APOLOGETICS

The earliest theologian of the reformation really to begin inquiring about Islam was Luther. Because many lies (*ungeschwungen luegen*) were circulating about the Turks and their religion he added an altogether brief summary of Islamic theology, politics, and culture to his *On War against the Turk* (1529).<sup>25</sup> In particular, he discussed Islamic views of Jesus and Muhammad, their approach to infidel nations, and marriage amongst the Muslim Turks, but he noted how he would have to stop at this until he could verify whatever else he had heard with the Qur'ân. The details he learned thus far were enough for him to offer a substantial critique, though. On the basis of its rejection of the divine personage and redemptive work of Christ, its propagation of the faith by the sword, and the allowance of polygamy, Luther concluded that Islam was a product of the Devil. It destroyed and sought to supplant what God had ordained in the realm of religion, politics, and marriage.<sup>26</sup>

Following the publication of *On War against the Turk* and another work entitled *An Army Sermon against the Turk* in 1529, Luther received a copy of a *Booklet on the Customs, Manners, and Wickedness of the Turks* written by a 20-year veteran of Turkish captivity.<sup>27</sup> He was apparently pleased to have received it, for he quickly edited it and had it published both in Wittenberg and Nürnberg by March 1530. In his attached preface he noted that he considered it to be a very credible source from which readers could understand the nature of Islam and Turkish society.<sup>28</sup> Further, he hoped his

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<sup>25</sup> For his discussion of Islam, see *Vom Kriege widder die Türcken*, WA 30.2:121-29; AE 46:175-84.

<sup>26</sup> These three areas of life make up the content of Luther's three-estate doctrine. On this, see Bernard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology* (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1999), 322-24 and Oswald Bayer, "Nature and Institution: Luther's Doctrine of the Three Orders", *Lutheran Quarterly* 12.2 (1998): 125-59.

<sup>27</sup> A critical edition and German translation, with an extensive introduction, has recently been published. See Georgius de Hungaria, *Tractatus de moribus, conditionibus et nequicia Turcorum – Traktat über die Sitten, die Lebensverhältnisse und die Arglist der Türken*, ed. and trans. Klockow (Köln: Böhlau, 1993).

<sup>28</sup> Compare Luther's appraisal (located in *Libellus*, 1-2 [see above note 25]; WA 30.2:205-6) with the remarkably similar contemporary appraisal of J. A. B. Palmer, "Fr. Georgius de Hungaria, O. P., and the *Tractatus de moribus, conditionibus et nequicia Turcorum*", *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 34 (1951-52): 53. The Wittenberg and Nürnberg editions altered the title from *Tractatus de moribus, conditionibus et nequicia Turcorum* to *Libellus de ritu et moribus turcorum*.

readers would come to understand that Muslim Turks were “simultaneously empty of true faith and full of the most disgraceful crimes, abominable before God and man.”<sup>29</sup>

The text of the *Booklet on the Turks* is quite remarkable. In addition to its detailed description of Turkish society ranging from wandering, naked sufis to the sultan’s military forces, from their architecture to their dress, there is a fairly extensive description of Islamic theology and religious practices. The author explained throughout the work how these appealed to certain Christians and even mentions witnessing several conversions, admitting how he almost converted himself. For Luther’s purposes, though, the fact that Muhammad (and Turkish Muslims) “denies that Christ is the son of God, denies his death for our sins, denies his resurrection for our life, denies that by faith in him sins are forgiven and we are justified, denies that he will come as judge as the living and the dead (although he believes in the resurrection of the dead and the day of judgement), denies the Holy Spirit, and denies his gifts” was sufficient to demonstrate the errors of Islam to his readers for the present time.<sup>30</sup> However, he concluded that he wanted to read the Qur’ân as soon as he could get his hands on it so that he could deal directly with the source of the problem.

While Luther waited to get his hands on a copy of the Qur’ân, his colleagues began studying the history of the Turks. They acquired an Italian work written by Paolo Giovio (1486-1552) in 1531 (*Commentario delle cose de’ Turchi*), which chronicled the history of the Turks from their origins up until the time of the present sultan (Süleyman). By 1537 they had it translated into Latin and published in Wittenberg. In the preface, Melancthon stressed the need to learn more about the affairs of the Turks. He warned his readers that they threatened the basic principles of a Christian society. Furthermore, a study of their history not only demonstrated that they sought to extend their religion and form of government throughout Europe, but how they had “carried out war with God, His laws, reputable doctrine, and with the entire human race.”<sup>31</sup> To further publicize this verdict, Jonas translated the *Commentary on the Affairs of the Turks* into German under the title, *Origin of the Turkish Empire up until the Time of Süleyman* in 1538.

There were developments in the study and critique of Islam outside of Wittenberg as well. Already in 1530, according to a letter from 1542, one of Zwingli’s successors named Theodor Bibliander began to collect whatever texts he could get his hands on in order to “obtain a thorough knowledge of

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<sup>29</sup> Luther, *Libellus*, 4; WA 30.2:208.

<sup>30</sup> Luther, *Libellus*, 4; WA 30.2:207-8.

<sup>31</sup> Melancthon, *Turcicarum rerum commentarius*, trans. Negri (Wittenberg: Klug, 1537), A7v.

the Muhammadan or Turkish faith.”<sup>32</sup> The fruit of his interest would not, however, be seen until over a decade later. In Strasbourg a polemical work was published in 1540 entitled *The Qur’ân. That is, the Contents and a Rejection of the Muhammadan Lawbook and Turkish Superstition*. It is clear after analysing the text that it is a paraphrased translation of Dionysius Carthusianus’ 1454 *Against the Qur’ân and the Sect of the Muhammadans*, which was published in Köln seven years earlier.<sup>33</sup> This shortened German version of what Nicholas of Cusa rightly called a “huge”<sup>34</sup> work pits Qur’ânic verse against Biblical citation in the form of a dialogue between the Qur’ân and a Christian, with the latter, of course, emerging victorious. Although it would hardly be convincing for a Muslim, it polarized the two faiths to such a degree that a Christian reading it would remain firm in their convictions assured of the truth of the Christian faith and falsity of Islam. It is also important for at least one other reason. For the first time extensive passages from the Qur’ân (especially those contentious with Biblical teachings) were rendered into German.

Two years later another polemic against the Qur’ân and apologetic for the primacy of the Christian faith over and against Islam was translated into German under the title *Refutation of the Qur’ân*. The translator of this work was none other than Luther, who mentioned in the preface that a better argument against the Qur’ân could not be found, and that it would not only be useful but was also necessary for the German laity to read.<sup>35</sup> His

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<sup>32</sup> K. R. Hagenbach, ed. “Schreiben Biblianders an Oporin”, in *Beiträge zur Vaterlandischen Geschichte*, vol. 9 (Basel: Georg’s Verlag, 1870), 323. For biographical information on Bibliander, see E. Egli, “Biblianders Leben und Schriften”, in *Analecta Reformatoria*, vol. 2 (Zürich, 1901), 1-144. Concerning Zwingli, Katya Vehlow argues that he appears not to have “ever studied Islam” (“The Swiss Reformers Zwingli, Bullinger, Bibliander and Their Attitude to Islam [1520-1566]”, *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 6.2 [1995]: 236).

<sup>33</sup> Bobzin, *Der Koran*, 70. See pages 70-76 for a brief overview of the contents and connection between *Contra Alchoranum & sectam Machometicam* and *Alchoran. Das ist des Mahometischen Gesatzbuchs und Türckischen Aberglaubens ynnhalt und ablänung*. The cataloguer for the British museum suggests that the translator of this work was the humanist and adversary of Erasmus named Heinrich von Eppendorff.

<sup>34</sup> Nicholas of Cusa, *Cribratio Alkorani*, trans. Hopkins (Minneapolis: Banning Press, 1990), 75-76.

<sup>35</sup> Luther, *Verlegung des Alcoran* (Wittenberg: Lufft, 1542), Aiii. Also in WA 53:272. The Latin text that Luther translated from, entitled *Confutatio Alcorani*, is located on facing pages with Luther’s translation in WA 53:272-388. The author of the *Confutatio* was a Dominican missionary named Riccoldo da Monte di Croce who wrote this work after returning to Italy after spending a decade in Baghdad. The *Confutatio* is actually a translation from a Greek version of his original Latin text entitled *Contra Legem Saracenorum*. See Jean-Marie Merigoux, “L’ouvrage d’un frère prêcheur florentin en Orient à la fin du XIIIe siècle. Le *Contra legem Saracenorum* de Riccoldo da Monte di Croce”, in *Fede e controversia nel ’300 e ’500. Memorie Domenicane, nuova serie*, 15 (Pistoia, 1986), 1-144. Two recent works on Riccoldo worth mentioning are L. Michael Spath’s “Riccoldo da Monte Croce: Medieval

paraphrased translation left the press in Wittenberg by April 1542. And like the German translation of Dionysius' *Against the Qur'ân and the Sect of the Muhammadans* it also contained a significant amount of Qur'ânic citations. However, unlike the former work, it attempted to engage Islam on its own grounds. Luther argued from internal (Qur'ân citations) and external evidence (Islamic traditions and history) that the Qur'ân was a contradictory and spurious book devoid of God's revelation. The original author wrote the work as a polemical textbook to enable his fellow missionaries to "confute the principle obscenities of the Qur'an, and to equip Christians so that they might be able to call the followers of Islam back to God."<sup>36</sup> Luther translated it so that his readers would "know what an abominable religion Muhammad's faith is", so that they would be "strengthened in their Christian faith."<sup>37</sup>

A month following the publication of Luther's *Refutation* Bibliander's first contribution to Protestant studies of Islam left the press in Basel. It was entitled *A Consultation to the People of the Christian Name*. He offered three reasons for publishing the work. First, he wanted to explain to Christians why the Turks continued to be victorious. He did this by tracing Muhammad's teachings to Christian heresy, particularly Nestorianism and Judaism. Then, since it was obvious that the Islamic Turks were heretics, there could only be one explanation for their consistent victories: God was using them to punish an unrepentant Europe. The second reason, therefore, for writing the *Consultation* was to call Europe into repentance so that God might withdraw His punishment. And the final reason was to provide Christians with enough knowledge about Islam to strengthen their faith. Bibliander had soldiers in mind especially, so that if they were captured they would not fall into apostasy.<sup>38</sup> His discussion of Islam focused on its history. That is, he develops a rather extensive account of Muhammad's life in order to prove that the prophet of Islam was a charlatan. Through the aid of Christian heretics and Jewish conspirators as well as black magic, he sought to impose his "new civil and religious" law on the people of Arabia,

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Pilgrim and Traveller to the Heart of Islam" and "De Lege Saracenorum According to Riccoldo da Monte Croce". Both are located in the *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies* 1.1 (Spring 1999): 65-102; 2.2 (Autumn 2000): 115-40 (respectively).

<sup>36</sup> Riccoldo da Monte di Croce, *Contra Legem Saracenorum*, 63, in Jean-Marie Merigoux, ed., "L'ouvrage", *Fede e controversia nel '300 e '500. Memorie Domenicane, nuova serie*, 15 (1986), 60-144

<sup>37</sup> Luther, *Verlegung*, Aiii; WA 53:273-74.

<sup>38</sup> Bibliander, *Ad nominis christiani socios consultatio, quanam ratione Turcarum dira potentia repelli possit ac debeat a populo Christiano* (Basel: Brylinger, 1542), 5r. Cf. Rudolf Pfister, "Das Türkenbüchlein Theodor Biblianders", *Theologische Zeitschrift* 9 (1953): 438-54.

Bibliander charged, and from it the Turks continued to extend this detestable faith into the rest of the world.<sup>39</sup>

After the printing of the *Consultation*, Bibliander, in conjunction with his friend and publisher Johannes Oporinus (from Basel), began to collate a mass of texts on Islam, which the former had been collecting for over a decade. Included in the collection was a newly edited Latin translation of the Qur'ân.<sup>40</sup> When news of this spread, the city council members thought that it might be a cause for concern. So they tried to put a stop to its publication.<sup>41</sup> When Oporinus ignored their order to put the presses on hold he was incarcerated, but not to long afterwards he, with the help of Bibliander, was able to enlist the support of several prominent Protestant reformers, which included Luther, Martin Bucer, and others.<sup>42</sup> The council of Basel argued that the Qur'ân only belonged in libraries where learned scholars could refer to it if necessary. And if the general public was exposed to its false teachings, they argued that a general apostasy might take place (as was rumoured to be happening amongst Christians under Ottoman rule). Luther, Bucer, and others argued that every Christian should be aware of the religion of the Turks, and that by making the Qur'ân available the "abomination of Mohammed" would be exposed once and for all.<sup>43</sup> Luther also mentioned that he would have his publisher in Wittenberg take up the task if Basel would not permit it to continue. Upon receiving Luther's letter the council reversed their decision and the Qur'ân was published by January 1543. Although its publication was an immensely important contribution to the understanding of Islam during the Reformation Era, the accompanying works included in the same volume were equally as important amounting to, as noted earlier, a sort of "Encyclopédie de l'Islam".<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Bibliander, *Consultatio*, 14rff. Cf. with the work of Heinrich Knaust: *Von geringem herkommen schentlichem leben schmeulichem ende des Türkischen abgots Machomets und seiner verdamlichen und Gotslesterischen Ler allen fromen Christen zu disen geferlichen Zeiten zur Sterckung unnd trost im glauben an Jesum Christum* (Berlin: Weisen, 1542). This work is almost entirely a biography of Muhammad (similar to Bibliander's).

<sup>40</sup> See Bobzin, *Der Koran*, 170-236; also see his "Über Theodor Biblianders Koran Ausgabe im Jahr 1543", *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Alterkunde* 85 (1985): 213-319.

<sup>41</sup> The events that transpired surrounding the publication of the Qur'ân are adequately described in Harry Clark, "The Publication of the Koran in Latin: A Reformation Dilemma", *Sixteenth Century Journal* 15.1 (1984): 3-12. For further details see Bobzin, *Der Koran*, 181-209.

<sup>42</sup> Karl R. Hagenbach has collected the relevant letters as well as the judgements of the council (see "Luther an der Koran vor dem Rathe zu Basel", in *Beiträge Väterlandische Geschichte*, 293-326). According to Jan Slomp, Calvin was also contacted but apparently did not respond. This, he thinks, may suggest that Calvin supported the censoring ("Calvin and the Turks", in *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, ed. Haddad [Florida: University of Florida Press, 1995], 135).

<sup>43</sup> "Luther an den Rat zu Basel", WABr 10:162.

<sup>44</sup> See note 1.

