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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
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AN INTRODUCTION
TO
LUTHER'S THEOLOGY OF PASTORAL CARE

A Thesis Presented to the
Faculty of Theology, St. Paul's University and
The School of Graduate Studies, University of Ottawa
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree:
Doctor of Philosophy in Theology

M. Vernon Begalke, S.T.M.

Summer,

1979



M. Vernon Begalke, Ottawa, Canada, 1980.

DEDICATED

TO

MY

FAMILY

CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Melvin Vernon Begalke was born July, 1943, at Gladstone, Manitoba. He graduated from the Graysville High School, 1961; The Canadian Lutheran Bible Institute, Camrose, Alberta, 1962; University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, B.A., 1965 in Philosophy and Psychology; Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon, B.D., 1969 in Functional Theology; Andover Newton Theological School, Boston, S.T.M., 1970 in Pastoral Care.

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Reverend Begalke was ordained a Lutheran pastor in 1971 upon accepting a Letter of Call to serve as Assistant Pastor, Messiah Lutheran Church, Camrose, Alberta. Since 1975, he has also been teaching part-time in Religious Studies, Camrose Lutheran College, Camrose.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the generous one-year sabbatical leave from parish duties, granted by Messiah Lutheran Church, in order to work full-time on this Dissertation.

Second, I want to thank my Thesis advisor and friend, Professor Roger Lapointe, Religious Studies, University of Ottawa (formerly member of the Faculty of Theology, St. Paul's University, Ottawa), for his encouragement through the years; and his efforts in reading and commenting on the manuscript during its preliminary stages of development.

Third, as noted in the "Preface" on The Appendix, I wish again to thank Mrs. Frieda Oswald and Reverend Fred Lenz of Saskatoon for their interest and many hours of disciplined help in the laborious task of translating the large number of Table Talks.

Fourth, but not least of all, I want to express my thankfulness and appreciation to my cheerful, energetic typist, Miss Barbara Whalley, Saskatoon, for her tireless and exacting efforts in producing the final copy.

M. Vernon Begalke.

-v-

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- LW -- Luther's Works: American Edition, 55 vols. General editors are Jaroslav Pelikan for vols. 1-30, and Helmut T. Lehmann for vols. 31-55. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House and Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958--.
- PE -- Works of Martin Luther: The Philadelphia Edition, 6 vols. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1915--.
- WA -- (Weimarer Ausgabe) D. MARTIN LUTHERS WERKE, KRITISCHE GESAMMT-AUSGABE, 58 vols. Weimar, 1883--.
- WA, Br. -- D. Martin Luthers Werke, Briefwechsel, edited by Otto Clemen, 11 vols., with index. Weimar, 1930-1948.
- WA, TR -- D. Martin Luthers Werke, Tischreden, edited by E. Kroker, 6 vols., with index. Weimar, 1912-1921.

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PROLEGOMENA

Innumerable research projects have already thoroughly studied the achievements of Dr. Martin Luther (1483 - 1546), as reformer, translator, and educator. Yet to date, research into his pastoral activity and his theological insights in relation to this activity, has been largely neglected.¹

Because of this deficiency and subsequent lack of secondary works, one might all too easily assume that Luther's pastoral role was insignificant to the Reformation. If so, then it would not merit our attention five centuries later. . . . Nothing could be farther from the actual facts of the matter! Several modern day scholars have hinted that Luther's importance as pastor rivals his importance in all these other capacities.²

My hypothesis suggests the "deficiency" is not with Luther but with a lack of disciplined research and study by pastoral theologians. It can be demonstrated, for example, that Luther's pastoral orientation was indeed central to the Reformation. Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses on the church door in Wittenberg (1517), out

¹E.G. Schwiebert, Luther and His Times (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), 892 pp., is a monumental work of more recent times. However, Luther's activity as a pastor is not even mentioned!

²See Roland Bainton, Here I Stand (New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1950), Chapter XXI, "The Struggle for Faith", pp. 359ff; Theodore G. Tappert, ed. and trans. Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel, The Library of Christian Classics: Volume XVIII (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1955), pp. 13-24; and Arthur Becker, "Luther as Seelsorger--The Unexamined Role" in Interpreting Luther's Legacy, eds. Fred W. Meuser and Stanley D. Schneider (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969), pp. 136-150.

of deep pastoral concern for his parishioners. He felt strongly that they were being deceived by placing their hope of salvation in a commercial "rip-off" known as letters of indulgence: "I grieve over the utterly false notions the people have conceived . . . unhappy souls. . . O Good God! I could keep silence no longer. . . Works of piety and love are infinitely better than indulgences."¹

It was this same concern, coupled with his own search for peace of heart and mind, that continued vigorously throughout his life-time. His very last act was the reconciliation of the feuding counts of Mansfield; after which he died.² Between these great events - the posting of the Ninety-Five Theses and Luther's death - we have inherited a rich legacy of pastoral theology.

Past Studies

It has come to my attention that there are two short secondary works related to the subject at hand.³ Both of these books are relatively old, out of print, and therefore not readily accessible to the ordinary reader.

The work by August Nebe provides a brief introduction to Luther's

¹Letter sent by Luther to Archbishop Albert of Mayence, Oct. 31, 1517, with a copy of the Ninety-Five Theses. WA, Br, 1, 3, trans. Works of Martin Luther, PE, 1, pp. 26-27.

²See WA, Br, XI, 286, 287 and WA, Br, XI, 290, 292, trans. Theodore Tappert, Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel, Op. cit., pp. 105-108.

³August Nebe, Luther as Spiritual Advisor, trans. Charles A. Hay and Charles E. Hay (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1894), 242 pp., and D. Hermann Steinlein, Luther als Seelsorger (Leipzig: Publication House of Doerfling and Franke, 1918), 96 pp.

"caring" first for his own soul. Then there are several chapters on his dealing with the sick, the forlorn, the erring, the tempted, etc. While there are a few references to the Table Talk, the work relies mainly on Luther's Letters.

D. Hermann Steinlein gives a more systematic presentation of Luther as "carer of souls". He indicates the personal quality of Luther's religion, his adherence to the Word of God, and his great empathy with his fellowman.¹ Again, the primary source of this work is Luther's Letters of personal counsel. In addition no doubt, since this book was written during war-time, Steinlein pays attention to Luther's pastoral attitude to soldiers and the military.² He ends his work with an Appendix which is a rebuttal to the criticisms of Luther by French physician Bérillon.³

The conclusion of Steinlein's book is very interesting and highly suggestive for my dissertation:

We do have this impression however, that Luther, precisely by his pastoral counseling, orally and in his writings, exercised a profound influence on a wide scale - his letters often went beyond the borders of Germany! There would be essentially something missing if in the picture of his character we would fail again and again to take into account and notice that tract we have attempted to present in this treatise, namely: Luther in his capacity of carer of souls.⁴

¹ Ibid., pp. 24ff.

² Ibid., pp. 90ff.

³ Bérillon attempts to prove that Luther was overly pre-occupied with his digestive troubles, bowel movements, and hemorrhoids. Steinlein replies: "One gains the impression that the proverb cited by Luther and Melancthon, 'The French lack brains', is not completely unjustified even in our time!" Ibid., p. 96.

⁴ Ibid., p. 95.

Is Steinlein right or wrong? This question will be basic to my research.

While both studies have suggested the relative importance of our subject, yet both are quite limited in omitting almost entirely such sub-topics as Luther's paradoxical theology as well as his theological analyses of the Anfechtung, and the spiritual office of ministry. They have also made very limited use of my proposed primary source, namely Luther's Table Talk. This was probably due to the fact that the definitive Weimar edition of the Tischreden¹ was not completed until 1921, three years after the more recent work was published!

Primary Source

As mentioned, my primary source will be the Table Talks along with a selection of Luther's Letters and other Works. The Table Talks contain a vast theological resource of Luther's thoughts that has been largely ignored in the past. Perhaps this is due to an automatic distrust of the note-taking ability of Luther's students and friends gathered around his table. However, in my opinion this is not a good enough reason to ignore completely this vast collection. Its sheer volume alone demands that it be recognized.² Often there are distinct versions given by several students listening to the

¹ D. Martin Luthers Werke, Tischreden, ed. E. Kröker, 6 vols. (Weimar, 1912-1921) - will be cited as WA, TR.

² There are six large volumes of Tischreden in WA, TR, each containing more than 700 pages.

same Table Talk. The great mutual similitude of these versions bear witness to the basic authenticity. Perhaps the most compelling reason to make use of this unique resource is that we have "first-hand" records of Luther's religious insights and candid pastoral advice given orally to specific problems at hand.

Since it is not within the scope of this study, nor within my area of competence, I am relying upon the critical definitive labors of the Weimar editors in regard to textual problems and questions. In other words, all the Tischreden in the Weimar edition are accepted as authentic for the purpose of my study.

As an additional "check and balance", from time to time quotations will be given from Luther's primary Works¹ and his Letters.²

Having stated that the Tischreden will be my primary source, it will still be impossible due to limits of time and energy, to make an exhaustive study of the seven thousand extant. Hence, a representative selection will be made from the Weimar Edition, drawing upon existing, recognized English translations³ plus the

¹D. Martin Luthers Werke, kritische Gesamtausgabe, 58 vols. (Weimar, 1883--). This work will be cited as WA (Weimarer Ausgabe).

²D. Martin Luthers Werke, Briefwechsel, ed. Otto Clemen, 11 vols. (Weimar, 1930-1948). This section will be cited as WA, Br. There is one final section, Die Deutsche Bibel, 12 vols. (Weimar, 1906--).

³For example, Luther's Works, American Edition, Vol. 54, Table Talk, ed. and trans. Theodore G. Tappert; general ed. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967). This edition of Luther's Works will be cited hereafter as LW.

additional original translations contained in the Appendix.¹

Since this whole matter of primary sources is of such great importance to this entire study, let us examine in more detail what is contained in the Table Talks.

To begin, John Mathesius, one of those present in Luther's home, 1540, gives the following description of a typical meal-time:

Although our doctor often took weighty and profound thoughts to table with him and sometimes maintained the silence of the monastery during the entire meal, so that not a word was spoken, yet at appropriate times he spoke in a very joyful way. We used to call his conversation the condiments of the meal because we preferred it to all spices and dainty food.

When he wished to get us to talk he would throw out a question, "What's new?". The first time we let this remark pass, but if he repeated it--"You prelates, what's new in the land?"--the oldest ones at the table would start talking. Dr. Wolf Severus², who had been the tutor of his royal majesty of the Roman Empire, sat near the head of the table and, unless there was a stranger present (like a traveling courtier), he got something started.

If the conversation was animated, it was nevertheless conducted with decent propriety and courtesy, and others would contribute their share until the doctor started to talk. Often good questions were put to him from the Bible, and he provided expert and concise answers. When at times somebody took exception to what had been said, the doctor was able to bear this patiently and refute him with a skilful answer. Reputable

¹ See the "Preface" to the Appendix for the "Criteria for Selection" and #4 for a critical note. For a more extensive critique of the Table Talk, see Preserved Smith, Luther's Table Talk, A Critical Study (New York: AMS Press, 1907/1970).

² "Wolfgang Schiefer (Severus) is often mentioned in John Mathesius' notes for the year 1540. He was the tutor of Archduke Maximilian, who later became Emperor Maximilian II." LW 54, Table Talk, p. X, n. 2.

persons often came to the table from the university and from foreign places, and then very nice talks and stories were heard.¹

Between 1529-30, the dinner companions at Luther's table began to take notes as they listened to the various conversations. Conrad Cordatus claimed to be the first to record these "talks" and that Luther . . . "never indicated by as much as a word that what I did displeased him."² Perhaps it was due in part to the fact that as a professor, Luther was quite accustomed to students taking notes. In fact, there are examples from these discussion periods where he insisted that the recorders be certain to include certain unusual thoughts and ideas: "Make a note of this!"; "Write it down!" and "Mark this well!"³

What has been preserved in the Table Talk? One editor says: "It was as much the purpose of Table Talk to benefit the hearers spiritually as to cheer them up and amuse them."⁴ He goes on to add that some of the statements made by Luther about astrology, idolatry, the papacy, Jews and Turks, anti-Christ, etc., belong to the religious climate of the 15th and 16th centuries. However, he concludes by

¹Quoted in LW 54, ibid., pp. ix-x.

²ibid., p. x.

³ibid., p. x, Table Talk #246; Between April 7-15, 1532, p. 33: "When Master Philip laughed at the astrologers for saying that if it had not been for the planet Saturn men would never die, our Martin Luther remarked, 'If it had not been for Adam no man would die. If this were not so, though there were a thousand Saturns for one, I would beshit myself. Make a note of this! Write it down!'" Cf. also #463, p. 77 and #1525, p. 155.

⁴Thomas S. Kepler, ed., The Table Talk of Martin Luther (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1952), p. xx.

saying: "Martin Luther's insights into spiritual truths speak to the needs of modern man. Though some of his ideas may be attached to the sixteenth century of western Europe, many of his spiritual suggestions in Table-Talk sound a sane and inspiring note for those living in the contemporary world."¹

One of the most fascinating introductions to the Table Talk that I discovered in my research, came in the form of a letter to the translator in 1652. It was printed in the preface to the first English edition, translated by Captain Henry Bell. Although this letter is some 327 years old now, it would be very difficult to surpass its striking eloquence:

"Herein is a full character of the free and zealous spirit of Martin Luther, who was a man of God raised in his generation with invincible courage to beat down the strongest holds of Satan, wherein for many generations he had captivated the spirits of our forefathers under poperie. The depth and soliditie of his judgement may be discovered in the writings which he himself did publish in his life-time: but in this collection of his extemporarie discourses, published since his death, the fullness of his affection, and genuine readiness of his spirit, may be seen, which did incline him to advance the truth of the gospel, and manifest the testimonie of Jesus upon all occasions. And truly, I have met (in that which I have looked upon) with many excellent and fundamental truths, necessarie to be minded in this age, as well as in that wherein he spake them; and the gracefulness which they have in their familiar and careless dress, doth make them the more commendable to all men of ingenuitie, not only of popular capacities, but even of more raised thoughts. Whence I do probably conjecture that the plainness and great variety of matters contained in these discourses, did in the first reformation ingratiate the delivery and insinuate the consideration of most eminent truths with acceptance into all men's apprehensions, so far, as to cause the

¹ Ibid., p. xxi.

enemies of those truths to endeavour the suppressing of this book, which they found to be so much taking with everybody, and so full of deadly blows given to their superstition and hierarchie, to their profaneness, hypocrisie, and impietie."

"We should, indeed, seek in vain elsewhere for more striking and interesting specimens of the talents, the disposition, and the manners of the great Reformer, than in this volume of his 'Table-Talk'. And certainly if the personal character of any individual deserves to be dwelt upon, it is that of Luther. In no other instance have such great events depended upon the courage, sagacity, and energy, of a single man, nor can there be found a more profitable study than the temper and peculiarities of one, who, by his sole and unassisted efforts, made his solitary cell the heart and centre of the most wonderful and important commotion the world ever witnessed; who, by the native force and vigour of his genius, attacked and successfully resisted, and at length overthrew the most awful and sacred authority that ever imposed its commands on mankind."

"In perusing the work itself, we may here observe, it must always be recollected that they show the Reformer in his undress, and are not to be taken as specimens of what he wrote or preached when girded up for great occasions; - though it may be observed that, like most men of genius, there was less difference in the language and manner of Luther in private and public, than is the case with those who cannot afford to be free, homely, and familiar: - a great peculiarity of both his preaching and writing was, that, despising all form and authority, he went straight to the hearts of his hearers and readers, and never hesitated to use an image or impression, however coarse or homely, provided it conveyed his meaning with liveliness and force."

Definition of Terms

It is necessary to offer at least a preliminary or "working" definition of two basic terms that will be used repeatedly throughout this work: "pastoral care" and "theology".

In a compendium of source material from church history, Clebsch and Jaekle define pastoral care as "helping acts, done by representative Christian persons, directed toward the healing,

¹Quoted by William Hazlitt, ed., The Table-Talk of Martin Luther, Third Edition (Philadelphia: Lutheran Board of Publication, 1873), pp. X-XI.

sustaining, guiding, and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns".¹

The authors proceed to identify the four functions of pastoral care as follows:

a) Healing - a pastoral function that aims to overcome some impairment by restoring the person to wholeness and by leading him to advance beyond his previous condition.²

b) Sustaining - helping a hurting person to endure and to transcend a circumstance in which restoration to his former condition or recuperation from his malady is either impossible or so remote as to seem improbable.

c) Guiding - assisting perplexed persons to make confident choices between alternative courses of thought and action, when such choices are viewed as affecting the present and future state of the soul.

d) Reconciling - seeks to re-establish broken relationships between man and fellowman and between man and God.³

Certainly in Luther's practice of pastoral care, we will discover all four of these functions. While he tended to concentrate upon "reconciling" in terms of man and God in the Gospel, "healing", "sustaining" and "guiding" are also revealed in the Table Talk.

In reference to the modern situation, one contemporary authority in the field defines pastoral care as involving the entire ministry of a pastor: visiting the sick, bringing comfort to the dying and bereaved, confronting the indifferent and erring, as well as the prophetic-priestly functions of preaching the Word of God and

¹William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle, Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective (New York: Harper Torch Books, 1967), p. 4.

²Ibid., p. 33.

³Ibid., pp. 8-9.

administering the Sacraments.¹ Again, in this general sense, we will see how Luther very actively engaged himself in these kinds of pastoral activities or Seelsorge.²

While it is possible to define pastoral care in these broad categories, perhaps it will be more helpful for our research to emphasize an essential dynamic principle inherent in all the functions mentioned and that is pastoral dialogue or conversation.³

It is fascinating to discover that this recent emphasis in pastoral care had already been anticipated in some ways, as Luther vigorously promoted the value of the audible word five centuries previously! To give one example, we find the following in the Table Talk: In men speech is a great and divine gift. It's with words and not with might that wisdom rules men, instructs, edifies, consoles, and soothes in all circumstances of life, especially in affairs of conscience. Therefore God provided His church with audible preaching and visible sacraments. . . .The power of the oral Word is truly remarkable.⁴

¹William E. Hulme, Pastoral Care Come of Age (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), pp. 10-11.

²Cassell's German and English Dictionary, ed. Harold T. Betteridge (London: Cassell, 1962), p. 423 defines Seelsorge as "care or cure of souls"; "ministerial work"; or "pastoral duties".

³See Herje Faber and Ebel van der Schoot, The Art of Pastoral Conversation (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965).

⁴LW 54, Table Talk #4081, pp. 317-318.

All of these pastoral care activities by Luther, publicly and privately, imply a fundamental and sustaining theology. In one of his earliest Works in Romans (1516) he gives an exciting new definition derived from St. Paul in Romans 8:19, "For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God". Instead of defining creation in terms of its "substance", "essence", or "accidents" as was common among philosophers, Luther points to its relational dimension, in this case its "expectation". . . . "He [St. Paul] no longer directs his attention to or inquires about the creation itself, but rather to what it is awaiting. . . . It is high time that we undertake new studies and learn Jesus Christ and Him crucified."¹ Therefore, Luther boldly claims that Scripture gives a theological and not a metaphysical definition of man. "He constantly says that man is, becomes, and always remains coram deo ('in the presence of, before, God')."²

In another early Work in Psalms (1518), Luther summarizes the content of Psalm 51 as "theological knowledge of man and also the theological knowledge of God"³. He continues:

The proper subject of theology is man guilty of sin and

¹LW 25, Lectures on Romans, pp. 360-361.

²John R. Loesch, Wrestling with Luther (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1976), p. 19. Cf. Hulme, Op. cit., p. 14: "Pastoral theology exists in a mutual relationship between the Word of God and the dynamics of personal interaction".

³LW 12, Selected Psalms 1, p. 311.

condemned, and God the Justifier and Savior of man the sinner. Whatever is asked or discussed in theology outside this subject, is error and poison. All Scripture points to this, that God commands His kindness to us and in His Son restores to righteousness and life the nature that has fallen into sin and condemnation!

Very briefly, "theology" for Luther deals with the knowledge of God and man intimately related together. God can be known most clearly in relationship to man; and man can be understood best in a most profound and complete sense, in relationship to God, both through His Son. "True theology is practical, and its foundation is Christ, whose death is appropriated to us through faith."²

It should be helpful to remember also at the beginning of this study, that even though the attempt is being made to show Luther as an outstanding Christian pastor, he was at the same time a professor of biblical exegesis, University of Wittenberg: "All Luther's theological thinking presupposes the authority of Scripture. His theology is nothing more than an attempt to interpret the Scripture"³. Therefore, when we attempt to write about Luther's "theology of pastoral care", drawing from his Table Talk, Letters or other Works, most often there will be a direct reference to the

¹ LW 12, Selected Psalms, p. 311.

² LW 54, Table Talk #153, p. 22. Cf. Hulme, Op. cit., p. 14: "Pastoral theology exists in a mutual relationship between the Word of God and the dynamics of personal interaction".

³ Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 3.

Word of God as revealed in the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments. This in itself gives great value and a "timelessness" to Luther's entire Works and in particular to his pastoral theology.

Plan for Thesis

Since this doctoral thesis is a study in pastoral theology, it will not be overly concerned with systematic, historical, or ecclesiastical theology. / Granted, there will be elements of the systematic, historical and ecclesiastical present throughout the study; but my orientation will most often be to the dynamic theology of Luther that is in some way a practical or personal interaction with the Word of God.

I will attempt to prove that Luther was in fact a very active and effective pastor with many brilliant theological insights in relation to this activity. This will help bridge some of the current "gap" in Luther Studies where the pastoral dimension has been almost completely ignored. Hopefully, this study may help also to give a more complete understanding of Luther so that modern theologians will not fall into error by stating for example: "Luther has very little to say about the problems of illness and health".¹

In order to examine Luther's pastoral theology carefully and in depth, we must spend some time looking first at Luther as a

¹Henrik Ivarsson, "The Principles of Pastoral Care According to Martin Luther", Pastoral Psychology, Volume 13, #121, February, 1962, p. 25.

person. Part One: "Luther's Search for Self-Identity" will be a biographical study based to a large extent upon his Letters. From Luther's own hand, we will follow his developing, often ambivalent personal experiences in the Christian faith, through early, middle, and later years of life. My hypothesis is that Luther knew himself well. Therefore, in this first part we will be led closer to his inner life and thought, than can be achieved through a study only of his public pronouncements. There will also be an attempt to give theological analyses of his Anfechtung.

Part Two: "Luther's Paradoxical Theology" will be a short examination of four typical paradoxes in Luther's theology, utilizing some of Luther's most significant Works. We will study his unique understanding of the Christian faith in reference to "Simultaneously Righteous and Sinner"; "Law and Gospel"; "Freedom and Bondage"; and "Flesh and Spirit".

Part Three: "Luther's Theologizing as a Pastor" represents the major redaction of this dissertation, and it aims at integrating the personal-experiential with the theological dynamics. To a large extent, this integration will be that of Luther himself, as evidenced in the almost boundless resource of the Tischreden.

In short, this doctoral thesis attempts to give an original and creative presentation of Luther's Seelsorge. It is my conviction, that there is great potential here for a significant contribution to confirm, deepen and enrich Luther studies.

PART ONE

LUTHER'S SEARCH FOR SELF-IDENTITY

Introduction

Dr. Martin Luther's dynamic personality has been the subject of numerous character studies from the time of the Reformation until the present.¹ When confronted with these voluminous profiles, one cannot help but pose the natural question: "Will the real Martin Luther please step forward?!" However, since the question cannot be answered in this way, at least not on this side of the Resurrection, let us attempt to listen carefully to Luther's description of his own spiritual struggles as he grew and matured throughout his intriguing life-time.

It is important in our over-all research of Luther's theology of pastoral care, to examine in some detail his struggles for spiritual

¹There are over two hundred biographies of various lengths and quality. The following are recommended: Preserved Smith, The Life and Letters of Martin Luther (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1911/1968); Ewald W. Plass, This is Luther (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1948) especially Chapter VIII, "A Man with His Heart on His Sleeve", pp. 212ff; E.G. Schwiebert, Luther and His Times (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950); Roland H. Bainton, Here I Stand, Op. cit.; Vergilius Ferm, Cross-Currents in the Personality of Martin Luther (North Quincy, Mass.: The Christopher Publishing House, 1972); Robert Herndon Fife, The Revolt of Martin Luther (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957) -- Luther's Childhood to the Diet of Worms; Julius Kbstlin, Luthers Leben zur Reformation: Erster Band "Auf der Schule und Universitdt: Zweiter Band "Im Kloster" (Tubingen: T.C.B. Mohr, 1917); Richard Friedenthal, Luther: Sein Leben und Seine Zeit (Munchen: R. Piper und Coverlag, 1967); Richard Marius, Luther - A Biography (Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1974); John M. Todd, Martin Luther (London: Burnes and Oates, 1964); Heinrich Boehmer, Luther and the Reformation, trans. E.S.G. Potter (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1930).

self-identity. For the manner in which one understands his own unique personal identity, relates directly to his style of pastoral ministry.¹

Analyzing Luther's comments about his own personality traits has value in addition to learning about his style of ministry. It leads us more closely to his inner-most life and supplements the image we might have based on his Reformation activities alone. He probably knew himself better than even his closest contemporaries ever did.² And yet, because of the nature of the subject under consideration, our research will have certain inherent limitations: "Personality is everywhere unique and in its essence unexplainable. All that the work of a biographical character can do is to bring its subject into such relief that personality may stand forth with its own peculiar laws and

¹M. Vernon Begalke, The Importance of Clergy Identity to the Work of Ministry (Unpublished B.D. Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1969); Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling (Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1966) especially Chapter 17: "The Key--The Pastor's Personality", pp. 294ff. Note also the three-year research efforts conducted by the Association of Theological Schools in Readiness for Ministry (Volume I, Criteria) David S. Schuller, Milo L. Brekke, Merton P. Stromman, Arlene Galloway, Mary Kay O'Brien, c. 1975: The Association of Theological Schools in USA and Canada, Vandalia, Ohio, pp. 15ff. To illustrate: some of the positive and negative elements in the personal self-image of a potential minister/priest are given: Positive: personal integrity; responsible functioning; positive approach; flexibility of spirit; realistic tolerance of diversity; acceptance of clergy role; mutuality in family commitments; denominational loyalty; championship of unpopular causes . . . Negative: secular life style; emotional immaturity; undisciplined living; self-serving ministry; manipulative insecurity; and irresponsibility to the congregation.

²Karl Holl, "Martin Luther on Luther", trans. H.C. Erick Midelfort. Interpreters of Luther. ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), p. 9.

patterns."¹

When one begins a serious study of Luther's character, he cannot help but be astonished, over and over again. The great Reformer speaks with such tremendous self-assurance in so many situations, only to alternate shortly thereafter with immense self-accusations. Once he has discovered the heart of the Gospel for himself, he gives numerous spontaneous expressions of joyous confident faith; but then there are also many inner doubts, conflicts, ambivalences, and grave devaluations of himself, his faith, and life work. This paradoxical experience of Anfechtung² lasted throughout his life-time and forms the complex pattern of his evolving personality to which we will devote our study in this section.

This does not mean that Luther was a "wishy-washy" person tossed "to and fro" by his changing moods, or that he was pathologically out of touch with reality. Nor does it mean that he ultimately lost confidence in the Reformation or his own personal faith. His letters written to his wife shortly before his death, illustrate concretely his security of faith and good conscience about his work:

¹ Robert Herndon Fife, Young Luther (New York: AMS Press, 1970) "Preface", p. 12.

² Roland Bainton, Op. cit., p. 42: "... The word he (Luther) used was Anfechtung, for which there is no English equivalent. It may be a trial sent by God to test man, or an assault by the Devil to destroy man. It is all the doubt, turmoil, pang, tremor, panic, despair, desolation, and desperation which invade the spirit of man." In psychological terms, Erikson asserts that Luther had a prolonged "integrity crisis ... which again leads man to the portals of nothingness, or at any rate to the station of having been." Erik H. Erikson, Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1952/1962), p. 260.

To Mrs. Martin Luther.
[Eisleben,] February 7, 1546

To my dear mistress of the house, Catherine Ludher, a doctor¹, the lady of the pig market at Wittenberg--placed into the hands of, and at the feet of, my gracious lady:

Grace and peace in the Lord! You, dear Katie, read John and the Small Catechism, about which you once said: Everything in this book has been said about me. For you prefer to worry about me instead of letting God worry, as if he were not almighty and could not create ten Doctor Martins, should the old one drown in² the Saale, or burn in the oven, or perish in Wolfgang's bird trap. Free me from your worries. I have a caretaker who is better than you and all angels; he lies in the cradle and rests on a virgin's bosom, and yet, nevertheless, he sits at the right hand of God, the almighty Father. Therefore be at peace. Amen.

We are living well here; for each meal the city council gives me one half Stübig of Italian wine which is very good. Sometimes I drink with my companions . . .

So that you do not get confused, you should know that all the letters you have written have arrived here; today those have arrived which you wrote last Friday and sent along with Master Philip's letters.

February 7, 1546

Your loving
Martin Luther, Doctor³

A few days later, Luther writes again to his wife with candid wit

¹ Catherine or "Katy" was not a "doctor" technically . . . However, she was to Luther in terms of her ability in helping him many times to deal with his religious doubts, fears, tensions, etc.

² LW 50, p. 302, n. 11: "This reference is to Wolfgang Seberger and his efforts to trap birds in the backyard of the Luther house in Wittenberg."

³ LW 50, Letters III, pp. 301-304.

and humor. He thanks her for her worries on his behalf, but then humorously tells her that her worries almost cost him his life! Therefore, he encourages his wife to place her trust in God and to rely confidently upon those principles of faith as taught in his Catechism:

To Mrs. Martin Luther
[Eisleben,] February 10, 1546

To the holy lady, full of worries, Mrs. Catherine Luther, doctor, the lady of Zblsdorf, at Wittenberg, my gracious, dear mistress of the house:

Grace and peace in Christ! Most holy Mrs. Doctor! I thank you very kindly for your great worry which robs you of sleep. Since the date that [you started] to worry about me, the fire in my quarters, right outside the door of my room, tried to devour me; and yesterday, no doubt because of the strength of your worries, a stone almost fell on my head and nearly squashed me as in a mouse trap. For in our secret chamber mortar has been falling down for about two days; we called in some people who [merely] touched the stone with two fingers and it fell down. The stone was as big as a long pillow and as wide as a large hand; it intended to repay you for your holy worries, had the dear angels not protected [me]. [Now] I worry that if you do not stop worrying the earth will finally swallow us up and all the elements will chase us. Is this the way you learned the Catechism and the faith? Pray, and let God worry. You have certainly not been commanded to worry about me or about yourself. "Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you", as it is written in Psalm 55 [:22] and many more passages.

We are chipper and healthy, praise² be to God, except that the affair¹ is disgusting to us and that Jonas² would also like to have a bad calf³; and so he accidentally bumped into a chest. So great is human envy that he did not want me to have a bad calf all by myself.

With this I commend you to God. We would gladly be free of this matter now and drive home, if God would will it. Amen.

¹ i.e. the negotiations to reconcile the counts of Mansfeld. See LW 50, p. 285, n. 3.

² Justus Jonas.

³ Schenckel: can mean the "thigh" or "calf".

February 10, 1546

Your Holiness,¹ Willing Servant,
Martin Luther

But Luther did not always have this peace and cheerfulness of spirit during his active life as these letters shortly before his death indicate. In fact he experienced extremely agonizing times in his search for self-confidence, especially in terms of personal religious faith. Even after his so-called "Tower Experience",² he sustained the pangs of internal spiritual doubt and despair. Why should this be the case? Why should he be forced to fight his spiritual battles again and again, even after he had reached clarity of faith in the risen Christ?

Some Psychological Clues?

To address this basic question, we will begin by looking very briefly for some clues in psychological theories of personality.³ Erik Erikson says: ". . . We have come to take it for granted that any greatness also harbors massive conflict."⁴ Adding to this statement, Vergilius Ferm writes:

. . . What makes for a great personality? What, for genius? Whatever answer is given certainly cannot be stated in physical terms alone; if so, the problem would be less a problem today with

¹LW 50, Letters III, pp. 305-306.

²See LW 54, p. 193, n. 65: This "awakening" experience of Luther's occurred in the tower of the Black Cloister in Wittenberg (later Luther's home), at an undetermined date between 1508 and 1518. It was a remarkable religious experience being born out of the Reformation insight: God justifies sinners by a gracious imputation of Christ's righteousness. Therefore, sinners are declared righteous by Grace through faith, even though within themselves they are not righteous . . . There will be more information on this "Tower Experience" later.

³It is not my intention to make an exhaustive psychological study, but rather to lead into my theological analysis of Luther's paradoxical experiences.

⁴Erik Erikson, Op. cit., p. 245.

our tremendously advancing knowledge of physical sequences (eugenics would then perhaps have a formula). We are here dealing with a problem whose complexity is concomitant with those subtle conflicts and co-ordinations of psychic life which together get expressed in personality and less frequently in genius.¹

Gordon Allport, in his psychological classic, agrees that there must be internal conflicts at the root of personality upheaval. "Mental ailments, whether major or minor in degree, are reflections of conflict within the personality. Often there are hereditary or physical factors underlying this conflict, especially in certain severe conditions of mental disorder. But whether or not our difficulties have a biogenetic basis they always betray a clash of contradictory impulses."²

Another clue comes from Dr. George Matheson, who declares that the strongest reasons for personality disturbance are usually not found in the external environment. Rather, one must conduct an "insearch"³ into the very depths of the psyche itself:

Again I say I fail to recognize an adequate cause for [personality] change. The cause, whatever it is, is within the man. His soul is a battlefield between bravery and cowardice; and here contend for the mastery of his heart, the most opposite things in life . . .⁴

Carl Rogers adds another dimension to problems occurring within a person by discussing the alienation of the inner self from its own

¹ Vergilius Ferm, Op. cit., p. 28.

² Gordon W. Allport, The Individual and His Religion (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1950/1960/1968), p. 86.

³ See also James Hillman, Insearch: Psychology and Religion (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967).

⁴ Quoted by Ferm, Op. cit., p. 36, n. 6.

external environment. This comes about in Rogers' view when . . .

"There is much blockage of internal communication between the self and experience."¹

Wilfried Daim makes a very interesting observation about individual personality and the "Absolute" based on the research of C.G. Jung and his own clinical experience: ". . . The unconscious knows no distinction between God and the Self. This statement contains the correct observation that in the analytic process the personality centre and its particular 'Absolute' are intimately interrelated. Man tends to identify himself with his specific 'Absolute' and for this reason his 'Absolute' is identical with his experiently known personality centre."²

Returning to our initial inquiry into Luther, the psychologists quoted have suggested several possible psychic roots giving rise to his life-long tensions and struggles: "massive conflict"; complexity of psychic life co-ordination; the cause is "within man"; the inter-relation between God and personal self was also noted. Do any or all of these clues fit Luther? Let us examine more closely the theological battlefield of his soul, the very essence of his faith and character. What produced the complexity of conflict within his being? How did this conflict manifest itself? How was it resolved? Luther, himself, suggests a starting point for our investigation in the Table Talk:

¹Carl R. Rogers, On Becoming a Person (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961), pp. 132ff.

²Wilfried Daim, Depth Psychology and Salvation, trans. and ed. Kurt F. Reinhardt (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1963), p. 114.

"I didn't learn my theology all at once. I had to ponder over it ever more deeply, and my spiritual trials were of help to me in this, for one does not learn anything without practice. This is what the spiritualists and sects lack. They don't have the right adversary, the devil. He would teach them well. None of the arts can be learned without practice. What kind of physician would that be who stayed in school all the time? When he finally puts his medicine to use and deals more and more with nature, he will come to see that he hasn't as yet mastered the art. Why shouldn't this be so in the case of the Holy Scriptures, too, where God has provided a different adversary? It is therefore the greatest gift [of God] to have a text and to be able to say, 'This is right. I know it'. People think that they can know everything by simply listening to a sermon. Zwingli also made the mistake of thinking that he knew everything, that theology is an easy art. But I know that I have yet to comprehend the Lord's Prayer. No one can be learned without practice. The peasant put it well: Armor is fine for a man who knows how to use it. To be sure, the Holy Scriptures are sufficient in themselves, but God grant that I find the right text. For when Satan disputes with me whether God is gracious to me, I dare not quote the passage, 'He who loves God will inherit the kingdom of God', [Cf. 1 Cor. 2:9] because Satan will at once object, 'But you have not loved God!' Nor can I oppose this on the ground that I am a diligent reader [of the Scriptures] and a preacher. The shoe doesn't fit. I should say, rather, that Jesus Christ died for me and should cite the article [of the Creed] concerning forgiveness of sin. That will do it!"

Upon Luther's own reflection here, about the necessity of time intervals for the learning of his theology, stimulated by his spiritual struggles, let us now trace this learning process through a reconnaissance of a number of significant events from three periods of his life: the "young", "middle aged", and "aging" Christian Reformer.²

¹ LW 54, Table Talk #352, Fall 1532, pp. 50-51.

² Research will be directed primarily to Luther's own Letters and Table Talks. It is not my intention to give a biographical sketch in great detail. However, a number of important events, spanning Luther's entire career have been selected in order to facilitate our study of his relentless search for self-identity.

Chapter I: Young Luther (1483-1519)¹

In a letter written to George Spalatin,² Wittenberg, January 14, 1520, Luther recounts the facts of his early childhood:

Concerning my family background, no one can give more trustworthy information than the counts of Mansfeld. I believe that these nobles have enough of a name and authority in the Empire to deserve to be believed on this subject . . . I was born, by the way at Eisleben, [November 10, 1483] and baptized there in St. Peter's Church [November 11, 1483]. I do not remember this, but I believe my parents and the folks at home. My parents are at Eisenach, and I am known there and recognized by them even today, since I went to school there for four years [1498-1501], and there is no other town in which I am better known. I hope the people there would not have been so stupid that any one of them would call the son of Luther "nephew", another "uncle", another "cousin" (I have many of them there), had they known that my father and my mother were Bohemians or other such people, rather than those born in their midst. The rest of my life I spent in school [1501-1505] and in the monastery at Erfurt [July, 1505ff] until I came to Wittenberg [1508/09, then permanently 1511]. I was also in Magdeburg for one year at the age of fourteen [1497/98].

Now you know my life and family. I would prefer, however, to be silent about [my background], just as Christ was silent when accused before Herod and Annas . . .³

The suggestions that astrology and prominent parents were important to his later accomplishments, are strongly rejected by Luther:

Thereupon somebody said, "Doctor, many astrologers agree that in the case of your horoscope the constellations that presided over your birth showed that you would bring about a great change."

The doctor Martin Luther replied, "There's nothing sure about the time of my birth. Philip and I disagree by a year on this. In the second place, do you think that our cause and my activity

¹ Actually, existing sources are quite scarce concerning Luther's ancestral family. See Schwieberg, Op. cit., pp. 102ff.

² Spalatin (1484-1545) was court chaplain, secretary and private advisor to Elector Frederick, and librarian at the University of Wittenberg. He was one of Luther's closest friends even though they had mutual disagreements, e.g. LW 48, Letters I, p. 326 and pp. 382ff.

³ LW 48, Letters I, pp. 145-146.

have been placed under the direction of your uncertain art? Ah, no! It's something else. It's God's work alone. You will never persuade me otherwise."

Then the same person said, "However, manifest experience teaches that those born to distinguished parents have accomplished something great." The doctor replied, "The contrary is true. I am the son of a peasant, and peasants have become kings and emperors. In short, I set no store on this. You draw a conclusion from one, two, three, or four examples. What about the other hundred who were born the same hour under the same sign and don't have any correspondence at all with such advancement?"¹

However, Luther does admit that the strict discipline of his parents had a strong influence upon his entering the monastery. Here we have one of the first clues to his self-abasement:

... My parents kept me under very strict discipline, even to the point of making me timid. For the sake of a mere nut my mother beat me until the blood flowed. By such strict discipline they finally forced me into the monastery; though they meant it heartily well, I was only made timid by it. They weren't able to keep a right balance between temperament and punishment . . . ²

Little is known about Luther during his matriculations days at the University of Erfurt for his B.A. (1502) and M.A. (1505). There is, however, one Table Talk that alludes to his mood as being dominated by "trials" of sadness before his conversion:

When I was a young magister in Erfurt, verily, I used to go around in sadness, oppressed by the tentatio tristitiae. But God acted in a miraculous way and drove me on, innocent as I was; and He alone, then, can be said to have come a long way [in bringing it about] that there can be no dealing between the Pope and me. ³

¹LW 54, Table Talk #5573, Spring, 1543, pp. 458-459.

²Ibid., #3566a, Between March 28 and May 27, 1537, p. 235.

³WA, TR, III, #3593, trans. Erikson, Op. cit., 97.

Augustinian Monastery

Through many popularized accounts¹ Luther's resolve to enter the ~~Augustinian~~ cloister at Erfurt is well known. It seems that in a severe thunder-storm in July, 1505, as he returned to the University, he was struck to the ground by lightning. In the external crisis of that brilliant flash he was struck with terror to the core of his being. He felt something of God as the Almighty Judge tearing him apart. He was not convinced at that time, nor could he rely on the mediation of Christ between God and himself. Therefore, it seems quite understandable that he should cry out to the saint of his ancestors, the protecting saint of miners . . . "St. Anne help me! I will become a monk!"²

While this thunderstorm experience is well-known, a similar incident of terror involving an accident earlier during student days at the University is not so well known. Luther recalls the event years later:

When he [Martin Luther] set out for home and was on the way, he accidentally struck his shin on his short sword and cut an artery in his leg. At the time he was alone in the open field except for one companion, and he was as far from Erfurt as Eutzsch is distant from Wittenberg, that is, a half mile. The blood gushed from the wound and could not be stopped. When he pressed his finger on the wound, his leg became greatly swollen. Finally a surgeon was fetched from the town, and he bound up the wound. There he [Luther] was in danger of death and cried out, "Mary, help!" "I would have died", he now added, "with trust in Mary." Afterward, during the night, while he was in bed, the wound broke open. He almost bled to death and again prayed to Mary. This happened on the Tuesday after Easter [probably

¹For example, see John Osborne, Luther, A Play (London: Faber and Faber, 1961) and the award-winning motion picture: "Martin Luther", a Louis de Rochemont Associates Production for Lutheran Film Associates, c. 1953.

²Dokumente zur Luthers Entwicklung (Otto Scheel, Edition, 1929) noted under Eintritt, and quoted by Bainton, Op. cit., p. 34.

April 16, 1503].¹

Apparently Luther became an obedient monk, studied well, and was admitted after one year to his "profession".² He was then directed into studies for the priesthood, celebrating his first mass on May 2, 1507.

First Mass

Since the first mass of a priest was very much like a graduation with an accompanying celebration, Luther invited his family and some close friends to attend. The following letter of invitation is the oldest letter by Luther that has been preserved. It is addressed to an old friend, John Braun, Erfurt, April 22, 1507 and carries Luther's feeling of "a poor and humble man", a feeling probably quite akin to that of any monk at the time:

To the pious and venerable John Braun, a priest of Christ and Mary, a vicar at Eisenach, my dearest friend in Christ:

Greetings in Christ Jesus, our Lord. I would fear, kindest sir, to disturb your love with my burdensome letters and wishes, if I did not consider (on the basis of your gracious heart which is so generously inclined toward me) the sincere friendship I have experienced in so many ways and favors. Therefore I do not hesitate to write this little letter to you, trusting that in the closeness of our mutual friendship you will listen, and that it might find you easily approachable.

God, who is glorious and holy in all his works, has designed to exalt me magnificently--a miserable and totally unworthy sinner-- by calling me into his supreme ministry, solely on the

¹ LW 54, Table Talk #119, Between November 19 and 30, 1531, pp. 14-15.

²"I, brother Martin, profess and promise to obey the Almighty God and the Holy Virgin, and you, brother Winand, prior of this monastery, in the name of the vicar-general of this order . . . and to live without property and in chastity according to the rule of St. Augustine . . . unto death." Otto Scheel, Martin Luther: Op. cit., II, pp. 23-24, Quoted by Erikson, Op. cit., pp. 136-137.

basis of his bounteous mercy. Therefore I have to fulfill completely the office entrusted to me so that I may be acceptable (as much as dust can be acceptable to God) to such great splendor of divine goodness.

According to the resolution of my fathers, it is determined that I should begin this holy office with the help of God's grace on the fourth Sunday following Easter, which we call Cantate [May 2, 1507]. For this day was set aside to celebrate my first mass before God, since it is convenient to my father. To this then, kind friend, I invite you humbly, perhaps even boldly. I do this certainly not because I consider myself in a position, due to favors I may have granted you (there are none), to request you to inconvenience yourself with the trouble of such a journey to visit me, a poor and humble man; but I do so because I experienced your good will and your obvious kindness toward me when I visited you the other day, and in great abundance on many other occasions.

Therefore, dearest Father, Sir, and Friar (the first title is due to your age and office, the second due to your merits, the third due to your Order), please honor me with your presence if time and your clerical or domestic duties in any way permit, and support me with your valuable presence and prayers, that my sacrifice may be acceptable to God. You may bring along my kinsman Conrad (who was once sacristan at St. Nicholas Church), and anyone you may wish as a traveling companion, so long as he has freed himself from domestic obligations and will enjoy coming.

Finally I urge you to come right into our monastery to stay with us this little while (I am not afraid that you will settle down here!) and not to look elsewhere for quarters. You will have to become a cellarius, that is, an inhabitant of a monastic cell.

Farewell in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Written at our cloister in Erfurt on April 22, the year of [our] Lord, 1507.

Friar Martin Luther
from Mansfeld.¹

When we examine the comments that Luther makes about his first mass, we learn a great deal about his sensitive character in relation to his Heavenly Father and toward Hans Luther his earthly father. In recalling the experience, he speaks about being so utterly terrified

¹ LW 48, Letters 1, pp. 3-4.

to the point of almost having died!

"The first mass was an occasion for great profit [Martin Luther said]. It was a real time for snaring money by means of fees and presents. The canonical hours were then supplanted for the bridegroom by torches. Amid weeping of the spectators the priest had to have the first dance with his mother, if she were living, as Christ danced with his mother. When I celebrated my first mass in Erfurt I almost died because no faith was there. I reflected only on the dignity of my person, that I wasn't a sinner, that I shouldn't leave anything out."¹

. . . When all the others had left he stood with me [John Schlaginhaufen] in the court and said to me, "When I was about to hold my first mass, my father sent twenty gulden for food and came with twenty persons, all of whom he put up. Somebody said to him, 'You must have a good friend here that you should come to visit him with such a large company', etc.

When at length I stood before the altar and was to consecrate, I was so terrified by the words aeterno vivo vero Deo ["to Thee, the eternal, living, and true God"], that I thought of running away from the altar and said to my prior, 'Reverend Father, I'm afraid I must leave the altar'. He shouted to me, 'Go ahead, faster, faster!'

"So terrified was I by those words! Already I had forebodings that something was wrong, but God didn't give me an understanding of this until later."²

Afterward he spoke of his monastic life, into which he had been thrust against the will of his parents and all of his friends. "When I celebrated my first mass, I was almost desperate at the altar when I read the canon, 'To Thee, eternal and true God'. The next day I asked my father why he was so angry at me since everything turned out well. He answered, 'Don't you know the Fourth Commandment, Honor your father and your mother [Exod. 20:12]?' For he wanted to encourage me to study law, and in fact I already possessed a complete Corpus iuris. However, God wanted to get a jube Domine benedicere "Lord command me to extol thee" out of me, and I first had to learn and know the pope's tricks."³

"I, Martin Luther, entered the monastery against the will of

¹ LW 54, Table Talk #4174, -December 5, 1538, p. 325.

² Ibid., #1558, May 20, 1532, pp. 156-157.

³ Ibid., #4574, May 8, 1539, p. 354.

my father and lost favor with him, for he saw through the knavery of the monks very well. On the day on which I sang my first mass he said to me, 'Son, don't you know that you ought to honor your father? Just so it wasn't a phantom you saw! Later when I stood there during the mass and began the canon, I was so frightened that I would have fled if I hadn't been admonished by the prior. For when I read the words, 'Thee, therefore, most merciful Father', etc., and thought I had to speak to God without a Mediator; I felt like fleeing from the world like Judas. Who can bear the majesty of God without Christ as Mediator? In short, as a monk I experienced such horrors; I had to experience them before I could fight them."¹

Since Luther mentions his first mass several times in the Table Talk as we have noted above, it must have been a deeply moving and profound experience to have stuck in his mind all those years. He must have been shaken to the depths of his soul being petrified in the presence of a Holy God without a propitiator. His "lack" of faith in the living Christ at that point no doubt left him vulnerable to his enormous sense of unworthiness and insecurity.

There is also the additional dimension involving his own father that has been alluded to as well. Not only was Luther struck with a deep sense of unworthiness in the presence of his God, but in his sensitivity of conscience, he was also struck with a deep sense of his unworthiness as a son of Hans Luther. He knew very well that his father disapproved and was openly hostile toward him because of his decision to enter the monastery. When they met for the banquet after his first mass, Luther recalls the encounter in another Table Talk:

"As we sat at the table, I started to talk with him with a childish good comportment, wanting to put him in the wrong and

¹ Ibid., #3556A, Between March 28 and May 27, 1537, p. 234.

myself in the right, by saying: 'Dear father, why did you resist so hard and become so angry because you did not want to let me be a monk, and maybe even now you do not like too much to see me here, although it is a sweet and godly life, full of peace'. But then the father carried on in front of all the doctors, magisters and other gentlemen: 'You scholars, have you not read in the Scriptures that one should honor father and mother?'.

As we saw in the previous quotation, when Luther began to debate his father on this point, citing his "Damascus road" experience in the thunderstorm, he was resolutely rebuked: "Just so it wasn't a phantom you saw!".

Since this conflict between Luther and his father plays a significant role in later years, I will quote an additional passage similar to the others except that it ends with his father's advice for matrimony:

. . . He [Martin Luther] became a monk against the will of his father. When he celebrated his first mass and asked his father why he was angry about the step he took, the father replied reproachfully, "Don't you know that it's written, Honor your father and your mother" [Exod. 20:12]? When he excused himself by saying that he was so frightened by a storm that he was compelled to become a monk, his father answered, "Just so it wasn't a phantom you saw!". Afterward it was his father who advised him to get married. . . .²

It took about fifteen or sixteen years for Luther to respond adequately and freely to his father on this point. The evidence is found in a striking letter, November 21, 1521 in which he dedicates his treatise "On Monastic Vows" to his father:

To Hans Luther, my Father, I, Martin Luther, your son, send

¹ Dok., #508 Otto Scheel, Dokumente zu Luthers Entwicklung (Tuebingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1929), Quoted by Erikson, Op. cit., pp. 144-145.

² LW 54, Table Talk #623, Fall, 1533, p. 109.

greetings in Christ

This book I have decided to dedicate to you, dearest Father. I do not intend to make your name famous in the world and to glory in the flesh, which would be contrary to the teaching of St. Paul. Rather my purpose is to recall, in a short preface, what took place between you and me in order to indicate to the pious reader the argument and the content of this book, together with an example.

To begin with, I wish you to know that your son has reached the point where he is altogether persuaded that there is nothing holier, nothing more important, nothing more scrupulously to be observed than God's commandment. But here you will say, "Have you been so unfortunate as ever to doubt this, and have you only now learned that this is so?". Most unfortunately indeed I not only doubted it, but I did not at all know that it is so; and if you will permit me, I am ready to show you that this ignorance was common to both of us.

It is now almost sixteen years since I became a monk, taking the vow without your knowledge and against your will. In your paternal love you were fearful about my weakness because I was then a youth, just entering my twenty-second year (that is, to use St. Augustine's words, I was still "clothed in hot youth"), and you had learned from numerous examples that this way of life turned out sadly for many. You were determined, therefore, to tie me down with an honorable and wealthy marriage. This fear of yours, this care, this indignation against me was for a time implacable. Your friends tried in vain to persuade you that if you wished to offer something to God, you ought to give your dearest and your best. The Lord, meanwhile, was dinning in your ears that Psalm verse: "God knows the thoughts of men, that they are vain" [Ps. 94:11 -Vulgate]; but you were deaf. At last you resisted and bowed to the will of God, but your fears for me were never laid aside. For I remember very well that after we were reconciled and you were again talking with me, I told you that I had been called by the terrors of heaven and that I did not become a monk of my own free will and desire, still less to gain any gratification of the flesh, but that I was walled in by the terror and the agony of sudden death and forced by necessity to take the vow. Then you said, "Let us hope that it was not an illusion and a deception". That word penetrated to the depths of my soul and stayed there, as if God had spoken by your lips, though I hardened my heart against you and your word as much as I could. You said something else that I have hardly ever in all my life heard any man say anything which struck me so forcibly and stayed with me so long. "Have you not also heard", you said, "that parents are to be obeyed?". But I was so sure of my own righteousness that in you I heard only a man, and boldly ignored you; though in my heart I could not ignore your word.

See, now, whether you, too, were not unaware that the commandments of God are to be put before all things. If you had known

that I was then in your power, would you not have used your paternal authority to pull me out of the cowl? On the other hand, had I known it, I would never have attempted to become a monk without your knowledge and consent, even though I had to die many deaths. For my vow was not worth a fig, since by taking it I withdrew myself from the authority and guidance of the parent to whom I was subject by God's commandment; indeed, it was a wicked vow, and proved that it was not of God not only because it was a sin against your authority, but because it was not absolutely free and voluntary. In short: it was taken in accordance with the doctrines of men and the superstition of hypocrites, none of which has God commanded. But behold how much good God (whose mercies are without number and whose wisdom is without end) has made to come out of all these errors and sins! Would you now not rather have lost a hundred sons than not have seen this good?

But to come back to you, my Father; would you still take me out of the monastery? But that you would not boast of it, the Lord has anticipated you, and taken me out himself. What difference does it make whether I retain or lay aside the cowl and tonsure? Do they make the monk? "All things are yours, and you are Christ's", says Paul. Shall I belong to the cowl, or shall not the cowl rather belong to me? My conscience has been freed, and that is the most complete liberation. Therefore I am still a monk and yet not a monk. I am a new creature, not of the pope but of Christ. The pope also has his creatures, but he creates puppets and straw-men, that is, masks and idols of himself. I myself was formerly one of them, led astray by the various usages of words, by which even the Sage confesses that he was brought into the danger of death but by God's grace was delivered.

But am I not robbing you again of your right and authority? No, for your authority over me still remains, so far as the monastic life is concerned; but this is nothing to me anymore, as I have said. Nevertheless God, who has taken me out of the monastery, has an authority over me that is greater than yours; you see that he has placed me now not in the pretended monastic service but in the true service of God. Who can doubt that I am in the ministry of the Word? And it is plain that the authority of parents must yield to this service, for Christ says, "He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." Not that this word destroys the authority of parents, for the Apostle Paul often insists that children should obey their parents; but if the authority of parents conflicts with the authority or calling of Christ, then Christ's authority must reign alone.

Therefore--so I am now absolutely persuaded--I could not have

refused to obey you without endangering my conscience unless Christ had added the ministry of the Word of my monastic profession. This is what I meant when I said that neither you nor I realized that God's commandments must be put before everything else. . . .

I am sending [you] this book, then, in which you may see by what signs and wonders Christ has absolved me from the monastic vow and granted me such great liberty. Although he has made me servant of all men, I am, nevertheless, subject to no one except to him alone. He is himself (as they say) my immediate bishop, abbot, prior, lord, father, and teacher; I know no other. Thus I hope that he has taken from you one son in order that he may begin to help the sons of many others through me. You ought not only to endure this willingly, but you ought to rejoice with exceeding joy--and this I am sure is what you will do. . . .

Farewell in the Lord, my dearest Father, and greet in Christ my mother, your Margaret, and our whole family.
From the wilderness, November 21, 1521.¹

Doctor of Sacred Theology

The next event we shall consider is Luther's receiving his theological doctorate. Up to this point and beyond in the development of his character, he is repeatedly plagued by intense feelings of worthlessness and self-despair. In fact, in September of 1511, when John Staupitz² first suggested that he should try for his doctorate, he immediately drew up a list of reasons why he felt incompetent for such a rigorous program of study: "It is a waste of energy and money, because such a thing would probably be the death of me."³ To which Staupitz replied: "That doesn't matter much; God in heaven can use

¹ LW 48, Letters I, pp. 330-336.

² John Staupitz (d. 1524) was the vicar general of the Augustinian Observantists in Germany, while Luther was still in the Erfurt monastery.

³ Quoted by Willem J. Kooiman, "Luther as He Saw Himself" in The Mature Luther (Decorah, Iowa: Luther College Press, 1959), p. 76.

doctors of theology as His advisers, for He is extremely busy!"¹

In due course, Luther was made a Doctor of Theology and given an official position at the University of Wittenberg. This was against his own preference, but nonetheless, in obedience to his superior:

"I, doctor Martin Luther, have been called and forced to take this doctor's degree. Against my own will, merely out of obedience, I have done this. Then I had to take the chair, and I swore and promised on the Holy Scriptures, so dear to me, to preach and teach the Word of God truly and purely."²

The ceremony took place on October 19, 1512 to which Luther invited his old friends from the Erfurt monastery.³ He then began his new work as lecturing on Psalms, Romans and Galatians. Yet, even as a highly esteemed new doctor, his old doubts continued to plague him. In his own words, he had not yet seen "the light".⁴

Tower Experience

As stated earlier in this section, the actual date of Luther's

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. 77 (WA XXX (3), 386).

³ See LW 48, Letters 1: "To the Augustinians at Erfurt Wittenberg, September 22, 1512", pp. 6-7. (WA, Br 1,18) -- a letter of invitation. . . It should also be noted that in the years that followed, Luther relied heavily upon the fact that he was a doctor of theology. For example, he justified his speaking out against indulgences and other abuses in the church because of his oath and responsibility to the Roman Catholic Church as an official Doctor of Sacred Theology. See a letter addressed to Cardinal Albrecht, Arch-Bishop of Mainz, Wittenberg, October 31, 1517, where Luther protests the abusive sale of indulgences: LW 48, Letters 1, pp. 45-49.

⁴ WA XLV, 86: Quoted by Schwieberg, Op. cit., p. 196.

"Tower Experience" is still in doubt today even after the prolonged efforts of the best Reformation scholars.¹ For our purpose, it is more important to follow Luther's own description of this experience rather than to try to determine its exact date. He had been rigorously trained in the University and monastery at Erfurt. He was ordained a priest and had received his doctorate in theology. However, none of these momentous acts of devotion and scholarship brought him peace of mind and soul. However, he was not to endure this lingering affliction and dark night of soul much longer. As he continued his lectures, he not only recovered some valuable self-esteem previously lacking, but he also gave birth to a powerful new theology. The following two references give Luther's description of this climatic breakthrough:

"The words 'righteous' and 'righteousness of God' struck my conscience like lightning. When I heard them I was exceedingly terrified. If God is righteous [I thought], he must punish. But when by God's grace I pondered, in the tower and heated room of this building, over the words, "He who through faith is righteous shall live" [Rom. 1:17] and "the righteousness of God" [Rom. 3:21], I soon came to the conclusion that if we, as righteous men, ought to live from faith and if the righteousness of God should contribute to the salvation of all who believe, then salvation won't be our merit but God's mercy. My spirit was

¹For a summary of the various solutions concerning the date, see Uuras Saarnivaare, Luther Discovers the Gospel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), pp. 48ff. Dr. Saarnivaare groups the solutions proposed: 1) Luther's discovery took place while he was preparing his first lectures on the Psalms, between the late fall of 1512 and the summer of 1513; 2) The "tower experience" took place during Luther's first lectures on the Psalms, 1513-14; 3) Luther's discovery occurred sometime during the years 1514-16; and 4) Luther is right in stating that his "tower experience" took place toward the end of 1518. . . . My own conclusion favors #3 in that the great theological dawning seems to have come out of teaching the Book of Romans 1515 and certainly before October 31/1517 when he posted the 95 theses.

thereby cheered. For it's by the righteousness of God that we're justified and saved through Christ. These words which had before terrified me now became more pleasing to me. The Holy Spirit unveiled the Scriptures for me in the tower."¹

"That expression 'righteousness of God' was like a thunderbolt in my heart. When under the papacy I read, 'In thy righteousness deliver me' Ps. 31:1 and 'in thy truth', I thought at once that this righteousness was an avenging anger, namely, the wrath of God. I hated Paul with all my heart when I read that the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel Rom. 1:16,17. Only afterward, when I saw the words that follow--namely, that it's written that the righteous shall live through the faith Rom. 1:17 --and in addition consulted Augustine, was I cheered. When I learned that the righteousness of God is his mercy, and that he makes us righteous through it, a remedy was offered to me in my affliction."²

We are given here a glimpse of the historical, momentous, theological discovery that captivated Luther while studying Romans 1:16-17 . . .

"The just shall live by faith". . . . Herein was the revolutionary insight for all of life and eternity. God's righteousness was not consigned to wrath and judgement. Rather His righteousness is revealed in His gracious and merciful gift, in the person of His Son through Whom He declares us righteous. This is why Luther said his spirit was "cheered" and he found here a "remedy" in his "affliction".

Commenting further on this discovery, Luther writes the following in his "Preface to Latin Writings":

At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, "In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.'" There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the

¹LW 54, Table Talk #3232c, Between June 9 and July 21, 1532, pp. 193-194.

²Ibid., #4007, September 12, 1538, pp. 308-309.

righteousness of God is revealed by the Gospel, namely, passive righteousness with which merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live". Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates. There a totally other face of the entire Scripture showed itself to me. Thereupon I ran through the Scriptures from memory. I also found in other terms an analogy, as, the work of God, that is, what God does in us, the power of God, with which he makes us strong, the wisdom of God, with which he makes us wise, the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God!

Though the battle of life and death had been won, and Luther had redress for his spiritual trials and temptations in the passive righteousness of God, yet his struggles with the Anfechtung continue. In a letter of October 21, 1516, Luther gives his daily routine, and mentions these struggles:

To the venerable Father John Lang, Bachelor of Theology, prior of the Augustinians at Erfurt, my friend

Greetings. I nearly need two copyists or secretaries. All day long I do almost nothing else than write letters; therefore I am sometimes not aware of whether or not I constantly repeat myself, but you will see. I am a preacher at the monastery, I am a reader at mealtimes, I am asked daily to preach in the city church, I have to supervise the study of novices and friars, I am a vicar (and that means I am eleven times prior), I am caretaker of the fish pond at Leitzkau, I represent the people of Herzberg at the court in Torgau, I lecture on Paul, and I am assembling material for a commentary on the Psalms. As I have already mentioned, the greater part of my time is filled with the job of letter writing. I hardly have any uninterrupted time to say the Hourly Prayers and celebrate mass. Besides all this there are my own struggles with the flesh, the world, and the devil.² See what a lazy man I am!³

¹ LW 34, Career of the Reformer IV, "Preface to the Complete Edition of Luther's Latin Writings, 1545", p. 337.

² Luther is referring here to the geistliche Anfechtung.

³ LW 48, Letters I, pp. 27-28.

The Ninety-Five Theses

Much to his dismay, Luther's popularity grew rapidly as a University lecturer and pastor. On October 31, 1517, out of pastoral concern for the people, he posted his ninety-five theses on the church door at Wittenberg, calling for scholarly debate within the Roman church over the ecclesiastical abuse of indulgences:

. . . When at the beginning I wrote against indulgences, I thought that I might remain still while I humbly sought the opinions of others. I assumed that afterward other people would appear who could carry on better than I could . . .

"God knows, I never thought of going so far as I did. I intended only to attack indulgences. If anybody had said to me when I was at the Diet of Worms, 'In a few years you'll have a wife and your own household', I wouldn't have believed it." ²

"God led us away from all this in a wonderful way; without my being aware of it he took me away from that game more than twenty years ago. How difficult it was at first when we journeyed toward Kemberg after All Saints' Day in the year 1517, when I first made up my mind to write against the crass errors of indulgences! Dr. Jerome Schurff advised against this: 'You wish to write against the pope? What are you trying to do? It won't be tolerated!' I replied, 'And if they have to tolerate it?' Presently Sylvester, master of the sacred palace, entered the arena, fulminating against me with this syllogism: 'Whoever questions what the Roman church says and does is heretical. Luther questions what the Roman church says and does, and therefore he is a heretic.' So it all began." ³

It is interesting to note that even up to a year after the Theses were posted, Luther felt strongly the need to submit to the pope's authority and to recant if necessary:

The honorable Sir Charles Miltitz, chamber secretary to Your Holiness, has been with us. In the presence of the Most

¹ LW 54, Table Talk #2838b, December 8-11, 1532, p. 174.

² Ibid., #1654, June 12-July 12, 1532, p. 160.

³ Ibid., #3722, February 2, 1538, p. 264.

Illustrious Sovereign Frederick he very harshly accused me in the name of Your Holiness of lacking respect for and being rash toward the Roman church and Your Holiness, and demanded satisfaction for this. Hearing this, I was deeply grieved that my most loyal service has had such an unhappy outcome and that what I had under-taken--to guard the honor of the Roman church--had resulted in disgrace and was suspected of all wickedness, even so far as the head of the church was concerned. But what am I to do, Most Holy Father? I do not know what to do further: I cannot bear the power of your wrath, and I do not know of any means to escape it. The demand is made that I recant my theses. If such a revocation could accomplish what I was attempting to do with my thesis, I would issue it without hesitation. . . .

Most Holy Father, before God and all his creation, I testify that I have never wanted, nor do I today want to touch in any way the authority of the Roman church and of Your Holiness or demolish it by any craftiness. On the contrary I confess the authority of this church to be supreme over all, and that nothing, be it in heaven or on earth, is to be preferred to it, save the one Jesus Christ who is Lord of all--nor should Your Holiness believe the schemers who claim otherwise, plotting evil against this Martin.

However, it was not long afterward that Luther debated Eck publicly² challenging the pope's supremacy in matters of the Christian faith.

Luther recalls the debate with these words:

"So I put the squeeze on Eck when he tried to prove the primacy of Peter. Peter, he said, walked on the water: the body of water is the world; therefore Peter is the prince of the apostles. I laughed at Eck for following Bernard in calling the apostles the world. Driven into a corner Eck exclaimed, 'See, he doesn't acknowledge the authority of St. Bernard!' But I stuck to it, let Bernard be Bernard, and exposed the interpretation that the water on which Peter walked is the world³

It was soon obvious that the theological climate of 1519-1520 had

¹LW 48, Letters 1, Draft of a letter to Pope Leo X, January 5 or 6, 1519, pp. 101-102 (WA, Br 1, 292-293).

²See "The Leipzig Debate" -1519 Disputation and Defense of Brother Martin Luther against the Accusations of Dr. John Eck. Trans. from WA 2, 158-161 by Harold J. Grim: LW 31, "Career of the Reformer 1", pp. 313-318.

³LW 54, Table Talk, #3329a, May or June, 1533, p. 197.

reached a point of no return. The young Luther could no longer reconcile himself to leading a reform from within the church. On July 10, 1520, he wrote to his friend Spalatin: "I have cast the die . . . I will not reconcile myself to them in all eternity."¹ Shortly thereafter, the pope published a bull threatening excommunication.

¹Enders II, 432-433: Quoted by Erikson, Op. cit., p. 229.