This three-part reference work entitled *The Life, Teachings, and Qur'ân of Muhammad the Prince of the Saracens* was the first of its kind in the West since Peter the Venerable had the Qur'ân and other Islamic texts translated in the 1140s.<sup>45</sup> It was divided into three volumes. The first, Bibliander indicated on the title page, contained an “authentic collection of the divine laws of the Hagarians and Turks.” Along with an advanced warning to the reader (*praemonitio*),<sup>46</sup> two defences of the Qur'ân's publication,<sup>47</sup> and a summary of Islamic doctrine,<sup>48</sup> were four “books of Muhammadan doctrine”. The first was, of course, the Qur'ân. The second and third were popular hadîths, or reports, of Muhammad's words and deeds.<sup>49</sup> The fourth work was an account of early Islamic history from Muhammad into the first century of Islam.<sup>50</sup> The first volume closes with a listing of annotations for particular verses of the Qur'ân and a (separate) listing of variant readings of the text.

The second volume contained a variety of polemical and apologetic works or, as Bibliander called them, “Refutations of the law of Muhammad”. The first three are short two- to three-page extracts from the works of humanist scholars, which generally sum up the teachings of Islam while critiquing it along the way.<sup>51</sup> Following this is a paraphrased copy of perhaps the most popular medieval Arab apologetic-polemical work, usually known as the *Apology of al-Kindî*. Bibliander gave it the title, “Disputation of a learned Christian and his Saracen friend”.<sup>52</sup> Following this are two of the most popular Western polemics against the Qur'ân: Nicholas of Cusa's *Sifting of the Qur'ân*, and Riccoldo da Monte di Croce's *Confutation of the Qur'ân* (in Latin in Greek). The final work is an old Byzantine polemic,

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<sup>45</sup> For the first Western attempt to translate the Qur'ân, see James Kritzeck, *Peter the Venerable and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964). For Bibliander's volume on Islam, in addition to the work itself (see note 1), see Bobzin, *Der Koran*, 176-236; Manuel, “Une encyclopedie de l'islam”, 31-37; and V. Segesvary, *L'Islam et la Réforme: Etude sur l'attitude des réformateurs Zurichois envers l'Islam (1510-1550)* (Lausanne, 1978).

<sup>46</sup> One of the editions contains Luther's preface (see note 1). The other editions contain Melancthon's *praemonitio* (in *Corpus Reformatorum* 5:10-13).

<sup>47</sup> One was written by Bibliander (*Apologia pro editione Alcorani*) and the other was Peter the Venerable's letter to Bernard of Clairveaux written 400 years earlier in defence of the first Latin translation.

<sup>48</sup> Peter the Venerable's *Summula brevis contra haereses et sectam diabolicam fraudis Saracenorum, sive Ismahelitarum*.

<sup>49</sup> *Doctrina Machumetis* and *De generatione Mahumet & nutritura eius*.

<sup>50</sup> *Chronica mendosa et ridiculosa Saracenorum*.

<sup>51</sup> The first is an extract from Juan Luis Vive's *De veritate fidei Christianae: De Mahomete & Alcorano*. The second is a work by Raffaele Maffei of Volterra entitled *De Mahometo, eiusque legibus, & Sarracenorum rebus*. And the third was from Girolamo Savonarola under the title *Mahumetanorum sectam omni ratione carere, commentatiucula lectu dignissima*.

<sup>52</sup> *Disputatio Christiani eruditissime, qui diversatus est apud principem Sarracenorum cum magna dignatione, & Sarraceni sodalis ipsius, adversus doctrinam & flagitia Mahumetis*.

which was also printed in both Latin and Greek.<sup>53</sup> In general, these works attempt, in various ways, to discredit Muhammad as a prophet and expose the Qur'ân as an erroneous and heretical book.

The final part of *The Life, Teachings, and Qur'ân of Muhammad the Prince of the Saracens* is devoted to the history of Islam, particularly the Ottoman Empire, and testimonies of life under Islamic rule. The *Booklet on the rites and customs of the Turks* and Paolo Giovio's *Commentary on the Affairs of the Turks* take up a significant part of the section. Added to it, however, is a copy of Pope Pius II's letter to the Turkish sultan Mehmet II and Mehmet's response, along with an account of Turkish politics and another work by Paolo Giovio on the nature of the Turkish military.<sup>54</sup> The final three works are all regional studies and accounts of what it is like to live under Turkish rule.<sup>55</sup>

By the end of 1543 six editions of the Bibliander's *Life, Teachings, and Qur'ân of Muhammad the Prince of the Saracens* were published (and another in 1550). It was **the** sourcebook for information on Islam in the sixteenth century. From it, later Protestant theologians and pastors were able to educate and equip the laity for possible confrontations with Islam.<sup>56</sup> (There is even evidence that Catholic Jesuit missionaries used it in their dialogues with Muslims in India.<sup>57</sup>) From Bibliander's edition of the Qur'ân three vernacular translations were made during the seventeenth century—in Italian, Dutch, and German (by a Lutheran pastor).<sup>58</sup> Luther's German translation of the *Refutation of the Qur'ân* also proved to remain influential into the seventeenth century as it was included in two editions of a work entitled *A Short Volume on the Blasphemous Qur'ân and Religion of the Turk*.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *Christianae fidei Exomologesis, sive Confessio, Sarracenis facta, cum primis quidem pia, & spiritum plane Apostolicum redolens, Graecae & Latine, incerto autore.*

<sup>54</sup> *Ordinatio politicae Turcarum domi & foris, incerto autore* and *Ordo ac disciplina Turcicae militiae, eadem Paulo Iovio autore.*

<sup>55</sup> First, *Ioannis Lodovici Vivis, de conditione vite Christianorum sub Turca, libellus*; second, *Quibus itineribus Turci sint aggreddedi, Felicis Petantij Cancellarij Segniae ad Vladislaum Hungariae & Boëmiae regem liber*; and third, *Iacobi Sadoleti episcopi Carpentoractis, de regno Hungariae ab hostibus Turcis oppresso & capto, Homilia.*

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, Siegfried Raeder, "Die Türkenpredigten des Jakob Andrea", in *Theologen und Theologie an der Universität Tübingen*, ed. Brecht (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1977), 103-6.

<sup>57</sup> Bobzin, *Der Koran*, 274; Stephen Neill, *A History of Christianity in India*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 173 n. 33.

<sup>58</sup> Bobzin, *Der Koran*, 275.

<sup>59</sup> WA 53:270.

## CONCLUSION

The reformers desired a sound knowledge of the Qur'ân and Muslim religious beliefs. Although by no means up to the standards of contemporary Islamic studies, for the most part they were able to gain an adequate understanding of the differences between Christianity and the religion of the Turks. What they really sought, however, was to guarantee the safety of the individual Christian's faith. They knew both from contemporary events and the teachings of the Qur'ân that Muslims were to "cause Islam to prevail over all religion".<sup>60</sup> Therefore, with the appearance of this new theological opponent, they began to build up their arsenal of polemics and apologetic weapons.

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<sup>60</sup> Qur'ân 9:33.

## HOW LUTHERAN WAS WILLIAM TYNDALE?

Jeffrey W. Leininger

### JUSTIFICATION IN AN ENGLISH REFORMER

In Kentish Town, London, there stands one of the oldest Lutheran churches in England. It goes by a name which expresses the strong link assumed between one of England's earliest and most influential reformers and the "Great Reformer" himself. The name of the church is "Luther-Tyndale". Previously called Emmanuel, the church was renamed by the members of the congregation in 1938 to reflect the shift towards spoken English within many of the congregation's families. They wanted the theology of Luther in the language of English. What better name than William Tyndale (d. 1536), the earliest and most prolific English translator of Luther?<sup>1</sup>

Tyndale and Luther's names have been linked since the Reformation; they remain so today. The question of Tyndale's Lutheranism appears obvious from the outset. No other theologian of the English Reformation translated as much Luther as did William Tyndale (fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> Tyndale's first attempt to translate the New Testament included a prologue (1525; sometimes referred to as *The Cologne Fragment*) based on Luther's 1522 New Testament preface.<sup>3</sup> This prologue was incorporated into Tyndale's

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<sup>1</sup> The link between Luther and Tyndale was more recently celebrated in Cambridge, England. Tyndale House, one of Europe's premier exegetical centres, hosted a study conference on Luther in 2001. At this conference I presented an earlier version of this paper, for within the walls of Tyndale House there has been a constant stream of exegetes who could be described as "Tyndale House Lutherans". This paper was also presented at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England's Pastors' conference in 2002. This "Barnes Conference" is so named because of the work of Robert Barnes (martyred, 1540), another sixteenth-century reformer who promoted Luther's theology in Britain.

<sup>2</sup> On Tyndale's life and literary career, see Carl Trueman, *Luther's Legacy: Salvation and the English Reformers 1525-1556* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), 9-14. Trueman follows but improves upon J. F. Mozley, *William Tyndale* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1937). *Luther's Legacy* has replaced William Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1964) as an accurate account of Tyndale's soteriology; and is a more balanced approach than L. J. Trinterud, "A Reappraisal of William Tyndale's Debt to Martin Luther", *Church History* 31 (1962): 24-45. On Tyndale's significant and lasting contributions to the development of the English language, see David Daniell's rather hagiographical account, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> There is no modern critical edition of Tyndale's works; the most widely used remains the Parker Society's three-volume set of his most important writings: *Doctrinal Treatises and*

**Fig. 1: Tyndale's debt to Luther***The Cologne Fragment* (1525) [*The Prologue*]

- based on Luther's 1522 New Testament preface.
- included in Tyndale's *Pathway into Holy Scripture*, London (1531).

*The Prologue to the Epistle of Romans* (1526)

- copied from Luther's *Introduction to Romans* (1522)

*The Parable of the Wicked Mammon* (1528)

- includes all of Luther's 1522 sermon for the 9<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Trinity

*The Obedience of a Christian Man* (1528)

- reliant on Luther's theology of the Two Realms, the Fourth Commandment, and his exegesis of Romans 13.
- specifically draws on Luther's *Prefaces to the Old Testament*.

*Prologues to the Old Testament* (1530)

- reliant on Luther's *Prefaces to the Old Testament* (1523-28)

*The Exposition of 1 John* (1531)

- similarities with Luther's sermons

*Exposition of the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> Chapters of Matthew* (1533)

- contains translations of Luther's sermons

*Pathway into Holy Scripture*, printed in London (1531).<sup>4</sup> His most well known borrowing comes from *The Prologue to the Epistle of Romans* (1526) [hereafter abbreviated *The Prologue to Romans*], which relies heavily on Luther's own 1522 introduction—the reading of which Wesley credited for his conversion. *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon* (1528) follows verbatim at times Luther's 1522 sermon for the Ninth Sunday after Trinity. Even Tyndale's classic presentation of Reformation obedience theology, *The Obedience of a Christian Man* (1528), which gives the opposite side of the political coin to Luther's *Freedom of the Christian Man*, has been shown to be indirectly, if not directly, based upon Luther's *Zwei-Regimente-Lehre*, his exposition on obedience due unto rulers subsumed under the fourth commandment, and his exegesis of Romans 13.<sup>5</sup> In fact, the more one juxtaposes Tyndale and Luther, the more the English exegete seems to have borrowed. His *Exposition upon the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Chapters of*

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*Introductions to Different Portions of the Holy Scriptures* [hereafter abbreviated *Works 1*], ed. H. Walter (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1848); *Expositions and Notes on Sundry Portions of the Holy Scriptures, together with The Practice of Prelates* [*Works 2*] (1849); *An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue* [*Works 3*] (1850).

<sup>4</sup> *The Prologue* (1525) is edited in *The First Printed English New Testament*, ed. T. Arber (London, 1871).

<sup>5</sup> Richard Rex reviews Luther's conceptual influences on Tyndale's *Obedience of the Christian Man* in "The Crisis of Obedience: God's Word and Henry's Reformation", *The Historical Journal* 39.4 (1996): 866-67.

*Matthew* (1533) contains translations of sermons by Luther;<sup>6</sup> *The Exposition of 1 John* (1531) points in the same direction.<sup>7</sup> Just in the course of preparing this paper I have uncovered a couple of unpaid debts to Luther.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, it seems the Lutherans in Kentish Town, London, were not without justification in naming their church Luther-Tyndale—nor were they the first to make the connection. The Catholic Humanist Thomas More (d. 1535) dismissed Tyndale’s writings as mere rehashed Luther. George Joy, Tyndale’s co-worker from their days on the Continent (of Peterhouse, Cambridge), once remarked: “I heard him praise his exposition of the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> chapters of Matthew so much that mine ears glowed for shame to hear him, and yet it was Luther that made it and Tyndale only by translating it and powdering it here and there with his own fantasies.”<sup>9</sup>

What we know of Tyndale’s life confirms Luther’s direct influence. He matriculated at Wittenberg, 27 May 1524, under the name “Guilelmus Daltin” (Daltin being an anagram of Tindal). It was here that he came into contact with his Jewish translation assistant William Roy, Luther, and presumably Melancthon. We do not know how long Tyndale resided in Wittenberg, but by March 1526 he and Roy had produced at Worms the first printing of the English New Testament.

Tyndale’s theological debt to the German Reformation appears obvious, and the matter would have remained closed had he not departed significantly from Luther’s teaching on the real, corporeal presence in the Eucharist. We do not know when this shift may have occurred, or even whether it can be called “a shift”—we might suppose that Tyndale had initially held to a more substantive, real presence view as Thomas Cranmer once had.<sup>10</sup> But by 1532 when Frith had returned to England from his sojourn in the Low Countries with Tyndale and was imprisoned for his Eucharistic views, Tyndale advised his friend to conceal his heretical views on the sacrament—even from their fellow reformers:

Of the presence of Christ’s body in the sacrament, meddle as little as you can, that there appear no division among us. Barnes will be hot against you. The

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<sup>6</sup> E. G. Rupp, *Studies in the Making of the English Protestant Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1947), 51.

<sup>7</sup> Rupp, *English Protestant Tradition*, 51.

<sup>8</sup> Tyndale’s understanding of the Law in his prologues to the Old Testament (Marburg, 1530) is generally reliant upon Luther’s understanding of the same in his *Prefaces to the Old Testament*, first published in Wittenberg, 1523, but revised six times by 1528. Tyndale’s tripartite division of Natural Law, the Law of Moses, and the Law of Christ in *The Obedience of the Christian Man* (Marburg, 1528; *Works* 1:181-85) draws specifically on Luther’s *Prefaces to the Old Testament* (WA DB 8:27= AE 35:245-46).

<sup>9</sup> Rupp, *English Protestant Tradition*, 50.

<sup>10</sup> Peter Newman Brooks demonstrated Cranmer’s “Lutheran phase” in *Cranmer’s Doctrine of the Eucharist* (London: Macmillan, 1965).