Chapter II: The Middle-Aged Luther (1520-1530)

In his new identity as theological reformer, Luther surged ahead preaching and writing numerous critiques on such topics as the Sacraments, penance and good works. Near the end of 1520, he published three documents in German that raised a fanfare across the country. Whether he intended it or not, he gained the additional identity of political reformer: An Den Christlichen Adel Deutscher Nation ("To the Christian Nobility of German Nationality"); Ueber die Babylonische Gefangenschaft der Kirche ("On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church"); and Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen ("About the Freedom of a Christian").¹

Very briefly, these documents outlined revolutionary theological and political liberties for everyone regardless of class or position in society. Theologically, Luther pointed out the priesthood of all believers. Every Christian is a priest before God by virtue of his Baptism and faith in God's Word as revealed in the Scriptures. Monastic vows were considered to be of human origin and if taken at all, should be postponed until at least thirty years of age. Politically, he preached open revolt against the pope's authority over political rulers, saying in one place that it was quite proper "to wash our hands in the blood of cardinals and popes."² Luther lived to regret deeply the insurrection and bloodshed by extremists based on these

¹ LW 31, Career of the Reformer I, pp. 320ff. See the detailed account of these three pamphlets in James Mackinnon, Luther and the Reformation, II (London: Longmans Green, 1930), pp. 222-270.

² Quoted by Erikson, Op. cit., p. 229.

views.

Pope Leo X responded to all of this with his bull of excommunication, which Luther took on December 10, 1520, outside the gates of Wittenberg and burned it along with other documents amid the cheers of his students and friends. He reports this event in a letter to George Spalatin on the same day:

Greetings. On December 10, 1520, at nine o'clock in the morning, all the following papal books were burned in Wittenberg at the eastern gate near the Church of the Holy Cross: the Decretum, the Decretals, the Liber Sextus, the Clementines, the Extra-vagantes various parts of Canon Law, and the most recent bull of Leo X; likewise the Summa Angelica, Eck's Chrysopassus and other books by this author, writings of Emser, and certain other books were added by different people. This was done so that the incendiary papists may see that it doesn't take much to burn books they cannot refute. This is the news here. . . .¹

It is interesting to note that while Luther may have initially felt anguish over this kind of radical action, later he claims that among all the other reforming acts to date, he was most pleased with this burning! . . . "I have burned the books of the pope and the bull, at first with trembling and praying; but now I am more pleased with this than with any other action of my life, for these books were worse than I thought."²

Diet of Worms (1521)

Luther's appearance at the Diet of Worms turned out to be one of the most dramatic events in his entire career. If he would not recant

¹ LW 48, Letters 1, pp. 186-187 (WA, Br 2, 234).

² Ibid., "To John von Staupitz-Wittenberg, January 14, 1521", p. 192 (WA, Br 2, 245-246).

what he had written, he faced the possibility of being put to death as a malicious heretic. After a few days at the Diet, the answer Luther gave was a powerful personal testimony derived from his own persistent search for inner peace. He could not at this point quote the pope, church fathers, traditional creeds or documents. He could only quote the Scripture and reflect upon these eternal truths within his own experience of life's struggles:

"Since then your serene majesty and your lordships seek a simple answer, I will give it in this manner, neither horned nor toothed: Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience."

"I cannot do otherwise, here I stand. . . may God help me. Amen."¹

This emphasis upon individual conscience captive to the Word opened the way for new religious life and freedom, but unfortunately, it also led the way to open rebellion and insurrection. The latter never was Luther's intention: "Had I desired to foment trouble, I could have brought great bloodshed upon Germany. Yea, I could have started such a little game at Worms that the Emperor would not have been safe. But what would it have been? A fool's game. I left it to the Word."²

It was not long after Luther's historic proclamation, that the

¹ LW 32, Career of the Reformer II, pp. 112-113 (WA 7, 814-857).

² Works of Martin Luther, Philadelphia II, p. 400, Quoted by Erikson, p. 231. See #5342b Table Talk, in Appendix: for a detailed account of the Diet of Worms as Luther recalled it in 1540.

Emperor Charles V placed him under a ban.¹ That is why Luther exclaimed in 1532 that he had been excommunicated not only once, or twice, but three times!

"Three times have I been excommunicated. The first time was by Dr. Staupitz, who absolved me from the observance and rule of the Augustinian Order so that, if the pope pressed him to imprison me or command me to be silent, he could excuse himself on the ground that I was not under his obedience. The second was by the pope and the third was by the emperor. Consequently, I cannot be accused of laying aside my habit, and I am now silent by divine authority alone."²

In any case, Luther's Elector Frederick arranged for his being kidnapped and safely placed in seclusion at Wartburg Castle, May 4, 1521.³

¹Luther was declared an outlaw of the empire: See LW 32, Career of the Reformer 11, pp. 114-115, n. 9 for the emperor's declaration, which reads in part as follows: ". . . For it would be a great shame to me and to you, who are the noble and renowned German nation, who are by privilege and pre-eminent standing singularly called to be defenders and protectors of the Catholic faith, if in our time not only heresy but suspicion of heresy or decrease of the Christian religion should through our negligence dwell after us in the hearts of men and our successors to our perpetual dishonor. And after having heard the obstinate answer which Luther gave yesterday, April 18, in the presence of us all, I declare to you that I regret having so long delayed to proceed against this Luther and his false doctrine and I am no longer willing to hear him speak more, but I am making it clear that immediately, according to the mandate, he be taken back keeping the tenor of his safe-conduct without preaching or admonishing the people with his bad doctrine and making sure that no disorder results. And as I have said before, I am determined to proceed against him as a notorious heretic, requesting of you that you conduct yourselves in this matter as good Christians as you have promised it to me and are held to do it. Given by my hand this nineteenth day of April, 1521. Signed Carolus."

²LW 54, Table Talk, #225, Between April 7-15, 1532, p. 30.

³See Schwiebert, Op. cit., pp. 513-515.

At Wartburg Castle

Luther's exile at the Wartburg Castle from May, 1521 to March, 1522 was, in many ways, a very fruitful time for him. He had time to reflect on the events immediately preceeding his capture, and to meditate on his newly discovered theological insights and revelations. He wrote his book On Monastic Vows¹ and translated the New Testament into the German language.² This does not mean, however, that the sojourn at Wartburg was a pleasant or blissful experience without any personal ambiguities. In fact as we shall see in some of his letters, he was tortured in spirit by grotesque paradoxes that began to emerge into his consciousness in terms of his own lusts; longing for Christian fellowship; despairing of self; health problems; disputations with the devil; and prolonged periods of melancholia. All of these seem to be in sharp contradiction of his Reformation teaching of Christian freedom in all things.

Let us now examine portions of his letters from Wartburg, particularly those that reveal his wrestling with the geistliche Anfechtung. To begin, we note that during the first month of his stay in the castle, he reproaches himself and declares that his former troubles continue to plague him again:

Greetings. What are you doing these days, my Philip? Are you not praying for me that this retreat to which I unwillingly consented may result in something great for God's glory? I am quite eager to know your reaction [to my disappearance]. I was afraid it would look as if I had deserted the battle array; and yet there was no way to resist those who wanted and advised this.

¹See WA 8, 577ff.

²See Schwiebert, Op. cit., pp. 527ff.

I desire nothing more than to meet the fury of my enemies head on.

Sitting here all day, I picture to myself the state of the church and I see fulfilled the word of Psalm 89 [47]: "Hast thou made all sons of men in vain?" God, what a horrible picture of God's wrath is that detestable kingdom of the Roman Antichrist! I abhor the hardness of my heart, that I am not completely melted to tears, so that I too might shed fountains of tears for the slain sons of my people. But there is no one who arises and lays hold on God, or places himself as a wall for the house of Israel on this last day of God's wrath. O kingdom of the pope, worthy of the end and the dregs of the ages! God have mercy on us!¹

I definitely do not want you all to worry about me in any way. As far as I am concerned, all is well, except that the troubles of my soul have not yet ceased, and the former weakness of the spirit and faith persists. . . .²

In another letter of Philip Melanchthon, July 13, 1521, Luther claims that his free time lends itself to becoming pre-occupied with his temptations and health problems: "Already eight days have passed in which I have written nothing, in which I have not prayed or studied; this is partly because of temptations of the flesh, partly because I am tortured by other burdens. . . ."³

Writing to George Spalatin, September 9, 1521, he includes the following exhortation to pray and declares his anger at self for not doing so:

Now is the time to pray against Satan with all our strength; he is threatening Germany with some fatal tragedy. And in spite of my fear that the Lord will allow him to bring it about, until now I have been sleepy and lazy, both in praying and resisting Satan, so that I am angry at myself, and am a burden to myself. Perhaps it is because I am alone and you are not helping me. I

¹ LW 48, Letters I, To Philip Melanchthon, May 12, 1521, p. 215.

² Ibid., May 26, 1521, p. 232.

³ Ibid., p. 257. When Luther refers to "other burdens" here, he means such things as his prolonged periods of constipation.

beg you, let us pray and watch that we do not enter into temptation. I have nothing else to write just now. . . .

In writing to Nicholas Gerbel, November 1, 1521, we note Luther's growing restlessness, desiring to return from his exile, because he feels it is far easier to combat evil personified in people than in spirit:

But you may believe me, in this leisurely solitude, I am exposed to a thousand devils. It is so much easier to fight the devil incarnate--that is, people--than the spirits of iniquity in heavenly places. Often I fall, but the right hand of the Most High raises me again. Therefore I yearn again and again for companionship.² But I do not want to go back unless the Lord has called me back.

Yet for all the anguish the Anfechtung caused him in his solitude, Luther does not discredit the profound lessons for life that one can learn through them. In fact he goes so far as to suggest that these trials and temptations can be used as criteria for testing the authenticity of preachers:

In order to explore their individual spirit, too, you should inquire whether they have experienced spiritual distress and the divine birth, death and hell. If you should hear that all their experiences are pleasant, quiet, devout (as they say), and spiritual, then don't approve of them, even if they should say that they were caught up to the third heaven. The sign of the Son of Man is then missing, which is the only touchstone of Christians and a certain differentiator between the spirits. Do you want to know the place, time, and manner of true conversations with God? Listen: "Like a lion has he broken all my bones"; "I am cast out from before your eyes"; "My soul is filled with grief, and my life has approached hell." . . .³

Nevertheless, despite all his self struggles and loneliness, Luther could still work hard at times and accomplish a great deal! As

¹ Ibid., p. 308.

² Ibid., p. 319.

³ Ibid., "To Philip Melancton, January 13, 1522", pp. 366-367.

noted earlier, he wrote his book on Monastic Vows and prefaced it with a letter of dedication to his father.¹ Perhaps much more important is his translation of the Greek New Testament to German. Into this translation, he poured himself with all the richness of the vernacular to produce the Scriptures in "living" letters for the people. Some years later in evaluating Luther's translation of the Old and New Testaments, Nietzsche wrote: "the master-piece of German prose is, appropriately enough, the masterwork of Germany's greatest preacher: the Bible so far has been the best German book. Compared with Luther's Bible, almost everything else is 'literature' that is, a thing which has not grown in German and has not grown, and does not grow, into German hearts as the Bible has done."²

In translating the Scriptures, Luther saw his great opportunity to have the Word taught and proclaimed in the indigenous language. Although this was extremely arduous labor, he said one time: "God bestows all good things; but you must take the bull by the horns, you must do the work and so provide God with an opportunity and a disguise."³ In another place he said: "I have had such trouble with translating! No one would have persuaded me by favors or gold to translate a book had I not done it for the sake of my Lord Christ."⁴ In summary of his work Luther wrote: "This I can say with a good conscience: I have

¹ LW 48, Letters I, pp. 328ff.

² Nietzsche, Ref. 32, Chapter III, p. 216, Quoted by Erikson, Op. cit., p. 233.

³ LWWA XXX I, 436, trans. Gordon Rupp, The Righteousness of God (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953), p. 293.

⁴ WA, TR II, #2623b, trans. Plass, Vol. I, p. 107.

used the utmost faithfulness and care in this work, and I never had any intention to falsify anything. . . ."¹ And in a Table Talk, Mathesius recorded these words of Luther: "This German Bible (this is not praise for myself but the work praises itself) is so good and precious that it's better than all other versions, Greek and Latin, and one can find more in it than in all commentaries, for we are removing impediments and difficulties so the other people may read it without hindrance."²

The Peasants' Revolt - 1525

When Luther returned to Wittenberg, after his Wartburg exile, the Elector turned over the Augustinian monastery to him since it had been previously vacated by the monks. From this station he continued his work of the Reformation. In September, 1522, his translation of the New Testament was published. Other books and treatises followed soon thereafter: On Civil Government - March, 1523; on The Order of Worship, Pentecost 1523; to Councilmen on Christian Schools, 1524; and on The Bondage of the Will, September, 1524. Even as he was now well settled into a routine of literary challenge and debate, a phenomenon began to arise all over Germany that would shake him again to the very core of his being. This phenomenon was the insurrection by the peasants. Although Luther felt his earlier teachings were perverted, yet some of these words came back to haunt him. For example, concerning those in ecclesiastical authority . . . "What do they better

¹WA, XXX II, 640, trans. Plass, Vol. I, p. 106.

²LW 54, Table Talk, #5324, Between October 19 and November 5, 1540, p. 408. More details on Luther's work of translating the Scriptures can be found in Chapter X.

deserve than a strong uprising which will sweep them from the earth? And we would smile, did it happen."¹ . . . "In Christendom . . . all things are in common and each man's goods are the other's, and nothing is simply a man's own."² Further, he had also written: "The common man has been brooding over the injury he has suffered in property, in body, and in soul. . . . If I had ten bodies . . . I would most gladly give all to death in behalf of these poor men."³

The Twelve Articles of the peasants were presented to Luther in March, 1525. He was pleased in general with the evangelical tone such as: "To the Christian reader, peace and grace of God through Christ. . . . The Gospel is not a cause of rebellion and disturbance."⁴ The Articles had to do with church polity, the calling of a pastor and his support by the local congregation; abolishing the tithe on cattle; fields, forests and waters should be held in common; rents to be established in relation to quality of the land: and serfdom should be completely abolished.⁵ These demands were fairly conservative and in most cases fair, taking into consideration the cruel ways the princes had dealt with the peasants in the past. Luther felt the only way to work out a mutually acceptable solution was through

¹WA 38, 142: Quoted by Erikson, Op. cit., p. 235.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Quoted by Bainton, Op. cit., p. 273.

⁵See Bainton, Ibid., pp. 273-274.

arbitration. However, neither side wanted to take this route, and soon open rebellion and warfare resulted.

Luther warned against such violence in An Ernest Exhortation for all Christians. Warning Them Against Insurrection and Rebellion: "No insurrection is ever right no matter what the cause. . . . My sympathies are and all along will be with those against whom insurrection is made."¹

The peasants may not have ended up in such a bloody rebellion if it had not been for Thomas Muntzer.² He had been earlier banished to Bohemia, but now returned to take over control of the local government in a Saxon village. In Muntzer, the peasants found a leader and rallied around him:

Luther says that the poor people have enough in their faith. Doesn't he see that usury and taxes impede the reception of the faith? He claims that the Word of God is sufficient. Doesn't he realize that men whose every moment is consumed in the making of a living have not time to learn to read the Word of God? The princes bleed the people with usury and count as their own the fish in the stream, the bird of the air, and the grass of the field, and Dr. Liar says, "Amen!". What courage has he, Dr. Pussyfoot, the new pope of Wittenberg, Dr. Easychair, the basking sycophant? He says there should be no rebellion, because the sword has been committed by God to the ruler, but the power of the sword belongs to the whole community. In the good old days the people stood by when judgement was rendered lest the ruler pervert justice, and the rulers have perverted justice. They shall be cast down from their seats. The fowls of the heavens are gathering to devour their carcasses. . . .
... "Now is the time", Muntzer cried. "If you be only three wholly committed unto God, you need not fear one hundred thousand. On! On! On! Spare not! Pity not the godless when they cry. Remember the command of God to Moses to destroy utterly and show

¹Quoted by Erikson, Op. cit., p. 235.

²Bainton, Op. cit., pp. 277ff.

no mercy. The whole countryside is in commotion. Strike! Clang! Clang! On! On!"¹

Luther tried to preach against the uprising, but was himself met with violence. He wrote Against the Murderous and Thieving Hordes of Peasants² and Müntzer . . . "Who does nothing else but stir up robbery, murder and bloodshed."³ In a letter written May 4, 1525, he urges all necessary force be used in suppressing the peasants who appeared to him to be covering over their actions of robbery and murder with the Gospel:

To begin with, I urge you not to influence my gracious Lord, Count Albrecht, to be soft in this affair. . . . Therefore, as long as life is in him, His Grace ought to use his sword in punishing the wicked. . . .

If there were thousands more of the peasants, they would still be altogether robbers and murderers, who take the sword simply because of their own insolence and wickedness, and who want to expel sovereigns [and] lords, and [to destroy] everything, and to establish a new order in this word. But for this they have neither God's commandment, authority, right, or injunction, as the lords have it now. In addition, the peasants are faithless and are committing perjury toward their lords. Above all this, they borrow the authority of the divine Word and gospel [for covering up] their great sins, and thus disgrace and slander [God's name]. . . .⁴

On another occasion, Luther wrote:

If the peasant is in open rebellion, then he is outside the law of God, for rebellion is not simply murder, but it is like a great fire which attacks and lays waste a whole land. Thus, rebellion brings with it a land full of murders and bloodshed, makes widows and orphans, and turns everything upside down like a great disaster. Therefore, let everyone who can, smite, slay, and stab, secretly and openly, remembering that nothing can be more

¹Quoted by Bainton, Op. cit., pp. 277-278.

²LW 46, The Christian in Society III, pp. 3-85.

³Quoted by Bainton, Op. cit., p. 278.

⁴LW 49, Letters II, "To John Rùhel", pp. 108-109.

poisonous, hurtful, or devilish than a rebel. It is just as when one must kill a mad dog; if you don't strike him, he will strike you, and the whole land with you.¹

In May-June of 1525, the peasant rebellion was crushed with enormous loss of lives, estimated at over 100,000.² Luther found himself in another kind of paradox, being damned by both sides. The princes blamed him for having started the rebellion in the first place. The peasants condemned him as a traitor to their cause. In June, he laments bitterly " . . . all is forgotten, that God has done for the world through me. . . . Now lords, priests, and peasants are all against me and threaten me with death."³

The gravity of this predicament remained with him and bothered him so much, that eight years later he still spoke ironically about being held responsible for the mass murders of peasants:

"Preachers are the greatest murderers because they admonish the ruler to do his duty and punish the guilty. I, Martin Luther, slew all the peasants in the uprising, for I ordered that they be put to death; all their blood is on my neck. But I refer it all to our Lord God, who commanded me to speak as I did. . . ."⁴

Luther's Marriage (1525)

Writing to Spalatin on November 30, 1524, Luther reveals that he had given little thought to his own marriage. In fact, at that time, he had completely erased marriage from his mind, fearing that his life

¹WA XVIII, 358, Quoted by Bainton, Op. cit., p. 280.

²Bainton, Ibid., p. 281.

³Quoted by Erikson, Op. cit., p. 236.

⁴LW 54, Table Talk, #2911b, Between January 26-29, 1533, p. 180.

as a condemned heretic was in danger, and that he would not want a wife to worry under those circumstances:

I am grateful for what Argula writes about my wedding plans; I am not surprised about such gossip, since so many other bits of gossip are around concerning me. Nevertheless give her my thanks and tell her I am in God's hand as a creature whose heart God may change and rechange, kill and revive again at any moment. Nevertheless, the way I feel now, and have felt thus far, I will not marry. It is not that I do not feel my flesh or sex, since I am neither wood nor stone, but my mind is far removed from marriage, since I daily expect death and punishment due to a heretic. Therefore I shall not limit God's work in me, nor shall I rely on my own heart. Yet I hope God does not let me live long. . . .

Spalatin must have made a further suggestion of marriage in one of his written communications which solicits Luther's reply on April 16, 1525:

Incidentally, regarding what you are writing about my marrying let me say the following: I do not want you to wonder that a famous lover like me does not marry. It is rather strange that I, who so often write about matrimony and get mixed up with women, have not yet turned into a woman, to say nothing of not having married one. Yet, if you want me to set an example, look, here you have the most powerful one, for I have had three wives [uns seeking help] simultaneously, and loved them so much that I have lost two who are taking husbands; ~~the third~~ I can hardly keep with my left arm, and she, too, will probably soon be snatched away from me. But you are a sluggish lover who does not dare to become the husband of even one woman. Watch out that I, who have no thought of marriage at all, do not some day overtake you too eager suitors--just as God usually does those things which are least expected. . . .²

It was June 13, 1525³, the "least expected" happened. A pleasant change finally came into Luther's life when he married Katharine

¹ LW 49, Letters 11, p. 93.

² Ibid., "To George Spalatin", pp. 104-105.

³ Date of the legal ceremony. The public celebration came later.

von Bora.¹ A few days later he gave some of the reasons for his sudden decision to marry:

It is very dangerous to put off your wedding, for Satan gladly interferes and makes great trouble through evil talkers, slanderers, and friends of both parties. If I had not married quickly and secretly and taken few into my confidence, everyone would have done what he could to hinder me; for all my best friends cried: "Not this one, but another."²

Still later (June 21, 1525), in a letter of invitation to Nicholas von Amsdorf, Luther gives additional reasons:

Indeed, the rumor is true that I was suddenly married to Catherine; I did this to silence the evil mouths which are so used to complaining about me. For I still hope to live for a little while. In addition, I also did not want to reject this unique opportunity to obey my father's wish for progeny, which he so often expressed. At the same time, I also wanted to confirm what I have taught by practising it; for I find so many timid people in spite of such great light from the gospel. God has willed and brought about this step. For I feel neither passionate love nor burning for my spouse, but I cherish her. To give a [public] testimony of my wedding I shall give a banquet this coming Tuesday, where my parents will be present. I definitely wish that you, too, will be there. . . .³

Through Luther's marriage to his "Katy", he had to change from being completely absorbed in his work as a monk and professor, to establishing a home as a husband and later as father. He speaks about this adjustment and behind it the deep need men and women have for each other in God's creation; in the following three selections:

"Man has strange thoughts the first year of marriage. When sitting at table he thinks, 'Before I was alone; now there are two'. Or in bed, when he wakes up, he sees a pair of pigtails

¹1499-1552: See LW 49, Letters 11, p. 115, n. 2. Also Armin Stein: Katharine von Bora, A Picture from Life, trans. E.A. Endlich (Philadelphia: G.W. Frederick, 1890); Clara Seuel Schreiber, Katherine: Wife of Luther (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1954); E. Jane Mall: Kitty, My Rib - A Novel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959).

²Quoted by Schwiebert, Op. cit., p. 589.

³LW 49, Letters 11, p. 117 (WA, Br 3, 541).

lying beside him which he hadn't seen there before. On the other hand, wives bring to their husbands, no matter how busy they may be, a multitude of trivial matters. So my Katy used to sit next to me at first while I was studying and would spin and ask, 'Doctor, is the grandmaster the margrave's brother?'¹

" . . . To be sure, when I consider marriage, only the flesh seems to be there. Yet my father must have slept with my mother and made love to her, and they were nevertheless godly people. All the patriarchs and prophets did likewise. The longing of a man for a woman is God's creation--that is to say, when nature's sound, not when it's corrupted as it is among the Italians and Turks."²

Then he began to speak in praise of marriage, the divine institution from which everything proceeds and without which the whole world would have remained empty and all creatures would have been meaningless and of no account, since they were created for the sake of man. "So Eve and her breasts would not have existed and none of the other ordinances would have followed. It was for this reason that, in the power of the Holy Spirit, Adam called his wife by that admirable name Eve, which means mother. He didn't say 'wife' but 'mother', and he added 'of all living'.³ Here you have the ornament that distinguishes woman, namely, that she is the fount of all living human beings . . ."³

Since marriage is God's institution, Luther believed strongly that couples considering this step, should pray diligently for God's guidance and help in making such an important life decision. This was his method in contemplating marriage to Katy:

"Marriage consists of these things: the natural desire of sex, the bringing to life of offspring, and life together with mutual fidelity. Yet the devil can so rupture marriage that hate is never more bitter than here. This comes from our beginning everything without prayer and with presumption. A God-fearing young man who is about to be married should pray, 'Dear God, add thy blessing!' But this is not done like Dolzig, and the most important things are begun presumptuously. What is our Lord God to do under the circumstances? It is implied that his name is false Almighty, Creator, the Giver of all things. Accordingly,

¹ LW 54, Table Talk #3178a, June, 1532, p. 191.

² Ibid., #1659, Between June 12 and July 12, 1532, p. 161.

³ Ibid., #3528, Between January 14 and 31, 1537, p. 223.

dear Master Veit, do as I did. When I wished to marry my Katy, I prayed to God earnestly for a wife."¹

As it turned out; Katy was a very good counter-part for the Reformer.

One time he gave this brief analysis of his wife's strengths and weaknesses: "I wouldn't give up my Katy for France or for Venice-- first, because God gave her to me and gave me to her; second, because I have observed that other women have more shortcomings than my Katy (although she, too, has some shortcomings they are outweighed by many great virtues); and third because she keeps faith in marriage, that is fidelity and respect. . . ."²

Dr. Luther went out with his wife into the garden to fish in the pond and on the bank of the river. There they caught pike, loach, trout, blacktail, carp. Some of them they ate at the Table with great delight and thanksgiving. The doctor said, "Katy, you are more pleased over these few fish than many a nobleman when he fishes in several large ponds and catches thousands of fish. AAs, greed and ambition prevent us from enjoying things. . . ."³

There are many other references by Luther to the admiration and happiness he discovered in the marital relationship with his wife. For example, "Martin Luther looked admiringly at a painting of his wife and said, 'I think I'll have a husband added to that painting, send it to Mantua,⁴ and inquire whether they prefer marriage to celibacy."⁵

¹ Ibid., #185, Between February and March, 1532, pp. 25-26.

² Ibid., #49, Summer or Fall, 1531, pp. 7-8.

³ Ibid., #3390b, Fall, 1533, p. 199.

⁴ I.e. to the council called by the pope to meet at Mantua in 1537. (The council did not meet until 1545, later in Trent).

⁵ Ibid., #3528, Between January 14-31, 1537, p. 222.

On another occasion, we catch sight again of how Katy brought out the happy, light-hearted side of Luther's character, as he joked with her about polygamy:

Martin Luther said, "The time will come when a man will take more than one wife."

The doctor's wife responded, "Let the devil believe that!"

The doctor said, "The reason, Katy, is that a woman can bear a child only once a year while her husband can beget many."

Katy responded, "Paul said that each man should have his own wife." [1 Cor. 7:2].

To this the doctor replied, "Yes, 'his own wife' and not 'only one wife', for the latter isn't what Paul wrote."

The doctor spoke thus in jest for a long time, and finally the doctor's wife said, "Before I put up with this, I'd rather go back to the convent and leave you and all our children."¹

He also teased her about the misplaced colouring of women: "... our women would be beautiful if their coloring were not misplaced. They have fine red eyes, pale white lips, yellow teeth, and black neck whereas they ought to have red cheeks, white faces, and black eyebrows."² In turn, Katy attempted to tame his "coarseness" of language. One time Luther was criticizing Schwenckfeld's Christology, when Katy interrupted: "Ah, dear Sir, that's much too coarse!" And he [Martin Luther] replied, "They are the ones who teach me to be so coarse. This is the way one must talk to the devil."³

Of course, like any other marriage, Katy and Martin had their marital quarrels. It is not clear about what they disagreed, but we

¹ Ibid., #1461, Between April 7 and May 1, 1532, p. 153.

² Ibid., #3467, October 27, 1536, p. 205.

³ Ibid., #5659, 1544, p. 470.

have the following account: "If I can endure conflict with the devil, sin, and a bad conscience, then I can also put up with the irritations of Katy von Bora. . . ."¹ On another occasion, the quarrel is recorded by Cordatus:

When he Martin Luther was arguing with his wife he said, "You convince me of whatever you please. You have complete control. I concede to you the control of the household, provided my rights are preserved. Female government has never done any good. God made Adam master over all creatures, to rule over all living things, but when Eve persuaded him that he was lord even over God she spoiled everything. We have you women to thank for that! With tricks and cunning women deceive men, as I, too, have experienced."²

Family Life

Apparently Katy was a good mother and managed their family life well: "I'm rich", said Luther. "My God has given me a nun and has added three children.³ I don't worry about my debts, for when my Katy has paid them there will be more."⁴ . . .

"I am very busy. Four persons are dependent on me, and each of them demands my time for himself. Four times a week I preach in public, twice a week I lecture, and in addition I hear cases, write letters, and am working on a book for publication. It is a good thing that God came to my aid and gave me a wife. She takes care of domestic matters, so that I do not have to be responsible for these too."⁵

Many times, Luther marvelled at the maternal ability of his wife:

"It's difficult to feed two guests, one in the house and the other at

¹ Ibid., #255, Between April 20 and May 16, 1532, p. 34-35.

² Ibid., #2847b, Between December 11, 1532 and January 2, 1533, pp. 174-175.

³ Hans, Magdalene and Martin were living at the time. There were six children in all: Hans, June 7, 1526; Elizabeth, December 10, 1527; Magdalene, December 17, 1529; Martin, November 9, 1531; Paul, January 28, 1533; and Margaretha, December 17, 1534. See Roland Bainton, Op. cit., pp. 293ff.

⁴ Ibid., #1457, Between April 7 and May 1, 1532, p. 153.

⁵ Ibid., #154, Between December 14, 1531 and January 22, 1532, pp. 22-23.

the door." This he Martin Luther said when he saw his son Martin being nursed at his mother's breast at the same time that Katy, the doctor's wife had become pregnant."¹

He often reflected spiritually on God's patience and regard for us, when he discovered how kindly they, as parents, dealt with their little son:

"God must be much friendlier to me and speak to me in friendlier fashion than my Katy to little Martin. Neither Katy nor I could intentionally gouge out the eye or tear off the head of our child. Nor could God. God must have patience with us. He has given evidence of it, and therefore he sent his Son into our flesh in order that we may look to him for the best. . . ."²

The doctor took his son on his lap, and the child befouled him. Thereupon he Martin Luther said, "How our Lord God has to put up with many a murmur and stink from us, worse than a mother has to endure from her child!"³

Luther marvelled also at the trust and simplicity of a small child's faith: "When his infant son Martin was being suckled at his mother's breast, the doctor said, 'The pope, the bishops, Duke George, Ferdinand, and all the demons hate this child, yet the little child isn't afraid of all of them put together. He sucks with pleasure at those breasts, is cheerful, is unconcerned about all his enemies, and lets them rage as long as they wish. Christ said truly, 'Unless you become like children,' etc., [Matt. 18:3].'"⁴

¹ Ibid., #1697, Between June 12 and July 12, 1532, p. 162.

² Ibid., #1237, Before December 14, 1531, p. 127.

³ Ibid., #1615, Between May 27-31, 1532, p. 158. (Note also Appendix #3203 a & b).

⁴ Ibid., #1631, June 8 or 9, 1532, p. 159.

Afterward, watching his son, he Martin Luther praised the boy's ingenuousness and innocence: "Children are better informed in the faith than adults, for they believe very simply and without any question in a gracious God and eternal life. Oh, how good it is for children to die when they are young. To be sure, it would cause me great grief because part of my body and part of their mother's flesh and blood would die. Such natural feelings don't cease in godly parents, no matter how hardened and calloused they think they are, for feelings like these are a work of divine creation.

"Children live altogether in faith, without reason. It's as Ambrose said, 'There is lack of reason but not of faith.'¹

In matters of the faith, Luther felt he had never advanced beyond the level of his children: "Though I am a great doctor, I haven't yet progressed beyond the instruction of children in the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. I still learn and pray these every day with my Hans and my little Lena. . . ."² His preaching also was directed to the level of the child and the common person: " . . . I don't want to be conscious of Doctors Pommer, Jonas and Philip in my preaching; for they know the substance of my sermon better than I. Accordingly, I do not preach for them, but I observe my little Hans and Elsie. It would be a foolish gardener, who in a large garden would wish to attend only to the best flowers and neglect all the rest. . . ."³

When it came to the whole matter of disciplining his children, Luther felt that this training must not be too severe and be carried out with proper understanding. In his own experience as a small child, he recalls a harsh whipping received from his father: "One shouldn't

¹ Ibid., #4367, February 26, 1539, p. 335.

² Ibid., #81, Fall, 1531, p. 9.

³ Appendix, Table Talk #3421.

whip children too hard. My father once whipped me so severely that I ran away from him, and he was worried that he might not win me back again."¹

Then he [Martin Luther] spoke about children and said that they should not be allowed to commit thefts. "However, one ought to observe reasonableness. If only cherries, apples, and the like are involved, such childish pranks ought not to be punished so severely; but if money, clothing, or coffers have been seized it is time to punish. . . . One must punish in such a way that the rod is accompanied by the apple. It's a bad thing if children and pupils² lose their spirit on account of their parents and teachers. . . .

While Luther encourages "reasonableness" and moderation in child discipline, he could also be quite stern with his children. There are some rather embarrassing examples of his under-scoring the preference of . . . "a dead rather than a disobedient son."³ . . . and refusing to allow his disobedient son Hans to see him for three days.⁴ At another time he shocked his son Martin by taking him in his arms and saying: "If you should become a lawyer, I'd hang you on the gallows. You must be a preacher and must baptize, preach, administer the sacrament, visit the sick and comfort the sorrowful."⁵

Luther had a genuine understanding of childhood fantasy and imagination. This is portrayed most remarkably in his famous letter addressed to little Hans, June 19, 1530, given in simple words

¹ LW, 54, #1559, Between May 20 and 27, 1532, p. 157.

² Ibid., #3566a, Between March 28 and May 27, 1537, p. 234.

³ WA, TR VI, #6102, Quoted by Schwiebert, Op. cit., p. 596.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ LW, 54, #1422, Between April 7 and May 1, 1532, p. 150.

that his son could easily understand and enjoy:

My beloved Son:

I am pleased to learn that you are doing well in your studies and that you are praying diligently. Continue to do so, my son, and when I return home I shall bring you a present from the fair.

I know of a pretty, gay, and beautiful garden where there are many children wearing golden robes. They pick up fine apples, pears, cherries, and plums under the trees, and they sing, jump, and are happy all the time. They also have nice ponies with golden reins and silver saddles. I asked the owner of the garden who the children were. He replied: "These are the children who love to pray, learn their lessons, and be good." Then I said: "Dear sir, I also have a son. His name is Hans Luther. May he too enter the garden, eat of the fine apples and pears, ride on these pretty ponies, and play with the other children?" The man answered: "If he likes to pray and study and is good, he may enter the garden, and also Lippus and Jost. And when they are all together there, they shall get whistles, drums, lutes, and other musical instruments, and they shall dance and shoot with little crossbows." And he showed me a lovely lawn in the garden, all ready for dancing, and many gold whistles and drums and fine silver crossbows were hanging there. But it was still so early in the morning that the children had not yet eaten, and so I could not wait for the dancing. I said to the man: "Dear sir, I must hurry away and write about this to my dear little son Hans and tell him to pray, study, and be good in order that he may get into this garden. He has an Aunt Lena, and he must bring her along." "By all means", said the man, "go and write him accordingly."

Therefore, dear Hans, continue to learn your lessons and pray and tell Lippus and Jost to pray too, so that an N of you may get into the garden together.

Herewith I commit you to the dear Lord's keeping. Greet Aunt Lena, and give her a kiss from me. Your loving father, Martin Luther.

There is another picture of Luther's fatherly love and esteem, given a few years later. His son Hans was about eight years of age when the following incident took place in the midst of household company:

On February 26 Master Spalatin and the pastor of Zwickau,

¹WA, Br, V, 379-380. Trans. Theodore G. Tappert, Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel, Volume XVIII Library of Christian Classics (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1955), pp. 144-145.

Master Leonard, came to supper in Luther's house. He [Martin Luther] had some pleasant banter with his little son Martin, who wished to defend his doll with zeal and honor and dress her and love her. Then he said, "Such was our disposition in paradise--simple, upright, without malice. There must have been real earnestness there, just as this boy speaks about God piously and with supreme trust and just as he is sure of God. Such natural playing is best in children, who are the dearest jesters. The affected play of old fools lacks such grace. Therefore little children are the finest mockingbirds and talk naturally and honestly. Such a man was the jester Claus, who, when he befouled his boots, excused himself to the chamberlain Pfeffinger by saying a little bird had done it."¹

Unfortunately, ~~Katy~~ and Martin had to agonize through the death of their third child, Magdalene, at the age of about twelve. There is an unusually clear and complete record of this sorrowful event:

When the illness of his daughter became graver he [Martin Luther] said, "I love her very much. But if it is thy will to take her, dear God, I shall be glad to know that she is with thee."

Afterward he said to his daughter, who was lying in bed, "Dear Magdalene, my little daughter, you will be glad to stay here with me, your father. Are you also glad to go to your Father in heaven?"

The sick girl replied, "Yes, dear Father, as God wills."

The father said, "you dear little girl!" [Then he turned away from her and said,] "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak [Matt. 26:41]. I love her very much. If this flesh is so strong, what must the spirit be?" Among other things he then said, "In the last thousand years God has given to no bishop such great gifts as he has given to me (for one should boast of God's gifts). I'm angry with myself that I'm unable to rejoice from my heart and be thankful to God, though I do at times sing a little song and thank God . . ."²

When his wife wept loudly, Martin Luther comforted her: "Think where she's going. She'll get along all right. Flesh is flesh, spirit is spirit. Children don't argue. They believe what they're told. All things are simple for children. They die without anxiety, complaint, or fear of death, and they have little

¹ LW 54, Table Talk, #4364, February 26, 1539, p. 334.

² Ibid., #5494, September, 1542, p. 430.

physical pain, as if they were falling asleep."¹

In due course, Magdalene passed away. Heydenreich records the event with these words: "When his daughter was in the agony of death, he Martin Luther fell on his knees before the bed and, weeping bitterly, prayed that God might will to save her. Thus she gave up the ghost in the arms of her father. Her mother was in the same room, but farther from the bed on account of her grief. It was the ninth hour on the Wednesday after the Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity in the year 1542."²

After her body had been placed in a coffin, Luther continued to lament and grieve deeply for his little girl:

... "You dear little Lena! How well it has turned out for you!"

He looked at her and said, "Ah, dear child, to think that you must be raised up and will shine like the stars, yes, like the sun!"

The coffin would not hold her, and he said, "The little bed is too small for her."

[Before this,] when she died, he said, "I am joyful in spirit but I am sad according to the flesh. The flesh doesn't take kindly to this. The separation [caused by death] troubles me above measure. It's strange to know that she is surely at peace and that she is well off there, very well off, and yet to grieve so much!"³

When the coffin was taken out of the home for the funeral and burial, people came and expressed their sympathies; to which Luther responded:

... "You should be pleased! I've sent a saint to heaven--yes, a living saint. Would that our death might be like this! Such a death I'd take this very hour."⁴

¹ Ibid., #5491, September, 1542, pp. 428-429.

² Ibid., #5496, September 20, 1542, p. 431.

³ Ibid., #5498, September, 1542, p. 432.

⁴ Ibid., #5499, September, 1542, pp. 432-433.

One cannot help but feel today some of the emotion of these grieving parents, even though the actual event took place over four-hundred years ago. Perhaps Philip Melanchton identified the reason for this kinship in terms of a divine imprint upon human personality: "The feelings of parents are a likeness of divinity impressed upon the human character. If the love of God for the human race is as great as the love of parents for their children, then it is truly great and ardent."¹

Household

As we have already discovered in our short study of the family life, Luther's household was a very active habitation. Not only was there a large family of six children, but there were often numerous guests. At one time, Prince George of Anhalt considered the possibility of lodging in the Luther home at Wittenberg. He received the subsequent letter, giving a picture of the place:

The home of Luther is occupied by a motley crowd of boys, students, girls, widows, old women, and youngsters. For this reason there is much disturbance in the place, and many regret it for the sake of the good man, the honorable father. If but the spirit of Doctor Luther lived in all of these, his house would offer you an agreeable, friendly quarter for a few days so that your Grace would be able to enjoy the hospitality of that man. But as the situation now stands and as circumstances exist in the household of Luther, I would not advise that your Grace stop there.²

¹ Ibid., #5497, September, 1542, p. 432.

² Kroker, p. 156ff, Quoted by Schwiebert, Op. cit., p. 597.

Schwiebert gives a list of who all might be included in that "motley crowd".¹

We can well imagine the kind of lively conversation that took place within such a setting, especially at meal-time. Often students brought their notebooks and recorded Luther's answers to their questions. Because this grew to be such a popular activity, at one point Katy jokingly suggested that they should pay extra for this instruction. However, Luther replied that he expected no remuneration for his teaching: "For thirty years I have taught and preached without charging anything. Why should I begin to sell something in my old age?"²

It is out of this rather extra-ordinary household milieu that the famous Luther, Tischreden (1531-1546) evolved. After critical analysis and editing by E. Kroker, there are six volumes of approximately 700 pages each devoted to the Table Talks in the Weimarer Ausgabe giving a grand total of 7,075. As indicated earlier, the sheer volume alone of the Tischreden calls for our consideration.³ This will be given in Part Three of this dissertation.

¹ Ibid., p. 597: There were . . . "two daughters and four sons of a sister of Luther; Hans Polner, son of another sister; and another nephew, the son of his brother; a great-niece, Anna Strauss; a lady teacher, Margarethe von Mochau; other tutors of the Luther children, at one time numbering six; and Aunt Lena . . . To these more or less permanent members of the family must be added numerous nuns and monks, who found themselves without occupation, the twelve table companions who spent varying lengths of time under the Luther roof, a steady flow of guests, and indigenous pastors without pulpits."

² Ibid., #5187, August 24, 1540, p. 396.

³ See The Prolegomena.

Chapter III: The Aging Luther (1531-1546)

The later years of Luther are often characterized as a time of growing "dogmatism", "egocentricity", and "cantankerousness" in contrast to the "intellectual dynamics" of the younger Luther.¹ In all of these labels, there is some truth. "In the portrait of an older person we discover lines and wrinkles which we have not seen in the portrait of that same person at an earlier age. . . ."²

However, we should not simply write off this period as of no value in our research of Luther's struggle for self-identity.³ During this time, Luther serves as Dean of the Faculty of Theology, at Wittenberg. Even though his disputations and tracts are often bitter in tone, employing coarse language, he is still growing in the maturity of his faith. He improved his translation of the Bible. His pastoral care, sermons and commentaries, the development of his religious principles, all reach new vivacity in response to the challenges of the day.

Poor Health

As much as twenty-five years before his death, Luther already complained about certain physical ailments that would plague his body until the end of his earthly journey. These ailments often played

¹ LW 50, Letters III, p. xiv.

² Ibid.

³ To date, the available information on the aging Luther is very sketchy and incomplete. Consequently, most biographies spend very little time on these years. E.g. Bainton, Op. cit., has 14 pages out of 386; Schwiebert, Op. cit., writes 8 pages out of 752. For a discussion of the documented details of this period see G. Ritter, Luther: His Life and Work (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 175ff.

havoc with his emotional and spiritual health as well. In a letter dated May 12, 1521, to Philip Melancton, he describes in detail his excruciating bouts with constipation: "The elimination is so hard that I am forced to press with all my strength, even to the point of perspiration, and the longer I delay the worse it gets. Yesterday on the fourth day I could go once, but I did not sleep all night and still have no peace. Please pray for me. This affliction will be intolerable if it continues as it has begun."¹ About one month later, in a letter Luther notes the affliction has still not left him: "The trouble from which I was suffering at Worms has not left me but rather has increased. I am more constipated than ever in my life, and despair of a remedy."²

Luther found some relief by taking some medication sent by Spalatin. He reports: "Greetings. I finally received everything, my Spalatin. I tried the pills according to the prescription. Soon I had some relief and elimination without blood or force, but the wound of the previous rupture isn't healed yet, and I even had to suffer a good deal because some flesh extruded, either due to the power of the pills, or I don't know what."³ While the pills seemed to solve one problem, namely the constipation, Luther still suffered from indigestion and hemorrhoids: "Concerning my health, I have easier elimination now, due to the strong and powerful medications, but the way my digestion

¹ LW 48, Letters 1, p. 217.

² Ibid., "To George Spalatin: Wartburg, June 10, 1521", p. 255.

³ Ibid., "To George Spalatin: Wartburg, July 15, 1521", pp. 268-269.

functions has not changed at all. The soreness continues, and I am afraid it may develop into a worse evil with which the Lord afflicts me, according to his wisdom."¹ Though the medicine helped initially, Luther complains again in September of the same year about his old problem: "Today, on the sixth day, I had elimination with such difficulty that I almost passed out. Now I sit aching as if in labor confinement, wounded and sore, and shall have no -- or little -- rest this night. . . . I would have been healed from all soreness if the elimination had moved more easily. But whatever heals in four days is wounded again by elimination."² But in October, he finally found relief: "Greetings. Thanks for your last shipment. At last my behind and my bowels have reconciled themselves to me. Therefore, I need no further medication, and I am again completely healthy as before. Thanks be to God!"³

Within the next few years, Luther endured the opposite affliction, severe diarrhea: ". . . yesterday and today I have been suffering from diarrhea, and my body has been weakened so that I cannot sleep and have no appetite, and we have nothing to drink. I hope to feel better tomorrow. In the past two days I have had fifteen bowel movements."⁴ Perhaps more serious than diarrhea, were the recurring attacks by kidney-stones: "I myself left Smalcald yesterday and

¹ Ibid., "To George Spalatin, July 31, 1521", p. 276.

² Ibid., September 9, 1521, p. 307.

³ Ibid., October 7, 1521, p. 316.

⁴ LW 50, Letters III, "To Philip Melanchthon, August 29, 1535", p. 87.

traveled up to this place in my gracious Lord's private carriage.

This is the reason: I had not been healthy there for more than three days, and from the first Sunday to this night not one little drop of water passed from me; I had no rest nor did I sleep, and I was unable to retain any drink or food. In summary, I was dead; I commended you, together with the little ones, to God and to my gracious Lord, since I thought that I would never again see you in this mortal life."¹ From the Table Talk, we learn more about this episode. Luther was indeed gravely ill with constant vomiting. He was feeling quite broken-down emotionally with uncontrolled weeping. He was so ill, he, as noted above, fully expected death:

"Of course a great change has taken place as far as I am concerned: Yesterday I was quite resolute in spirit and strong in body, while today, as you see, I am pitifully broken in my strength. How much I am changed from what I was yesterday! Yesterday I felt exuberant and light as a bird. But, O God, we are nothing, and all that is ours is nothing, even when we are everything! I might have prayed to our Lord God, or at least grumbled at him, that he'd let me die in the land of my prince. But if that's not to be, I'll be ready at whatever hour and place the Lord calls me. . . ."

The next day--that is, on February 26--he said when he vomited as result of his sickness, "Ah, dear Father, take this dear soul into thy hand. I give thee thanks and bless thee, and let all thy creatures bless thee. Grant that I may speedily be gathered to the fathers."

"To you, dear Amsdorf,² I commend Katy, my wife. I have no doubt that Satan produces and sharpens these pains. There's an obstruction in my body that prevents the stone and urine from following their course. But by God's grace I'll have it better after this life. So nothing that I now suffer from the devil will hurt me. I'll gladly go to pieces; only let Satan not have his

¹LW 50, Letters III, To Mrs. Martin Luther, February 27, 1537, p. 167.

²Nicholas Amsdorf (1488-1565) was a faithful follower of the Reformation teachings and good friend of the Luther family:

way in the church after my death. I'm very afraid of this because contempt of the gospel and ingratitude toward it are so great."

Hereupon he shed many bitter tears, sighed deeply, and folded his hands amid the sobs. "I'm concerned", he said, "lest the precious gospel may be lost, . . ."

At this point he again wept copiously and continued, "Dear God, I am thy little creature, and thou art the Creator. I am thy clay, and thou art my potter. If only the end will come for me and thou mayest preserve the Word longer! But I have reason to fear the opposite. I observe the more we are enlightened, the more we suffer."

Then he sipped some almond broth and said, "Dear God, may it be blest for me either in time or for eternity! If this illness lasts longer, I'll surely go mad. Even if this should happen, I know that my God remains skilful and wise. Good God, how subject to death this wretched little body is! Except that I have faith in Jesus Christ, it wouldn't be surprising if I took my own life with a sword. . . ."

He raised himself up and, after making the sign of the cross with his hand, he said to us who were standing around him, "The Lord fill you with his benediction and with hatred of the pope."

Not only did Luther give up hope of recovering from his illness but his friends also did not expect his recovery: "On March 21 he [Martin Luther] mentioned his mortal illness, or rather his death, for everybody had given up hope of his survival. Restitution of his health was not looked for from man, and so his recovery was miraculous."² Finally, on March 14, 1537, he was able to return to Wittenberg from Smalcald. His recuperation was slow with continued suffering as described in a letter one week later:

Grace and peace in Christ! Finally I am writing to you, my Spalatin, after my pen has celebrated so many Sabbath days. By God's grace I gradually recuperate, and learn to eat and drink again. Yet my thighs, knees, and bones are still shaky, and are

¹ LW 54, Table Talk, #3543A, February, 1537, pp. 225-228.

² Ibid., #3553, March 21, 1537, p. 232.

thus far not sufficiently strong to carry my body. I am more exhausted than I thought, but I shall take care of myself with rest and other nourishment until through God's help I have regained my strength. . . .¹

Through this episode of Luther's serious illness, he tells a little about the medical care he received from his physicians: In no uncertain terms, he describes his annoyance with the way they practised medicine in his case:

On February 5 Luther spoke about the perilous times and sighed: "Dear God, if I had died of stone in Smalcald I would now have been in heaven, freed from all evil, for a year. I was at that time sufficiently annoyed by the physicians. They gave me as much to drink as if I had been a big ox. They worked over my body until all my members, even my private parts, became lifeless. I had to obey the physicians. I did what I did from necessity, lest I appear to neglect my body. Wretched is the man who relies on the help of physicians. I don't deny that medicine is a gift of God and I don't reject this knowledge, but where are the physicians who are perfect? . . .²

On another occasion when Luther was ill, ". . . he took an enema on the recommendation of the physician. Afterward he said: "Such an act puts an end to modesty, for physicians play with their patients as mothers do with their infants, although they deceive themselves mutually."³

Luther also felt the devil had a great deal to do with the cause of an illness and possessed sufficient power even to alter the medicinal quality of certain drugs:

"The devil's also a fellow who can cause sickness. As Peter

¹ LW 50, Letters III, To George Spalatin, March 21, 1537, p. 170.

² LW 54, Table Talk, #3733, February 5, 1538, p. 266.

³ Ibid., #3912, July 10, 1538, p. 293.

said in the book of Acts, the sick are oppressed by the devil, [Acts 10:38]. Disease doesn't spring only from men's constitutions, and we observe that various medicines have been found to treat one sickness. Although these medicines have helped once or twice, soon they are ineffective. So powerful is the devil that he can alter all medicines and drugs and change what's in the boxes. Accordingly let us pray to the true physician, Christ. When the hour comes, as it must, in which we breathe our last breath, God grant that we may have a cheerful end. Amen."¹

Enjoys Good Food, Drink and Fellowship

We must not conclude that Luther was always ill. There are many references in his Letters and Table Talk to the contrary. Even in later years, he thoroughly enjoyed good food and drink: ". . . I wish humbly to inform Your grace that I am doing well here. I eat like a Bohemian and drink like a German; thanks be to God for this."² "If our Lord God can pardon me for having crucified and martyred him for about twenty years by saying mass, he can also approve of my occasionally taking a drink in his honor. God grant it, no matter how the world may wish to interpret it!"³

In Luther's view good food and drink could be therapeutic for those who were facing temptation or troubled in other ways:

Those who are assailed by doubts should be given plenty to eat and drink. Early this morning the devil was disputing with me concerning Zwingli, and I discovered that a person who is well-fed is better fitted for disputation with the devil than a person who is fasting. Think, for example, of the bishop who, when his sister came to him troubled with such great thoughts that she could not free herself from them, gave her plenty to eat and drink. Three days later he asked her how she felt.

¹ Ibid., #3582A, Between March 28 and May 27, 1537, p. 237.

² LW 50, Letters III, "To Mrs. Martin Luther, July 2, 1540", p. 209. See also Ibid., "To Mrs. Martin Luther, July 16, 1540", p. 218.

³ LW 54, Table Talk, #139, Between November 30 and December 14, 1531, p. 20.

"Very well", she replied.

"What has happened to the thoughts that before troubled you?"

"I have quite forgotten them", she answered.

Accordingly you should eat, and drink and enjoy yourself. Those who are afflicted with spiritual temptations should be given plenty to eat and drink, but whoremongers and those assailed by lust should fast.¹

In a letter to Jerome Weller, July 1530, Luther gives some very interesting advice. He advises good food, drink, and merriment in direct defiance of the devil:

"... When the devil pesters you with these thoughts, at once seek out the company of men, drink more, joke and jest, or engage in some form of merriment. Sometimes it is necessary to drink a little more, play, jest, or even commit some sin in defiance and contempt of the devil in order not to give him an opportunity to make us scrupulous about trifles. We shall be overcome if we worry too much about falling into some sin.

Accordingly if the devil should say, "Do not drink", you should reply to him, "On this very account, because you forbade it, I shall drink, and what is more, I shall drink a generous amount. Thus one must always do the opposite of that which Satan prohibits. What do you think is my reason for drinking wine undiluted, talking freely, and eating more often if it is not to torment and vex the devil, so that he might understand that I acknowledge no sin and am conscious of no sin. When the devil attacks and torments us, we must completely set aside the whole Decalogue."²...

With this kind of advice, Luther is centuries ahead of his time, at least in comparison to modern day psychotherapy! For example, his counselling above sounds very similar to "paradoxical intention",

¹WA, TR II, #1299, Spring, 1532, trans. Tappert, Op. cit., p. 88.

²This means to turn from the Law to the Gospel. "The devil makes a law of the Gospel." The teachings of Law and Gospel are very necessary and are to be brought together, but with discrimination, lest men either despair or become complacent. WA, TR III, #3799, Tappert, Op. cit., p. 86.

³WA, Br, V, 518-520, trans. Tappert, Op. cit., p. 86.

popularized by the third Viennese School of psychotherapy, namely Logotherapy.¹

Ultimately, Luther is able to rejoice and be merry with a good conscience because of his new understanding of God's Word in the Scriptures:

... Be merry with them; for gladness and good cheer, when decent and proper, are the best medicine for a young person--indeed, for all people. I myself, who have spent a good part of my life in sorrow and gloom, now seek and find pleasure wherever I can. Praise God, we now have sufficient understanding [of the Word of God] to be able to rejoice with a good conscience and to use God's gifts with thanksgiving, for he created them for this purpose and is pleased when we use them.

... To be sure, to have pleasure in sins is of the devil, but participation in proper and honorable pleasures with good God-fearing people is pleasing to God, even if one may at times carry playfulness too far.

Be merry, then, both inwardly in Christ himself and outwardly in his gifts and the good things of life. He will have it so. It is for this that he is with us. It is for this that he provides his gifts--that we may use them and be glad, and that we may praise, love and thank him forever and ever. . . .²

Prayer-Life

Luther remembers well the years when he served as a monk and strictly observed all the prescribed prayers:

"When I was a monk I was unwilling to omit any of the prayers, but when I was busy with public lecturing and writing I often accumulated my appointed prayers for a whole week, or even two or three weeks. Then I would take a Saturday off, or shut myself in for as long as three days without food and drink, until I had said the prescribed prayers. This made my head split, and as a consequence, I couldn't close my eyes for five nights, lay sick

¹See Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning (New York: Washington Square Press, 1959/63), pp. 196ff. More details on this similarity will be given in Part Three, Chapter VIII, "Use of Humor".

²WA, Br, VII, 65-67, "To Prince Joachim of Anhalt, May 23, 1534", trans. Tappert, Op. cit., p. 93.

unto death, and went out of my senses. Even after I had quickly recovered and I tried again to read, my head went 'round and 'round. Thus our Lord God drew me, as if by force, from that torment of prayers. To such an extent had I been captive [to human traditions]! Therefore I readily forgive those who can't at once assent to my teaching. You young fellows know nothing about such outrages. What is written applies to you: 'Others have labored and you have entered into their labor' [John 4:38]. . . ."¹

He also confessed that during those days he prayed not only to God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, but also to a number of saints including the Virgin Mary: "I chose twenty-one saints and prayed to three every day when I celebrated Mass; thus I completed the number every week. I prayed especially to the Blessed Virgin, who with her womanly heart would compassionately appease her Son. Ah, if the article on justification hadn't fallen, the brotherhoods, pilgrimages, masses, invocation of saints, etc., would have found no place in the church. . . ."²

Luther's views of traditional prayer life were drastically altered during the turbulent years of the Reformation. He charged that there were many prayer books in need of reform because . . . "They drub into the minds of simple people such a wretched counting up of sins and going to confession, such un-Christian tomfoolery about prayer to God and his saints!"³ In addition he asserted there were unwarranted promises of reward because of such schemes as indulgences.⁴

¹ LW 54, Table Talk, #495, Spring, 1533, p. 85.

² Ibid., #4422, March 20, 1539, p. 340.

³ LW 43, Devotional Writings II, 1522, p. 11.

⁴ "For praying the seven penitential psalms on Friday, Pope Pius V granted a fifty-day indulgence. One of the prayers carried a guarantee of a day's indulgence for each of the wounds of Jesus. Another prayer,

Two particular examples of prayer books, very popular at the time and yet in his view quite deceitful, were Hortulus animae (Garden of the Spirit)¹ and Paradisus animae (Paradise of the Soul).² "These books need a basic and thorough reformation if not total extermination."³

Fundamental to renewal in Luther's personal prayer life, and also that of the Reformation, was his emphasis upon the orientation and direction of the Model Prayer given by our Lord: "And I am convinced that when a Christian rightly prays the Lord's Prayer at any time or uses any portion of it as he may desire, his praying is more than adequate. What is important for a good prayer is not many words, as Christ says in Matthew 6[:7], but rather a turning to God frequently and with heartfelt longing, and doing so without ceasing [1 Thess. 5:17]."⁴

One of the most popular devotional writings by Luther on prayer appeared in 1535, entitled Eine einfältige Weise zu beten für einen Freund⁵ ("A Simple Way to Pray for a Good Friend"). The straight-

if said before a picture of St. Anne, gave protection against pestilence. Certain prayers guaranteed preservation against sudden death, help for a pregnant woman, and the protection of the Holy Virgin for the thirty days before the person's death." LW 43, ibid., p. 11, n. 3.

¹"The Hortulus animae contained an office of prayers to the Virgin Mary, prayers on the passion of Christ, the seven penitential psalms and a litany, evening and morning prayers, prayers to the holy Virgin Mary, to angels, apostles, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, teachers, virgins, and holy widows, a prayer for each of the main festivals of the year, instruction for going to confession and the sacrament, a reminder of death, and prayers for the hour of death, which included the prayers of St. Bridget." LW 43, p. 11, n. 5.

²"The Paradisus animae . . . was published in Latin (in Basel) and is similar in content to the Hortulus." LW 43, p. 11, n. 6.

³LW 43, p. 12.

⁴Ibid.

⁵WA, 38, 358-357. This tract first appeared in 1535 with four

forward pastoral advice found in this document was based squarely upon what Luther found to be true in his own prayer life. As the treatise unfolds it lends more insights into Luther's own prayers. It is clearly a "simple way", making use of the Psalter, the Catechism, and meditations upon each petition of the Lord's Prayer. There is also Luther's recommendation for a set time each day devoted to personal reflection and prayer and not to succumb to the temptation of postponing prayer because of more "urgent" matters. The following quotations illustrate Luther's personal experience with prayer:

Dear Master Peter: I will tell you as best I can what I do personally when I pray. May our dear Lord grant to you and to everybody to do it better than I! Amen.

First, when I feel that I have become cool and joyless in prayer because of other tasks or thoughts (for the flesh and the devil always impede and obstruct prayer), I take my little psalter, hurry to my room, or, if it be the day and hour for it, to the church where a congregation is assembled and, as time permits, I say quietly to myself and word-for-word the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and, if I have time, some words of Christ or of Paul, or some psalms, just as a child might do.

It is a good thing to let prayer be the first business of the morning and the last at night. Guard yourself carefully against those false, deluding ideas which tell you, "Wait a little while. I will pray in an hour; first I must attend to this or that." Such thoughts get you away from prayer into other affairs which so hold your attention and involve you that nothing comes of prayer for that day. . . .

You should also know that I do not want you to recite all these words in your prayer. That would make it nothing but idle chatter and prattle, read word for word out of a book as were the rosaries by the laity and the prayers of the priests and monks. Rather do I want your heart to be stirred and guided concerning the thoughts which ought to be comprehended in the Lord's Prayer.

more additions being printed the same year. In total there are at least twenty German editions now and a number of English translations. The translation used here is found in Luthers Works 43, Devotional Writings II, pp. 193-217.

These thoughts may be expressed, if your heart is rightly warmed and inclined toward prayer, in many different ways and with more words or fewer. I do not bind myself to such words or syllables, but say my prayers in one fashion today, in another tomorrow, depending upon my mood and feeling. I stay however, as nearly as I can, with the same general thoughts and ideas. It may happen occasionally that I may get lost among so many ideas in one petition that I forego the other six. If such an abundance of good thoughts comes to us we ought to disregard the other petitions, make room for such thoughts, listen in silence, and under no circumstances obstruct them. The Holy Spirit himself preaches here, and one word of his sermon is far better than a thousand of our prayers. Many times I have learned more from one prayer than I might have learned from much reading and speculation.

It is of great importance that the heart be made ready and eager for prayer. As the Preacher says, "Prepare your heart for prayer, and do not tempt God" [Ecclus. 18:23]. What else is it but tempting God when your mouth babbles and the mind wonders to other thoughts? Like the priest who prayed, "Deus in adiutorium meum intende. ["Make haste, O God, to deliver me." Ps. 70:1]. Farmhand, did you unhitch the horses? Domine ad adjuvandum me festina ["Make haste to help me, O Lord."] Maid, go out and milk the cow. Gloria patri et filia et spiritui sancto. ["Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost."] Hurry up, boy, I wish the ague would take you!" I have heard such prayers in my experience under the papacy; most of their prayers are of this sort. This is blasphemy and it would be better if they played at it; they cannot or do not care to do better. In my day I have prayed many such canonical hours myself, regrettably, and in such a manner that the psalm or the allotted time came to an end before I even realized whether I was at the beginning or in the middle.

. . . To this day I suckle at the Lord's Prayer like a child, and as an old man eat and drink from it and never get my fill. It is the very best prayer, even better than the psalter, which is so very dear to me. It is surely evident that a real master composed and taught it. . . .

If I have had time and opportunity to go through the Lord's Prayer, I do the same with the Ten Commandments. I take one part after another and free myself as much as possible from distractions in order to pray. I divide each commandment into four parts, thereby fashioning a garland of four strands. That is, I think of each commandment as, first, instruction, which is really what it is intended to be, and consider what the Lord God demands of me so earnestly. Second, I turn it into a thanksgiving; third, a confession; and fourth, a prayer. . . .¹

¹ LW 43, Devotional Writings II, pp. 193, 198-200.

Luther's prayer life through his earthly pilgrimage was most often vigorous and at times intensely animated with loud conversation in dialogue with his heavenly Father. For example, at Worms he was overheard praying in the following manner:

Almighty, eternal God! How strange this world! How it makes the mouths of people gape! How little is the trust of people in God! How quickly it withdraws its hand from a matter, flits on, and follows the common track and broad road toward hell; and looks only on what is pompous and imposing and on what makes an impression! If I should turn my eyes in that direction, I am undone, then the hell is already cast, the sentence already spoken. O God, my God, come to my aid against the mind and wisdom of all the world. You must do it; it is not my, but your cause. I for my person have no business here with these big lords of the world. Don't you hear? Oh, my God, are you dead? No, you cannot die; you are only hiding. Did you predestine me unto this? I ask you, as indeed I know. God's will be done; for never in my life did I expect to confront such lords. Come, come, I am ready even to give up my life as a patient lamb. For the cause is just, and it is yours, and to eternity I will not separate myself from you. This be resolved in your name. The world will needs have to leave me in conscience free; and if my body, the work of your hand, should be crushed for this cause, the soul is yours and belongs to you and will remain with you eternally. Amen! God, help me! Amen!

In 1530 at Coburg Castle, his companion Viet Dietrich wrote to Philip Melanchthon about one of Luther's prayer sessions:

I cannot sufficiently admire the singular steadfastness, the happy attitude (Heiterkeit), the faith and hope of this man in serious times. But he nurtures this without surcease by diligent occupation with the divine Word. There is not a day on which he does not devote at least three hours, the very ones most suitable for studying, to prayer. Once I was fortunate to overhear his prayer. Good God, what faith in his words! He speaks with the great reverence of one who speaks to his God, and with the trust and hope of one who speaks with his father and friend. He said: 'I know you are our God and Father. Therefore I am certain that you will confound the persecutors of your children. If you do not do it, the danger is yours and ours. Yours is the cause. We went at it, because we knew this. Therefore be pleased to defend him', probably Melanchthon. Standing at a distance I

¹ Julius Kbstlin, Martin Luther, Sein Leben und seine Schriften 1

heard him pray thus with a clear voice. My heart burned mightily within me when he prayed so intimately, so earnestly, so reverently to God, and in his prayer appealed to the promises in the psalms as one who is sure what he asks will come to pass.¹

During his later years, Luther's prayer life remained active and vital based upon the promises of God:

"When we pray we have the advantage [of the promise] that what we ask will be granted, although not according to our wish. If it weren't for the promise I wouldn't pray. God does well, moreover, that he doesn't give us everything as we wish, for otherwise we'd want to have everything on our own terms. That our Lord God is the same in life and death I have often experienced. If our prayer is earnest it will be heard, even if not as and when we wish. This must be so or our faith is vain. Consequently it's difficult to pray. I know well what a prayer requires of me. I haven't committed adultery, but I've broken the first table against God's Word and honor. On account of my great sins [against the first table] I can't get to the others in the second table."²

Does God really hear our prayers? In response to this question, Luther one time gave this answer: "We don't have a command that we shouldn't pray. If we had such a command we ought not pray, but we have a command to pray. Accordingly I would have stopped praying against the Turk long ago if I had such a command, but because I don't, I must pray, although it almost appears as if we never pray."³ In one more reference, Luther concludes: "'Pray for one another', etc. for 'the prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects', [Jas. 5:16]. This is one of the best verses in that epistle. Prayer is a powerful thing, if only one believes in it, for God has attached and bound

(Berlin: Alexander Duncker, 1903), 423. Quoted by Leonhard Ludwig, "Luther, Man of Prayer" in Interpreting Luther's Legacy, eds. Fred W. Meuser and Stanley D. Schneider (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969), pp. 165-166.

¹ Ibid., p. 166.

² LW 54, Table Talk, #358, Fall, 1532, pp. 52-53.

³ LW 54, Table Talk, #5510, Winter of 1542-1543, p. 439. See also #3446 Appendix.

himself to it by his promises."¹

Evaluations of Self

Luther seems to think of himself as a "simple" man, always concerned primarily with spiritual matters:

On the Sunday after St. Michael's Day, he [Martin Luther] was cheerful at heart, joked with his friends and with me [John Mathesius], and made little of his learning. "I'm a simple man", he said. "You're a scoundrel but more learned than I am in economic and political matters. I'm not interested in such things. I'm concerned about the church and must defend myself against the attacks of the devil. . . ."²

In comparing himself to Philip Melanchthon, he notes their differences in temperament and actions:

. . . "In the Acts of the Apostles you have a description of us. James is our Philip, who in his modesty wanted to retain the law voluntarily [Acts 15:13-21]. Peter signifies me, who smashed it: 'Why do you put a yoke on the neck of the disciples?' [Acts 15:10]. Philip lets himself be devoured. I devour everything and spare no one. So God accomplishes the same thing in two different persons."³

"Philip stabs, too, but only with pins and needles. The pricks are hard to heal and they hurt. But when I stab I do it with a heavy pike used to hunt boars."⁴

When there was talk about Philip and it was said that he employed the greatest moderation in negotiations pertaining to the gospel, the doctor Martin Luther said, "The little fellow is a godly man, and even if he should do wrong, his intention's not bad, but it's because he's taken captive by others. He hasn't accomplished much by his method, and he used bad judgement in dedicating his books."