Saxons be sore on the affirmative .... My mind is that nothing be put forth till we hear how you have sped. I would have the right use preached, and the presence to be an indifferent thing, till the matter might be reasoned in peace, at leisure, of both parties.<sup>11</sup>

Unable in good conscience to affirm transubstantiation positively, Frith was burned 4 July 1533 under Archbishop Cranmer's watch—which proved to be an embarrassment to the Protestant establishment in Edward VI's reign. Tyndale never went public with his views, but sometime in 1533-34<sup>12</sup> wrote *A Fruitful and Godly Treatise* (also called *A Brief Declaration of the Sacraments*). Though moderate in tone and hopeful that all views be tolerated in the Church, it specifically repudiates both transubstantiation and the Lutheran view.<sup>13</sup> Tyndale showed enough prudence to refrain from publishing on the hot topic: his colleagues printed the manuscript sometime after his capture in Amsterdam, 1536.

Thus, Tyndale was certainly no Lutheran in terms of his sacramental theology: he showed nothing of the *hoc est corpus meum* fire of Luther; nor that of Robert Barnes, the English Reformation's confessional Lutheran. The more interesting and involved question, however, concerns Tyndale's debt to Luther regarding soteriology—a question addressed in the remainder of this article. Much has been written concerning Luther's influence on Tyndale's understanding of justification. The classic view, articulated eloquently by Cambridge's great Luther scholar, Gordon Rupp, stressed the essential identity of the Henrician reformers Tyndale, Frith, and Barnes with the solifidian faith of Luther.<sup>14</sup> Clebsch's work, *England's Earliest Protestants*, maintained that Tyndale and Barnes **began** their reforming careers as serious Lutherans, but later undermined justification by faith by a legalism not too distinct from Thomas More's. L. J. Trinterud, on the other hand, noted where and how Tyndale had expanded on Luther. He argued that the strong works-oriented view of salvation not only departed from Luther, but also prefigured the legalism of later Puritan thought. More recently, Carl Trueman has produced an excellent, thorough, and balanced approach to the topic: *Luther's Legacy: Salvation and English Reformers, 1525-56*. While this article offers some important correctives to Trueman's work, it also remains indebted to him.

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<sup>11</sup> John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, 4th ed., rev. Josiah Pratt, 8 vols (London: Religious Tract Society, 1877), 5:133.

<sup>12</sup> Mozley, *William Tyndale*, 260.

<sup>13</sup> “... we be not bound to believe that the bread is the very body of Christ, though it be so called: nor that the bread is transubstantiated into the body ...”; *Works* 1:379.

<sup>14</sup> For this summary, I follow Trueman, *Luther's Legacy*, 54-56. For the following secondary sources, see n. 2.

One of the reasons for this disparity among Tyndale scholars is that no one has sufficiently untangled the most important question: when are we reading Tyndale and when are we reading Luther. The task is daunting and will only be unravelled as proper modern editions of his works emerge.<sup>15</sup> One example is found in the Tyndale's treatment of election. In *Luther's Legacy* Trueman contrasts the two reformers' views, maintaining that Tyndale used predestination only to underline "that salvation is by grace", defined as the "free favour of God"; and to assert "that man's will is bound, preventing the individual from initiating his own salvation."<sup>16</sup> Trueman further argues that Tyndale does not develop a doctrine of reprobation: the English reformer "never indulges in speculation and stresses that God's choice of one and not another is hidden and not to be inquired into."<sup>17</sup> If we may be permitted to impose a later theological shorthand, here, Trueman maintains that Tyndale holds to "single-particular" predestination—a perspective embraced by Lutheran orthodoxy.

This label fits Tyndale, so far as it goes, and Trueman cites the following passage from *The Prologue to Romans* as evidence:

In the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters he treateth of God's predestination; whence it springeth altogether; whether we shall believe or not believe; be loosed from sin, or not be loosed. By which predestination our justifying and salvation are clean taken out of our hands, and put in the hands of God; which thing is most necessary of all. For we are so weak and so uncertain, that if it stood in us, there would of a truth be no man saved; the devil, no doubt would deceive us. But now is God sure, that his predestination cannot deceive him, neither can any man withstand or let him; and therefore have we hope and trust against sin.<sup>18</sup>

Trueman, however, goes on to contrast Tyndale's views here with Luther's. There are a number of difficulties with this. In the first place, English scholarship on Luther has focused almost exclusively on *Bondage of the Will* as a litmus test for his theology of election. They speak in terms of Luther's "double" predestination theology, as it relates to a distinction of the revealed and hidden will of God.<sup>19</sup> A full discussion on the topic cannot detain us

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<sup>15</sup> For example, J. A. R. Dick, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, "A critical ed. of William Tyndale's *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon*" (Yale, 1974).

<sup>16</sup> Trueman, *Luther's Legacy*, 85.

<sup>17</sup> Trueman, *Luther's Legacy*, 86.

<sup>18</sup> *Works* 1:504-5.

<sup>19</sup> Trueman maintains that Luther's argument "demands a doctrine of double predestination". *Luther's Legacy*, 86 n. 13, and 67ff. Similarly, Alister McGrath contrasts Luther with Augustine (!): "Luther explicitly teaches a doctrine of double predestination, whereas Augustine was reluctant to acknowledge such a doctrine, no matter how logically appropriate it might appear." *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Doctrine of Justification* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998 [1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1986]), 203.

here, but it appears that English scholars have over-read Luther's polemic against Erasmus, while also neglecting Luther's more mature, pastoral theology found in his commentaries of Galatians, Genesis, or John, where he consistently uses election as an assurance for the trouble conscience and to repudiate salvation by works, and never to touch on reprobation. In fact, Tyndale's doctrine is indistinguishable from Luther's: both reformers regarded election as flowing from grace and justification, and only to be used as an application of the Gospel.

But more importantly for our purposes, the passage concerning election from Tyndale's prologue (cited above) which Trueman uses to distinguish Tyndale from Luther, in fact is a direct quotation **from** Luther:

In chapters 9, 10, and 11 he teaches of God's eternal predestination—out of which originally proceeds who shall believe or not, who can or cannot get rid of sin—in order that our salvation may be taken entirely out of our hands and put in the hand of God alone. And this too is utterly necessary. For we are so weak and uncertain that if it depended on us, not even a single person would be saved; the devil would surely overpower us all. But since God is dependable—his predestination cannot fail, and no one can withstand him—we still have hope in the face of sin.<sup>20</sup>

Instead of contrasting Tyndale with Luther, Trueman is actually contrasting Luther with Luther: pitting *Bondage of the Will* against the *Preface to Romans*, as Tyndale translated it!

This is not meant detract from the general usefulness of Trueman's *Luther's Legacy*, but rather to point to the larger difficulty which arises when discussing Tyndale's view of salvation: we have to be particularly circumspect in determining precisely **where** Tyndale is elaborating or detracting from Luther.

But a second and more fundamental difficulty arises as we try to contrast soteriology in the two reformers: before we can ask, "How Lutheran was Tyndale?" should we not first ask, "How Lutheran was **Luther**?" That is to say, **which** Luther Tyndale uses will go a long way in determining the nature of his theology. The young Luther–old Luther distinction is well known and

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<sup>20</sup> AE 35:378. The American Edition of Luther's preface to Romans translates from his complete Bible of 1546 (WA DB 7:2-27). Tyndale borrowed from the prefaces to Luther's "September Testament" of 1522, which the St. Louis edition follows:

Um neunten, zehnten und elften Capitel lehrt er von der ewigen Versehung Gottes, daher es ursprünglich fleußt, wer glauben oder nicht glauben soll, von Sünden los oder nicht los werden kann; damit es je gar aus unsern Händen genommen, und allein in Gottes Hand gestellet sei, daß wir fromm werden. Und das ist auch aufs allerhöchste noth. Denn wir sind so schmach und ungewiß, daß, wenn es bei uns stünde, würde freilich nicht Ein Mensch selig, der Teufel würde sie gewißlich alle überwältigen. Aber nun GOtt gewiß ist, daß ihm sein Versehen nicht fehlet, noch jemand ihm wehren kann, haben wir noch Hoffnung wider die Sünde (W<sup>2</sup> 14:107<sup>40</sup>).

the details cannot detain us here,<sup>21</sup> but it may be useful to rehearse the most important points. The prevailing view is that Luther did not arrive at his fully reformational understanding of justification until 1518 or 1519. Before this time—for example, in his first course of lectures on the Psalms (1513-15), his lectures on Romans (1515/16), and even his famous Ninety-Five Thesis—Luther’s views on salvation are still very much Augustinian:

1. The early Luther contrasted works of the law with true works of faith, which he regarded as necessary for salvation.
2. He held an understanding of *facitive* justification: that is, God sees us righteous because we are actually made to be righteous by grace through faith. This is also sometimes referred to as analytic, or effective justification, which stands in contrast with the mature Luther who spoke of forensic justification and the positive imputation of Christ’s alien righteousness.
3. The early Luther also tended to use sanative language: like Augustine he spoke of justification as the **process** by which God heals our sinful condition. In connection to this, Luther also sometimes thought of justification **proleptically**: God declares us righteous, now, because he foresees the end of the healing process, when we will actually become righteous.

Although there has been great debate over the timing of Luther’s Reformation discovery, there is growing evidence that, while his Romans lectures of 1515/16 contained important advances, he had not fully departed from Augustine.<sup>22</sup> This is actually confirmed by Luther’s own words. In his 1545 preface to his Latin works, he describes the Reformation breakthrough as occurring in the same year as his second work on the Psalms, 1519.<sup>23</sup>

In any case, it is better to view Luther’s Reformation discovery as a series of advances. It has become almost a mantra to say that “Luther was not a systematic theologian.” As the Reformation unfolds he addresses different

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<sup>21</sup> For a summary, see Lowell Green, *How Melancthon helped Luther discover the Gospel* (Fallbrook: Verdict, 1980), chapter 1.

<sup>22</sup> One example comes from David Maxwell, “Luther’s Augustinian Understanding of Justification in the *Lectures on Romans*”, *Logia* 5.4 (1996): 9-14. (1) The righteousness of God: Luther’s *iustificamur* is parallel with Augustine’s *iustos facit*. (2) Luther states that “our righteousness from God is the very turning [*inclinatio*] toward the good and the avoiding [*declinatio*] of evil which is given to us inwardly [*interius*] through grace” (p. 11). (3) Luther still sees justification as a healing process, using the terms *iustificari* and *sanari* as synonymous. (4) Luther uses *facio* (make or do) and *effecio* (effect) to describe both the remission of sins and the effecting of righteousness. (5) While speaking of the non-imputation of sin, Luther expresses this as the complementary role of divine forbearance until the sanative process is complete.

<sup>23</sup> WA 54:185<sup>12ff</sup>=AE 34:336.

problems as they arise. In fact, Lowell Green has argued that, although his experiences of 1518-19 were crucial to his development, Luther's understanding of justification is still in transition throughout the 1520s. It is not until 1528 that he makes a complete break with his Augustinian views. Crucial to this development were the forensic discoveries of Melancthon in the 1520s, who came to Wittenberg in 1518: grace is divine **favour**; faith is not a substance, but rather *fiducia*, trust, assurance, confidence that God is favourable and forgiving; our justification occurs *coram Deo*, by the positive imputation of Christ's righteousness; we are at once both saint and sinner, *simul iustus et peccator*; and a strong, systematic distinction between Law and Gospel, justification and sanctification. Luther himself specifically repudiated his earlier understandings. He endorsed Melancthon's *Augsburg Confession*, and later spoke against Augustinian formulations of justification.<sup>24</sup>

Some would argue that Green overstates his case: it is unreasonable to characterize the Luther of the 1520s as "not fully reformational". However this may be, for our purposes it is noteworthy that, though Luther became more comfortable with forensic terminology during the 1520s, at times he seems to retreat back to Augustine. How Lutheran was Luther? If his theological quest can be described as "where can I find a gracious God?", he found his most profound and lasting answers in the forensic soteriology developed by Melancthon, which was refined in the 1520s and grew into the Augsburg Confession; after 1528 Luther never retreated from these insights.

How does this help us with Tyndale? Some of the elements in Luther's earlier views on salvation frequently arise in Tyndale: sanative and proleptic justification; the righteousness of humility; our works as certification or assurance for salvation; justification by faith effecting a change in our actual righteousness; faith as enabling true works of the heart, the power to fulfil the law, which brings salvation. English Reformation scholars agree that Tyndale's theology grew into some form of legalism in the 1530s. It is my contention that, while this was certainly a product of tendencies in the English Reformation as a whole and of Tyndale's own theological development, he also appears to have resonated with Luther's theology **in transition**, and thus did not receive the full benefits of Melancthon's forensic understandings of justification. Tyndale arrived at Wittenberg in 1524 amid Luther's maturation. He spent but nine or ten months there, at which time he was working feverishly on his New Testament and learning German. His direct borrowings are from Luther's 1522 writings. He returned to Wittenberg only briefly in 1525 before heading to Cologne to print his

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<sup>24</sup> Green, 224, who cites, for example, Luther's own *De loco iustificatione* (1530), WA 30<sup>ll</sup>:659.

translation of the New Testament.<sup>25</sup> Thus, Tyndale's personal exposure to Luther would have been rather limited; and what exposure he did have was to the Luther in transition.

### *Tyndale's Organic Justification*

While Tyndale always maintained that salvation was by faith alone, his understanding of the **nature** of justification can be characterized as "organic", rather than "forensic". He continually returns to images like the "tree and the fruit" in order to show that righteousness, though brought about through faith, will necessarily produce works. This enables him in his debates with Thomas More to maintain that salvation is **caused** only by faith, but will always be **correlated** with the production of right living, love, obedience, etc .... Further, organic justification functioned as an exegetical tool in treating the many biblical passages exhorting good works. Concomitant with this organic concept came an understanding of the process, or growth of real righteousness, which left little room for the distinction between justification and sanctification. And because works came to be seen as a consequential process of justification, they also could be regarded as evidence or certification of salvation, and a basis for assurance.

#### *I. Tyndale's Early Career: 1525-29*

It has become standard to divide those writings of Tyndale which reflect most clearly his soteriology into three periods: I. his early career, 1525-29; II. his mid-career, 1530-32; and III. his mature theology, 1533-36.<sup>26</sup> Tyndale's early works are those most indebted to Luther: *The Cologne Fragment* (1525), which served as prologue to his first attempt to publish the New Testament in English; *The Prologue to the Epistle of Romans* (1526), *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon*, and *The Obedience of a Christian Man* (1528) (see Fig. 1, above).

Tyndale's *The Parable of the Wicked Mammon* [hereafter abbreviated *The Mammon*] serves well as an exemplar for his theology during this period. It may have been written at Marburg, though we know it was printed at Amsterdam, 1528.<sup>27</sup> Ostensibly based upon Luke 16:1-9 (better known as the Parable of the Unjust Steward) *The Mammon* is in fact an extended treatise on the Reformation *sola fide*.

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<sup>25</sup> Mozley, *William Tyndale*, 53-58.

<sup>26</sup> The tripartite division was first introduced by Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants*.

<sup>27</sup> It is difficult to say which printing of Luther's 1522 sermon on the Unjust Steward Tyndale used. It could have been a 1528 Strassburg publication, where Bucer translated the German into Latin. Luther maintained that Bucer "poisoned" portions of this printing, referring, of course, to the Eucharist. It is noteworthy that Luther's sermon also contains *facitive*, effective righteousness language, which Tyndale embellished.

An illustration of Tyndale's common use of organic metaphors to describe justification comes from a discussion of original sin in *The Mammon*. Although he speaks of the non-imputation of sin, a discussion of the alien righteousness of Christ imputed onto the sinner is suspiciously lacking. In fact, the concept of *reputatio iustitiae Christi alienae* is not found in Tyndale's soteriology, an omission which resonates with both Augustine and the early Luther:

In Adam are we all, as it were, wild crab-trees, of which God chooseth whom he will, and plucketh them out of Adam, and planteth them in the garden of his mercy; and stocketh them, and grafteth the Spirit of Christ in them, which bringeth forth the fruit of the will of God; which fruit testifieth that God hath blessed us in Christ. Note this also; that, as long as we live, we are yet partly carnal and fleshly, notwithstanding that we are in Christ, and though it be not imputed unto us for Christ's sake; for there abideth and remaineth in us yet of the old Adam, as it were of the stock of the crab-tree ... against whom we must fight and subdue him, and change all his nature by little and little, with prayer, fasting, and watching, with virtuous meditation and holy works, until we be altogether spirit .... The leaven is the Spirit, and we the meal, which must be seasoned with the Spirit by a little and a little, till we be throughout spiritual.<sup>28</sup>

Images such as the tree and fruit, leaven and meal, are common in Tyndale. He uses them to point to the natural process whereby faith grows into the spiritual life. Later Lutheran and Reformed theologians would place this growth process in the area of sanctification. Tyndale has no such distinction in his writings.

In his sermon on the Unjust Steward (1522) Luther concedes (as he would elsewhere<sup>29</sup>) that works can function as a sign to ourselves and others that our faith is genuine—although the mature Luther would always endeavour to place the assurance of salvation firmly in the wounds of Christ. For our purposes, it is instructional to note where and how Tyndale elaborates on Luther's 1522 sermon. Speaking of the role of works which show forth that goodness which we have received by faith, Tyndale writes in *The Mammon*:

[**Tyndale** (underlined portions are Tyndale's periphrastic translation of Luther):] 'Let your light so shine in the sight of men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' Or else were it as a treasure digged in the ground, and hid wisdom, in the which there is no profit.

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<sup>28</sup> *Works* 1:113.

<sup>29</sup> In his Genesis commentary, for example, remarking on II Peter 1:10, "Sic Petrus iubet, ut certificemus electionem nostrum per bona opera. Sunt enim Testimonium, quod gratia in nobis sit efficax, et quod vocati et electi simus" (WA 42:669<sup>20</sup>=AE 3:169).

Moreover therewith the goodness, favour and gifts of God which are in thee, not only shall be known unto other[s], but also unto thine own self; and thou shalt be sure that thy faith is right, and that the true Spirit of God is in thee, and that thou art called and chosen of God unto eternal life, and loosed from the bonds of Satan, whose captive thou wast; as Peter exhorteth, in the first of his second epistle, through good works to make our calling and election (where with we are called and chosen of God) sure. For how dare a man presume to think that his faith is right, and that God's favour is on him, and that God's Spirit is in him, when he feeleth not the working of the Spirit, neither himself disposed to any godly thing? Thou canst never know or be sure of thy faith, but by the works: if works follow not, yea, and that of love, without looking after any reward, thou mayest be sure that thy faith is but a dream, and not right, and even the same that James calleth in his epistle, the second chapter, dead faith, and not justifying. Abraham...<sup>30</sup>

[Luther:] 'Even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.' Otherwise it would be but a buried treasure and a hidden light. But what profit is there in either? Yea, goodness does not only thereby become known to others, but we ourselves also become certain that we are honest, as St. Peter in 2 Pet. 1:10 says: 'Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure.' For where works do not follow a man cannot know whether his faith is right; yea, he may be certain that his faith is a dream, and not right as it should be. Thus Abraham...<sup>31</sup>

Tyndale resonates with Luther's idea that works can serve as a sign of true faith, but then spins the concept into works as certification of faith and assurance of salvation:

[Tyndale (Luther underlined):] ... such receiving into everlasting habitations is not to be understand [sic] that men shall do it ... so we meekly and lovingly do our duty; yea, it is a sign of strong faith and fervent love, if we do well to the evil, and study to draw them to Christ, in all that lieth in us. But

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<sup>30</sup> *Works* 1:60.

<sup>31</sup> John Lenker, trans., *Sermons of Martin Luther* (Grand Rapids: Baker, repr. 1989), 4:307<sup>13</sup> [hereafter abbreviated *Unjust Steward*]; WA 10<sup>III</sup>:287 -

'Last leuchten ewr liecht fur den leutten auff das sie ewr gute werck sehen und got preysen'. Sonst were es wie eyn verborgener schatz und verholene weyßheyt, waß sind die alle beyde nutz?

Ja damit wirt die frumkeyt nicht alleyn andern bekant, Bondern auch yhr selb gewiß, das sie recht schaffen sey, wie S. Peter. 2 Pet. 1. sagt 'Vleyssigt euch durch gutte werk ewr erwelung gewiß und fest tzu machen". Denn wo nicht werck folgen, kan der mensch nicht wissen, ob er recht glawbe, ja er ist gewiß, das seyn glawb eyn trawm und nicht recht. Szo wirt Abraham Gen. 22 ....

(I am grateful to professor William Ewald, of Concordia University, River Forest, for his assistance with the Weimar's German.) Compare also *The Mammon*, *Works* 1:61 and *Unjust Steward*, 308:14=WA 10<sup>III</sup>:287-88<sup>26ff</sup>.

the poor give us an occasion to exercise our faith; and the deeds make us feel our faith, and certify us, and make us sure that we are safe, and are escaped and translated from death unto life, and that we are delivered and redeemed from the captivity and bondage of Satan, and brought into the liberty of the sons of God, in that we feel lust and strength in our heart to work the will of God .... So that good works help our faith, and make us sure in our consciences, and make us feel the mercy of God. Notwithstanding, heaven, everlasting life, joy eternal, faith, the favour of God, the Spirit of God, lust and strength unto the will of God, are given us freely of the bounteous and plenteous riches of God, purchased by Christ, without our deservings, that no man should rejoice but in the Lord only.<sup>32</sup>

Once he departs from Luther's sermon for good, Tyndale's treatment of the parable of the wicked Mammon grows into a flourish of works-certification language. In a section not from Luther, Tyndale maintains that our works prove that we are sons of God, and show we have the Spirit of God:

'Ye shall be perfect therefore, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' That is to say, if that ye do nothing but that the world doth, and they which have the spirit of the world, whereby [how] shall ye know that ye are the sons of God, and beloved of God, more than the world? But and if ye counterfeit and follow God in well-doing, then no doubt it is a sign that the Spirit of God is in you, and also the favour of God, which is not in the world; and that ye are inheritors of all the promises of God, and elect unto the fellowship of the blood of Christ.<sup>33</sup>

According to Tyndale, not only do our works demonstrate that we are sons of God, but they serve as a sign that we are inheritors of the favour of God—a significant departure from Luther.

Tyndale, of course, denies that works justify us. But like Augustine and the early Luther, he tends to see justification as a disposition of righteousness which brings about good works:

Neither do our works justify us: for except we were justified by faith, which is our righteousness, and had the Spirit of God in us, to teach us, we could do no good work freely ....

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<sup>32</sup> *Works* 1: 67; compare *Unjust Steward*, 311:22=WA 10<sup>III</sup>:290<sup>22ff</sup> -

Auffs ander. Solchs auffnehmen yn die ewigen hutten ist nicht tzuverstehen, das die menschen thun werden, sondern sie werden ursach unnd tzeugen seyn unßers glawbens, an yhn geübt und beweyßet, umb wilchs willen gott uns ynn die ewigen hutten nympt. Denn solichs ist die weyße der schrift zu reden, wenn sie spricht 'die sunde verdampft', 'der glawbe macht selig', das ist sund ist ursach, das gott verdampft, unnd glawbe ist ursach, das er selig macht.

<sup>33</sup> *Works* 1:72.

Good works are called the fruits of the Spirit, Gal. v. for the Spirit worketh them in us; and sometime fruits of righteousness .... Before all works, therefore we must have a righteousness within the heart, the mother of all works, and from whence they spring.<sup>34</sup>

For Tyndale, justification consists of the bestowal of a heart of righteousness, given by faith, which grows into good works. Like Luther, he does speak of the Law of God showing what we are unable to do; yet he tends to point to the ontological change wrought by the Spirit:

... but that by the law we might see and know our horrible damnation and captivity under sin, and therefore should repent and come to Christ, and receive mercy, and the Spirit of God to loose us, strength[en] us, and to make us able to do God's will, which is the law.<sup>35</sup>

We are enslaved to sin, but faith receives the working of the Spirit. The Spirit brings ontological change, enabling the fulfilling of the law:

Faith and trust in Christ expelleth the wrath of God; and bringeth favour, the Spirit, power to do good, and everlasting life ... and until his Spirit hath loosed thine heart, thou canst not consent unto good works. All that is good in us, both will and works, cometh of the favour of God, through Christ, to whom be all the laud. Amen.<sup>36</sup>

Notice that the favour of God given through Christ is not the imputation of Christ's alien righteousness, as Melancthon came to describe it. The favour of God is the grace to will and do good works. Faith gives the power to fulfil the law:

The law killeth thy conscience, and giveth thee no lust to fulfil the law. Faith in Christ giveth lust and power to do the law. Now is it true, that he which doth the law is righteous; but that doth no man, save he that believeth and putteth his trust in Christ.<sup>37</sup>

Although Lutheran orthodoxy would speak of sanctification being Christ working in us as a result of the power of the gospel, Tyndale speaks in terms of justifying faith being the power to fulfil the law.

Like Augustine and the early Luther, *The Mammon* often speaks of salvation as a healing process whereby Christ begins his work in us, but takes us as just in anticipation of our full health:

A physician serveth but for sick men; and that for such sick men as feel their sicknesses, and mourn therefore, and long for health. Christ likewise serveth but for such sinners only as feel their sin, and that for such sinners that

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<sup>34</sup> *Works* 1:73-74.

<sup>35</sup> *Works* 1:81.

<sup>36</sup> *Works* 1:111.

<sup>37</sup> *Works* 1:115.

sorrow and mourn in their hearts for health. Health is power or strength to fulfil the law, or to keep the commandments. Now he that longeth for that health, that is to say, for to do the law of God, is blessed in Christ, and hath a promise that his lust shall be fulfilled, and that he shall be made whole.

This longing and consent of the heart unto the law of God is the working of the Spirit, which God hath poured into thine heart, in earnest that thou mightest be sure that God will fulfil all his promises that he hath made thee .... So long as thou seest thy sin and mournest, and consentest to the law, and longest (though thou be never so meek), yet the Spirit shall ... certify thine heart that God for his truth shall deliver thee and save thee ....<sup>38</sup>

In contrast with Lutheran orthodoxy, which strove to clearly distinguish justification (an act of God on behalf of the sinner) and sanctification (Christ at work in the justified), Tyndale describes justification as a healing process whereby Christ gives the “power and strength to fulfil the law” and promises to complete this process for the sinner’s salvation.

## ***II. Tyndale in mid-career: 1530-32***

Tyndale’s soteriological works of the early 1530s include his translation of the Pentateuch (1530); *The Practice of Prelates* (1530); *A Pathway unto Holy Scripture* (1531), which included the previous *The Cologne Fragment* (1525); *The Exposition of 1 John* (1531), which may have had a Lutheran model;<sup>39</sup> and *The Answer to More* (1531).

While some scholars read in these works a significant shift towards legalism, Carl Trueman holds that Tyndale’s theology remains essentially the same, but with a greater emphasis on works. In any case it is apparent that Tyndale’s organic justification emphasizes the ethical effects rather than the objective foundations of God’s saving work. Noteworthy for our present discussion is that these works are considerably **less** indebted to Luther. While at Wittenberg Tyndale seems to have resonated with Luther’s theology in development, including his 1522 writings, and then in his mid and mature years drove these ideas in a direction which would become fully legalistic. Tyndale was not influenced by the Melancthonian advances in forensic justification.

The organic justification metaphors continue in this period. Here is but one example from his prologue to the book of Exodus:

‘He gave them power to be the sons of God, in that they believed on his name’

And of that power they work; so that he which hath the Spirit of Christ is now no more a child: he neither learneth nor worketh now any longer for pain

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<sup>38</sup> *Works* 1:78-79.

<sup>39</sup> Rupp, *English Protestant Tradition*, 51.

of the rod ... but doth all things of his own corage [affections]; as Christ saith, John vii. 'He that believeth on me shall have rivers of living waters flowing out of his belly': that is, all good works and all gifts of grace spring out of him naturally, and by their own accord. Thou needest not to wrest good works out of him, as a man would wring verjuice out of crabs [crab apples]: nay, they flow naturally out of him, as springs out of rocks.<sup>40</sup>

Tyndale, here, takes two organic images drawn from scripture and employs them to demonstrate a natural, continuous connection between faith and works. Note again the absence of categories such as Law and Gospel, justification and sanctification, and especially the *simul iustus et peccator* of Lutheran theology. Tyndale describes one organic process and flow in God's saving work.

The sanative elements of his soteriology continue throughout the reformer's career and are illustrated in *The Exposition of 1 John*:

When a true preacher preacheth, the Spirit entereth the hearts of the elect, and maketh them feel the righteousness of the law of God, and by the law the poison of their corrupt nature; and thence leadeth them, through repentance, unto the mercy that is in Christ's blood; and as an ointment healeth the body, even so the Spirit, through confidence and trust in Christ's blood, healeth the soul, and maketh her love the law of God ....<sup>41</sup>

Standing on a post-Reformation summit, one might be tempted to view this passage as describing sanctification. For Tyndale, the healing process which follows the forgiveness and mercy of Christ, is part of one continuous process of salvation, begun by faith, but growing into love for the Law. Absent is the distinction that our justification takes place solely *coram Deo*, by God declaring the all-at-once full righteousness of Christ; and **then** that this declaration of perfection takes on new life in area of sanctification.