"I think, when I reflect on the matter, that my way is still the best. I speak right out and scold my opponents like schoolboys. For a knotty stump requires a tough wedge."⁵

¹ Ibid., #5565, Spring, 1543, p. 454.

² LW 54, Table Talk, #5284, October 3, 1540, p. 405.

³ Ibid., #4577, May 8, 1539, p. 355.

⁴ Ibid., #352, Fall, 1532, p. 50.

⁵ Ibid., #5096, June 18, 1540, p. 387.

It's interesting to note Luther's self-affirmation here. While he recognizes the value of Melanchthon's "gentle" approach, he still much prefers his own methods of speaking out and scolding those who disagree with him!

With the advancing of age, Luther feels very much like a tired, over-worked, old man, although new challenges seem to renew his strength: "News: I--an exhausted old man, tired out from so many labors--constantly become younger from day to day; that is, new sects always rise up against me, and renewed youth is necessary to fight them."¹ A few years later Luther writes that he longs for a peaceful departure from this world. There is no mention of being renewed by new challenges: "I am more dead than alive, yet I am overwhelmed with writing letters and books; the theological lecture, the stone and much else weigh me down. . . . For myself I desire a good hour of passing on to God. I am content, I am tired, and nothing more is in me."²

About one month before his death, he gives another description of himself similar to those noted above, concluding with his strong statement of faith:

"I am writing, my James, as an old man, decrepit, sluggish, tired, cold, and now also one-eyed, and as a man who now that he has died would be given the highly deserved rest (as it seems to me) he was hoping for. But as if I had never worked, written, said, or done anything, so I am now overloaded with matters on which I have to write, speak, negotiate, and act. Yet Christ is all in all; he is capable of doing all things, and he does them; blessed be he in eternity. Amen."³

¹ LW 50, Letters III, "To James Propst, September 15, 1538", pp. 182-183.

² Ibid., "To Wenceslas Link, June 20, 1543", p. 242.

³ Ibid., "To Mrs. Martin Luther, January 25, 1546", pp. 284-285.

Concerning his personal spiritual struggles, these are still present with him during his sunset years. Even though he is no longer plagued as much with sensuous temptations for example: "I am free from avarice, my age and bodily weakness protect me from sensual desire, and I am not afflicted with hate or envy toward anybody. Up to now only anger remains in me, and for the most part this is necessary and just. But I have other sins that are greater."¹ Along the same lines, Luther teases his wife a little in a letter written February 1, 1546: "But thank God now I am well, except for the fact that beautiful women tempt me so much that I neither care nor worry about becoming unchaste."²

Nonetheless, the devil continues to harass Luther in his old age, so much so that he complains that he cannot get much accomplished. . . "But as I have said, I am now so worn down by certain vexations of Satan, that I am unable to write more."³ . . . "I hope you make the best of this, since you know of my various burdens of business, work, age, and spiritual struggles. . . ."⁴ However, as noted previously, Luther still feels these vexations of spirit are of definite value to

¹ LW 54, Table Talk, #197, End of March, 1532, pp. 26-27.

² LW 50, Letters III, "To Mrs. Martin Luther, February 1, 1546", p. 291: Please note the translator gives an alternate translation also quite possible for this quotation: "Except for the fact that beautiful women do not bother me, so that I neither care for nor am afraid of any kind of unchastity." (Ibid., p. 291, n. 10).

³ Ibid., "To Nicholas Hausmann, February 23, 1538", p. 175.

⁴ Ibid., "To James Propst, September 15, 1538", p. 182.

himself and others:

. . . Were there no other proof that we are the ones who have been called and elected to the Kingdom of God and have the true Word of God, this one fact would suffice: we are attacked by so many sects which constantly disagree with one another--sometimes they even originate within our own ranks--not to speak of the papists, and my personal wars with Satan, and the contempt for the Word in our midst. . . .¹

While there is value in this harassment from without and within, Luther still preferred to be freed from the torment: . . . "I write nothing about myself except to ask you to pray in my behalf that the Lord may free me from the blows and the horns of the angel of Satan, and that according to His will He may grant me a good hour when I am to be delivered from this misery. . . ."²

Last Days and Death

Luther's life has a remarkable ending. Out of pastoral concern for the rivalling Counts of Mansfield, he felt an urgency to help work out a reconcilliation. On January 23rd, 1546, he left Wittenberg for Eisleben accompanied by his three sons John, Martin, and Paul, also John Aurifaber and later Justus Jonas. Apparently the winter of 1546 was extremely cold and severe. Consequently, their journey was interrupted for three days because of rivers flooding:

Grace and Peace in the Lord! Dear Katie! Today at eight we drove away from Halle, yet did not get to Eisleben, but returned to Halle again by nine. For a huge female Anabaptist met us with waves of water and great floating pieces of ice; she threatened to baptize us again, and has covered the whole countryside. But we are also unable to return because of the Mulde River at Bitterfeld, and are forced to stay captive here at Halle between the waters--not that we are thirsty to drink them. Instead we

¹ Ibid., p. 183.

² Ibid., p. 184.

take good beer from Torgau and good wine from the Rhine, with which we refresh and comfort ourselves in the meantime, hoping that the rage of the Saale River may wear itself out today. For since the ferryman and the people themselves were of little courage to try to cross, we did not want to go into the water and tempt God. For the devil is angry at us, and he lives in the water. Foresight is better than hindsight, and there is no need for us to prepare a fool's delight for the pope and his hanger-on. I did not think that the Saale could create such a flood and rumble over the stones and everything in such a way.¹

The delegation arrived finally in Eisleben on January 28th, 1546, and the mediation talks began in earnest the next day. However, things did not work out well and the negotiations were prolonged as Luther's letter of February 1, 1546 indicates:

Grace and peace in the Lord! I do thank you, my Philip, for your prayers for me, and I ask you to continue to pray. You know that I am an old man, and a man who ought to be retired. [But] now I am being drawn into a struggle which is troublesome to my studies, totally incompatible with my disposition and quite bothersome to my old age; consequently I certainly wish you were here, were it not that consideration for your health forces me instead to think it is good that we left you home. With God's help we have slain today the most bristly of all porcupines, the case concerning Newton--though not without a great fight. We hope that finally the battles will be less pitched if it pleases God.²

As it turned out, Luther was too optimistic and the main controversy was not settled at this point:

Grace and peace in the Lord. I wrote to you the day before yesterday, my Philip, that we had slain the porcupine. But this was really rejoicing before the victory, [for] this territory is indeed harassed by a certain ill fate, whoever might be to blame. I fear that the ruin of Germany also will follow, once this territory has passed away. Until now I have played the role of

¹ Ibid., "To Mrs. Martin Luther, January 25, 1546", pp. 286-287.

² Ibid., "To Philip Melanchthon, February 1, 1546", p. 293.

the sick goat, almost in despair concerning the successful outcome of this tragedy or comedy. Satan lets loose all his forces. Thus far we have resisted him by prayer. Yesterday after my sermon the chimney of my quarters was set on fire, no doubt by Satan himself who has very much frightened my poor hosts. I suspect Satan of ridiculing our efforts, or of threatening [us with] something else. . . .¹

After three weeks of grueling negotiations, finally by the sheer force of Luther's personality, the reconciliation of the counts took place: "I shall ask them [Count Gebhard and Count Albrecht] to be my guests so that they may talk with each other. For until now they have been silent, and in their writings have shown much bitterness toward each other."² This was Luther's strategy that finally succeeded.

On the same day of the reconcilliation, Luther became critically ill. There were several attacks involving sharp seizures in the area of his heart. Apparently, he realized this was his end. He recited Scriptures, and confessed his willingness to die in the Name of Christ and the doctrine he preached. He grew weaker moment by moment, and peacefully passed away, February 18, 1546, at the age of 63 years.³ So the Reformation began and ended with his pastoral concern for himself and his people, leaving a rich legacy for pastoral theology down through the centuries.

¹ Ibid., "To Philip Melanchton, February 3, 1546, p. 296.

² LW 50, Letters III, "To Mrs. Martin Luther, February 14, 1546, p. 311.

³ For more details on Luther's death, see Schwiebert, Op. cit., pp. 749ff. and Martin Ebon, ed. and trans., The Last Days of Luther by Justus Jonas, Michael Coelius, and Others. Introduction by Theodore G. Tappert (New York: Double Day and Co., Inc., 1970).

Chapter IV: The Anfechtung Analyzed Theologically

The episodes recorded in Chapters I, II and III, based on significant events in the "young", "middle-aged" and "aging" Luther, have revealed his growing relationship with the Gospel. This relationship was over-shadowed by the prevailing characteristic of ambivalence about self and the faith, "ups and downs", as he searched for Christian self-identity. Herein lies the uniqueness of Luther's personality, of which he was extremely conscious and often verbalized. He visited the heights and depths. Believing whole-heartedly at times and doubting just as strongly at other times, became the experiential base from which he could empathize warmly with the ecstasy and despair of others.

Definition and Classification

Reference has already been made to a definition of the Anfechtung by Bainton: "It may be a trial sent by God to test man, or an assault by the Devil to destroy man. It is all the doubt, turmoil, pang, tremor, panic, despair, desolation, and desperation which invade the spirit of man."¹

Bühler adds to this definition a classification of temptations.² He shows that Luther classified the Anfechtung first of "low" degree, coming from the "left" and from the "right", according to their differing origins and attacks upon the inner man. Concerning those trials on the "left", Luther had in mind all those troublesome

¹ Roland Bainton, Op. cit., p. 42.

² Paul Bühler, Die Anfechtung bei Martin Luther (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1942), pp. 3ff.

situations that engender hostility, hatred, bitterness, discomfort and impatience. Such situations might be illness, poverty, dishonor, - anything that causes us physical or emotional pain.¹

Along with the trials on the "left" are all those on the "right". These are the temptations to lust, honors, pleasures, that Luther says we experience in times of good fortune. "Here too, one's existence is endangered and one can be lost. Precisely he who would escape the temptation of misfortune, easily falls into the temptation of good fortune and is then in a greater danger; because this temptation is not so easily felt."² In short, Luther sees mankind attacked periodically from both sides, the "left" and the "right".

Bühler proceeds to illustrate what Luther considered as the most devastating of all the Anfechtung, and that has to do with spiritual distress, or those attacks from on high.³ By this classification Luther means the devil and all things that challenge our very faith, so that we end up in doubt rather than with assurance of our salvation. "These are sadness and heaviness of spirit, terror and fear of God's wrath, judgement, eternal death and such poisoned darts of hateful Satan."⁴

¹ Ibid., p. 3.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., pp. 3-4.

⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

It is important to point out, even though Luther classified the various experiences of Anfechtung as "high" and "low" as well as from "right" and "left", he is not suggesting an objective scale whereby the temptations can be rated from lesser to greater severity of pain. Rather, he teaches that at the time of an assault, from whatever direction, each is felt to be severe in its own way. Within each trial, "the whole danger resides and the battle is always for faith".¹ This is a significant principle according to Luther, in all struggles with the Anfechtung.

Description of Luther's Temptations

In regard to Luther's own experiences of the Anfechtung, we have observed how these struggles lasted all of his life. At various times he was sorely tempted by those on "high" and on "low", from the "left" and the "right". Probably the Anfechtung in the monastery were largely those from on "high"; that is in his failure to enjoy the assurance of saving faith, new life and salvation.²

With his discovery of the Reformation faith,³ Luther found

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. 64: "Luther's monastery temptations were a reaction to the failed attempt of work righteousness. At first things went well with Luther in the monastery; the devil was peaceful and quiet. But then he soon noticed that his striving was a crab-like progression, in which one only became ever more insecure in spite of all attempts to lead a holy life. So that he, as others, almost became insane in his desire to no longer have sin in him."

³ See Chapter I: "The Tower Experience".

release from his monastic Anfechtung. However, in leading the whole Reformation movement, the Anfechtung returned with renewed vengeance. Early in 1527, he began to suffer one of his longest and most intense states of spiritual anxiety and depression.¹

One of the first direct clues we have about this internal crisis is his report of a haunting inner voice that plagued him with such soul-searching questions as: "Du bist allein Klug? You

¹ Some scholars have postulated that in each occurrence of Luther's depression, including 1527, there was a physical illness that actually precipitated the emotional upheaval. Perhaps the most exhaustive analysis in support of this theory is Wilhelm Ebstein, Dr. Martin Luthers Krankheiten und deren Einfluss auf seinen körperlichen und geistigen Zustand (Stuttgart, 1908). In more recent years, another work in favour of this same interpretation has appeared: Annemarie Halder's Das Harnsteinleiden Martin Luthers (Trier, 1969) - a study of Luther's stones in the bladder between 1537 and 1546.

No doubt there is a direct connection between Luther's physical, emotional and spiritual health. However, to presuppose only physiological roots to the Anfechtung is not accurate and certainly not exhaustive nor comprehensive in my view. In fact, Luther observed that it often worked in the reverse for him: his worries and anxieties precipitated bodily illnesses: "...You know the proverb, 'Imagination produces misfortune'. Therefore, you ought to take the pains to divert rather than to entertain such notions. I too must do this. For our adversary, the devil, walks about seeking not only to devour our souls but also to weaken our bodies with thoughts of our souls in the hope that he might perhaps slay our bodies, for he knows that our physical health depends in large measure on the thoughts in our minds. This is in accord with the saying, 'Good cheer is half the battle', and 'A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones'. . . ." To Conrad Cordatus, May 21, 1537, trans. Tappert, Op. cit., p. 99 (WA, Br, VIII, 79).

alone know everything? But what if you were wrong, and if you should lead all these people into error and into eternal damnation?"¹ Self-reproach plummeted him into the utter depths of despair where he was forced to reflect upon his having survived the turmoil of the Reformation this long. Hundreds of martyrs died for their faith. Thousands died in the peasant tumult . . . "I was not worthy to shed my blood for Christ as many of my fellow confessors of the Gospel have done. . . ."²

There is little actual symptomatology recorded of Luther's melancholy during this prolonged period of time. This is no doubt due in part at least to the nature of the depressive state. There is often great agitation or extreme lethargy, so much so that very little, if anything, coherent or rational is produced by the sufferer. Luther commented once: "If I live longer, I would like to write a book about Anfechtungen, for without them no person is able to know Holy Scripture, nor faith, the fear and love of God; indeed he is not able to know what the Spirit is, having never been in temptations."³

Nevertheless, there are a few descriptive pieces of information from which we can draw together something of what Luther endured during this severe and lasting trial of body and soul. He reports

¹ Quoted by Erikson, Op. cit., p. 241.

² Quoted by Roland Bainton, Op. cit., p. 360.

³ Appendix, Table Talk #4777.

initially of experiencing severe anxiety with cardiac complications: "Mein herz zappelt", (My heart quivers).¹ He then broke down with intense crying spells and periods of profuse sweating. He was convinced that his death was imminent and that he must pass over that fateful threshold without any hope, or faith, or justification: "For more than a week I was close to the gates of death and hell. I trembled in all my members. Christ was wholly lost. I was shaken by desperation and blasphemy of God."²

In addition to a complete loss of self-confidence, Luther's state of despair was aggravated by his run-down (physical) condition. He suffered severe bouts of indigestion, constipation, as well as painful kidney stones. He also mentioned Ohrensausen, an annoying ringing or buzzing in his ears, probably caused by an infection in the middle-ear.³

Given these symptoms above, it is not too difficult to imagine some of the physical, emotional, and spiritual agony of Luther during this time. The distasteful physical ailments, the loss of faith and self-esteem, and the foreboding question, "Was hastu gepredigt?" (What have you preached?) became a disparaging aggregate hounding him day and night: "The devil has often troubled

¹WA VIII, 482, Quoted by Erikson, Op. cit., p. 243. I wish to acknowledge Erikson's help in extracting this clinical information about Luther's chronic state.

²Quoted by Bainton, Op. cit., p. 361.

³Erikson, Op. cit., p. 244.

me by saying, 'Who commanded you to teach against monasteries?' Or again, 'Before there was glorious peace, but now you have disturbed it, and who ordered you to do so?'"¹

"Above all, we must be certain that this our teaching is the Word of God. When this is established, we shall be sure that the cause must and will remain and that no devil can suppress it. God be praised, I am certain that it is the Word of our Lord God, I have driven from my heart all other beliefs in the world, whatever they may be, and I have almost overcome that most difficult of all thoughts which arises in the heart, 'Do you claim to be the only one who has the true Word of God and no one else has it?'. In this sense--that is, in the name of the church--they are now attacking us most severely. . ."²

This report by Luther was given some four years after 1527. In it he still refers to this one question as the most difficult and the one he has yet to master: "Do you claim to be the only one who has the true Word of God. . .?" It is little wonder that when he was overtaken by despair, this inner question would completely overwhelm his consciousness with great force and accusation, without any of the usual defense on his part.

Learning to Cope

Luther tried to respond to the accusations of this inner voice at first in terms of his achieved status as a distinguished Doctor of Theology, but without success. In his confusion, he could no longer properly distinguish between law and gospel.³ Despite heroic efforts, he could not pray.⁴ When everything else failed, in his

¹ LW 54, #525, Spring, 1533, p. 96.

² Ibid., #130, Between November 30 and December 14, 1531, p. 18.

³ See Erikson, Op. cit., p. 244.

⁴ Ibid.

desperation he requested someone to read the Paternoster . . . 'mit hellen Worten'¹ (with a sharp voice). Slowly he began to hear the Word of the Lord speak to him again. ". . . (When) Christ comes and talks to you as if to a sinner and tortures you like Moses: 'What have you done?' -- slay him to death. But when he talks to you as God does, and as a savior, prick up both ears."²

As Luther began to allow his heart and mind to bask in the revealed Word of Christ, recorded in the Scriptures, his mood of despondency and self-accusation began to lift. "The true Christian pilgrimage is not to Rome or Compostela, but to the prophets, the Psalms, and the Gospels." In turning his thoughts to God, he recalled the promise of the First Commandment. "I am the Lord thy God":

In such a case we must say, "Let go everything in which I have trusted. Lord, thou alone givest help and comfort. Thou hast said that thou wouldst help me. I believe thy word. O my God and Lord, I have from thee a joyful and comforting word. I hold to it. I know thou wilt not lie to me! No matter how thou mayest appear, thou wilt keep what thou hast promised, that and nothing else."³

In addition to the Scriptures as objective aids in his spiritual struggles, Luther prized highly Baptism and the Lord's Supper: "Heaven is a gift that has been freely given me. I have documents and a seal to prove it. That is, I have been baptized and partake of the Sacrament. Therefore, guard your documents well, lest the

¹Enders VI, 298, Quoted by Erikson, Op. cit., p. 244.

²WA, TR II, 2655a, Quoted by Erikson, Op. cit., p. 244.

³Quoted by Bainton, Op. cit., pp. 365-367.

devil tear them up; that is, remain in the fear of the Lord and pray the Lord's Prayer. . . .¹ " . . . Our Lord God is so hostile to such disputation [re: predestination] that he instituted Baptism, the Word, and the Sacrament as signs to counteract it. We should rely on these and say: 'I have been baptized. I believe in Jesus Christ. I have received the Sacrament.' . . . If we despise this foundation and in the devil's name start building at the roof, we shall surely fall. . . ."²

-Since Luther believed that the devil had a great deal to do with his struggles, in many places he described in detail how he went about confronting the devil "directly":

When I go to bed, the Devil is always waiting for me. When he begins to plague me, I give him this answer: "Devil, I must sleep. That's God's command, 'Work by day. Sleep by night.' So go away." If that doesn't work and he brings out a catalog of sins, I say, "Yes, old fellow, I know all about it. And I know some more you have overlooked. Here are a few extra. Put them down." If he still won't quit and presses me hard and accuses me as a sinner, I scorn him and say, "St. Satan, pray for me. Of course you have never done anything wrong in your life. You alone are holy. Go to God and get grace for yourself. If you want to get me all straightened out, I say, 'Physician, heal thyself.'"³

"Almost every night when I wake up the devil is there and wants to dispute with me. I have come to this conclusion: When the argument that the Christian is without the law and above the law doesn't help, I instantly chase him away with a fart. The rogue wants to dispute about righteousness although he himself a knave, for he kicked God out of heaven and crucified his Son. . . ."⁴

¹WA, TR II, #1924, 1530, trans. in Appendix.

²WA, TR II, #2631b, Autumn, 1532, trans. Tappert, Op. cit., p. 122.

³WA, TR, #1557, Quoted by Bainton, Op. cit., p. 362.

⁴LW 54, Table Talk, #469, Spring 1533, p. 78.

At other times, he advises the method of an "indirect" attack upon the devil because, after all, he is a master at manifold temptations: "Don't argue with the devil, he has had 5000 years of experience. He has tried out all his tricks on Adam, Abraham, and David, and he knows exactly the weak spots."¹ Therefore, we are to drop the challenge at hand. Seek out some friends; discuss irrelevant events. Above all else, flee solitude! "Eve got into trouble when she walked in the garden alone. I have my worst temptations when I am by myself."²

The fellowship of the church is also seen by Luther as extremely valuable in this regard: "No one should be alone when he opposes Satan. The church and the ministry of the Word were instituted for this purpose, that hands may be joined together and one may help another. If the prayer of one doesn't help, the prayer of another will."³

At another time, Luther suggested the following: "Having been taught by experience I can say how you ought to restore your spirit when you suffer from spiritual depression. When you are assailed by gloom, despair, or a troubled conscience, you should eat, drink, and talk with others. If you can find help from yourself by thinking of a girl, do so."⁴ Of course, everyone must guard against eating and

¹WA, TR, #4329, Quoted by Bainton, Op. cit., p. 363.

²WA, TR, #4857, Bainton, Ibid., p. 363.

³LW 54, #469, Spring 1533, p. 78.

⁴Ibid., #122, November 30, 1531, pp. 17-18.

drinking too much: "Copious drinking benefits me when I am in this condition. But I would not advise a young person to drink more because this might stimulate his sexual desire. In short, abstinence is beneficial for some and a drinking bout for others!"¹

A revival of music and good exercise was also recommended: "I especially admire these two noble exercises, music and gymnastics. The first of these pertains to the spirit and serves to drive away care, while the second pertains to the body and practises the limbs by jumping and wrestling."² "In all this advice to flee the fray Luther was in a way prescribing faith as a cure for lack of faith. To give up the argument is of itself an act of faith akin to the Gelassenheit of the mystics, an expression of confidence in the restorative power of God, who operates in the subconscious while man occupies himself with extraneous things."³

Help from Others

In his experiences with the Anfechtung, Luther often requested the personal assistance of others. The value of this kind of personal help was profoundly impressed upon him early in his career, beginning with his sojourn in the monastery.

A professor of Ecclesiastical History, James MacKinnon, has observed that during those early years, Luther was well acquainted with the

¹ Ibid., p. 18.

² Ibid., #3470, October 27, 1536, p. 206.

³ Bainton, Op. cit., p. 364.

"mystical-evangelical element in mediaeval thought"¹ as represented by such authorities as St. Bernard², Bonaventure³ and Gerson.⁴ However, MacKinnon concludes that of the three, Gerson proved to be of some initial help during Luther's experience of the Anfechtung in the monastery. He discovered in Gerson, some one who knew about "the temptations of the spirit"⁵. Not only could Luther sense a point of contact or identification, but Gerson helped him to reflect theologically about his experience: "distrust of self and all its works, humility and suffering constitute the condition of the operation of God's mercy and goodness. Only such does God save as turn to Him in their impotence, doubt and fear."⁶ Whereas on the other hand, Luther could find no comfort in the speculative, mystical writing of Bonaventure. "He (Luther) was unable by force of will and intellectual abstraction to reason himself out of his spiritual trouble into the higher plane of mystical speculation."⁷ In Luther's words, "I have read Bonaventure

¹ James MacKinnon, Luther and the Reformation, Vol. I (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1925), p. 123.

² Bernard of Clairraux (ca. 1091-1153).

³ "Bonaventure (1221-1274) was a Franciscan whose mystical and dialectical writings occupy an important place in the history of medieval thought." LW 54, p. 112, n. 388.

⁴ Jean Gerson (1363-1429).

⁵ MacKinnon, Op. cit., p. 123.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 123-124.

⁷ Ibid., p. 124.

on this, and he almost drove me mad because I desired to experience the union of God with my soul (about which he babbles) through a union of intellect and will. Such theologians are nothing but fanatics."¹

It is the considered opinion of another historian Kbstlin that the most influential person to guide Luther through his early Anfechtung was John Staupitz, Vicar-General of the Augustinians.² Even though he did not always fully understand or appreciate Luther's spiritual struggles, yet Staupitz did not abandon him. He offered a great deal of pastoral interest and counsel, assuring Luther these trials were necessary: "The self-reliant heart fails to find the grace of God as it is in its essential nature and as it is freely offered to all."³

Luther always remembered the advice that Staupitz gave him early in his career:

Finally, when I was sad and downcast, Staupitz started to talk to me at table and asked, 'Why are you so sad?' I replied, 'Alas, what am I to do!' Then he said, 'You don't know how necessary this is for you; otherwise nothing good will come of you.' He himself didn't understand [what he said], for he thought I was too learned and that I would become haughty if I remained free of spiritual trials. But I took his words like Paul's, 'A thorn was given me in the flesh to keep me from being too elated; my power is made perfect in weakness' [II Cor. 12:7,9]. Therefore I accepted his words as the voice of the Holy Spirit comforting me.⁴

¹LW 54, Table Talk, #644, p. 112.

²Julius Kbstlin, The Theology of Luther, trans. Charles E. Hay (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publishing Society, 1897), I, p. 63.

³Ibid., p. 69.

⁴LW 54, Table Talk, #518, pp. 94-95.

Philip Watson, a systematic theologian gives an excellent summary of the wise theological counsel that Staupitz offered to Luther:

First, that love for God and righteousness was only the beginning of true penitence, not its end and completion. This made clear to him the vanity of 'making pretences to God' with the 'forced and feigned love' that was all he could himself produce; for if repentance meant a complete change of heart, then only God could effect it by His prevenient grace. Secondly, when he spoke of distress he felt at the thought of predestination, Staupitz sought to lead him away from such thoughts. 'In the wounds of Christ he said is predestination understood and found, and nowhere else; for it is written: Him shall ye hear (Matthew 17:5). The Father is too high, therefore He says: I will give a way by which men may come to Me . . . in Christ you shall find what and who I am, and what I will; otherwise you will not find it either in heaven or on earth.' Lastly, Staupitz urged Luther to study his Bible, to know it chapter and verse, and become a good textualis et localis; and he helped him to do so, moreover, by overcoming his reluctance to take his Doctorate and inducing him to accept a Professorship in Biblical exegesis!

With this kind of pastoral direction and his disciplined study of Scripture, particularly the Book of Romans, Luther finally found deliverance from his intense distress about a righteous God in relation to sinners such as himself.² Upon gaining a new spiritual

¹ Philip S. Watson, Let God be God! (London: The Epworth Press, 1947), pp. 19-20.

² See Horst Beintker, Die Überwindung der Anfechtung bei Luther (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1954). This work is based on a study of Luther's early commentary on Psalms 1519-21. . . . Beintker offers the following conclusion: 'The security of the heart - which is in the forgiveness of sins - where hope rules - stands and falls with faith. . . . The sinner in the sight of God has fear only and he is driven still farther into it by the devil and held captive therein! But God does not hate the sinner, only those who will not acknowledge that they are sinners. The victory over our fear consequently consists in the insight that God justifies sinners; and Luther knows only one danger that leads away from the certainty of salvation, when justifying faith itself is lost from view.' pp. 194-195.

relationship with God, based not upon his own, but God's righteousness in Christ, Luther gained a whole new "lease" on life during those early years. Christ no longer appeared as a stern judge or task-master to him, but rather as a compassionate friend and Saviour, ready to accept sinners. Through this experience of spiritual renewal with the help of others, Luther confesses he was inwardly warmed by the immense love of God and filled with new hope even in the midst of trial and opposition!

Necessity of Trials - God's Visitation

It is instructive to learn how Luther understands theologically his experiences with the Anfechtung. The first principle he reiterates in earlier and later writings, as well as in the Table Talk, is rather startling. Instead of asserting that the Anfechtung is the greatest distress or anxiety for a Christian to fear and endure, he concludes precisely the opposite. The gravest or most dangerous state of all for the Christian, is the time there is no distress.² In spite of the

¹MacKinnon, Op. cit., pp. 151-156. In Chapter IX "Pastoral Care of Self" we will discuss the pastoral help Luther received after leaving the monastery. He never regarded himself as all sufficient and from time to time would seek out colleagues such as John Bugenhagen, Justus Jonas, Philip Melancthon for help. Even his wife Katy was particularly helpful to him during some of his struggles with the Anfechtung.

²LW 44, The Christian in Society 1, "Treatise on God Works - 1520"; p. 47: "For who lives an hour without trials? I will make no mention of the trials of adversity which are countless. The most dangerous trial of all is when there is no trial, when everything is all right and running smoothly. That is when a man tends to forget God, to become too independent and put his time of prosperity to a wrong use. In fact, at this time he has the times more need to call upon God's name than in adversity." . . . Cf. Appendix, Table Talk,

physical pain, the emotional agony or the spiritual turmoil that may be involved to a greater or lesser degree, Luther believes strongly that the Anfechtung is an integral part of the Christian experience. In his view, these experiences are an avenue for a personal visitation by God Himself. "Therefore, we should willingly endure the hand of God in this and in all suffering. Do not be worried; indeed such a trial is the very best sign of God's grace and love for man."¹ Here Luther is alluding to such passages of Scripture as: "Blessed is the man whom thou dost chasten O Lord"²; "For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives"³; and "Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten; so be zealous and repent."⁴ Hence, a Christian should ". . . thank God for deeming him worthy of such a visitation, of which many thousands of people remain deprived."⁵

Even though the Anfechtung was considered necessary, equivalent to a visitation or revelation from God, yet Luther admits it is not easily accepted as such. "Now even if He hides His love from me, and it seems

#3678: "The temptation of faith is the gravest, for faith ought to conquer all other temptations and calamities. If faith succumbs to temptation, all the others, even the smallest, attack the human being. But where faith is healthy, all other temptations must decrease. That is the thorn of Paul [1 Cor. 12:7], the temptation against faith, a great spit and pest that go through spirit and flesh. It is not a temptation of the carnal libido as the papists dream, who have felt no other temptation other than fleshly lust; they have not experienced such great sorrows of faith." . . . Cf. Beintker, Op. cit., p. 194.

¹ LW 42, Devotional Writings 1, p. 184.

² Psalm 94:12.

³ Hebrews 12:6.

⁴ Revelation 3:19.

⁵ LW 42, p. 183.

so to you also, that is His way. . . . As He says in the Book of Moses, He wishes to dwell in darkness. . . . We may see only His back. We indeed become cast down, but we are not deserted."¹

This common experience within Anfechtung points to an additional theological principle taught by Luther about the "hidden" and "revealed" God. "God is incomprehensible and invisible, and hence whatever is comprehended and seen is not God. It can also be expressed in another way. God is both visible and invisible. He is visible through His Word and work. Apart from His Word and work one should not look for Him."²

This unique understanding of God's revelation is based ultimately upon the cross, the death and resurrection of Christ. "Because the revelation of God takes place on the cross everything depends upon the word and upon faith. The word and faith are the marks of the revelation which is concealed under its contrary."³

There is a more complete and systematic treatment of that which is "hidden" and "revealed" in Luther's Work On the Bondage of the Will.⁴ Faith has to do with things which are not seen."⁵

¹Appendix, Table Talk, #3669; Cf. Beintker, Op. cit., p. 195: "Temptation, yes, but also consolation. This is the way it has to be. Our Lord God assails us vigorously, but He does not desert us."

²LW 54, Table Talk, #257, p. 35.

³Gerhard Ebeling, Luther: An Introduction to His Thought, trans. R.A. Wilson (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), p. 236. See also Walther von Loewenich, Luther's Theology of the Cross, trans. Herbert J.A. Bouman (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976), "Luther's Doctrine of the Hidden God", pp. 27-49.

⁴LW 33, Career of the Reformer, pp. 62ff.

⁵Hebrews 11:1.

Thus that there may be room for faith, everything which is believed must be concealed; but it cannot be more deeply concealed than under the contrary appearance, sensation, and experience. Thus when God brings to life, he does it by killing; when he justifies, he does it by making guilty; when he exalts to heaven, he does it by leading to hell. . . . Thus he conceals his eternal goodness and mercy under eternal anger, his righteousness under unrighteousness!

Not only are the experiences of Anfechtung valuable to make "room" for faith, but they also help teach total dependence upon the promises of God and His sustaining power.² Certainly this was part of the reason the patriarchs had to endure such crushing annoyances at times.³ In short, all of these challenges to our welfare mean for Luther: "To hold firm!"⁴

Thus what Luther advised others in their times of despondency, was not always easy for him to put into practice in his own life. There were times, particularly during prolonged instances of anguish, when he found himself arguing rather impatiently with God when no satisfactory answers to his dilemmas were apparent. "I dispute much with God with great impatience and I hold him to his promises."⁵

¹ LW 33, p. 62.

² Appendix, Table Talk, #835. "But such temptations are not only necessary for us, but they are good and useful for us. Otherwise, we would continue to go along without any fear of God; would not call upon Him for help; for whoever is healthy and happy does not need a physician nor comforter. Thus the devil could easily deceive him. In addition, temptation is also useful in making us live in the fear of God, walk circumspectly, pray without ceasing, grow in the knowledge of Christ and learn to understand the power of His Word. And even though we as yet are weak, yet the power of our Lord Christ is strong in the weak. [1 Cor. 12:9]."

³ Ibid., Table Talk, #1333.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Quoted by Bainton, Op. cit., p. 362.

With this attitude of faith, Luther found a great deal of comfort from such biblical accounts as the Canaanite woman who gained her wish, when she was bold enough to argue with Christ on the basis of His Word:

Jesus left that place and went off to the territory near the cities of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman who lived in that region came to him. "Son of David!", she cried out. "Have mercy on me! My daughter has a demon and is in a terrible condition."