This sanative language also arises in his disputation with Thomas More. Tyndale emphasizes that we are justified by the healing process which results in actual righteousness, and not by the imputation of Christ's righteousness which declares us right before God. The Law of God shows us what we are unable to do and pushes us to despair:

But God, which hath begun to cure me, and hath laid that corosy [corrosive] unto my sores, goeth forth in his cure, and setteth his son Jesus before me ... and sayeth to me ... 'for his sake I will forgive thee all that that thou hast done against this good law, and I will heal thy flesh, and teach thee to keep this law, if thou learn. And I will bear with thee, and take all a worth [in good part] that thou doest, till thou canst do better; and in the mean season, not withstanding thy weakness, I will yet love thee no less than I do the angels in

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<sup>40</sup> *Works* 1:417.

<sup>41</sup> *Works* 2:183-84.

heaven, so thou wilt be diligent to learn. And I will assist thee, and keep thee  
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Note also the proleptic language, here: God will take “all a worth” our present efforts, despite their weakness; “that little we have is taken a worth [as of worth], and accepted till more come.”<sup>43</sup>

Tyndale never completely embraces the declarative aspects of justification and in *The Answer to More* points to a *facitive* righteousness reminiscent of the Augustinianism of the early Luther:

Now then, to love the law of God, and to consent thereto, and to have it written in thine heart, and to profess it, so that thou art ready of thine own accord to do it and without compulsion, is to be righteous: that I grant, and that love may be called righteousness before God, *passive*, and the life and quickness of the soul, *passive*. And so far forth as a man loveth the law of God, so far forth he is righteous .... And that thing which maketh a man love the law of God, doth make a man righteous, and justifieth him effectively and actually; and maketh him alive, as a workman and cause efficient .... Even so the preaching of faith doth work love in our souls, and make them alive, and draw our hearts to God.<sup>44</sup>

Passive righteousness is not the alien righteousness of Christ received by faith, but a passive receiving of love of the law of God. Similarly, in *The Exposition of 1 John* Tyndale comments concerning the disposition towards loving which we receive by faith and which makes us right before God:

Love is the instrument wherewith faith maketh us God’s sons, and fashioneth us like the image of God, and certifieth us that we so are.<sup>45</sup>

### ***III. Tyndale’s mature theology, 1533-36***

Works of the “mature” Tyndale include his *Exposition upon the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Chapters of Matthew* (1533) [hereafter abbreviated *Exposition of Matthew*], based on a Lutheran original; an edition of the New Testament (1534), including prefaces and marginal notes; a second edition of the Pentateuch (1534), with the prologue revised and the translation of Genesis slightly altered; a commentary upon the will of William Tracy, found among Tyndale’s papers after his 1536 execution; and *A Brief Declaration of the Sacraments*, published posthumously.

In these works Tyndale expands his emphasis on the transformation of man’s moral being—his ethical imperatives—into a form of covenant

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<sup>42</sup> *Works* 3:195.

<sup>43</sup> *Works* 3:206.

<sup>44</sup> *Works* 3:205.

<sup>45</sup> *Works* 2:200.

theology. Present in part earlier, this covenant theology comes to dominate his soteriology of the mid 1530s.<sup>46</sup> At times Tyndale's mature writings become rather legalistic, giving the impression that God regards the believer as righteous so long as he strives to fulfil the law. For example, he writes in his *Prologue to Matthew* (1534):

The general covenant, wherein all other are comprehended and included, is this: If we meek ourselves to God, to keep all his laws, after the example of Christ, then God hath bound himself unto us, to keep and make good all the mercies promised in Christ throughout all the scripture.<sup>47</sup>

Tyndale further elaborates the conditional aspects of this covenant in his *Exposition of Matthew* (1533):

... all the good promises which are made us throughout all the scripture, for Christ's sake, for his love, his passion or suffering, his blood-shedding or death, are all made us on this condition and covenant on our party [part], that we henceforth love the law of God, to walk therein, and to do it, and fashion our lives thereafter ....<sup>48</sup>

Tyndale expressed the same covenant theology in his *Exposition of Tracy's Testament* (1536):

'... whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved': by which words he declareth evidently, that he meaneth that faith that is in the promise made upon the appointment between God and us, that we should keep his law to the uttermost of our power; that is, he that believeth in Christ for the remission of sin, and is baptized to do the will of Christ, and to keep his law of love, and to mortify the flesh, that man shall be saved ....<sup>49</sup>

This answer begged a question from Thomas More, and it might from us as well: if justification is given on the promise that God will save us if we keep our part of the covenant, how can it be said that we are justified by faith alone? Tyndale responds that on the one hand justification is the full forgiveness of sins, but it is also the state of grace which gives power for righteousness:

[thou wilt say] 'if I must profess the law, and work; *ergo*, faith alone saveth me not.' ... Faith justifieth thee; that is, bringeth remission of all sins, and setteth thee in the state of grace before all works, and getteth thee power to work before thou couldst work. But if thou wilt not go back again, but

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<sup>46</sup> For a broader discussion of Tyndale's covenant theology, see Trueman, *Luther's Legacy*, 109-19.

<sup>47</sup> *Works* 1:470.

<sup>48</sup> *Works* 2:6.

<sup>49</sup> *Works* 3:276.

continue in grace, and come to that salvation and glorious resurrection of Christ, thou must work and join works to thy faith, in will and deed too ....<sup>50</sup>

Although Tyndale enthusiastically preached justification by faith,<sup>51</sup> it is evident that his understanding of the **nature** of justification, especially in his later writings, included the Augustinian idea of the gift of the “power to work”, making Tyndale’s soteriology as a whole impossible to reconcile with the mature Luther.

## CONCLUSION

One of the difficulties in contrasting Tyndale with Luther is that we need to know **which** Luther influenced Tyndale. Much of Tyndale’s soteriology is reminiscent of the early Luther. My suggestion is that Tyndale’s natural tendency to focus on the **effects** of faith in the ethical life resonated with Luther’s transitional theology during the early to mid 1520s; and that once he left Wittenberg, Tyndale missed exposure to Melanchthon’s forensic insights. Tyndale’s tendencies then grew into a more pronounced legalism during the 1530s. Perhaps we could say that Tyndale learned enough Luther to get himself into trouble, but not enough Melanchthon to get him out again. If Luther asked, “Where can I find a gracious God?”, Tyndale’s question remained, “How can a gracious God change my life?”—anticipating portions of contemporary evangelicalism.

And what of the Lutheran church at Kentish Town, London? Should Luther-Tyndale change its name? Considering that Tyndale compromised the two most distinctive elements of Lutheran theology—the real presence and justification—one might argue that the “Tyndale” half should be dropped. And yet the name “Tyndale” more than anything else represents a love for God’s Word in the hearts and minds and lives of His people. Whilst in fear for his life during his continental exile and amid his pleas for a vernacular Bible for the English people, Tyndale offered the following to Henry VIII:

If it would stand with the King’s most gracious pleasure to grant only a bare text of the Scripture to be put forth among his people ... I shall immediately make faithful promise never to write more, nor abide two days in these parts after the same; but immediately to repair into his realm [England], and there most humbly submit myself at the feet of his Royal Majesty, offering my body to suffer what pain and torture, yea, what death his grace will, so this be

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<sup>50</sup> *Works* 3:276.

<sup>51</sup> See his earlier comments on Tracy’s testament: “And that this trust and confidence in the mercy of God is through Jesus Christ, is the second article of our creed, confirmed and testified throughout all scripture.” *Works* 3:274.

obtained. And till that time, I will abide the asperity of all chances, whatsoever shall come, and endure my life in as many pains as it is able to bear and suffer.<sup>52</sup>

His words would prove prophetic. In 1536 Tyndale was betrayed by a friend and executed by strangulation and burning. It is one of history's pleasant ironies that scarcely a year later Henry VIII authorized a vernacular Bible heavily dependent on Tyndale's work, which would be required in every parish of the realm. It is this work of bringing the Scriptures into the hands of the people which the name "Tyndale" represents. It is for this endeavour he gave his life, and although it may not be appropriate to call Tyndale a Lutheran, "Luther-Tyndale" still adds honour to the German reformer's name in Kentish Town.

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<sup>52</sup> Mozley, *William Tyndale*, 198.

## ROBERT BARNES AND EARLY ENGLISH LUTHERANISM, 1517-1540<sup>1</sup>

*Korey D. Maas*

Anyone first being introduced to Robert Barnes, unless they have been thoroughly desensitized by television and film, will be struck by the fact that his life—and especially its tragic end—was a highly dramatic affair. It includes, to offer just a sound bite: a rapid rise from obscurity to prominence, frequent travel in disguise, more than one arrest and several narrow escapes, one feigned suicide, and ultimately, as the dramatic climax, death by being burned at the stake. If it is not necessarily a Hollywood action film, it could at least be a swashbuckling novel by Alexander Dumas, something in the vein of *The Three Musketeers* or *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Barnes was well known in the courts of Kings Henry VIII of England and Christian III of Denmark. He was equally well known in those of the German princes John Frederick, Elector of Saxony, and Philip, Landgrave of Hesse. Barnes included Martin Luther, Luther's own pastor John Bugenhagen, and his fellow professor Philip Melanchthon—all architects of the Reformation in Germany—among his closest friends. Among his patrons he counted Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Thomas Cromwell, minister to the King, the two men we can undoubtedly consider the masterminds behind the English Reformation. And among lesser known but nonetheless influential men of the age, Miles Coverdale, the first to offer a complete sixteenth-century English translation of the Bible, is worth mentioning as having been a student of Robert Barnes in the Augustinian friary that once stood in Cambridge.

Despite these credentials, or even in part because of them, Robert Barnes has been almost all but forgotten. The reason, I will suggest, is that Barnes was one of what is still a very rare breed: an English Lutheran. Lutheranism world-wide remains by and large a German and Scandinavian commodity. So it is that even in countries like the United States, Canada, or Australia, each home to a sizeable number of English-speaking Lutherans, little attention has been given by Lutherans to the country of England. And conversely, England, which decided even in the sixteenth century that Lutheranism was not a viable option as the national faith, gave little more consideration to those Lutherans who had called England their home. The

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<sup>1</sup>Slightly revised versions of this paper were originally presented to the Oxford and Cambridge University Lutheran Societies, and to a meeting of the pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in England.

result is that Barnes, who for much of his life in England and on the Continent seemed to straddle the English Channel, was eventually left by churches on both sides to sink to its bottom.

What I would like to do here is offer some small attempt at a resuscitation. I will not attempt to argue any particularly profound thesis about Barnes's importance for the Reformation. Barnes was not, regardless of the connections I have already mentioned, and as much as many modern English-speaking Lutherans might like him to be, a major player in the Reformation. But this is not to say that he is not an interesting and in some ways a unique individual. Illustrating this will perhaps be enough to encourage further and continued interest in both Robert Barnes and early English Lutheranism. To do so, though, we will first have to put Barnes into context by sketching a shamefully brief history of the ecclesiastical scene in early sixteenth-century England.

We can perhaps begin where many histories of the Reformation begin, with Luther's famous posting of his ninety-five theses. The date, of course, was 31 October 1517. And though Luther posted his theses on a church door in Germany, less than four weeks later the controversial opinions there outlined were being read and discussed across the channel in England. In the few years following, it was quite possible to see Luther not necessarily as a theological reformer attempting to undermine the tradition and authority of the institutional church in which he himself was raised. Rather, many were reading Luther as merely another proponent of the intellectual movement known as humanism, which found fault with what it considered the "nit-picking" and "hair-splitting" of so much medieval theology. The humanists, though, were not primarily critical of the conclusions reached by medieval theologians, but most often simply of the methods by which those conclusions were reached. So while it is true that the humanists could very often be critical of the church and some of her more dubious claims and practices, they were early on and almost to a man sincere supporters of the church's official theology. And many thought Luther could be included in this camp. Thus some could even claim that Luther agreed in everything with Erasmus (far and away the most prominent humanist), saying that "the only difference [is] that what Erasmus merely hints at, Luther teaches openly".<sup>2</sup>

That opinion, however, had soon to be abandoned by those who continued to read Luther's growing number of publications. The year 1520 is in many ways decisive for the turning point in popular opinion. In that year Luther published three treatises which together offered a fairly thorough summary of his theological thinking. It was one of these in particular, his

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<sup>2</sup>The remark is that of Martin Bucer. See Erika Rummel, *The Confessionalization of Humanism in Germany* (Oxford, 2000), 23.

*Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, which pointed up the radical differences between Luther's thought and that of received tradition. This *Babylonian Captivity* was a direct attack on the sacramental system of the church of Rome, in many ways the heart and soul of the church. It is here that Luther dismissed the great majority of Roman sacraments as unbiblical inventions of the medieval church, and in doing so placed himself in a position outside of and against that church.

What exactly does this all have to do with England, much less with Robert Barnes? England first. With Luther's publication of the *Babylonian Captivity*, conservative theologians throughout Christendom took up their pens to refute what they saw as outright and dangerous heresy. And the theologians of England were no exception. What was exceptional on this island is that the refutations of Luther were not solely the work of theologians. Strangely, the first systematic English rebuttal of Luther's *Babylonian Captivity* was penned by a most unexpected author, King Henry VIII himself. Henry, despite the fact that he is most often remembered as the man who eventually removed England from obedience to the Roman church and had himself proclaimed Supreme Head of the church in England, was, in the early 1520s, one of Rome's most loyal supporters. It was in demonstration of this loyalty that he took it upon himself to write what he called an *Assertion of the Seven Sacraments*, condemning Luther's dismissal of the majority of these. And so impressive was Henry's work considered by those in high places, that, in the first of many ironies of the English Reformation, he was rewarded with the title Defender of the Faith.<sup>3</sup>

This is where things stood in the England of the early 1520s. The King was praised as defender of orthodoxy; Luther was condemned as dangerous heretic; and any who showed signs, however faint, of favouring Luther's opinions would of course fall under the same condemnation. Enter Robert Barnes.<sup>4</sup> Barnes, like Luther himself, was a friar of the Augustinian order. He had been born in the market town of Bishop's Lynn (now King's Lynn), in Norfolk, in the year 1495, and while he was still quite young—by best estimates when he was only ten or eleven—he was sent from his hometown to the Augustinian house in Cambridge. The fact that there was an Augustinian house in Bishop's Lynn itself suggests that it was not simply the monastic life which his parents intended for him. By sending him to

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<sup>3</sup>Lest there be any confusion, especially in the light of Prince Charles's fairly recent intimations that English sovereigns should be considered defenders of "faith", in an inclusive and generic sense, it should be stressed that this title was granted by the Roman pope, and referred strictly to the Roman Catholic faith.

<sup>4</sup>The following biographical details can be found in most works on Barnes. Still the best overview of his life is that by James P. Lusardi, "The Career of Robert Barnes", in *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, 15 vols, ed. C. H. Miller, et al. (New Haven, 1963-1997), 8:1365-1415.