But Jesus did not say a word to her. His disciples came to him and begged him, "Send her away! She is following us and making all this noise!"

Then Jesus replied, "I have been sent only to those lost sheep, the people of Israel."

At this the woman came and fell at his feet. "Help me, sir!", she said.

Jesus answered, "It isn't right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

"That's true, sir", she answered, "but even the dogs eat the leftovers that fall from their masters' table."

So Jesus answered her, "You are a woman of great faith! What you want will be done for you." And at that very moment her daughter was healed.¹

Luther writes the following commentary on this passage:

All this is written for our comfort that we should see how deeply God hides his face and how we must not go by our feeling but only by his Word. All Christ's answers sounded like no, but he did not mean no. He had not said that she was not of the house of Israel. He had not said that she was a dog. He had not said no. Yet all his answers were more like no than yes. This shows how our heart feels in despondency. It seems nothing but a plain no. Therefore it must turn to the deep hidden yes under the no and hold with a firm faith to God's Word.²

In relating to God and in searching for inner peace, Luther is hereby offering the profound religious insight that one must ultimately reach underneath the apparent "no's" of life, all the way through to the

¹ Matthew 15:21-28 - Good News Bible Translation. Other examples are 1) Mary's response to Jesus' rebuke at the Marriage feast at Cana, John 2:1-12 and 2) Jacob's wrestling with the angel, Genesis 32:24-31.

² WA 17, 11, p. 202, Quoted by Bainton, Op. cit., p. 363.

eternal "yes's". Having gained this kind of deep theology about spiritual turmoil, perhaps it is quite understandable how Luther could eventually work through his identity crisis in 1527 with renewed conviction of Christian faith and self-affirmation. To attest to this remarkable victory, it is instructive to realize that it was out of this period of his most intense and prolonged depression, that he composed the glorious Reformation Hymn that has been sung and resung countless times from that fateful year of suffering to the present time: "Ein feste burg ist unser Gott" - (Psalm 46):

A mighty fortress is our God, A bulwark never failing;
Our helper he amid the flood, Of Mortal ills prevailing;
For still our ancient foe, Doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great, And armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide, Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is he; Lord Sabaoth
his Name, From age to age the same, And he must win the battle.

And should this world, with devils filled, Though threaten to
undo us;
We will not fear, for God hath willed, His truth to triumph
through us;
The prince of darkness grim, We tremble not for him; His rage we
can endure,
For lo! his doom is sure, One little world shall fell him.

That word above all earthly powers, No thanks to them abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours, Through him who with us sideth:
Let goods and kindred go, This mortal life also; the body they may
kill: God's truth abideth still, His kingdom is forever.¹

¹ Service Book and Hymnal, Authorized by the Lutheran Churches cooperating in The Commission on the Liturgy and Hymnal (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1958/1964), trans. Frederick H. Hedge, #150, cf. LW 53, pp. 284-285.

Assaults by the Devil

In Luther's view there is a continual struggle between God and the devil - between the good and evil. "God makes alive; the devil kills. . . as Jeremiah says; He has pleasure in life, but death came into the world because of the devil's jealousy and malice."¹ Or, put in another way in reference to the Son of God: "Christ says, I am the truth and the life - the devil, I am death and lies."² Ultimately, it is Christ alone who can overcome the cunning of the devil:

The devil indeed is not a recognized doctor of theology, but otherwise highly learned and experienced, for after all he has now been practising his art, tested and exercised it, carried on his trade for almost six thousand years! Against him, Christ alone can prevail. Nevertheless, he tried his art and cunning on Him also when he lustingly said to Him: "If you fall down and worship me, I will give you all the kingdoms of the whole world, etc." He no longer says as previously: "If thou be the Son of God", but simply, "I am god, you are my creature, for all of the might and glory of the world is mine, and I give them to whom I will; if you worship me, I shall give them to you." Christ cannot stand this blasphemy, and calls him by his right name saying: "Get thee hence Satan, etc."³

Therefore, as the devil attempted to dissuade Christ, likewise he attacks Christ's followers with every form of suffering; "All despondency and sadness come from the devil, for he is the Lord of death [Hebrews 2:14] especially when a person is sad and afraid as if God were an ungracious God. This is certainly the work of the

¹ Appendix, Table Talk, #6826.

² Appendix, Table Talk, #5940. For a more complete theological examination of Luther's teaching on the devil, see Harmannus Obendiek, Der Teufel bei Martin Luther (Berlin: Furche-Verlag G.m.b.H., 1931). Obendiek states that the importance of Luther's concept of the devil must be drawn from many different sources, as Luther does not give a systematic presentation of his concepts on the devil, p. 33.

³ Appendix, Table Talk, #724.

devil and his machination."¹

Many vexations of body, mind, and spirit are not, however, to be interpreted as visitations from God. We must note carefully that a fundamental principle of Luther's theology allows definite room for influences by the devil. Barth reminds us that Luther's position on the devil flows from his understanding of God in Christ and must be evaluated in this context. Natural man without Christ cannot distinguish the devil from God. The devil seems divine and God seems evil to unenlightened man. But with the revelation of God in Christ, God and the devil can be properly distinguished.²

If the devil can be differentiated from God, and his ways from God's ways, why is it that we still tend to believe the devil more readily than in God? Luther gives a very interesting answer to this question in terms of one's personal disposition: "We are better skilled and lean more to doubt than to hope. Hope comes from the Holy

¹Appendix, Table Talk, #832.

²Hans-Martin Barth, Der Teufel und Jesus Christus in der Theologie Martin Luthers (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), p. 209: "One cannot do justice to the theological facts if we consider the devil with Luther to be only a rudiment of the world of faith of the Middle Ages. . . . Luther meets the devil where he meets Christ. He recognizes him as the one who strives to take the place of Christ. While for Luther Christ is essentially mediator, connector, and reconciliator with God the Father, essentially the devil for him is the interrupter of this connection, instigator of all separation from the Father, indeed by seeking to eliminate the true mediator. . . . Now since God can act in a devilish way and the devil in a godly way, for man without Christ - God and the devil are impossible to differentiate. . . . Only in looking to Jesus Christ do God and the devil step apart for the believer. Therefore, the devil makes every effort to hinder and bann people from looking up to Jesus Christ. This is why for Luther, the devil has his necessary theological place in opposition to Christ, against His Word and against the working of His Word."

Spirit and is His work; but doubt comes from our spirit and is our doing."¹ And in another place he reminds us that each person must wrestle with his own peculiar temptations. "For no one is content with his lot. The married man wishes to be single; the single man to be married; the master to be servant, and servant master; the pauper rich, and the rich man desires even more!"²

Since the devil is "lord of death", he often uses death as one of the most intense threats to the well-being of people. "He has more vials full of poison than all drug-stores, and if one won't do it another will!"³

Luther holds the devil responsible for the very existence of death; ". . .for death came into the world as a result of the satanic seduction into inherited sin."⁴ Since it is impossible to trace death back to God, the conclusion above is quite logical for Luther. The source of death and destruction must be the devil. Therefore, in all cases of fear over impending death or bereavement, Luther would accuse the devil as the real cause of this severe form of Anfechtung.

Ultimately, the devil and all forms of the Anfechtung are subordinated to God and are active only in accord with His permissive

¹ Appendix, Table Talk, #388.

² Ibid., Table Talk, #3816.

³ Buhler, Op. cit., p. 53.

⁴ Ibid.

will. "For, it is now recognized that the devil in spite of all his power is in fact nothing. Even if he were to gain all things, he is nevertheless only a creature of God."¹ Therefore, in one way at least, it appears everything we experience in our lives comes from God, whether that is good or evil.

How can this be understood? Reflecting Luther, Böhler points back to the difference between God's permissive will and immediate or direct cause. "The devil is permitted, so to speak, only to cast snow-balls at us in a way that approaches the burden of what we can well bear, yet not overcome us."² This permission by God is granted without his actually causing the suffering directly.

With this kind of a formulation, an impression of dualism might be aroused, God and the devil as equals. But this is not the teaching of Luther. There is a strict subordination of the devil to God.

"The devil is nothing else than a tool of God. . . . He is a bad instrument, but God can use such too, in order to advance that which is good through that which is bad. The superiority of God is shown in this that the devil, in all his raging, must remain within the limits of the Will of God."³

Law - Gospel and Mood Deflation

Another dimension to Luther's theological analyses of the Anfechtung has to do with the Law-Gospel paradox. At first glance

¹ Ibid., p. 211.

² Ibid., p. 212.

³ Ibid.

we might conclude the concept "Law and Gospel" belongs solely to doctrinal theology and has no place in experiential Christianity. However, upon further reflection and with Luther's help, we can begin to appreciate the broad scope of this Biblical theme and how at the same time it can relate closely to daily life. Again, we must turn to some of Luther's dialogues as recorded in the Table Talk for some clues in this regard. In Chapter V, we will note how Law and Gospel relate the dual nature of the Divine Word. The Law makes its demands, accusations, and condemnations. The Gospel offers grace and blessing freely, resulting in forgiveness of sins and new life.

It is during a time of severe testing or temptation that the Law comes to frighten, accuse and blame: "It is difficult to dismiss the burden and curse of the Law in times of temptation. . . . When the Law . . . threatens you with the wrath of God and death, then you must take courage."¹ For Luther it is the devil's cunning and insidious ways to use the Law to terrify us. ". . . (the devil) makes beams out of small splinters, something that is probably no sin or very small ones, and makes a real hell out of them (Matt. 7:3)."²

In another case, someone arrived at Luther's home where-upon the visitor was questioned: "Why are you so down-hearted?" Answer: "Oh, dear doctor, I find myself dwelling on thoughts that are sour and I cannot do anything about it. I am unable properly to distinguish

¹ Appendix, Table Talk, #6699.

² Ibid., Table Talk, #6629.

between Law and Gospel."¹ Luther concurred with the diagnosis and attempted to reassure the young man that these trials were necessary and that God's grace and His Word were sufficient to hold him even in this time of trial.

Pastoral Implications

One of the first positive implications from experiences with the Anfechtung through the years for Luther is his claim that it helped him learn more about theology. "I didn't learn my theology all at once. I had to ponder over it ever more deeply, and my spiritual trials were of help to me in this, for one does not learn anything without practise."²

Along with learning more theology in depth, Luther gained a tremendous awareness and acceptance of the human condition. Troubled persons could sense in him, a humble fellow-sojourner who experienced many of the same depressive anxieties as themselves. One "objective" factor in appraising the significance for this identification is the large numbers of people who sought out his spiritual counsel. The volumes of Table Talks alone attest to this fact.

Historian Roland Bainton gives a further assessment of his genuine appeal among the people at Wittenberg: "Luther was equally great in sermons preached from the pulpit, the lectures delivered in the class hall, and the prayers voiced in the upper room. His

¹Appendix, Table Talk, #1557.

²LW 54, Table Talk, #352, Fall, 1532, pp. 50-51.

versatility is genuinely amazing. No one in his own generation was able to vie with him."¹ Bainton goes on to point out that Luther often preached four times a week with the result that Twenty-three hundred of his sermons are extant. The highest number of sermons preached came in 1528, a total of 195 in 145 days.²

Another indication of Luther's deep understanding of the human condition and his responding with meaningful spiritual insights can be seen in the far-reaching appeal of his devotional writings. One scholar has concluded:

Of about 30 works of this nature which Luther published between March 1517 and the summer of 1520, we know of 370 impressions by 1520. . . . There is evidence extant that every popular devotional work which Luther published up to the summer of 1520, that is, until the appearance of the "Letter to the Nobility", was reprinted an average twelve times, sometimes less, sometimes more, and in most cases as often as twenty-four times.³

No doubt there were many different factors that combined in producing this effect, such as ecclesiastical abuses, political ferment, social upheavals, and not least, a deep religious discontent. However, in response to these factors, Luther spoke new words of comfort and hope, ". . . with the liberty of one who is completely absorbed by what he has to say, and with the practicality of one who is hitting the nail right on the head."⁴

¹ Bainton, Op. cit., p. 348.

² Ibid., p. 349.

³ Gerhard Ebeling, Luther, Op. cit., pp. 57-58.

⁴ Ibid., p. 58.

Another group of extant writings (in addition to his sermons and Biblical commentaries) that graphically illustrates Luther's popularity in pastoral care is his Letters. There are some 2,580 Letters still in existence of which Luther's authorship is certain.¹ These Letters address a wide range of matters from personal private concerns to matters of national interest. Most of them portray Luther's pastoral counsel drawn from his immediate experience and study of the Word.²

It is interesting to note how the German scholar Beintker expresses his agreement that Luther had gained an exceptional understanding of the Anfechtung. He says: "It belonged to the central purpose of his theology and sermons, to set in true perspective the meaning of temptation and sorrow for the Christian life."³ He continues by explaining further Luther's position that Anfechtung has to do with God and man. As such it is "part and parcel" of justification through which God refines and cleanses man. "Thus the question has less to do with temptation in itself as precisely with the help issuing from God in overcoming temptation through faith."⁴ Not only did people flock to Luther because he

¹LW 48, Letters I, p. xiii.

²See Tappert, Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel, Op. cit., for a selection of Letters giving Luther's response to situations of the sick and dying, the bereaved, the anxious and depressed, questions facing the clergy, marriage and sex, etc.

³Beintker, Op. cit., "Vorwort".

⁴Ibid.

could identify with them, but they came for the specific spiritual help and insight he could offer.

All of this "objective" evidence, i.e. sermons, Table Talks, devotional writings and Letters shows Luther relating intimately to the human condition. The words he shares pastorally are drawn from the Scripture, tempered by his own deep and varied experiences with the Anfechtung. He guides and sustains others simply by offering what he has found himself: "It is therefore the greatest gift [of God] to have a text and to be able to say, 'This is right. I know it'."¹

There are many other implications for pastoral care in addition to his identification with the human condition, that can be drawn from Luther's experience with Anfechtung. Examples are the resources of Word and Sacraments, prayer, pastoral help of others, value of Christian fellowship, direct and indirect response to the devil. Most of these will be discussed later in this dissertation. But perhaps one of the most profound implications for pastoral care is not at all obvious to a casual observer, spiritual motivation. Luther's personal struggles challenge us to examine in more depth situations of suffering on the "left" and "right" from the "low" or "high" places.² The challenge is to look through or beyond the pain and realize with Luther, that each serious experience of Anfechtung is unique and calls faith

¹ LW 54, Table Talk, #352, Fall, 1532, p. 51.

² For an explanation of these terms, see the "Definition and Classification" of Anfechtung at the beginning of this Chapter.

into question.¹ Whatever we decide to do as pastors to help, should also include the faith dimension. This requires an inner spiritual motivation.

In the Gospel of St. John we read the Words of Jesus to his disciples: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide; . . ."² In a sermon on this specific passage of Scripture, Luther begins by explaining what Jesus means by using the term friends: "This friendship - the fact that I call you my friends - you do not have from yourselves; you have it because I chose you as friends through my suffering and death, and because I acknowledge you as my friends."³

Later in the same sermon, Luther continues to develop this theme. While it is true that we do nothing to merit forgiveness of sins or eternal life, yet we must not be idle: "You need not go to Rome or to Jerusalem, but you are to go to your neighbour. You are not to sit still without fruits and works; but you are to come into the open and let other people benefit from you and also gain from your message, confession, service, and help."⁴ All of these things we should freely offer others out of an inner motivation, a voluntary response to the One who calls us friends.

Having experienced the Anfechtung and remembering what it taught

¹ Ibid.

² John 15:14 (R.S.V.).

³ LW 24, Sermons, p. 258.

⁴ Ibid., p. 262.

him, Luther recounts that it is precisely because we are never completely free from spiritual trials, that we should never neglect prayer for help and strength. He concludes: "We have been ordained through Him to the priestly office. Hence we can and must step before God joyfully, as we bring both our own need and that of others before Him, assured by His promise that our prayers will be heard and that He will say yea and amen to them."¹ Herein lies abundant spiritual motivation for pastoral care!

To end this Chapter, we can take note of the conclusions by two historians who attempt to assess Luther's enduring, positive contributions. The first assessment is by Gerhard Ritter: "The most general and permanent achievement of his life lies in his own personal secret: in his life with God and in the direct relationship of all his thinking and willing with him. . . . It is in his simple religious insights that we find the true meaning of the man."² John T. McNeill adds to this assessment that it is rather surprising to learn about the amount of time Luther spent in helping troubled people: "(He) exhibits human warmth and reality in these matters, the product of his own vivid experience and emotional force . . . not as one conscious of superior attainment, . . . but as a sinful and tempted Christian who is glad to bring such spiritual remedies as he has learned

¹ Ibid., p. 264.

² Gerhard Ritter, Luther, His Life and Work, trans. John Riches (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row Publishers, 1959), p. 210.

from Scripture and experience to the aid of those who ask, or need, his brotherly help."¹ No doubt, one of the fundamental reasons for his willingness to share was the fact that Luther's pastoral theology was directly tempered and refined by his own intense and sometimes prolonged experiences with the Anfechtung.

Summary

In analyzing Luther's experiences with the Anfechtung, we can now summarize several basic theological principles. Basically, he held to the necessity of these experiences in combating the natural human tendency toward spiritual self-sufficiency. In fact there was serious doubt in his mind that one could have a growing vibrant Christian faith without occasions of spiritual distress and agony.

Not only were the Anfechtung considered necessary as a challenge to self-sufficiency, but Luther understood them also to be either visitations from God Himself or assaults by the Devil. In the former case, God uses these experiences to chasten and strengthen Christians; in the latter, the Devil sets out to destroy individuals, tempting them to neglect or surrender their faith completely.

The Anfechtung could readily obscure the differentiation between Law and Gospel. This differentiation, Luther held to be of utmost importance. Actually, he said, it is an old trick of the Devil to prompt the sufferer to focus upon the Law - the accusing, condemning

¹ John T. McNeill, A History of the Cure of Souls (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1951), p. 174.

Word, rather than Gospel - the Word of acceptance and forgiveness.

In any case, Luther recognizes an important inner meaning of the Anfechtung and that is in terms of a serious threat to destroy faith.

The ultimate defence that Luther recommended out of his own experience was the use of the Sacraments and the objective Word. Often during his moods of self-degradation and illness, he needed someone such as Staupitz, Katy or others, to share this objective Word with him. It was the Divine Word that drew him away from a pre-occupation with hell and sadness, back to the fountain of life in none other than his Lord Jesus Christ. It was this same Word, revealing the Spirit of Christ, that provides the necessary spiritual motivation to turn and live, to turn and live with others.

What were the essential features of the Divine Word for Luther? Let us attempt next to discuss his thinking about the Word of God, by researching briefly his paradoxical theology, based upon some of his major exegetical commentaries and treatises.

PART TWO

LUTHER'S PARADOXICAL THEOLOGY

Introduction

An important clue to the theological genius of Dr. Martin Luther is his deep insight into theology as paradox.

Luther was not a "systematic" theologian in a strictly scholastic sense in that he never wrote a properly indexed Christian Dogmatics or Systematic Theology! Nor were there any volumes specifically on his paradoxical theology. Not at all! His writings were to a large extent of the nature of Gelegenheitsschriften,¹ responding to particular problems of his time. This fact alone frustrates many of us as modern interpreters, causing us a sense of "quiet despair",² at least at the beginning of our Luther studies and research.

But Luther was definitely a "systematic" thinker. His works were inspired by an overwhelming, consistent vision of justification by Grace, through faith in Christ alone. This Christ he found again and again in the Scriptural records. Hence, what was theological for Luther must give glory to Christ and be found firmly rooted in the Scriptures. This was his vital unity of message even in the diversity of writing and speaking:

. . . I refuse to look at anything except this Christ. He should

¹"Work written for a particular occasion", Cassell's German & English Dictionary, Sixth Edition. See also Ewald M. Plass, What Luther Says: An Anthology. Vol. I, "Introduction" (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), pp. XVII-XVIII.

²See John R. Loeschen, Wrestling with Luther (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1976), p. 15ff.

be such a treasure to me that in comparison with Him everything else is filthy. He should be such a light to me that when I have taken hold of Him by faith, I do not know whether there is such a thing as Law, sin, or unrighteousness in the world. For what is everything there is in heaven and on earth in comparison with the Son of God?¹

. . . My doctrine does not in any part contradict itself; nor can it do so, since it is the doctrine of Christ, and the whole world already knows that on faith, on love, on works, and on those matters which the spirit of Christ teaches us in Holy Writ I have ever been of the same mind, have always taught and written the same thing even though I have daily progressed more and more by practice and study and have presented the same matters at one time from this angle, at another from that, and have treated them more clearly and fully at one time than at another, as the Scripture itself does.²

. . . In my heart reigns this one article: faith in Christ. From Him, through Him, and to Him all my theological thinking is flowing and reflowing by day and by night. And yet I find that I have grasped nothing beyond a few meager rudiments and fragments of a wisdom that is so high, so broad, and so profound.³

These passages are only three examples of Luther's unified Christological approach. Philip Watson has observed: ". . . He (Luther) made no attempt to construct a Lutheran Summa or Institutes . . . despite the formal diversity of his utterances, hardly any religious thinker has had so fundamentally unified an outlook as he."⁴ And Thomas Lindsay writes:

. . . With Luther all theology is really Christology; he knew no other God than the God who had manifested Himself in the

¹LW 26, "Lectures on Galatians", 1535, Chapters 1-4, p. 182.

²WA 10 11, p. 189, trans. Ewald M. Plass, Op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 1372-1373.

³WA 40 1, 33 (1 Cor. 2:2), trans. Ewald M. Plass, Ibid., p. 1373.

⁴Philip S. Watson, Let God Be God! (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1948), pp. 5, 27.

historical Christ and made us see in the miracle of faith that He is our salvation. This at once simplifies all Christian theology and cuts it clearly away from that Scholastic, which Luther called "sophistry".¹

Having a unified message, how was Luther's theology paradoxical? Before turning directly to an analysis of some important paradoxes in Luther's Works, let us first establish a definition for paradox. In theology, paradox deals with our conversations about the Divine-human realities of life. ". . . all discourses about God--and particularly Christian discourses about God--tend to be, perhaps must be, paradoxical."²

Taken literally, paradox means "against current opinion"³, and as such may appear to be in the domain of self-contradiction or nonsense. However, when applied to the jurisdiction of faith, paradoxical statements taken together express profound theological truths. To illustrate this point, two examples are the doctrines of Scripture and the Incarnation.⁴ Every page of the Scripture was written by human amanuenses; and yet it is all the Word of God. Jesus of Nazareth was a human being like any one else, born of the Virgin Mary, and yet was also Divine, "very God of very God". The God-man is

¹ Thomas M. Lindsay, A History of the Reformation (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), p. 1, 473.

² Stanley Romain Hopper, "Paradox": A Handbook of Christian Theology (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1966), p. 261 . . . "This is apparent the moment we consider that the terms of Christian discourse are precisely those of the divine and the human. But such discourse is necessarily of the (p. 262) divine from the standpoint of the human, of the infinite from the standpoint of the finite, of the perfect from the standpoint of the imperfect, of the eternal from the standpoint of the temporal, together with such other terms as must juxtapose the absolute to the relative."

³ F.G. Healey, Fifty Key Words in Theology (London: Lutterworth Press, 1967), p. 47.

⁴ Ibid., p. 48.

then the Absolute Paradox.¹

Paradox should not be limited in our understanding only to theology or the Christian faith. For example, a physiological paradox known medically as "hypothermia" was recently featured in the Canadian Magazine:

Every so often in this cold country of ours somebody is lost in the bush and almost freezes to death, or capsizes into a frigid lake or river and almost drowns. Then we hear the word again--hypothermia.

Hypothermia saved them, we're told of the ones who lived. And if they died, hypothermia killed them. What is this paradox?

In medical language, hypothermia is simply "low temperature"--a reduction of 2 degrees C (3.6 degrees F.) or more in the core (inner body) temperature. . . .

Medically, hypothermia has its uses. Doctors induce it in patients slated for heart surgery: it reduces their need for oxygen and increases their chance of survival. Hypothermia also preserves organs for transplants.

Outdoors, hypothermia overcomes its victim by rendering him unconscious so that he will die where he is unless help comes. Yet if help does come in time, it is hypothermia that may save his life.²

Because of this paradoxical phenomenon of hypothermia, we learn it can actually take our lives or save our lives depending upon certain other circumstances. It can be our gravest enemy or it can also be our very best friend!

Moving to the area of emotional adjustments in human life, Dr. Frank Lake describes some of the severest forms of personality distress and mental confusion as having the characteristic of

¹James E. Loder, Religious Pathology and Christian Faith (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), p. 96.

²Dorothy Sangster, "Chill of Life", in The Canadian Magazine, March 4, 1978, pp. 16-17.

paradox: "The truth is not in either statement taken alone. To attempt to compromise in half-way statements is intolerable to every soul that seeks for the truth." Dr. Lake continues: "The resolution must somehow be in a synthesis of both experiences, worked out in experience, accepted as true, even if this involves continued suffering in patience, until an entirely new position is reached above the paradox."¹ He concludes this specific discussion by asking the question: "Is there any supra-paradoxical synthesis of being and non-being, heaven and hell, possible to the human mind and heart?"²

In answer to his question, he says:

Until some new truth can hold these two together they ought to remain in opposition. Temptation lies in losing contact with one pole or the other, both of which have been true to experience. Is not this exactly what Christ has done? The Word of the Cross shows us that He did. Christ kept contact both with His pleromatic fullness and glory on the one hand, and with His kenotic emptying and humiliation on the other. Both are essential qualifications of the Messiah who redeems the chosen race and the whole world.³

We return again to the same kind of definition as noted earlier. The Christ as Saviour and Lord is the example of "Absolute Paradox" for us.

The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics concludes its definition of paradox by pointing out the quality of revealing truth to us that ordinarily would not be comprehended or missed entirely. "Truth may be--perhaps even in the end must be--paradoxical; but not every paradox is true. A healthy intellect may welcome and defend a paradox, not

¹ Frank Lake, Clinical Theology, "A Theological and Psychiatric Basis to Clinical Pastoral Care (London: Darton Longman & Todd, 1966), p. 1129.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

because it is against current opinion, but because in spite of that it reveals an aspect of truth."¹

Returning to our theological discussion, in talking about God, all our human verbalizations tend to fall short, and therefore falsify the inexpressible mystery² of an Almighty, Eternal, Omnipresent God. However, we come closer to speaking truth about God by making two apparently contradictory statements. Taken apart from each other these statements are clearly false, but when taken together they point to eternal Divine truth. In such paradoxes we discover one of the most important clues to the theological brilliance of Martin Luther.³

¹James Hastings, ed., Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. IX (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917/1930/1953), p. 632.

²William Hordern, Speaking of God (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1966), p. 127: "Theological paradox is legitimate when it is used to remind us that we are dealing with mystery. The great insight of Kierkegaard was to see that theological paradox is the point where our understanding must fail and we can do no more than point beyond it to the mystery that cannot be comprehended. The recognition of paradox and its use need not be an irrational act; it can be a means of pointing to mystery."

³Dr. George W. Forell, "The Paradox as a Clue to Luther's Theology", a series of four unpublished lectures delivered at the Sixtieth Anniversary Study Conference, "Our Common Heritage", Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, October 23-26, 1973. Dr. Forell is the Carver Distinguished Professor of Religion at the School of Religion, University of Iowa. . . . I wish to acknowledge that the general outline of Part Two of my thesis was suggested by this series of lectures.

Chapter V: Simultaneously Righteous and Sinner

At one and the same time a righteous man and a sinner: a sinner in fact but a righteous man through faith in the promise and through hope of its fulfillment.¹

Luther's paradoxes describe the tension that exists in the Christian life between sin and faith. This life consists, to a large measure, of an inner dialogue which (in the first place) Luther is content to leave at simul justus et peccator.² There is an ongoing conversation between the person always inclined to rely upon himself and the same person ready to trust entirely in the mercy of God.³

In a separate but related field, psychiatry has demonstrated that one essential attribute of a healthy personality is the ability to conduct a running conversation within oneself.⁴ Consequently, there is real danger of mental and emotional breakdown, and inappropriate behavior, if this "normal" conversation within the self is impaired

¹WA 57, 165.

²This Latin phrase has become a technical Theological formula that appears in many places in Luther's Works, e.g. LW 26 "Lectures on Galatians" (1535), p. 232; "Thus a Christian man is righteous and a sinner at the same time, holy and profane, an enemy of God and a child of God. None of the sophists will admit this paradox, because they do not understand the true meaning of justification." LW 12 "Selected Psalms", p. 328 . . . "both statements are true: "No Christian has sin; and every Christian has sin" and LW 25 "Lectures on Romans", p. 257ff. Cf. also Paul Althaus The Theology of Martin Luther, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 242-245.

³WA 39 I, 492: "You know that we are certainly righteous, pure and holy even though we are sinners, unrighteous and damned. We are, however, righteous in terms of the imputation of mercy of God promised in Christ, that is, on account of Christ in whom we believe. . . . According to our own form and substance, however, we are unrighteous and damned. . . ."

⁴E.g. in Freudian terms between the "id", "ego", and "super-ego",

or ceases to function altogether.

For Luther, spiritual breakdown occurs when the dialogue between a person who fears God and the one confident in his own achieved righteousness, suffers acute dysfunction. In Luther's own experience, the inner conversations within himself were exceedingly vigorous at times, and because of this he has become for us an example of remarkable spiritual health rather than spiritual hypocrisy and disorder as some have charged.¹

In the formula simul justus et peccator, Luther addresses the question, "How do we become Christian in the first place?" Do we need to be baptized as infants, to be purged from the defilement of sexual reproduction, as Origen taught?² Or, should we wait to be baptized as adults after the manner of so great a preacher in the early Church as John Chrysostom?³ Or, is it necessary to have some sort of an adult conversion experience like St. Augustine?⁴ Is

where the id is the biological, ego - the psychological, and super-ego the sociological component of personality. See S. Freud, A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis (Garden City, N.Y.: Garden City Publishing Co., 1943). Cf. also Franz G. Alexander and Sheldon T. Selesnick, The History of Psychiatry - An Evaluation of Psychiatric Thought and Practice from Prehistoric Times to the Present (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1966), pp. 232 and 303.

¹ See Heinrich Denifle, Luther und Luthertum (Mainz, 1940) and Hartmann Grisar, Martin Luthers Leben und sein Werk (Maryland: The Newman Press, 1950). . . . Denifle and Grisar both attempt to make Luther into a person so vile and emotionally unstable, a demon to be exorcised, that God could not possibly have used him to lead a genuine Reformation. Cf. also Richard Stauffer, Luther as Seen by Catholics, Ecumenical Studies in History, No. 7 (London: Lutterworth Press, 1967).

² Henry Chadwick, Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition, Studies in Justin Clement and Origen (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 90.

³ Stephen Neill, Chrysostom and His Message World Christian Books, No. 44 (London: Lutterworth Press, 1962), p. 10.

⁴ Patrick J. Hamell, Handbook of Patrology (New York: Alba House,

salvation dependent entirely upon God's saving action, or do we have to do something to win His favour? . . . "A person becomes a Christian when God grants him grace to come to Christ, His Son, to be baptized in His Name, to hear His Word, and to accept Christ by faith."¹

One is a Christian, not because he gives to Christ but because he accepts from Christ. A Christian is not an active but a passive person, one who allows things to be given to him. If you do not permit things to be given you, you are no Christian. You are not called a Christian from what you do--for then you should be called a "worker"--but because you have Christ. How so? You did not make Him, as a vessel, but you had to let Him be given to you through the Gospel.²

This is the wonderful way that God deals with us. He moves us to believe in His Son where we are declared righteous and holy by divine imputation . . . we are at one and the same time His children and yet also sinners.³

Is there any significant difference between saints, those declared righteous by God and hypocrites who are righteous in their own estimation of themselves? In giving his commentary of Romans 4:7, Luther writes the following:

The saints are always sinners in their own sight, and therefore always justified outwardly.

But the hypocrites are always righteous in their own sight, and thus always sinners outwardly.

I use the term "inwardly" (intrinsice) to show how we are in ourselves, in our own eyes, in our own estimation; and the term "outwardly" (extrinsice) to indicate how we are before God and in His reckoning. Therefore we are righteous outwardly when we are righteous solely by the imputation of God and not of ourselves or our own works. For His imputation is not ours by

1968), pp. 146-147.

¹WA 33, 100, trans. Plass, Op. cit., p. 210.

²WA 34, 11, 414, trans. Plass, Ibid., p. 209.

³WA 39¹, 507, trans. Althaus, Op. cit., p. 243.

reason of anything in us or in our own power. Thus our righteousness is not something in us or in our own power, as Hos. 13:9 says, "Destruction is your own, O Israel; your help is only in Me", that is within yourself there is nothing but destruction, and your deliverance is from outside you. And Ps. 121:2: "My help comes from the Lord", which is to say, it is not from myself. But inwardly we are sinners according to the law of mutual relationship. For if we are righteous only because God reckons us to be such, then it is not because of our mode of living or our deeds. Thus inwardly and of ourselves we are always unrighteous. Thus we read in Ps. 51:3-4, "My sin is ever before me", that is, I always have it in my mind that I am a sinner. "Against Thee have I sinned" (that is, I am a sinner), "so that Thou art justified in Thy Word, etc." And on the contrary, the hypocrites, because they are righteous in their own sight, by force and necessity of this relationship are outwardly unrighteous (that is, in the reckoning of God), as Ps. 95:10 says, "And I said, 'They are a people who err in heart'." They pervert every word of the Scripture, as, for example, this statement, "My sin is ever before me" (Ps. 51:3), for they say: "My righteousness is always before me" (that is, always in view), and "Blessed are they who work (p. 258) righteousness, etc." "Before Thee", they say (not, "I have sinned", but, "I do righteous works"). Indeed, before themselves they perform such works.

"God is wonderful in His saints" (Ps. 68:35). To Him they are at the same time both unrighteous and righteous.