Cambridge it seems they hoped he would also benefit from the academic environment of the university. And by all accounts he did. After initial studies at Cambridge he was sent by his order to study overseas: in fact, to the very university at which the great humanist Erasmus was then resident, Louvain. He returned to Cambridge between the years 1521 and 1523, was in 1523 granted the degree of Doctor of Divinity, and very quickly thereafter elevated to the position of prior in his Augustinian house. Although there is no sure evidence that Barnes in fact studied with Erasmus, it is clear upon his return to Cambridge that he had been very much influenced by the humanism represented by men like Erasmus. He revised the curriculum for studies in the Augustinian house, replacing an earlier medieval emphasis on logic with a notably classical and humanist emphasis on rhetoric.<sup>5</sup> And, very much like other prominent humanists, he could not resist the occasional attack on what seemed an excessive worldliness among the clergy of his day.

It was this that led Barnes into his first confrontation with ecclesiastical authority. By 1525, despite the position of the King and most influential English churchmen, Luther's works were becoming increasingly available, especially in Cambridge, where they were secretly read and discussed. Despite the incredibly sparse information available, most students of the English Reformation, especially those with ties to Cambridge, are familiar with the White Horse Inn. There Luther's ideas were discussed with some frequency, and apparently with sympathy; the sixteenth-century historian John Foxe tells us that the Inn was soon nick-named "Germany".<sup>6</sup> It is not altogether clear how many or which people spent their evenings in the White Horse, but it is clear that Barnes was at this time familiar with many of those who later became prominent spokesmen, and eventually martyrs, for English Protestantism. Thomas Bilney and Hugh Latimer are two particularly important names, as both were involved in the affair leading to Barnes's first arrest and imprisonment. Bilney is especially important, as John Foxe, the source for much early information about Robert Barnes, states that it was Bilney who was ultimately responsible for Barnes's conversion to Protestantism.<sup>7</sup> This is probably in some sense true—Bilney was notoriously persuasive—but perhaps more interesting for the present examination is the fact that John Bale, a Cambridge student who knew Barnes at the time, later says bluntly that Barnes was converted through the reading of Luther's works.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments of John Foxe* [hereinafter cited as *A&M*], 8 vols, ed. J. Pratt (London, 1877), 5:415.

<sup>6</sup>*A&M* 5:415.

<sup>7</sup>*A&M* 4:620.

<sup>8</sup>John Bale, *Scriptorum Illustrium maioris Brytanniae ... Catalogus* (Basle, 1557), 667.

Whatever finally pushed Barnes over the thin line separating orthodox humanists from heretical Protestants, what finally brought him to the attention of conservative authorities was a sermon of Christmas Eve 1525. Barnes was not a cloistered monk, but a friar, which means he was free (and even expected) to preach in pulpits outside of his Augustinian house. But as prior of the house, and as one with teaching responsibilities, it seems that this was something he rarely did before 1525. But on Christmas Eve of that year, Robert Barnes and Hugh Latimer exchanged pulpits. Latimer was to preach in the friary, while Barnes would preach in the nearby church of St Edward's. Shortly after he descended the pulpit, Barnes was censured; in the next few days he was examined by university authorities on three separate occasions (two of which were broken up by an angry mob of students, who believed Barnes was being mistreated); five weeks later he was officially tried in London by a panel of bishops; and in the next week he began the first of several imprisonments. Something in his sermon had clearly hit a nerve.

There are a number of sources, which, when read together, give us a fairly accurate picture of the content of Barnes's sermon.<sup>9</sup> The picture that emerges is undoubtedly one of a fiery preacher, both critical and humorous, quick with a pun or an intentional verbal slip. Taking deadly aim at the highest ecclesiastical official in England, Cardinal Wolsey, Barnes's reference to certain "carnal sins" consciously slipped out as "cardinal sins". Likewise, his mention of the Cardinal's red gloves was made with an unmistakable allusion to their being the colour of blood. Asides like this, though depicting Barnes's sense of humour, also illustrate that he was not altogether prudent considering the times. He went on in his sermon to question the importance of holy days and to inveigh against ecclesiastical wealth, clerical pride, and rampant pluralism; he criticized the church's trafficking in indulgences and dispensations; he questioned the benefit of mumbled masses which no one could understand; and he neglected prayers to the virgin Mary and for souls in purgatory.

None of this, it should be noted, was as radical as it might sound, however much it appears typically Protestant in hindsight. Much of it was common fare, even in the late fifteenth-century preaching of orthodox sons of the Roman church. What set Barnes apart from the orthodox preachers of the late fifteenth century was the simple but deciding factor of Luther. By this it should not be understood that Barnes was simply regurgitating Luther; only that to suspicious hearers it **sounded** like he was. And this is not

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<sup>9</sup>The fullest accounts, on which this paragraph is based, are found in Barnes's own writings, *A Supplicatyon made by Robert Barnes doctoure in divinitie unto the most excellent and redoubted prince kinge henry the eyght* (n.p., n.d. [Antwerp, 1531]), and its later revision, *A supplicacion unto the most gracyous prynce H. the viij.* (London, 1534).

surprising. The Luther controversy was in full flower. His works and opinions had been condemned in England. Even as Barnes was preaching, Cardinal Wolsey had been putting into effect plans for a massive search for heretical books to be confiscated and publicly burned.<sup>10</sup> It was an unhappy coincidence for Barnes that everyone was particularly keen to uncover Lutheran ideas at just the moment he stepped into the pulpit. Thus it was that on Sunday, 11 February 1526, when Barnes did public penance for his indiscretion, Bishop John Fisher preached over him a sermon not only against Barnes, but also “against Luther and Lutherans”.<sup>11</sup> Whether or not Barnes could at that time be accused of Lutheranism in any strict sense is much debated, but from that time forward he would become continually and consistently associated with the German heresy.

Following his trial Barnes was committed to the Fleet Prison in London. He remained there for approximately six months, at which time he was transferred to the more comfortable house of the Augustinian friars in London. There he remained a prisoner, though what Foxe calls a “free prisoner”.<sup>12</sup> He was not confined to a cell, and he was allowed to receive visitors. It was a privilege he soon abused by making his imprisonment an opportunity to distribute what was considered heretical literature, namely English translations of the New Testament with prefaces to each book written by Luther himself.<sup>13</sup> When he was found out he was again transferred, and, as he would soon learn, meant to be burned. Hardly an appealing prospect, so it was at this point, late in the year 1528, that Barnes cleverly faked the suicide alluded to earlier. He feigned desperation, then left a note on his desk explaining that he had gone to drown himself. The note also explained that, when his body was recovered, an additional note would be found on it. It was a convincing enough ruse that while the authorities spent seven whole days dragging the river, Barnes had plenty of time to make his way back to London and board a ship for the continent. Foxe’s account of Barnes’s life concludes this portion with the flourish: “and so to Luther”.<sup>14</sup> And he is quite right. The next time Barnes appears on the radar, in the summer of 1530, he is settled in Wittenberg, living with Luther’s pastor, and writing the first of a series of books outlining and defending a decidedly Protestant theology. At this point we need not go into any detail concerning the content of these books, but will return to consider two particularly important aspects of his theology below. For the present we need

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<sup>10</sup>*Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII* [hereinafter cited as *LP*], 23 vols, ed. J.S. Brewer et al. (London 1862-1932), 4:995.

<sup>11</sup>*LP* 4:995. Cf. Barnes, *A supplicacion* (1534), sig. 12v.

<sup>12</sup>*A&M* 5:419.

<sup>13</sup>See *LP* 4/2:4218.

<sup>14</sup>*A&M* 5:419.

to leave Barnes in Wittenberg and briefly return to England and refocus on the broader picture.

If one thing most people know about Henry VIII is that he severed his nation from the Roman church, the other bit of information almost everyone knows is that he entered into a number of famously troublesome marriages. And the ecclesiastical turmoil was not at all unrelated to the marital difficulties. Once again shamefully oversimplifying, some of the more important details are these. Henry's first wife was Catherine of Aragon. Among other problems he found with her, Catherine had not given Henry a son, and therefore had provided no undisputed heir to the throne of England. Disputed heirs—whether illegitimate or female—everyone knew could lead to bloody civil war. And England had had enough of that recently. If Catherine could give birth to no heir, Henry would have to remarry a wife who could. This would have been rather uncomplicated if not for two facts. The first is that to remarry meant having to annul his marriage to Catherine, and this necessitated papal permission. The second is that Catherine was connected to important and influential people, the sort of people who did not take kindly to the prospect of her being cast aside. The most important and influential of these people was her nephew Charles, who just happened to be Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. The problem here is that the Pope, who needed imperial support to thwart the growth of Protestantism in the empire, would not be persuaded to grant an annulment that might open a rift between himself and the Emperor. Henry would have to turn elsewhere to find legitimization for what he was determined to do in any case. If the papacy was not co-operative, perhaps those who rejected the papacy would be. And so he began to solicit opinions from prominent Protestant theologians, one of whom was the man he had so violently opposed ten years earlier: Martin Luther. But this was no straightforward matter either. England had no official ties with Germany and no resident ambassadors at the Saxon court. What she did have, Henry found out, was an Englishman, and a doctor of theology at that, who was living in Wittenberg and on friendly terms with both Luther and the German princes.

In 1531 an English messenger arrived in Germany to seek out Robert Barnes and to persuade Barnes to solicit Luther's opinion (and, of course, to influence it) on Henry's right to annul one marriage and enter another.<sup>15</sup> Though he was unable—even over the course of the next five years—to convince Luther himself to adopt Henry's views on marriage, Barnes did have friends on the continent who were more agreeable, and the Protestant cities of Hamburg and Lübeck were soon persuaded by the King's reasoning.

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<sup>15</sup>C. S. Anderson, "The Person and Position of Dr. Robert Barnes, 1495-1540" (Unpublished Th.D. Thesis, Union Theological Seminary, 1962), 53; E. Doernberg, *Henry VIII and Luther: An Account of their Personal Relations* (London, 1961), 85.

It also happened that, being Protestant, they had their own difficulties with both Pope and Emperor, and therefore wondered if they and England might be of some mutual benefit to one another. To discuss the terms of a possible alliance, they dispatched an embassy to London in 1534. Among the ambassadors from Hamburg was, fortuitously as it would turn out, Robert Barnes.<sup>16</sup>

Barnes remained in England with this delegation into the next year, meeting almost daily with prominent English bishops as terms of a possible alliance were discussed. The negotiations eventually broke off without success, in part because the Lutheran delegates insisted that any alliance be built upon specifically theological agreement. Particularly troublesome to traditionalist English bishops were an insistence upon the doctrine of justification by faith alone and questions regarding sacramental theology, two points to which we will have to return in a short while. Despite the failure of these negotiations, Barnes seems at least to have proved his worth as an effective middle-man for any future Anglo-Lutheran politics. Even while the doctrinal conversations were still taking place, Henry asked Barnes to stand ready for a mission to Denmark as his own ambassador to the Danish King. This request marks the beginning of a sea change in Barnes's fortunes. No longer considered a renegade friar or a lapsed heretic, from 1535 to 1540 he was an employee of the English crown.

There is a great deal of available information concerning Barnes's activities in the next few years. Most of it concerns the more mundane matters of international diplomacy, but a few highlights are worthy of mention. In 1535 he returned to Wittenberg, this time with letters of commendation that designate him as the King's personal chaplain.<sup>17</sup> At the end of the year he, Melanchthon, and others drew up a series of articles known as the "Christmas Articles", which outlined German conditions for England's entrance into the League of Smalcald, an alliance of Lutheran states preparing for the possibility of armed conflict with the Emperor.<sup>18</sup> Early in the next year Barnes, Luther, Melanchthon, and others also formulated what are now called the "Wittenberg Articles".<sup>19</sup> In contrast to the more political considerations of the Christmas Articles, these were a series of specifically doctrinal statements upon which, it was hoped, England and the Lutheran states could reach agreement. In 1538 Barnes is again engaged in theological negotiations between England and the Lutherans, this

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<sup>16</sup>LP 7:871; 7:873; 7:874; 7:957; 7:1064; 8:121.

<sup>17</sup>*Ecclesiastical Memorials Relating Chiefly to Religion and the Reformation of it under King Henry VIII*, 3 vols, ed. J. Strype (London, 1721), 1/1:357.

<sup>18</sup>For the articles in translation see LP 9:1016.

<sup>19</sup>*Documents of the English Reformation* [hereinafter cited as *Documents*], ed. G. Bray (Cambridge, 1994), 118-61.

time in London. The result of this meeting was a document referred to as the “Thirteen Articles”, another theological statement of the points on which both parties could agree.<sup>20</sup> It should be noted that none of these series of articles was ever in any way accepted as authoritative in England. Nor, contrary to what one sometimes reads, were any of them a significant influence on the formulation of English confessions produced in the later reigns of Edward and Elizabeth. They are here mentioned only to point up the fact that Barnes was, for a few years, at the very centre of efforts to bring England officially into the Lutheran camp.

If he was ultimately unsuccessful in this regard, he did at the same time enjoy some considerable success on a more local level. In addition to his diplomatic responsibilities, Barnes was also a frequent and persuasive preacher when his duties allowed him to remain in England. He was well regarded by the laity, preaching funeral sermons for several prominent Londoners.<sup>21</sup> Englishmen wrote to friends on the continent that “the word is powerfully preached by an individual named Barnes”.<sup>22</sup> And Hugh Latimer, perhaps the greatest Protestant preacher of the day, regularly praised Barnes’s homiletical abilities, once noting matter-of-factly that “he is alone in handling a piece of scripture, and in setting forth of Christ he hath no fellow”.<sup>23</sup> This opinion is even confirmed by those who were less favourable to Barnes. On several occasions supporters of the old faith condemned his preaching precisely because it was so effective. He was briefly imprisoned again after a 1536 sermon.<sup>24</sup> Stephen Gardiner later warned that if the King continued to allow Barnes to preach then the whole nation would be lost to Protestantism.<sup>25</sup> And at one point an observer even noted in unpleasant detail that the Bishop of London, in an attempt to avoid answering one of Barnes’s more pointed sermons, was feigning sickness by gorging himself on laxatives.<sup>26</sup> Keeping this in mind, and remembering that it was his preaching which first brought him into trouble in 1525, it will not be surprising to learn that it was yet another sermon which eventually reversed the good fortune he had for a few years enjoyed.

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<sup>20</sup>*Documents*, 184-221.

<sup>21</sup>Public Record Office (London), PCC, Prob. 11/27, fos 32, 93ff., and 232ff. Also see *LP* 15:306.

<sup>22</sup>*Original Letters Relative to the English Reformation*, 2 vols, ed. H. Robinson (Parker Society, 1846-47), 2:627.

<sup>23</sup>Hugh Latimer, *Sermons and Remains of Hugh Latimer*, ed. G. E. Corrie (Parker Society, 1845), 389.

<sup>24</sup>*LP* 11:1097.

<sup>25</sup>See the anonymous *Chronicle of King Henry VIII of England*, ed./tr. M.A.S. Hume (London, 1889), 194.