And God is wonderful in the hypocrites. To Him they are at the same time both unrighteous and righteous.

For inasmuch as the saints are always aware of their sin and seek righteousness from God in accord with His mercy, for this very reason they are always also regarded as righteous by God. Thus in their own sight and in truth they are unrighteous, but before God they are righteous because He reckons them so because of their confession of sin. They are actually sinners, but they are righteous by the imputation of a merciful God. They are unknowingly righteous in hope. And this is what he is saying here: "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (Ps. 32:1). Hence, these words follow (v.5), "I said I will confess my transgressions to the Lord" (that is, I am always conscious of my sin, because I confess it to thee). Therefore, "Then Thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin", not to me only but to all . . .¹

¹ LW, Vol. 25: "Lectures on Romans", pp. 257-258.

In this extensive quote, Luther repeats simul justus et peccator many times. From this repetition, we observe how this formula is central to Reformation theology and certainly central to all of Luther's work, not the least of which his work as a pastor. It relates the coexistence of righteousness and sinner that resides within each Christian. Based upon the teachings of Romans 7, Luther points out that as we exist now as human beings, we are always "intrinsically" sinners in ourselves. But then by faith we are also "extrinsically" righteous in the experience of God's acceptance for Christ's sake. Each reality is true in its own dimension; sinner because we look to ourselves, with all our imperfections and must face the judgement or wrath of a righteous God -- righteous, as we are encouraged to trust in His Divine love and mercy. Both are in force at one and the same time. Simul justus et peccator begins with Christ and faith being drawn into the human heart and there the battle with the "old man" begins.¹ In our daily living . . . "It means that our sinful self, with all its evil deeds and desires, should be drowned through daily repentance; and that day after day a new self should arise to live with God in righteousness and purity forever."²

¹WA 39¹, 376. "So both sin and righteousness are present in us. . . . Faith fights against sin . . . Sin fights against faith." Cf LW 27,231 and LW 12,328 . . . "When this faith have been born, you see its task is to drive what is left of sin out of the flesh. . . . So that in this way the law of God gives pleasure and is fulfilled not only in the spirit and in the heart but in the flesh that still resists faith and in the spirit which loves and fulfills the law."

²Martin Luther's, Small Catechism, "Sacrament of Baptism" Part IV, #4, in the Book of Concord, ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 349.

One additional feature of Luther's simul justus et peccator should be mentioned before going on to another paradox in his theology. At first glance, it may seem that "simultaneous saint and sinner" does not hold for any movement or growth in sanctification. But this is not the case. There is growth, but not so much in terms of ethical perfection in this life. Rather growth takes place more in terms of depth in one's inner being, "in a growing confidence in God and a diminishing confidence in oneself."¹

¹WA 25, 180 (Isa. 27:9), trans. Plass, Op. cit., p. 213. Luther does hold that there is a positive influence for good in our daily walk because of the presence of the Holy Spirit. "...God begins really to cleanse a man. First He purifies him by imputation; thereafter He gives the Holy Spirit, through whom He also cleanses a man in substantial reality. Faith cleanses through the forgiveness of sins; the Holy Spirit cleanses through his effect on a man's character. This is the divine cleansing and purifying which God sends from heaven, but through faith and the Holy Spirit." (WA 39 1, 99, Plass, 657-658). But perfection in ethical conduct is found only in the life to come! "When we finally stop lying, deceiving, stealing, murdering, robbing, committing adultery, we shall have become pious, that is, when they use the shovel to put us under the ground. For Paul says: 'He that is dead is freed from sin.'" (Rom. 6:7) WA, TR #6730.

Chapter VI: Law and Gospel

By "Law" we should understand nothing but God's Word and command in which He commands us what we are to do and not to do and demands our obedience or service (Werk). . . .

The Gospel is such a doctrine or Word of God as does not demand our works or command us to do anything but bids us simply receive the offered grace of the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation and be satisfied to have it given us as a present.¹

The second major paradox of Luther's that we shall consider briefly is "Law and Gospel". This is not a human doctrine, imposed upon Christians by some Homosapien ingenuity, but rather is revealed in the Scriptures.² It relates the two-fold nature of the Divine Word. There is the Law, making its demands, its accusations, its condemnations. But there is also Gospel, offering grace, forgiveness and new life. For Luther the ability to distinguish properly Law and Gospel makes a mature theologian!

The difference between the Law and Gospel is the height of knowledge in Christendom. Every person and all persons who assume or glory in the name of Christian should know and be able to state this difference. If this ability is lacking, one cannot tell a Christian from a heathen or a Jew; of such supreme importance is this differentiation.

This is why St. Paul so strongly insists on a clean-cut and proper differentiating among Christians of these two doctrines, the Law and Gospel. To be sure, both are God's Word: the Law, or the Ten Commandments, and the Gospel; the latter first given by God in Paradise, the former on Mount Sinai. But everything depends on the proper differentiation of these two messages and on not mixing them together; otherwise one will know and retain the proper understanding of neither the one nor the other; nay, while under the impression of having both, one will have neither. . . .

Therefore place the man who is able nicely to divorce the Law from the Gospel at the head of the list and call him a Doctor of

¹WA 36, 30f, trans. Plass, Op. cit., #2277, p. 732.

²E.g. see Galatians 1:11ff.

Holy Scripture, for without the Holy Spirit the attainment of this differentiating is impossible.¹

Probably no other Work by Luther contains more statements about the nature and difference of Law and Gospel than his Lectures on Galatians 1531 (1535).² In this volume he clarifies his views on the Law as having a two-fold purpose, leading itself to the two basic functions in the political as well as in the theological realms:

. . . For the law was given for two uses.. The first is to restrain those who are uncivilized and wicked. In this sense the statement, "He who does these things shall live by them", is a political statement. It means: If a man obeys the magistrate outwardly and in the civil realm, he will avoid punishment and death. The civil magistrate had no right to impose punishment upon him or to execute him but permits him to live with impunity. This is the civil use of the Law, which is valid for the restraint of the uncivilized. But Paul is not pressing that use here, but he is discussing this passage theologically. He says: "If a man does these things, etc." It is as though he were saying: "If men could keep the Law, they would be blessed. But were they? Therefore they are not doers of the Law unless they are first justified before and without the Law, through faith."³

Luther continues to outline the difference between the activity of Law and Gospel in the hearts of believers as he expounds the words of St. Paul: "Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?"⁴

. . . it is sufficiently evident what the distinction is between the Law and Gospel. The Law never brings the Holy Spirit; therefore it does not justify, because it only teaches what we

¹WA 36, 25, trans. Plass, Op. cit., p. 732.

²WA 50, trans. LW, Volume 26.

³LW, Ibid., pp. 274-275.

⁴Galatians 3:2.

ought to do. But the Gospel does bring the Holy Spirit, because it teaches what we ought to receive. Therefore the Law and Gospel are two altogether contrary doctrines. Accordingly, to put righteousness into the Law is simply to conflict with the Gospel. For the Law is a taskmaster; it demands that we work and that we give. In short, it wants to have something from us. The Gospel, on the contrary, does not demand; it grants freely; it commands us to hold out our hands and to receive what is being offered. . . .¹

Even though Law and Gospel are completely separate for Luther, and have different unique functions, yet he claims also that they are intimately linked together within the hearts of believers:

Though in their essential nature (re ipsa) these two are far apart, they are nonetheless most intimately joined in one and the same heart. Nothing is linked more closely than fear and confidence, Law and Gospel, sin and grace. For they are so connected that one absorbs the other. Therefore there can be no mathematical combination that is like this.²

For this reason, both Law and Gospel are required for a "balance" presentation of the Christian faith, each in proper proportion:

When one does not preach faith and does not let our incorporation in Christ and our becoming a branch in Him be the matter of first importance, all the world relies on its good works. On the other hand, when one teaches only faith, people become false Christians, who, to be sure, highly commend faith, are baptized and numbered with the Christians, and yet show neither fruit nor spiritual power. For this reason it is difficult to preach to people: it is never right, no matter how you preach to them; they always lean to one side. If you do not preach faith, their works become purely hypocritical. If you urge faith alone, works will not follow. In a word, the danger is that the people either have works without any faith (glaublose Werkeler) or "faith" without any works (werklose Glaublinge). This is why the Gospel is a message for those only who accept and hold to both (faith and works); the others, who refuse to follow, remain behind.

¹ LW 26, p. 208.

² WA 40 I, 527, trans. Plass, Op. cit., p. 740.

Afterall, nothing will come of the effort to make all the world pious, just as we shall never succeed in making the devil, who is its god and lord, pious. Despite much preaching, many only become all the more contrary, to spite the Gospel, and only take it as an incentive to live a life that is worse.¹

Why is it so important to deal with the Law - Gospel paradox, as two distinctive elements and yet to be understood together? There are many reasons that will become obvious as this thesis unfolds, including a proper appreciation for justification already noted above. But another reason pertains to the "success" of the whole Reformation. Luther claimed that the major difference between his reformation and those reforms of John Hus and John Wyclif, for example, was situated precisely in this doctrine of Law and Gospel. Hus and Wyclif sought to reform the church on the basis of Law. The Church was in bad shape, morally, they taught.² Whereas, Luther's attack on the Church of his day was not so much that it was corrupt, although he recognized this problem too, but that it failed to proclaim the Gospel.³

A great deal more could be written here on Law and Gospel. However, let us leave the significance and implications of this

¹Exposition of John 15:10-12, WA 45, 688ff, trans. Plass, Op. cit., p. 740.

²For commentary on the work of these reformers see: Matthew Spinka, John Hus: Concept of the Church (Princeton: University Press, 1966) and John Stacey, John Wyclif and Reform (London: Lutterworth Press, 1964), Chapter II "The Attack on the Medieval Church", pp. 29ff.

³LW Vol. 26, pp. 223ff. E.g. "Therefore the papacy is collapsing and tumbling down today, not by the tumults of the sectarians but by the proclamation of the doctrine of justification." Note: Tischr. 26 #35 "Others who have lived before me, have attacked the Pope's evil and scandalous life; but I have attacked his doctrine . . ." 380 #641: "(John Hus) attacked and castigated only the Pope's abuses and

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scandalous life, but I . . . have attacked the Pope's doctrine and overthrown him." Also 379 #639, given by Watson, Op. cit., p. 29; cf. Table Talk #'s 3403a and 3403b, Appendix.

Chapter VII: Freedom and Bondage

A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none.

A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.¹

In this chapter we shall turn to another of Luther's paradoxes, "Freedom and Bondage" of the will and relate it to his basic view of justification and good works.

The sources selected are Luther's De Servo Arbitrio (Concerning the Bondage of the Will) and his treatise on "The Freedom of a Christian". These short works are considered by scholars to be "primary works" and certainly Luther himself considered them to be among his most important theological writings.²

De Servo Arbitrio was Luther's reply to Desiderius Erasmus' diatribe De Libero Arbitrio (Concerning the Freedom of the Will). These historic compositions mark the climax of the struggle between Luther and Erasmus. Entire books have been devoted to the numerous intricacies of that historical battle.³ However, for the purpose of our investigating the "Bondage-Freedom" paradox, we will limit

¹LW 31, "The Freedom of a Christian", p. 344.

²E.g. note the "Forward", Martin Luther, Three Treatises (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960) lists "The Freedom of a Christian" as one of three principle works; the other two are "An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility" and "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church". In WA Br. 8.3162, p. 99, Luther writes on July 9th, 1537 to Captio concerning the publishing of comprehensive edition of his works. He affirms that none of his writings deserve to be preserved, except perhaps the Small Catechism and De Servo Arbitrio, "for only they, in their different departments, were 'right' (justum). . . . Gordon Rupp, The Righteousness of God (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953), p. 283 describes De Servo Arbitrio, as "the finest and most powerful Soli Deo Gloria to be sung in the whole period of the Reformation".

³E.g. see Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation, trans. and ed. E. Gordon Rupp and Philip S. Watson in collaboration with

ourselves to consider briefly Luther's responses to Erasmus' treatise.¹

The basic theological issue in the controversy between Luther and Erasmus is summarized in the title of each treatise. From Luther's own Scriptural research and personal experience of God's holiness and man's sinfulness, he concluded that human will or works were utterly impotent to win salvation. It is this understanding of man as totally depraved, that Erasmus attacked.² Even though Erasmus acknowledged that mankind had fallen into sin, he still felt that the human will was not totally corrupted. While he held that the way to eternal life was by grace, yet he maintained that man still had the capacity to choose this way, to choose between good and evil.

This power to choose good or evil must be retained; if man is to be held responsible for breaking the law, Erasmus continued. If man does not possess this power or will, how can he be held accountable for sin? Therefore, he concluded, man must be able to make some contribution toward his salvation, even though it might be infinitesimal.

With great passion, Luther remonstrates against this argument by

A.N. Marlow and B. Drewery, Library of Christian Classics, Volume XVII (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969).

¹Cf. Marlin Aadland: Martin Luther's Concept of Predestination (An unpublished thesis presented to the Lutheran Faculty of Theology, Saskatoon, Sask., in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Bachelor of Divinity). Note: Chapter II. "Bondage of the Will", pp. 12ff.

²Preserved Smith, Erasmus, A Study of His Life, Ideals and Place in History (London and New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1923), pp. 348ff.

Erasmus. In De Servo Arbitrio, he contends that in the final analysis, man's salvation is dependent solely and completely upon the grace of God. Pinomaa writes about De Servo Arbitrio: "The issue has to do with the matter of preparation for grace (dispositio ad gratiam). Is there anything man can do to prepare himself to receive God's grace?"¹

The matter of "free will" really did not concern Erasmus to any great extent.² However, for Luther, this was the essence of the Gospel.³ Since Erasmus sought to define "free will" . . . as a power of the human will by which a man may apply himself to those things that lead to eternal salvation, or turn away from the same,⁴ Luther felt very strongly that he had to offer a rebuttal to this key point:

So it is not irreligious, idle, or superfluous, but in the highest degree wholesome and necessary, for a Christian to know whether or not his will has anything to do in matters pertaining to salvation. Indeed, let me tell you, this is the hinge on which our discussion turns, the crucial issue between us; our aim is, simply to investigate what ability "free-will" has, in what respect it is subject of Divine action and how it stands related to the grace of God. If we know nothing of these things, we shall know nothing whatsoever of Christianity, and shall be in worse case than any people on earth!⁵

In speaking so forcefully about the freedom and bondage of the will, in terms of the very essence of salvation, Luther does not

¹ Lennart Pinomaa, Faith Victorious, trans. Walter J. Kukkonen (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), p. 27.

² J.I. Packer and O.R. Johnston, "Historical and Theological Introduction", to Martin Luther, The Bondage of the Will (Westwood, N.J.: Fortress Press, 1963), p. 41.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Martin Luther, The Bondage of the Will, trans. J.I. Packer and O.R. Johnston (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1957), p. 137 . . . "Review of Erasmus' Arguments for 'Free Will'" (WA 661-699). Hereafter cited as Bondage.

⁵ Luther, Bondage, p. 78.

advocate that mankind is in complete bondage with no options open for action. True, he insists on theological bondage; but he also holds for certain psychological freedoms. Men and women are "free" in their natural, personal options, e.g. in their choice of vocation; where they will live; care of a family, etc. But when it comes to one's relationship to God, Luther insists: . . . "there is no act or capacity of the will by which the self can successfully will itself into an adequate and proper relation to God."¹ Salvation rests solely and completely upon God's grace. This significant work De Servo Arbitrio is a good introduction for us as we now consider Luther's "Freedom of a Christian". In this canticle, the paradox of the Christian life is set forth as . . . "free lord of all, subject to none"; and as . . . "dutiful servant of all, subject to all"². At the beginning of this work, Luther readily admits:

These two theses seem to contradict each other.³ If, however, they should be found to fit together they would serve our purpose beautifully. Both are Paul's own statements, who says in 1 Cor. 9 (19), "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all", and in Rom. 13:8, "Owe no one anything, except to love one another". Love by its very nature is ready to serve and be subject to him who is loved. So Christ, although he was Lord of all, was "born of woman, born under the law" (Gal. 4:4), and therefore was at the same time a free man and a servant, "in the form of God" and "of a servant" (Phil. 2:6-7).³

Luther sets the stage for discussing these two theses by noting what he claims should be obvious, the two-fold nature of man, the

¹ John Dillenberger, ed., Martin Luther, Selections from His Writings (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961), p. XXVII.

² LW, Volume 31: Career of the Reformer: L, "The Freedom of a Christian", trans. W.A. Lambert - revised by Harold J. Grim, p. 344.

³ Ibid.

spiritual and the bodily. "According to the spiritual nature, which men refer to as the soul, he is called spiritual, inner, or a new man. According to the bodily nature, which men refer to as flesh, he is called a carnal, outward, or old man . . ."¹

He then begins to expound the first thesis: "free lord of all, subject to none", with a discussion of the meaning and significance of faith for the "inner" man. He notes the "one thing needful" to effect an inner transformation of righteousness and freedom. . . . "That one thing is the most holy Word of God, the gospel of Christ, as Christ says, John 11 (:25), "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live" . . ."²

. . . Therefore it is clear that, as the soul needs only the Word of God for its life and righteousness, so it is justified by faith alone and not any works; for if it could be justified by anything else, it would not need the Word, and consequently it would not need faith.³

A little later in this same work, Luther shifts our attention from man to God and says in effect faith then is simply giving God his due. "So when the soul firmly trusts God's promises, it regards him as truthful and righteous. Nothing more excellent than this can be ascribed to God."⁴

An important dimension of faith is the mystical union of the inner man with Christ, ". . . as a bride is united with her bridegroom!"⁵

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. 345.

³ Ibid., p. 346.

⁴ Ibid., p. 350.

⁵ Ibid., p. 351.

Within this mysterious union, Luther introduces the idea of our participation with Christ, not only in his life, but also in His resurrection:

. . . Accordingly the believing soul can boast of and glory in whatever Christ has as though it were its own, and whatever the soul has Christ claims as his own. Let us compare these and we shall see inestimable benefits. Christ is full of grace, life, and salvation. The soul is full of sins, death, and damnation. Now let faith come between them and sins, death, and damnation will be Christ's, while grace, life, and salvation will be the soul's; for if Christ is a bridegroom, he must take upon himself the things that are his bride's and bestow upon her the things that are his. If he gives her his body and very self, how shall he not give her all that is his? And if he takes the body of the bride, how shall he not take all that is hers?¹

Luther concludes this discussion of the first principle of the inner man being free absolutely in Christ with the following: "From this anyone can clearly see how a Christian is free from all things and over all things so that he needs no works to make him righteous and save him, since faith alone abundantly confers all these things."²

Turning then to the second thesis: . . . "dutiful servant of all, subject to all", Luther says this has to do with the "outer" man. He discusses the meaning of works in general first and then specifically addresses himself to the topic of works arising out of Christian freedom. "Insofar as he (a Christian) is free he does no works, but insofar as he is a servant he does all kinds of works."³ Herein we see the second part of the paradox begin to unfold.

¹ Ibid., p. 351.

² Ibid., p. 356.

³ Ibid., p. 358.

Luther's main point concerning how works can be good, is that they are good only insofar as they are not self-orientated. . . .

"Consequently, it is always necessary that the substance or person himself be good before there can be any good works, and that good works follow and proceed from the good person. . . . So a man must first be good or wicked before he does a good or wicked work, and his works do not make him good or wicked, but he himself makes his works either good or wicked."¹

. . . We do not, therefore, reject good works; on the contrary, we cherish and teach them as much as possible. We do not condemn them for their own sake but on account of this godless addition to them and the perverse idea that righteousness is to be sought through them; for that makes them appear good outwardly, when in truth they are not good. They deceive men and lead them to deceive one another like ravening wolves in sheep's clothing. (Matt. 7:15)²

The climax of the "Freedom of a Christian" is one of the boldest, most daring of all Luther's statements; we (as Christians) are to give ourselves as "Christs" to our neighbours:

. . . Although the Christian is thus free from all works, he ought in his liberty to empty himself, take upon himself the form of a servant, be made in the likeness of men, be found in human form, and to serve, help, and in every way deal with his neighbour as he sees that God through Christ has dealt and still deals with him. This he should do freely, having regard for nothing but divine approval.

He ought to think: "Although I am an unworthy and condemned man, my God has given me in Christ all the riches of righteousness and salvation without any merit on my part, out of pure, free mercy, so that from now on I need nothing except faith which believes that this is true. Why should I not therefore freely, joyfully, with all my heart, and with an eager will do all things

¹ Ibid., p. 361.

² Ibid., p. 363.

which I know are pleasing and acceptable to such a Father who has overwhelmed me with his inestimable riches? I will therefore give myself as a Christ to my neighbour, just as Christ offered himself to me; I will do nothing in this life except what I see is necessary, profitable, and salutary to my neighbour, since through faith I have an abundance of all good things in Christ."¹

Finally, as a summary of the dynamics of spiritual life, Luther draws upon the precepts of Romans 13:

. . . Christians should be subject to the governing authorities and be ready to do every good work, not that they shall in this way be justified, since they already are righteous through faith, but that in the liberty of the Spirit they shall by so doing serve others and the authorities themselves and obey their will freely and out of love. The works of all colleges, monasteries, and priests should be of this nature. Each one should do the works of his profession and station, not that by them he may strive after righteousness, but that through them he may keep his body under control, and finally that by such works he may submit his will to that of others in the freedom of love.²

We are free to serve others when we concern ourselves with the other in love, and not out of any kind of external duty. ". . . We conclude, therefore, that a Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbour."³ With these words, Luther closes his discussion of this paradox of his theology, freedom and bondage of a Christian.

¹ Ibid., p. 367.

² Ibid., p. 369.

³ Ibid., p. 371.

Chapter VIII: Flesh and the Spirit

. . . where you place God, there you must likewise put the humanity of Christ, for they cannot be separated in that they have become one person.¹

The fourth paradox of Luther addresses a fundamental question in Christian thought: can human flesh bear the Divine Spirit? Are the two realms connected, or are they completely separated forever?

To question the possible relation between the flesh and Spirit, or human and divine within Christianity, leads ultimately to a consideration of the historical person Jesus of Nazareth. Was Jesus truly human and truly Divine at one and the same time? Was He in fact born of Mary; or did He only appear in a phantom-like apparition as the Docetists and Gnostics of the past would have us believe?² Secondly, was He also the Son of God . . . "very God of very God, Begotten not made, Being of one substance with the Father . . . ?"³ Or, did He only appear to be similar to God?⁴ If there are two natures in Jesus who is accepted as the Christ of faith, is there more of one than the other? Or, is the human and the divine equal in all respects? (Can the human word also be the divine word?). What then, is the relationship between flesh and the Spirit? The answers that are

¹WA, XXVI, p. 332 (LW37).

²See Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, Revised Edition, 1959), pp. 51ff.

³Nicene Creed, Book of Concord, Op. cit., pp. 18-19.

⁴See Walker, Op. cit., pp. 108ff for a discussion of the Greek technical term: homousion, to say Christ was of the same substance as God, and homoiousion, to say Christ was of a substance like God. (Council of Nicea, 325). The one letter iota represented the division of the two different interpretations of the nature of Christ.

given to this fundamental question, have profound implications for pastoral care.

Luther's clearest statement about this issue are found in his treatise on the "Real Presence" in response to Zwingli and others, 1527 and 1528.¹ It is not my intention to research Luther's understanding of the Sacrament in detail, but rather to look in more depth at his basic Christology behind his interpretation of the Sacrament.²

To clarify this interpretation, let us note briefly Zwingli's position regarding the two natures of Christ. It is an incorrect oversimplification to assert that Zwingli denied that the right hand of God is everywhere; and, therefore, if Christ is seated at the right hand of God, then he could not really be present in the Lord's Supper. Rather, Zwingli held that Christ shares the omnipresence of God. But, he shares this attribute of God's right hand only in his divine nature and not in his human body: . . .

. . . That which is said concerning the Ascension must be referred specifically to the human nature, as, for example, in Mark 16: 'He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.' And that which is proper to his divine nature must be referred specifically to that nature, as for example, his omnipresence, his abiding fellowship with us, his presence in our hearts, and that all things consist in him, etc. In our

¹"That These Words of Christ, 'This is My Body', Etc., Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics" LW, 37, pp. 13-150, WA XXIII, 64-283 and "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper", 1528 LW 37, pp. 161-372, WA XXVI, 261-509.

²There are entire books devoted to a detailed analysis of Luther's view of the Lord's Supper, including his Medieval Background; his early years; debate with Zwingli and others; the Exegetical problems, Marburg Colloguy, etc. See Hermann Sasse, This is My Body

reading of Scripture this distinction must always be made. But if Christ is now seated at the right hand of God, and will sit there until he comes at the last day, how can he be literally-eaten in the sacrament? You say: He is God. He can be everywhere. But note with what circumspection you say this. First you say: He is God. You give it to be understood that it is the property of God to be everywhere. But it is not the property of the body. I will elucidate. In John 16 Christ says: 'I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father.' Note that these words contradict his saying: 'Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world', for here he says: 'Again I leave the world.' How then does he leave the world? With his divine presence and protection and grace and goodness and loving-kindness? God forbid: it is not for any creature to say that. But necessarily he has left us, for he has said so himself, and he cannot lie. It follows, then, that he has departed from us at any rate in the body, he has left us in the body. . . .¹

. . . According to the divine nature he is present as God of equal power and eternity, without beginning, omnipresent, preserving all things and giving life to all things. . . . according to His humanity he is present only with the nature which he later assumed and which cannot be from eternity; otherwise there would not be two 'infinita'.²

Further, as to Christ's human body, Zwingli taught that it must now occupy a specific place in the heavenly realm until the end of the age, otherwise, it could not be a true human body.³

From these writings of Zwingli we begin to catch a glimpse of his doctrinal stance that led to the profound difference between the two Reformers, Christologically. While both wished to remain faithful to the Scriptures, the ancient creeds, and orthodox doctrine of the

(Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1959) and Heinrich Bornkamm, Luther's World of Thought, trans. Martin H. Bertram (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965).

¹Zwingli . . . Selected Translations by G.W. Bromiley, Library of Christian Classics, Vol. XXIV (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press; 1953), p. 214.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

Medieval church, yet they ended up with sharply divergent views on natures of Christ. From beginning to end, Luther stressed the full humanity of Christ, as much as His divinity; and the complete unity of these two natures within the one person, "In Christ crucified there is true theology and knowledge of God."¹

This position Zwingli could not accept because he remained firmly with the strict medieval scholastic distinction between the two natures of Christ. This position saw no real unity between the God-man. As such this position came very close to the Nestorians² who recognized the characteristics of the two natures, but were unable to see how these natures would be intimately and completely combined in one person.

To illustrate this point further with the famous Nestorian example concerning Mary Mother of God³ Zwingli would have no problem in accepting the phrase "mother of God" as a mode of speech. By this he would mean mother of Jesus' human nature. In like manner, he speaks of the suffering and death of Jesus as the suffering and death of the human Son of Man.⁴ Whereas on the other hand, Luther

¹WA I, 362 (S. 149).

²Walker, Op. cit., p. 133. See also Otto W. Heick, A History of Christian Thought, Vol. I (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), p. 365.

³Cf. Sasse, Op. cit., pp. 150-151.

⁴Zwingli, Op. cit., p. 212 ". . . For our sakes he took this upon him in the pure body of Mary by the receiving and fructifying of the Holy Spirit, and he carried it truly in this present time. According to this nature he increased and grew in wisdom and stature. According to it he suffered hunger and thirst and cold and heat and all other infirmities, sin only excepted. According to it he was lifted up on the cross, and with it he ascended up (p. 213) into heaven. . . ."

found it quite ridiculous to hold that only one nature of Christ could suffer and thus be the saviour of the world:

Now if the old witch, Lady Reason, alloecosis' grandmother, should say that the Deity surely cannot suffer and die, then you must answer and say: That is true, but since the divinity and humanity are one person in Christ, the Scriptures ascribe to the divinity, because of this personal union, all that happens to the humanity, and vice versa. And in reality it is so. Indeed, you must say that the person (pointing to Christ) suffers and dies. But this person is truly God, and therefore it is correct to say: the Son of God suffers. . . . For the Son of God truly is crucified for us, i.e. this person who is God. . . .

Just as we say: the king's son is wounded--when actually only his leg is wounded; Solomon is wise--though only his soul is wise; Absalom is handsome--though only his body is handsome; Peter is gray--though only his head is gray. For since body and soul are one person, everything that pertains to the body or the soul, yes; to the least member of the body, is correctly and properly ascribed to the entire person. This is the way people speak throughout the world, not only in Scripture, and it is the truth. For the Son of God truly is crucified for us, i.e. this person who is God. . . .¹

" . . . We do not say that divinity is humanity,² or that the divine nature is the human nature, which would be confusing the natures into one essence. Rather we merge the two distinct natures into one single person, and say: God is man and man is God. . . . Therefore we regard our Lord Christ as God and man in one person. 'neither confusing the natures nor dividing the person.'³

Luther goes on to make some of his most dramatic Reformation assertions about the unity of Christ's personhood declaring that the humanness of Christ shares all of the attributes of his divinity, e.g. omniscience, omnipresence, etc.:

. . . Here you must take your stand and say, Where Christ is according to His divinity, there He is a natural divine person and is present in a natural and personal way, as His conception in His mother's womb shows. For if He was to be the Son of God,

¹ LW, 37, pp. 210-211.

² LW, 37, pp. 212-213.

He had to be naturally and personally in the womb of His mother and had to become man. If He is present naturally and personally where He is now, He must be there also as man. For there are not two separate persons, but one single person. Where this person is, there He is as one undivided person. And when you can say, Here is God, then you must also say, Christ, the man, is also here. If, however, you were to show me a place where the divine nature is and not the human nature, the person would be divided because then I could say in truth, Here is God who is not man and never has become man. That is not my God. For it would follow from this that space and place would separate the two natures and divide the person, though neither death nor all evil could ever separate and divide them.¹

This is the Christology of Luther, a paradox drawn from such Biblical passages as Col. 1:19: "That in him should dwell all the fullness of God . . ." and John 14:9, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father . . .". How is it possible that the Spirit relates so completely with human flesh? The answer is found also in the Scripture with such passages as John 1:4--not part of the Word becoming flesh in part--but, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Herein lies the miracle and mystery of the Incarnation!

To terminate this discussion on Luther's fourth paradox at this point may not prove too helpful for pastoral care implications later. Hence, it seems important to proceed a little further with the significance of the Spirit-flesh relationship, again in dialogue with Zwingli.

Zwingli placed the Spirit in opposition to the flesh.² He selected certain passages from Paul and John such as "The letter kills, but the

¹WA 26, 332, 24ff, Quoted by Sasse, Op. cit., pp. 151-152.

²Zwingli, Op. cit., p. 207ff.

Spirit gives life. . ." (II Cor. 3:6): "The flesh profits nothing. . ." (John 6:63). "Flesh was taken by Zwingli in the Platonic sense of body, whereas Luther understood it in the Hebraic sense of the evil-heart which may or may not be physical."¹ It was not difficult then for Zwingli to deny the Real presence of Christ in the Sacrament, counting bodily eating and drinking as quite unimportant. Although an accomplished musician on six instruments, he could even go so far as to deny any value in music or the arts in a person's experience of religion.²

Luther understood flesh and Spirit differently. Spirit was taken as the antithesis of flesh only in the sense of sinfulness. Otherwise, Spirit and flesh were intimately related. For this reason the body of Christ in the Sacrament was considered worthy and very important of God's and the Spirit's interests. Bodily eating was sacramental or spiritual when it was done in faith:

From these passages now we learn what spirit or spiritual, flesh or fleshy are: we do not call "flesh" that which can be seen by the eyes or touched by the fingers, as the fanatics do when they call Christ's body useless flesh; but, as I have said above, all is spirit, spiritual, and an object of the Spirit, in reality and in name, which comes from the Holy Spirit, be it physical or material, outward or visible as it may; on the other hand, all is flesh and fleshly which comes from the natural power of the flesh, without spirit, be it as inward and invisible as it may. For St. Paul in Romans 8 (:5) calls even the fleshly mind "flesh" and in Galatians 5 (:19ff) enumerates among the "works of the flesh" even "heresy, enmity, envy", etc., which however are entirely inward and entirely invisible.³

¹Bainton, Op. cit., p. 266.

²Ibid.

³LW 37, p. 99 Cf. "Lifting a piece of straw by divine command is

. . . As we have heard, a spiritual eating is instituted in the Supper by Christ alongside the physical, for in it there is God's Word which says to the heart, "Take, this is my body", which the stomach or mouth cannot grasp or eat physically. Although the ungodly and the papists and fanatics disregard these words and so miss the spiritual eating, nevertheless Christians hit it right with their faith.¹

. . . Thus, all that our body does outwardly and physically, if God's Word is added to it and it is done through faith, is in reality and in name done spiritually. Nothing can be so material, fleshly, or outward, but it becomes spiritual when it is done in the Word and in faith. "Spiritual" is nothing else than what is done in us and by us through the Spirit and faith, whether the object we are dealing with is physical or spiritual.²

Therefore, Christ's flesh is "spiritual" since it is engendered by the Spirit, and bodily eating is "spiritual" when it is done in faith. With this remarkable insight, Luther breaks through Zwingli's position of the Spirit: "He (Luther) preserves the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the totality and the significance of reality, of sharing with God, association with God for all of life. All of these are not only spiritual but also bodily in nature."³

To clarify this position further, we need only glance at some of the Biblical passages quoted by Luther's opponents, and note his reply: e.g. John 6:63 "The flesh is of no avail. . ."; 11 Cor. 5:16 "We no longer know Christ according to the flesh. . ." and Col. 3:1ff "Seek the things which are above. . . Set your minds on things that are

a spiritual act . . . what matters is not what is said but who says it." WA 30 III, 115.

¹ LW, 37, p. 88.

² LW, 37, p. 92 Cf. to the words of Luther at the Marburg Colloquy: "If God would present me with horse manure to eat, I should eat it spiritually. For wherever the Word of God is present, there is a spiritual eating." WA 30 III, 116, 118, Cf. Althaus, p. 396.