<sup>26</sup>*LP* 11:1355.

Barnes, through his association with Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, was scheduled to preach on the first Sunday in Lent, 1540, from the most influential pulpit in England: Paul's Cross in London. But Stephen Gardiner, the man who had warned against Barnes's preaching, managed to have Barnes ousted and himself placed in the pulpit instead. From there he got right to the heart of matters by denouncing the central Protestant doctrine of justification by grace through faith alone. If Barnes had some cause to be irritated at being replaced, he became all the more infuriated by the content of his replacement's sermon. And though he had been bumped from preaching on the first Lenten Sunday, he had his turn two weeks later when he preached from the same pulpit. At that point he decided against preaching on the assigned text, and instead took up the same text on which Gardiner had earlier preached. As he warmed to the subject and finally culminated his refutation of Gardiner—who himself happened to be present that day—Barnes pulled off a glove, threw it down in challenge, and announced that he would defend his position even to death.<sup>27</sup> The gesture was rash, but the announcement was prophetic. If Barnes had failed to read the times in 1525, when his temper led him to prison for the first time, he had even more radically misjudged the times in 1540.

Seven months earlier, during one of Barnes's absences from the country, the Act of Six Articles was passed in parliament and came into force.<sup>28</sup> Promulgated for the purpose of putting an end to the sort of religious disagreement displayed by Gardiner and Barnes, the Act was a brief statement of official English dogma on certain disputed points of theology. It also announced the penalties for preaching contrary to the doctrines there put forward. The most severe penalty for doing so was death itself. Barnes knew this. He also knew that, in spite of any previous indications that his King favoured Protestant doctrine, the Six Articles were an incredibly explicit denunciation of this theology. As such, they further indicated that men like Gardiner, defenders of traditional Roman doctrine, were again in the King's favour. It thus took only a complaint from Gardiner to the King to set in motion the events leading to Barnes's downfall. He was forced to retract the opinions he had preached against Gardiner. But the venue for doing so was a public one, and there Barnes's formal (and obviously insincere) retraction was quickly followed by another sermon that rehearsed his true views. His hearers were scandalised, and he was almost immediately escorted to the Tower of London.<sup>29</sup> He remained there for four months, never being tried

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<sup>27</sup>The episode is recounted in several contemporary letters and chronicles, but the fullest account is that provided by Gardiner himself in *The Letters of Stephen Gardiner*, ed. J. A. Muller (Cambridge, 1933), 168ff.

<sup>28</sup>The articles are reproduced in *Documents*, 222-32.

<sup>29</sup>See *LP* 15:485.

and never having formal charges brought against him. Nevertheless, on 30 July 1540, with no further explanation, he and two other Protestant preachers were, on orders of the King, removed from the Tower and burned at the stake. In a strange twist of fate, three Roman Catholic prisoners, on the very same day, also met their death at the King's orders.

These six deaths—three Catholic and three Protestant—highlight like nothing else the ambiguities and contradictions of Henry VIII and his reformation of the English church. He can hardly be considered Catholic, since he denounced the papacy and executed its supporters as traitors. But he also systematically persecuted Zwinglians and Anabaptists, so he certainly cannot be considered one of those brands of Protestantism. He disagreed with the tenets of Calvinism and, despite years of negotiation, he consistently refused to be allied with those of a Lutheran confession. It is probably not being too blunt to state that Henry never knew exactly where he stood theologically. Nor is it saying too much to state that his subjects never knew where he stood. The safest thing any of them could do was to remain flexible, speak vaguely, and be willing to change their opinions as those of their King changed. This is precisely what Barnes had failed to do. He unashamedly professed his beliefs, and then consistently maintained them even in the face of opposition. Before closing, then, it will be worth briefly attempting to define Barnes's faith more exactly.

I will not take the time to systematically spell out his stance on every conceivable doctrinal point. What I will instead attempt, by an admittedly oversimplified process of elimination, is to offer some evidence in support of the previously stated conviction that Barnes was a convinced proponent of Lutheranism. In many ways this opinion is not a novel one. But it is worth pursuing for at least two reasons. The first is that Lutheranism in any narrow sense was quite rare in sixteenth-century England; if Barnes did indeed support such a confession then it is definitely worth noting. The second reason, not unrelated to the first, is that some in the past half-century have attempted to undermine claims that Barnes was or remained a Lutheran.<sup>30</sup>

Any attempt to portray Barnes as a Lutheran must provide evidence first and foremost of his adherence to that doctrine standing at the centre of Lutheran theology: justification *sola fide*, by faith alone. And anyone picking up Barnes's first publication, his 1530 work titled *Sentences Collected from the Doctors*, will immediately be faced with the evidence of

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<sup>30</sup>Most notably, W. A. Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants, 1520-1535* (New Haven, 1964). More recently, see also R. W. Whittall, "Cambridge Preachers: Robert Barnes's Advent Sermon", in *Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord: Essays in Honor of Glen Zweck on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Houston, 2000), 235-46.

its opening proposition: “Faith alone justifies”.<sup>31</sup> Those three words fairly spell out the position he defended in this work. Further propositions also offer support for the necessity of justification by faith alone. These include, for example, his insistence that “The law of God cannot be kept by our ability” and that “By its own strength free will can only sin”. Or, in other words, since man is powerless to effect his own justification through the keeping of the Law, salvation must be a matter of grace alone, received by faith alone. The same is echoed in his next publication, his 1531 *Supplication unto Henry VIII*, where the first thesis he defends is that “Alonlye faith iustifyeth before god”.<sup>32</sup> And once again this is supported by the further thesis that free will after the fall of Adam can do nothing but sin.

If things are clear to this point, it is here that they may get muddled. In 1534 Barnes republished his *Supplication*, but with some drastic changes. Several theses were omitted, a new one added, and another entirely rewritten. Though the article on free will remained unchanged, that on justification did see some minor modifications. William Clebsch has argued that these changes distance Barnes from a Lutheran stance on justification by faith alone and move him toward legalism.<sup>33</sup> His claim is based largely on the fact that in 1531 Barnes, like Luther, felt that the book of James, with its emphasis on good works, was not truly biblical. But he goes on to note that by 1534 Barnes was willing to allow James a place in the canon of Scripture, and then assumes that this indicates a corresponding emphasis on good works rather than on faith alone.

Carl Trueman has done an excellent job of refuting this argument,<sup>34</sup> but some additional points might also be raised. The first, ignored by both Clebsch and Trueman, is simply that by the mid-1530s Luther himself appeared willing to regard James as canonical;<sup>35</sup> so any change in Barnes’s view is not necessarily a step away from Luther, but may be read as a step

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<sup>31</sup>*Sententiae ex doctoribus collectae, quas papistae valde impudenter hodie damnant* (Wittenberg, 1530), was written under Barnes’s continental pseudonym, Antonius Anglus. The propositions quoted in this paragraph are found in its table of contents as the titles to articles 1, 3, and 4. For an entire list of the articles addressed in the *Sentences* see N. S. Tjernagel, *The Reformation Essays of Dr. Robert Barnes* (London, 1963), 95.

<sup>32</sup>Barnes, *A Supplicatyon* (1531), fo. 1v.

<sup>33</sup>Clebsch, 59-60, 66, 168.

<sup>34</sup>Carl R. Trueman, *Luther’s Legacy: Salvation and English Reformers, 1525-1556* (Oxford 1994), 156-97.

<sup>35</sup>Changes are evident both in his general New Testament preface and the preface to James itself. The well-known reference to James as “an epistle of straw”, which had appeared in each edition of his New Testament since 1522, is first excised in the 1534 edition of the whole Bible. See AE 35:362 and 358 n. 5. The strong language of the 1522 preface to James—e.g. “he mangles the Scriptures and thereby opposes Paul and all Scripture”, and, “I will not have him in my Bible to be numbered among the true chief books”—disappears in all editions after 1530. See AE 35:397 nn. 54, 55.

taken with him. Secondly, both Clebsch and Trueman limit their arguments to Barnes's published works. But we can also look to other evidence. We can look to his last words at the stake, for example, which were recorded by a bystander and later published in several languages. Here Barnes confesses unambiguously that Christ's death was "the sufficient price and ransom for the sin of all the world" and that "there is no other satisfaction unto the Father but this his death and passion only".<sup>36</sup> And finally, a bit of evidence unknown to both Clebsch and Trueman can now be found in a sermon preached by Barnes in 1535. There he says that neither our own works nor those of the saints offer us any aid because "Christ died alone and rose again alone and went to hell alone, [he] saved us alone".<sup>37</sup>

On the basis of his doctrine of justification, none will dispute that Barnes stood firmly in the Protestant tradition. The real question is which Protestant tradition. A brief look at Barnes's eucharistic theology should sufficiently narrow the possibilities to one. As with the doctrine of justification, Barnes first outlines his views on the sacrament in his 1530 *Sentences*. His position, as stated in the title of article seventeen, is that "In the sacrament of the altar is the true body of Christ". That by "true body" he means not a figurative, virtual, or spiritual body, but a real, fleshly, corporeal body becomes evident upon reading the quotations he selects from various early church fathers. One in particular is graphically striking:

He certainly did not say, this is a figure, but this is my body. Although it seems to us bread, it is in fact transformed by an ineffable operation. Because we are weak and loathe to eat raw flesh, especially human flesh, it therefore appears to be bread; but it is flesh.<sup>38</sup>

Barnes's position became well known in England, partly because it was radically out of step with that of his fellow Protestants. In 1533 William Tyndale, who himself disagreed with Barnes on this point, warned John Frith, an outspoken proponent of a symbolic interpretation of the sacrament, to comment as little as possible on it. His famous words to Frith are: "Of the presence of Christ in the sacrament, meddle as little as you can. ... [or] Barnes will be hot against you".<sup>39</sup> Though Barnes never was "hot against" Frith (perhaps because Frith was executed only shortly after Tyndale wrote), he was "hot against" several others who shared his views. In 1535 and again in 1538 he served on royal commissions to examine those Protestants

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<sup>36</sup>Miles Coverdale, *Remains of Myles Coverdale*, ed. G. Pearson (Parker Society, 1846), 352 and 355. Coverdale reprints Barnes's confession together with a critical reply by John Standish and his own defence of Barnes.

<sup>37</sup>Warwickshire Record Office, DR 801/12, fo. 68r.

<sup>38</sup>Barnes, *Sententiae*, sig. I7r.

<sup>39</sup>*LP* 6:403.

accused of denying the Christ's corporeal presence in the sacrament.<sup>40</sup> Also, in drawing up the Wittenberg Articles of 1536 and the Thirteen Articles of 1538, Barnes confessed clearly that

We firmly believe and teach that in the sacrament of the Lord's body and blood, Christ's body and blood are truly, substantially and really present under the species of bread and wine, and that under the same species they are truly and bodily presented and distributed to all those who receive the sacrament.<sup>41</sup>

And just as he had on the topic of justification, even at the stake Barnes reaffirmed his belief in Christ's corporeal presence in the sacrament.<sup>42</sup>

Taking into account just these two doctrines, we can probably stop and safely identify Barnes as a Lutheran. Any good Protestant could affirm justification by faith alone. Any good Catholic could affirm Christ's bodily presence in the sacrament. But it does not seem unsafe to say that, from the time of the Reformation forward, the only persons who have held both views together are those of the Lutheran confession. Because this is so, I had contemplated titling this paper "Robert Barnes and the Origins of English Lutheranism". But this title was rejected since the word 'origins' seems to imply continuity. And the lamentable fact is that there is no historical continuity between Robert Barnes and modern English Lutheranism. When Barnes died in 1540, Lutheranism in England was for all intents and purposes laid to rest with him. Making reference to the title I have chosen—"Robert Barnes and Early English Lutheranism"—it can be said with only some slight exaggeration that Robert Barnes **was** early English Lutheranism. The Act of Uniformity promulgated under Henry's successor Edward VI forbade any faith other than that outlined in the Book of Common Prayer. And so when the first Lutheran congregation in England, as an exception to this Act, was founded more than one hundred years after Barnes's death, it was not the child of native Lutherans, heirs of those who might have once heard Barnes preach. It was founded by Danish, Swedish, and German merchants then living and working in London.<sup>43</sup> So even in modern England, like so many other places, it would seem that Lutheranism was a commodity imported especially for Germans and Scandinavians.

What, then, is the particular significance, if any, of Robert Barnes? If he has no other significance (and he certainly does), he stands as an important

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<sup>40</sup>See *LP* 8:771; 8:1063; 13/2:498.

<sup>41</sup>*Documents*, 137; cf. 192.

<sup>42</sup>Coverdale, *Remains*, 417. It is noteworthy that John Foxe, who happened to disagree with him on this point, simply excised this portion of Barnes's confession when he reprinted it in his *Acts and Monuments*.

<sup>43</sup>See E. G. Pearce, "A Short History of the Lutheran Church in Great Britain", *Concordia Theological Monthly* 22 (1951): 112-13.

reminder that Lutheranism need not be **only** a German or Scandinavian faith. That probably does not sound particularly revelatory. But there are plenty of people even today—at least among the few who have even heard of Lutheranism—who would argue the opposite, who would say that Lutheranism has not, does not, will not, and perhaps cannot appeal to an English audience. But it certainly appealed to the Englishman Robert Barnes. So much so that he devoted the most active decade of his life to promoting it among his countrymen. So much so that he risked the wrath of his King in order to do so. So much so that he ultimately gave his life for the sake of making a clear confession of its most central tenets: that salvation is founded on nothing other than the gracious and all-sufficient death of Christ, and that the saving benefits of this sacrifice are offered in the Sacrament of Christ's very Body and Blood. If those propositions are indeed true, they are absolutely true; their veracity is not dependent on personal ancestry or national boundaries. They are as true in England as they are in Germany, Denmark, Australia, or the United States. That they **are** true was a confession that at least one sixteenth-century Englishman found the most convincing amidst a number of other options and in the face of frequent opposition. And it is a confession that twenty-first century Englishmen (as well as Englishwomen) may also find convincing. If it is proclaimed with the uncompromising faithfulness exemplified by Robert Barnes.

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**SERMON:  
“CHOOSE FREEDOM” (GAL. 3:23-29)<sup>1</sup>**

*William Mundt*

**W**ho would choose to be a prisoner when you could be freed? The answer may surprise you. In matters of faith millions choose the slavery of the Law over the freedom of the Gospel. What is even more frightening is that these are the groups that are growing. What is this fascination people have for enslaving themselves to what the Bible calls the “weak and beggarly elemental spirits of the universe” (Gal. 4:9,3). What makes people so eager to be “tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine” (Eph. 4:14). The drive to be a slave always seems to be stronger than the desire to be free.

Of course, most people do not see it that way. “There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death”, Scripture says (Prov. 14:12). And what seems right is the notion—natural only since sin entered the world—that God will be happy and justice will be served if we just try our best; that God indeed helps those who help themselves. What a comforting thought to be persuaded that God did not really mean it when He said “The soul that sins shall die” (Ex. 34:7b) and that there is indeed no sin as long as one is sincere!

That kind of thinking is what makes and keeps one a prisoner, confined within the walls of man-made rules and rites, “holding the form of religion but denying the power of it” (II Tim. 3:5). People must like walls; they keep building them. The Bible tells us that among other things, Jesus came to break down the

dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in His flesh the law of commandments and ordinances ... and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. And He came and preached peace ... for through Him we have access ... to the Father” (Eph 2:14f.)

Unfortunately, by nature we build more walls, higher walls, or find other ways to keep God out of our lives.

It happened in Galatia then. It still happens in St. Catharines, Edmonton, and everywhere people live. “You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?” begins the chapter from which we take our text today. Don’t you see, it asks, that freedom is definitely a possibility? Jesus declared it: “If you continue in My word, you are truly My disciples; and you will know the

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<sup>1</sup> Preached at Faith Lutheran Church, Dunnville, Ontario, 8 July 2001.

truth and the truth will make you free” (Jn 8:31). Then He lived, suffered, and died for our sins so that we do not have to. This is no new or novel thought. The prophet Isaiah saw it coming, and recognized it as the only possible way for sinful people to be reconciled to a holy God:

He was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the punishment that made us whole, and by His bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Is. 53)

No laws can make us free. They only condemn us when we break them. **“Before faith came”** our text reminds us, **“we were imprisoned and guarded under the law.”** Think of the law as a prison guard. He is not going to free you; only a higher authority can say that he no longer has the right to detain you—or to shoot you should you try to escape. Although we know that law can be a good thing in protecting our rights, our possessions, our lives, we usually find it more irritating than useful. Imagine driving on your vacation with a police cruiser constantly behind you! Or working for someone who continually tells you that you are wrong and yells at you to try harder! That is what life under the law is like. To live under the law means to be aware that every wrong thought, word, or deed will be punished. Generally we like to confine ourselves to the broad terms of some commandments to prove to ourselves that we are better than most. So if we can get to the end of the day and not have killed anyone, stolen anything (cheating doesn’t count), or bowed down to worship a stone god, we like to commend ourselves. By “law” we mean all of God’s good and perfect will as encapsulated in the Ten Commandments and expounded in the Small Catechism of Martin Luther. Like it or not, no one can keep the law perfectly. Why then do so many choose to remain its prisoner trying to be saved by keeping it—even imperfectly?

The answer lies within our nature—our sinful human nature since the Fall. Even though we know it is impossible to please God by our own efforts, because “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23), we still persist in thinking we must be able to do something which will impress God enough to reward us. We have great difficulty seeing beyond such self-imposed concepts. Let me illustrate how our nature—which we know is imperfect—acts. Does anyone have an aquarium? Here is an experiment you can try: place a piece of glass down the middle with half the fish on one side and half on the other. After a few weeks you can remove the glass but the fish will only swim in their half, as if the glass wall was still there. Similar stories have been told about people. Prisoners of war have been found still living within the compound, still behaving as model prisoners, even though all the guards fled in the face of an oncoming liberation force.

We may find it silly that fish, or even people, remain confined when barriers are removed. But more serious is confining our faith and our hopes for life with God on what we can do ourselves. Before our text we are reminded: “All who rely on the works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law’” (10). (And it does mean **all** the things)

There is an alternative: an inexpensive, 100% reliable alternative. Instead of thinking “everything depends on me”, believe “everything depends on God”, because it does. Faith is a gift. Gifts do not depend on the recipient but on the giver. The law was our guard, our disciplinarian, until Christ came **so that we might be justified by faith**. By God’s grace, through the power of His Word and the promises He attaches to His Sacraments, we become and remain “sons of God”, children of God, **“for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”**

This means two things. First, faith is the great leveller. When the word says, **“there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female”**, it is not wiping out all the obvious physical or social differences. We may be one in Christ but we are still each individuals, with varying backgrounds, interests, skills, etc. Just as you may say of your children, “no two are alike”, so God may say the same of His. What it does mean, however, is that regardless of our state or status, we each may be sure of the “redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace that He lavished on us” (Eph. 1:7). Or in simpler terms, no one gets forgiveness and eternal life except by the grace of God. Anyone who believes differently is deluding himself. “If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn 1:9-10).

Secondly, it means we are free to do as we please. But what pleases us, Luther would ask? Surely it brings us no pleasure as forgiven children of God to indulge in every kind of sin or vice imaginable. Surely it does not please us as recipients of divine mercy to ignore invitations to worship and to serve. Surely it does not please us who have been relieved of the burden, fear, and guilt of trying to save ourselves, to refuse to serve and love God and our neighbour using the same commandments that condemned us as a guide to what pleases Him. To do as we please means we are free to do what pleases God. Nothing less than our best will do. We still seek, strive, deprive ourselves, behave ourselves—not because we think we are somehow earning our forgiveness that way, but because we are so enormously grateful for what God has promised and delivered in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and because the Christ whom we have put on through our Baptism “constrains” compels, directs, and drives us to do so.

As God's children we are "**heirs according to promise**". That means eternal life in heaven is already ours. It is just a matter of time until we inherit it. That is why the Bible calls faith "the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1).

It is difficult to imagine how anyone who has sensed the total freedom and relief that comes from knowing "God does it all" would choose to live like "it is all up to me!" We are continually tempted to think that way—and will be until we die. Sin remains part of our life, and the reason for our daily doubts and struggles until the day we die. But thanks to God's mercy, revealed and sealed in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, we may set aside any natural scepticism, and be sure that, even though it sounds too good to be true, it really is! *IJN*. Amen.

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**BOOK REVIEW:  
HELP IN THE QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL**

*Paul D. Landgraf*

David P. Scaer. *Discourses in Matthew: Jesus Teaches the Church*. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004. 415 pages, hardcover.

To be helpful, I'll include some prolegomena. First of all, given the popularity of David P. Scaer in some Lutheran circles, I will state my previous connections to him. The number of times I have heard him speak could probably be counted on two hands. Although he is well known for his quick wit, most people have the sense, and rightly so, that his words which will last far into the future are those which appear on paper. I consider Dr Scaer a friend, but in my mind even more important than that friendship is my "friendship" for the past few years with the Gospel according to Matthew.

I would hope that you would not consider me given to exaggeration, especially when dealing with such an important topic, but I consider the authentic structure of Matthew to be the "holy grail" of today's biblical studies. The Gospel according to Matthew is at a critical position in the Scriptures, heavily dependent on the Old Testament and heavily influential on the New. Its importance is especially clear when examining the writings of the early church fathers. With such a critical book, it is no coincidence that modern scholarship lacks consensus when explaining its structure.

The purpose of the Gospel which Scaer proposes in his new book pushes us another step forwards in our quest to find that illusive grail. The Gospel follows the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and is therefore inherently structured. The Gospel according to Matthew also sets down a series of discourses, the conclusions of which have been clearly marked ("And when Jesus finished these sayings ..."; 7:28, 11:1, 13:53, 19:1, 26:1). Some recent scholars have gravitated towards one or the other of these structural indicators. B. W. Bacon of Yale University is often credited with an emphasis on the five discourses; while even more recently, Jack Dean Kingsbury of Union Theological Seminary has essentially emphasized the life of Christ ("From that time Jesus began to ..."; 4:17, 16:21). Although B. W. Bacon is never directly quoted within Scaer's book (which was surprising), he treats the discourses as a significant indicator of the Gospel's entire purpose. Rather than seeing the structure of Jesus' life and that of His discourses as mutually exclusive alternatives, Scaer pushes forward and sees both aspects working together. Rather than seeing the final chapters of the Gospel as a conclusion to the discourses and therefore secondary in

importance, Scaer provides this picturesque resolution: “The concluding narrative of Matthew’s Gospel is a plateau on which the Gospel comes to rest” (p. 396).” The following helpful quotation makes reference to a frequently abused piece of Scripture commonly known as the Great Commission: “These Five Discourses, **along with the events in Jesus’ life**, are presupposed in the Gospel’s conclusion that the disciples are to teach the Gentiles all things” (p. 52, emphasis added).

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The typical parish pastor is usually not consumed with talk of treasures such as the grail. The typical parish pastor is often not even concerned about the overall structure of the Gospel. The typical pastor is more given to the mundane than the mysteries. The typical parish pastor is more concerned with the structure of the sermon text for the coming Sunday. The typical pastor is concerned about the amount of time he takes to prepare for his next sermon without alienating the people in the congregation or his family.

What parish pastor would not enjoy a book that would help him to see allusions to Holy Baptism and Holy Communion within the various sermon texts of the Gospel? Lutherans do not say that a sacramental emphasis is simply a perspective of denomination, but an emphasis that comes from the Lord Himself and is reflected throughout the Scriptures. One professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, was known to have said that if a pastor’s sermon had not mentioned the Lord’s Supper on a day when the Lord’s Supper was being served, that pastor had failed to preach the text. Scaer’s book is useful in providing a Means of Grace emphasis when preaching from the “A” series. With this book the pastor is given some help in describing the points at which salvation is delivered. The main thesis of his book is as follows: “In this volume, the idea will be advanced that Matthew’s Gospel was written as a catechesis or summary of what believers were taught before being admitted by Baptism into the full eucharistic membership of the church” (p. 9). The details of that statement are unfolded within the rest of the book.

Some Lutheran pastors are probably put off whenever the word “catechesis” is mentioned. For some people it refers to a style of teaching that is not reflected in the Scriptures, some type of archconservative brainwashing. If you were put off when he used that word, you need not be. Scaer in his preface helps to put that word in perspective when he explains that the initial idea for the book was part of a larger project to “demonstrate that **all** the New Testament documents had a catechetical purpose” (p. 7, emphasis added). Taken within this context, the word “catechetical” obviously has heavy salvific and evangelism-related overtones, similar to those found within something like Luther’s Small Catechism. With such an

understanding, this view might find a wide amount of agreement in many Lutheran circles.

Scaer does not have that critical mindset which distrusts the evidence given, and he is therefore content to take the Gospel's message at face value and then speak insightful conclusions in light of what today's scholarship knows of that time and situation. Especially enjoyable was his discussion on the inspiration of Matthew, obviously something you do not see too often in a commentary with such serious scholarship. Scaer's wealth of knowledge in many areas of theology makes this book one which often crosses the line between exegetical and dogmatic, a goal which Scaer specifically wishes to accomplish: "[T]his book intends to be biblical in approach and theological in outcome ..." (p. 8). It was also nice to see the frequent Scriptural references throughout the work, although this author did not have the time to check them. The book is detailed enough to be a commentary on many texts, but yet it is broad enough to help the pastor gain a fresh and enlivening perspective on many of the tasks of the ministry, especially those of preaching and reading the Gospel text. Liturgical, historical, and uniquely Lutheran issues are all interwoven within this work. Many of these issues would be helpful reading for **any** year of the lectionary series. Scaer often makes an issue of an early dating for the Gospel, but even more important is his theme of Jesus as teacher. "For the evangelist, Jesus was *the* catechist" (p. 213; see also p. 336). This is a good reminder for the pastor that his task is to get out of the way and let the Lord do His task, a thing which He is much better at than **any** pastor. Properly used, the book will greatly benefit both the pastor and the people in the pews.

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The following criticisms, therefore, should be considered minor when taking into account the new standard which this book sets. If the following two writings would have been engaged within the work, several more well-balanced discussions could have been made: The writings of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis,<sup>1</sup> and the work of Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989). These additions would have been helpful; but, again, the typical pastor can survive, even thrive, without them. The primary complaint is that the work suffers for lack of both Scriptural and topical indices. These would have been helpful for that extra-busy and easily forgetful pastor to find the places where the coming sermon text was mentioned.

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<sup>1</sup>Papias is discussed on pp. 7-17 in vol. 1 of W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison's *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Limited, 1988-1997); this commentary is a monumental work by all accounts and thankfully Scaer engages it frequently.

This deficiency is compounded by the fact that the book lacks an even organization. The following are the chapter headings:

1. Introduction
2. Matthew as Catechist, Biographer, and Apologist
3. The Gospel of Matthew as Scripture
4. The Development of Baptism in the Gospel of Matthew
5. The Development of the Eucharist in the Gospel of Matthew
6. The Development of the Trinity in the Gospel of Matthew
7. The First Discourse
8. *Righteousness* in the Gospel of Matthew
9. The Second Discourse
10. The Third Discourse
11. The Fourth Discourse
12. The Fifth Discourse
13. Death and Resurrection as Apocalyptic Conclusion to the Catechesis

The chapter on the First Discourse begins on page 211, over halfway through the book. The chapter on Baptism is (unfortunately) only about four pages, where others are nearly thirty. The writer of the Gospel according to Matthew has struck many people as someone quite organized, especially with his description of the genealogy of Jesus into three groups of fourteen generations. Scaer is not that organized, but nonetheless his book may be useful for many generations to come (perhaps fourteen?).

The book is a well-bound hardcover. With a list price of US\$26.99, the price might be considered high by some, but especially by the poor seminarian (a tautology if there ever was one). The following comments may help put the cost of the book in perspective. The Concordia Commentary on the Gospel according to Matthew will be at least two volumes and quite possibly three (at US\$42.99 per volume). The current author of the commentary and the New Testament editor of that series are the same person, and that person received his doctorate under Jack Dean Kingsbury. Given that information, the commentary's discussion surrounding the whole of the five discourses as an indicator of the Gospel's full structure might be slightly deficient (although this author would be glad to be proven wrong regarding this point). Scaer's book provides a balanced view at a fraction of the price. Purchasing this book will also give you an indication of what appears in his previous publication, *The Sermon on the Mount: The Church's First Statement of the Gospel* (Concordia Publishing House, 2000, 272 pp., US\$20.99). The benefits of buying such a book are many. If enough people would make an effort to contact Concordia Publishing House, and because of the benefits of modern technology, they could easily consider a second edition which adds at least an index of the Scripture passages used.

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Here are just a couple concluding thoughts. When reading the book, I was often tempted to think “magnum opus”. For someone who has recently passed the age in which he **could** retire, he (thankfully and most certainly) has not been resting on his laurels. Dr Scaer is committed to what has been laid down in the Scriptures, but is willing to stretch our minds to new and different, yet still biblical and confessional perspectives. I hope to see still more excellent things on paper from this friend regarding our mutual “friend”, Matthew.

Few people, when given the opportunity to depart this life, will leave either a son to carry on the family tradition or a substantial book which was widely influential. With son, Peter Scaer, and with this book, *Discourses in Matthew*, David P. Scaer has accomplished both, is certainly doubly blessed, and the Church has been doubly blessed through him.

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