³ Althaus, Op. cit., p. 396.

above, and not on things on earth." The implication is that seeking things on earth is definitely against Scripture and to be avoided at all costs! Luther replies:

Now we should like to consider the saying of Christ, "Flesh is of no avail" (John 6:63) and see whether we can handle it better than the fanatics. Our position is that where the two words "flesh" and "spirit", are placed in opposition to one another in the Scriptures, flesh cannot mean Christ's body but always means the old flesh which is born of flesh, John 3(:6): "That which is born of flesh is flesh". For why should the Scriptures contrast them if they are compatible with each other? Now Christ's body and flesh certainly are quite compatible with the Spirit; indeed, he is the Spirit's dwelling place bodily, and through him the Spirit comes into all others.¹

. . . But suppose I ask why they attend preaching and seek the gospel and why they observe the Lord's Supper? Why do they love and serve their neighbor? Our father, mother, master, servant, and neighbor are all on earth; all right, let us not seek them, nor honor, obey, serve, or love anyone! Wouldn't this be fine? But all this is on earth. And St. Paul says that we must not seek that which is on earth. Indeed, then the apostles were altogether wrong in following Christ, for he was on earth. Christ himself came to earth, and Paul himself preached and visited Christians here and there on earth. What do you think? Haven't they twisted this passage most wonderfully?²

Luther holds very strongly that the Spirit of God does not come to people in any other way than in the material, bodily, outward forms of history and day by day human encounter. "Despising bodiliness shows that one does not take seriously the true historicity of God's revelation."³

. . . (God) sets before us no word or commandment without including with it something material and outward, and proffering it to us. To Abraham he gave the word including with it his son Isaac (Gen. 15:4ff). To saul he gave the word including with it the slaying of the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:2f). To Noah he gave

¹LW, 37, p. 95.

²LW, 37, p. 199.

³Althaus, Op. cit., p. 397.

the word including with it the rainbow (Gen. 9:8ff). And so on. You will find no word of God in the entire Scriptures in which something material and outward is not contained and presented. ...¹

... They (the fanatics) think nothing spiritual can be present where there is anything material and physical, and assert flesh is of no avail. Actually the opposite is true. The spirit cannot be with us except in material and physical things such as the Word, water, and Christ's body and in his saints on earth. ...²

Finally in a word, what are the benefits of the bodily presence of our Lord particularly in the Sacrament? Many receive it, and the same gift of the Gospel is offered to all. However, there is forgiveness of sins and salvation only to those who receive these in faith. (1 Cor. 11). To the faithful their new life and faith is nourished and strengthened within a hostile environment led by the devil, the world, and our own evil desires. "For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation."³

In summary, "Spirit" for Luther is not some vague reality completely above and beyond all human history and personal relationships; but rather it is precisely and intimately connected with this history and personal encounter, understood in the light of God's Word. In terms of human flesh and Spirit, we become most completely human in our finitude to the extent that we are open to inter-action of the Infinite Spirit and His meaning in our lives.

¹ LW, 37, pp. 135-136.

² LW, 37, p. 95.

³ Luther's Small Catechism, Part V, "The Sacrament of Holy Communion", section 2, Book of Concord, Op. cit., p. 352.

Summary

In this Part Two, I have attempted to clarify briefly some of Luther's theological thoughts concerning the relation between the Divine Word and the human circumstance. Following Luther's unique insights into the paradoxes of the Word, we examined briefly: "Righteous and Sinner", "Law and Gospel", "Freedom and Bondage" and "Flesh and Spirit". God's ways are always paradoxical in the lives of Christians. He grants life by killing us; He makes righteous by placing us among the accused; He leads to heaven and peace by leading us to hell and despair. There is constant tension between sin and faith, between brokenness and restoration. . . This presentation is not to be considered complete or exhaustive. However, it does reveal rather succinctly one of the most important and basic clues to Luther's theology.

What remains now, in terms of investigating the pastoral implications of Luther's paradoxical theology, is a synthesizing of Parts One and Two: that is researching Luther's activity as a pastor drawing on his own biographical experiences and his paradoxical theology. The primary resource available for this major task is the Table Talk in which we discover Luther's own integration and his most intimate pastoral work.

PART THREE

LUTHER'S THEOLOGIZING AS A PASTOR

Introduction

Martin Luther was a very busy theologian directing the Protestant Reformation. Not only was he the Dean and Professor of Theology at Wittenberg, but he wrote numerous commentaries, books, tracts, letters, sermons; and translated the entire Bible! The sum of his Works are recorded in almost one hundred large volumes in the monumental D. Martin Luthers Werke, kritische Gesamtausgabe, Weimar, 1883--¹

In some ways it is rather surprising then, to observe the interest and attention Luther gave to those who had personal problems. The spiritually troubled, the despondent, the sick, sensed in him a measure of warmth and realism, that sprang from his vivid consciousness and deep Christian convictions. They came to him because here was a humble fellow-Christian, sinful and often tempted as they were, and yet who could offer them help--spiritual guidance and comfort that was firmly anchored in the revealed Word and his flourishing experience with that Word. (Personal experience was never separated from, nor made the exclusive source of, his theological endeavors). Hence, Luther's theologizing as a pastor was a natural dimension of his whole theological system in response to the many challenges of life.

¹ Luther's Works: American Edition in 55 Volumes, Op. cit., is a translation of selected Weimarer texts. It is probably the most successful attempt to date at making Luther speak English!

Luther's pastoral theology modifies, and at times, reforms completely the tradition in which he was born and educated. For example he continued to make use of the traditional office of the ordained priesthood. However, in place of celibacy he encouraged marriage for clergy. While recognizing the value and place of the pastoral office, at the same time he emphasized the priesthood of all believers.

This Part III cannot make any claim to completeness in terms of Luther's work as pastor. However, what is presented is an original and hopefully valuable analysis of Luther's paradoxical theology and experience, as uniquely integrated in the Table Talks. The Chapters on "Nature", "Function", and "Theological Analysis" of his pastoral care are separated for discussion purposes only. In actual fact they are at one and the same time a unified whole. Perhaps it is this very characteristic of Luther's blending theology and practice that moved one scholar to conclude: ". . . his spiritual counsel was not simply the application of external techniques. It was part and parcel of his theology."¹

Furthermore, it is necessary to keep in mind that Luther's pastoral theology must be understood within his historical context. We should not try to analyze his pastoral work on the basis of modern concepts

¹Theodore G. Tappert, ed., Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel, The Library of Christian Classics, Vol. XVIII (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press), p. 14.

in Clinical Pastoral Education.¹ Luther knew nothing about "Psychoanalysis"²; "Analytical Psychology"³; "Client-Centered Therapy"⁴; modern techniques of pastoral counseling⁵; or the kind of cooperation that exists in many places between clergy, medicine, and psychiatry.⁶ For him, pastoral care focused primarily upon theological issues such as sin and faith, law and gospel. In addition there was

¹See Seward Hiltner, ed., Clinical Pastoral Training (Published by the Commission on Religion and Health, Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, 1945); Ernest E. Brader and Marian L. Barb, eds., Clinical Education for the Pastoral Ministry (Published by the Advisory Committee on Clinical Pastoral Education, 1958); David Belgum, Clinical Training for Pastoral Care (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1952); Edward E. Thornton, Professional Education for Ministry - A History of Clinical Pastoral Education (Nashville and New York: Abingdon Press, 1970).

²Sigmund Freud, A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis, trans. Joan Riviere (New York: Washington Square Press, c. 1924, 1963).

³C.G. Jung, Analytical Psychology - Its Theory and Practice (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968).

⁴Carl R. Rogers, Client-Centered Therapy (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1951).

⁵See Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling, Op. cit.; Russell L. Dicks, Principles and Practises of Pastoral Care (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963); Heije Faber and Ebel van der Schoot, The Art of Pastoral Conversation (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965).

⁶For examples of this cooperation see: Peder Olsen, Pastoral Care and Psychotherapy - "A Study in Cooperation Between Physician and Pastor", trans. Herman E. Jorgensen (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961); Joshua Loth Liebman, ed., Psychiatry and Religion (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1948); William D. Sharpe, Medicine and the Ministry (New York: Appleton-Century, 1966); David Belgum, ed., Religion and Medicine (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1967); Dana L. Farnsworth and Francis J. Braceland, eds., Psychiatry, The Clergy and Pastoral Counseling (Collegeville: St. John's University Press, 1969).

inherent love toward others, that produced enormous extensions to his pastoral care.

What does it mean spiritually to take care of oneself and one's neighbour? Or simply, what does it mean to be Christian? As he conducts his pastoral activities, Luther can help us find answers based on the timeless truths of the Scriptures.

Chapter IX: The Nature of His Pastoral Care

When we search for the nature of Luther's Seelsorge or "concern for souls", evidence for its essential qualities can be found interwoven under at least two broad categories.¹ In the first place, we will note the German phrase für die Seelen sorgen, "to care for souls", indicates pastoral care in a broad comprehensive sense. This includes all of the many facets of Luther's public pastoral ministry: preaching in church; writing devotional tracts; teaching the children, youth, and theological students; finding lodging for the sick and destitute; administering the Sacraments; in short, practising the art of genuine acceptance, love and mercy. Certainly, as we shall see, Luther had a great deal to offer under this "broad" dimension of pastoral care.

But we will also need to research Luther's pastoral concern in a more particular or personal sense in terms of die Beichte -- the confessional or private Seelsorge, plus consolatio fratrum -- "mutual Christian comfort". This category includes the comfort that Luther offered individuals who were anxious, depressed or sick, der angefochtene Mensch -- "the spiritually afflicted". Within this category also is the encouragement he gave to fellow Christians to be available and of assistance to each other, sharing their Christian faith and hope, Seelsorger aller an allen -- "care of all for the souls

¹Cf. Henrik Invarsson, "The Principles of Pastoral Care According to Martin Luther", Pastoral Psychology, Vol. 13, #121, February, 1962, pp. 19ff.

of all". In any case, Luther's preference was always for "down to earth"¹ practical theology and to have little to do with what he called the "worthless" speculative theology:

"True theology is practical, and its foundation is Christ, whose death is appropriated to us through faith. However, today all those who do not agree with us and do not share our teaching make theology speculative because they cannot free themselves from the notion that those who do good [will be rewarded].² This is not what is written, but rather, 'Who so feareth the Lord, it shall go well with him at the last' [Ecclus. 1:13]. Accordingly speculative theology belongs to the devil in hell. So Zwingli speculated, 'The body of Christ is in the bread, but only spiritually because I think it is in the bread.' Such is the theology of Origen³ also. David did not do it thus but acknowledged his sin and said, 'Have mercy on me, O God' [Ps. 51:1]."⁴

On another occasion, he made the following remarks along similar lines:

"The speculative learning of the theologians is altogether worthless. I have read Bonaventure⁵ on this, and he almost drove me mad because I desired to experience the union of God with my soul (about which he babbles) through a union of intellect and will. Such theologians are nothing but fanatics. This is the true speculative theology (and it's practical too): Believe in Christ and do what you ought. Likewise, the mystical theology of

¹See Gerhard O. Forde, Where God Meets Man - "Luther's Down-to-Earth Approach to the Gospel" (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1972).

²Text in brackets is from a variant by John Aurifaber.

³"Origen (ca. 182-ca. 251) was a prolific writer of the ancient church whose biblical interpretations had continuing influence." LW 54, p. 22, n. 56.

⁴LW 54, Table Talk, #153, Between December 14, 1531-January 22, 1532, p. 22.

⁵"Bonaventure (1221-1274) was a Franciscan whose mystical and dialectical writings occupy an important place in the history of medieval thought." Ibid., p. 112, n. 388.

Dionysius¹ is nothing but trumpery, and Plato² prattles that everything is non-being and everything is being, and he leaves it at that. This is what mystical theology declares: Abandon your intellect and senses and rise up above being and non-being." "Is being in such shadows? God is everything", etc.³

Divine Dimension

(The reality of human care and concern is universal.⁴ Parents care for children; friends care for each other; individuals for the government and government for individuals, in greater or lesser degrees. The importance of this kind of human interaction has been demonstrated in many ways. In fact without an experience of at least a minimal level of mutuality, there is no development of language, and in extreme cases infants will die prematurely:

. . . This puts me in mind of Salimbene's Chronicle in its account of the follies of Emperor Frederick 2nd.⁵ The folly particularly relevant to this situation grew out of his curiosity to know the language spoken in the garden of Eden, the mother tongue of all

¹"Dionysius the Areopagite was converted to Christianity by St. Paul, and it became customary in the Middle Ages to ascribe to him a number of mystical writings which probably originated in the fifth or sixth century." Ibid., p. 112, n. 389.

²Intended is probably Plato's Timaeus, 27. Edith Hamilton and H. Cairns, eds., The Selected Dialogues of Plato (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961), p. 1161. LW 54, p. 35, n. 106. Cf. LW 54, Table Talk, #257, Between April 20th and May 16th, 1532, p. 35: "In this dialogue concerning being, Plato disputes about God and declares that God is nothing and yet is everything. Eck followed Plato, and other theologians also said that the affirmative definition is uncertain but the negative definition is absolute. No body has understood this. . . . These theologians have wished to apprehend God through speculations and have paid no attention to the Word. I recommend that speculation be laid aside. . . ."

³Ibid., Table Talk #644, Fall, 1533, p. 112.

⁴Paul Tillich, "The Theology of Pastoral Care", Clinical Education for Pastoral Ministry, Op. cit., p. 1.

⁵James B. Ross and Mary M. McLaughlin, The Portable Medieval Reader (New York: Viking, 1949).

mankind. He decided to determine this through an original (and, to my knowledge, never repeated) experiment. He arranged for a group of newborn babies to be removed from their mothers and reared by wet nurses who were commanded not to speak a word in their presence. Thus he was to assure himself that the children would develop spontaneously and without contamination the use of the mother tongue of the race. The experiment was a difficult one since it was difficult to find women able and willing to perform the function of mute wet nurses. But the experiment was finally under way and eventually was a total success in maintaining its pristine conditions. There was but one disappointment for the good Emperor--all the children died. Twentieth century observations on foundling homes confirm absolutely the need for intimacy and mother love and mother communication in the first year of life. Without the mother there is no mother tongue--and indeed there is no self.¹

Therefore, the giving and receiving of care is an essential human characteristic. It's going on all the time in one way or another, wherever there is human existence. Further, it appears there must also be some basic mutuality.² The one who receives care, also in turn gives; the one who offers concern also receives.

Everything that can be said about care that's universally human, has implications for the care offered by way of pastoral ministry. And yet there is much more. Paul Tillich defines pastoral care as . . . "a helping encounter in the dimension of ultimate concern".³

. . . This dimension reaches down to that which is the ground and meaning of our existence. A pastor engaged in pastoral care is a helper in a situation in which the relation to the ultimate has become a problem, and this problem certainly is in every human being. If this is understood, the function of pastoral care will have reached an all-embracing meaning and great dignity.⁴

¹Earl A. Loomis, "The Theology of Pastoral Care", Clinical Education for Pastoral Ministry, Op. cit., pp. 9-10.

²Tillich, Op. cit., p. 1.

³Ibid., p. 2.

⁴Ibid.

Tillich assists us in making a start at defining pastoral care in terms first of that which is universally human, to give and receive care, but also he points to that which is unique in terms of relating to "ultimate concerns".

It is in reference to these "ultimate concerns" that Luther makes his significant contribution in regard to Christian pastoral care.

He begins by boldly asserting on the basis of his Scriptural studies:

"God is God! Continually He says in the prophets: Am I not God? Is there another true God beside me? Have I no power that I can help?"¹

Further, Luther says this same God has guidelines for human life:

God also has His guidelines and rules. They are called the Ten Commandments and are in our very flesh and blood. What you would have others do to you, that do to others. [Matt. 7:12]. Then God also states with the measure you measure out, it will be measured to you again. [Matt. 7:12]. With His guideline and square, He has drawn the whole world: well unto them who abide therein!²

Further, he says we are totally dependent upon God: "We are nothing with all of our gifts no matter how great, if God does not keep us.

If He leaves us then our wisdom, skill, intellect, etc. are nothing.

If He doesn't always support and sustain us then our highest knowledge and best theology are nothing."³

In his observations of the human situation, Luther deduces that people do not automatically accept the existence of God. "The world

¹ Appendix, Table Talk #2304. Cf. Matthew 28:19. Luther understands God as Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. See John Theodore Mueller, Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), pp. 153ff.

² Ibid., #1948.

³ Ibid., #6536.

will neither hold God for God, nor the devil for the devil. And if man were left to himself, to do after his own kind and nature, he would willingly throw our Lord God out at the window; for the world regards God nothing at all, as the Psalm says: The wicked man saith in his heart, there is no God.¹ However, there is nevertheless a deep yearning to break free of finiteness in order to live forever:

As all people feel they must die, each seeks immortality here on earth, that he may be had in everlasting remembrance. Some great princes and kings seek it by raising great columns of stone, and high pyramids, great churches, costly and glorious palaces, castles, etc. Soldiers hunt after praise and honor, by obtaining famous victories. The learned seek an everlasting name by writing books. With these, and such like things, people think to be immortal. But as to the true, everlasting, and incurrutable honor and eternity of God, no man thinks or looks after it. Ah! we are poor, silly, miserable people.²

Luther continues his analysis of human nature by dividing humanity into three broad classifications:

There are three sorts of people: the first, the common sort, who live secure without remorse of conscience, acknowledging not their corrupt manners and natures, insensible of God's wrath against their sins, and careless thereof. The second, those who through the law are scared, feel God's anger, and strive and wrestle with despair. The third, those that acknowledge their sins and God's merited wrath, feel themselves conceived and born in sin, and therefore deserving of perdition, but, notwithstanding, attentively hearken to the gospel, and believe that God, out of grace, for the sake of Jesus Christ, forgives sins, and so are justified before God, and afterwards show the fruits of their faith by all manner of good works.³

This grouping suggests some visible manifestations of human behaviour, according to the basic orientation of the people involved.

¹ Hazlitt, Table Talk #CXXXVII, p. 72.

² Ibid., Table Talk #CL, p. 75.

³ Ibid., Table Talk #CXLIV, p. 73.

There is a difference too, between outward human comfort, and God's comfort that deals to a large extent with the inner spirit of man: "Human comfort consists in outward visible help which one can grasp, see and feel. God's comfort stands in His Word and promises, alone, which cannot be seen, heard or felt."¹ This distinction between comfort grounded in the Divine as compared with comfort based on human efforts alone is explained by Luther in more detail:

When we see no way or means, by advice or aid, through which we may be helped in our miseries, we at once conclude, according to our human reason: now our condition is desperate; but when we believe trustingly in God, our deliverance begins. The physician says: Where philosophy ends, physic begins; so we say: Where human help is at an end, God's help begins, or faith in God's Word. Trials and temptations appear before deliverance, after deliverance comes joy. To be suppressed and troubled, is to arise, to grow and to increase.²

Human reason, with all its wisdom, can bring it no further than to instruct people how to live honestly and decently in the world, how to keep house, build, etc., things learned from philosophy and heathenish books. But how they should learn to know God and his dear Son, Christ Jesus, to be saved, this the Holy Ghost alone teaches through God's Word; for philosophy understands naught of divine matters. I don't say that men may not teach and learn philosophy; I approve thereof, so that it be within reason and moderation. Let philosophy remain within her bounds, as God has appointed, and let us make use of her as of a character in a comedy; but to mix her up with divinity may not be endured.³

We must make a great difference between God's Word and the word of man. A man's word is a little sound, that flies into the air, and soon vanishes; but the Word of God is greater than heaven and earth, yea, greater than death and hell, for it forms part of the power of God, and endures everlastingly; we should, therefore, diligently study God's Word, and know and assuredly

¹ Appendix, Table Talk #1893.

² Hazlitt, Table Talk #CXVI, p. 61.

³ Ibid., #XLVIII, p. 27.

believe that God himself speaks unto us. This is what David saw and believed, who said: "God spake in his holiness, thereof I am glad." We should also be glad; but this gladness is often mixed up with sorrow and pain, of which, again, David is an example, who underwent manifold trials and tribulations in connection with the murder and adultery he had committed. It was no honeymoon for him, when he was hunted from one place to another, to the end he might remain in God's fear. In the second Psalm he says: "Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling."

Here Luther alludes to our paradoxical experience of the way God interacts with us as human beings.² In another place, he speaks specifically about how God takes delight and yet also hates our temptations and times of despair:

God delights in our temptations, and yet hates them; he delights in them when they drive us to prayer; he hates them when they drive us to despair. The Psalm says: "A humble and contrite heart is an acceptable sacrifice to God", etc. Therefore, when it goes well with you, sing and praise God with a hymn: goes it evil, that is, does temptation come, then pray: "For the Lord has pleasure in those that fear him"; and that which follows is better: "and in them that hope in his goodness", for God helps the lowly and humble, seeing he says: "Thinkest thou my hand is shortened that I cannot help?" He that feels himself weak in faith, let him always have a desire to be strong therein, for that is a nourishment which God relishes in us.³

Luther makes a further paradoxical claim in the Table Talk by claiming we can know and yet not know God as God: "God is incomprehensible and invisible, and hence whatever is comprehended and seen is not God. It can also be expressed in another way: 'God is both visible and invisible. He is visible through his Word and work. Apart from his Word and work one should not look for him.'"⁴

¹ Ibid., #XLIV, p. 24.

² See Part II "Luther's Paradoxical Theology".

³ Hazlitt, Table Talk #XC, p. 48.

⁴ LW 54, Table Talk #257, Between April 20 and May 16, 1532, p. 35.

The ultimate personification of God's nurturing us is found in His Son! "Faith is, as it were the centre of a circle. If anybody strays from the centre, it is impossible for him to have the circle around him, and he must blunder. The centre is Christ."² Luther draws this insight from the Scriptures, for example in the writings of St. Paul:

St. Paul teaches, that Christ was born, to the end that he might restore and bring everything to the state in which it was created at the beginning of the world; that is, to bring us to the knowledge of ourselves and our Creator, that we might learn to know who and what we have been, and who and what we now are; namely, that we are created after God's likeness, and afterwards, according to the likeness of man; that we were the devil's vizard through sin, utterly lost and destroyed; and that now we may be delivered from sin again, and become pure, justified, and saved.³

Luther adds to this his intriguing experience of the Divine in Christ as found not only in the Scriptures but also in and through his

¹ Cf. The Incarnation of Christ: Appendix #5333, November 5-7, 1540, #4915, May 16, 1540, and Macaulay, ed., Luther's Table Talks (New York: John B. Alden Publisher, 1885), pp. 10-11: "Therefore begin thou to see God thefe where Christ Himself began; namely, where He was conceived in the womb of His mother, the Virgin Mary, where He lay in the manger of Bethlehem sucking on His mother's breasts. For He came down from heaven, was born a natural human creature, He walked with us mankind on earth. He preached, wrought miracles, suffered, was crucified, and died, rose again from the dead, only for this end, that He might place Himself in such a manner before our corporeal eyes, thereby to draw the eyes of our hearts, that is all our senses, cognitions, and meditations, unto Him; and so to debar us from a presumptuous speculating and searching out the Majesty of God in heaven. . . ."

² LW 54, Table Talk #327, Summer and Fall, 1532, p. 45.

³ Hazlitt, Table Talk #CLXXXV, pp. 95-96.

personal anguish of spirit:

"However, I have learned, not only through the Scriptures but also from severe inner struggles and trials, that Christ is God and has put on flesh, and likewise I have learned the doctrine of the Trinity. Today, therefore, I don't so much believe as I know through experience that these doctrines are true. In the worst temptations nothing can help us but faith that God's Son has put on flesh, is bone [of our bone], sits at the right hand of the Father, and prays for us. There is no mightier comfort. From the beginning of the world God has defended this doctrine against all heretics, who are innumerable, and defends it today against the Turk and the pope. He always confirms it by miracles, allows us to call his Son the Son of God and true God, and hears us all when we call upon him in Christ's name."¹

I know nothing of Jesus Christ but only his name; I have not heard or seen him corporally, yet I have, God be praised, learned so much out of the Scriptures, that I am well and thoroughly satisfied; therefore I desire neither to see nor to hear him in the body. When left and forsaken of all men, in my highest weakness, in trembling, and in fear of death, when persecuted of the wicked world, then I felt most deeply the divine power which this name, Christ Jesus, communicated unto me.²

The revelation of Christ's power in the world takes on paradoxical character in Luther's thinking: it is present and yet not obviously present. "Christ governs his kingdom in a remarkable way. He hides himself so that none of his power may be seen, and yet he confounds kings and emperors. Not even the pope can resist this power. Full assurance about this is necessary. . . ."³ Though Christ's power is hidden from kings and others in authority, still it is all encompassing in its ultimate regency: "When Jesus Christ

¹LW 54, Table Talk, #4915, May 16, 1540, p: 371.

²Hazlitt, Table Talk, #CCXXXII, p. 124.

³LW 54, Table Talk, #1385, Between January 8 and March 23, 1532, p. 146.

utters a word, he opens his mouth so wide that it embraces all heaven and earth, even though that word be but a whisper. The word of the emperor is powerful, but that of Jesus Christ governs the whole universe."¹

Nevertheless, Christ remains very much as true priest or shepherd of the faithful: "There is no book in the Scripture in which the priesthood of Christ is more excellently described than in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The priestly office of Christ is of the greatest consolation to the believers, in that He is priest; that He is King, does not comfort as much since the mind always then thinks Him to be judge."² The devil is always at work trying to hide the compassionate priesthood of Christ from us: "That Christ our Saviour died for our sin, we can easily say because the words are easy. But when it comes to the crunch, when the devil in temptation hides Christ from our eyes, and tears the Words of Grace out of our hearts, then we realize that we really haven't learned much. But when one thoroughly knows Christ, not as severe judge, but as the most friendly and lovable Saviour and High Priest, then one has over-come many calamities and unpleasantness. . . ."³

In a further reference to Christ as true priest and best friend on behalf of Christians, Luther gives an interesting explanation of

¹Hazlitt, Table Talk #CCXXX, p. 123.

²Appendix, Table Talk #727.

³Ibid., #6629.

natural human fear in regard to Christ:

I expect more goodness from Kate my wife, from Philip Melanchthon, and from other friends, than from my sweet and blessed Saviour Christ Jesus; and yet I know for certain, that neither she nor any other person on earth, will or can suffer that for me which he has suffered; why then should I be afraid of him? This, my foolish weakness, grieves me very much. We plainly see in the gospel, how mild and gentle he showed himself towards his disciples; how kindly he passed over their weakness, their presumption, yea, their foolishness. He checked their unbelief, and in all gentleness admonished them. Moreover, the Scripture, which is most sure, says: "We'll are all they that put their trust in him." Fie on our unbelieving hearts, that we should be afraid of this man, who is more loving, friendly, gentle, and compassionate towards us than are our kindred, our brethren and sisters; yea, than parents themselves are towards their own children.

He that has such temptations, let him be assured, it is not Christ, but the envious devil that affrights wounds, and would destroy him; for Christ comforts, heals, and revives. . . .¹

This ambiguity between fear and love of Christ is also a factor of unenlightened human reason which is considered "blind".² However, Luther feels the "light" of Christ's incarnation can be of assistance. What is required is the opportunity to strike something on earth, i.e. human relationships:

A light will not light up in the darkness unless it be reflected. This can be seen if one holds a light in front of a door and lets it shine [into the room] through the key-hole. It will give no light until it strikes the wall. So in the middle region of the air, where the devils are; it is dark. The sun does not shine there. But on earth where the rays are reflected, there it shines. And this is similar to the incarnation of the Son of God. He is the beam of light from the Father. He does not shine anywhere, unless He comes down into the world and strikes it.³

¹ Hazlitt, Table Talk #CXXXI, p. 123.

² Appendix, see Table Talks #6601 and #6618.

³ Ibid., #5968.

A great deal more could be written here about Christ as the personalized Divine source of Luther's pastoral care. However, in order to proceed to other aspects, let us note that Luther says: "The principle lesson of theology is that Christ can be known. Here the teacher shouldn't be ashamed of learning from his student, nor the student of learning from his teacher. . . ."¹

Confession and Absolution

One of the greatest benefits of a Christian community is continually to offer opportunity for confession and to hold forth Divine forgiveness of sins for its members. In a sermon on "Penance", 1521, Luther expounds this benefit or gift of grace in the following way:

This is the authority of which Christ speaks, in Matthew 9[:6-8], to the unbelieving scribes; "That you may know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins--he said to the paralytic--'Arise, take up your bed and go home.' And he arose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men." Now this authority to forgive sins is nothing other than what a priest, indeed, if need be, any Christian, may say to another

¹ LW 54, Table Talk, #352, p. 50.

when he sees him afflicted or affrighted in his sins. He can joyously speak this verdict, 'Take heart, your sins are forgiven' [Matt. 9:2]. And whoever accepts this and believes it as a word of God, his sins are surely forgiven.¹

Luther observes that because of the boundless generosity of God, provision has been made for "many absolutions" to strengthen our weak and perplexed consciences:

In the first place, there is a confession which is founded on the Scriptures, and it is this: when anybody committed a sin publicly or with other men's knowledge, he was accused before the congregation. If he abandoned his sin, they interceded for him with God. But if he would not listen to the congregation [hauffen], he was cast out and excluded from the assembly. . . .

Secondly, we need a kind of confession when we go into a corner by ourselves and confess to God himself and pour out before him all our faults. This kind of confession is also commanded. . . .

Thirdly, there is also the kind of confession in which one takes another aside and tells him what troubles one, so that one may hear from him a word of comfort; and this confession is commanded by the pope. It is this urging and forcing which I condemned when I wrote concerning confession, and I refuse to go to confession simply because the pope has commanded it and insists upon it. For I wish him to keep his hands off the confession and not make of it a compulsion or command, which he has not the power to do. Nevertheless I will allow no man to take private confession away from me, and I would not give it up for all the treasures in the world, since I know what comfort and strength it has given me. . . .²

¹ LW 35, Word and Sacrament 1, p. 21.

² LW 51, Sermons 1, March 16, 1522, pp. 97-98. Cf. LW 13, Selected Psalms 11, p. 111. . . . "Therefore the Spirit reminds and admonishes us everywhere that Christians have authorization from God Himself to teach and console one another. . . . And so we, too, must exercise consideration and concern among ourselves. You should listen to me, according to God's command, when I comfort you in whatever battle and peril you may be, and you should believe me. I, on the other hand, should listen to and believe you when I find myself in a similar emergency. I am indeed a Doctor of Theology and many tell me that they were signally advanced in their knowledge of Holy Scripture through my help. But I have also experienced that I was helped and cheered

Here we note a basic difference in Luther's view of confession as compared to the traditional position of the Roman Church. He feels it is not correct to pressure anyone to make a confession: "Auricular confession was instituted only that people might give an account of their faith, and from their hearts confess an earnest desire to receive the holy sacrament. We force no man thereunto."¹

In his Table Talk, Luther gives further analysis of the former ecclesiastical abuses and practices of confession², in terms of their great "mischief", "bondage", and "slavery":

The papists, in private confession, only regard the work. There was such a running to confession, they were never satisfied; if one had forgotten to confess anything, however trivial, which afterwards came to his remembrance, off he must be back to his confessor, and confess again. I knew a doctor in law who was so bent upon confessing, that, before he could receive the sacrament, he went three times to his confessor. In my time, while in popedom, we made our confessors weary, and they again perplexed us with their conditional absolutions; for they absolved in this manner: "I absolve and loosen thee, by reason of the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the sorrow of thy heart, of thy mouth's confession, and of the satisfaction of thy works," &c. These conditions, and what pertained thereunto, were the cause of great mischief. All this we did out of fear, that thereby we might be justified and saved before God; we were so troubled and overburdened with traditions of men, that Gerson was constrained to slacken the bridle of the conscience and ease it; he was the first who began to break out of this prison, for he wrote, that it was no

through a single word of a brother who believed himself to be in no sense my equal. There is tremendous weight in the word of a brother, which, in an hour of emergency, he adduces from Scripture. For Holy Scripture's inseparable companion is the Holy Spirit, who moves hearts in more than one way and consoles them through the Word."

¹ Hazlitt, Table Talk #CCCXLV, pp. 199-200.

² There is a story about how one monk misused the privileged information confessed to him by a young lady. . . . Appendix, Table Talk #5180b.

mortal sin to neglect the ordinances and commandments of the church, or to act contrary to them, unless it were done out of contempt, wilfully, or from a stubborn mind. These words, although they were but weak and few, yet they raised up and comforted many consciences.

Against such bondage and slavery I wrote a book on Christian liberty, showing that such strict laws and ordinances of human inventions ought not to be observed. There are now, however, certain gross, ignorant, and inexperienced fellows, who never felt such captivity, that presumptuously undertake utterly to condemn and reject all laws and ordinances.

Luther suggests that a thankful heart is a proper response to the newly acquired freedom from legalistic requirements of confession: "We are now conquerors of sin, of the law, of death, and of the devil; freed and delivered from all human traditions. If we would but consider the tyranny of auricular confession, one of the least things we have escaped from, we could show ourselves sufficiently thankful to God for loosing us out of that one snare. . . ."²

Luther bases his views of confession and absolution squarely on the Word of God:

Then he [Martin Luther] spoke about the efficacy of the Word of God and about the joy in the church when brethren comfort one another with the Word of God. "There's something great about the employment of the keys and of private absolution when the conscience can be put to rest. Consequently I'm unwilling to discard absolution. For under the papacy I was always a despairing monk, even when I made the greatest efforts. Finally I received comfort from a brother through this one Word. God himself has commanded us to hope. Our salvation is faith in God. Why shouldn't we trust in God, who bids us and commands us to hope? Through this Word he gave me life again."³

¹ Hazlitt, Table Talk #CCCXLIII, pp. 198-199.

² Ibid., #CCLXXXVIII, p. 172.

³ LW 54, Table Talk #4362, Between February 22 and 25, 1539, p. 334.

However, even though in many ways this new interpretation is "easier" for the individual Christian, yet Luther acknowledges that it might be "harder" in the final analysis than the former methods of confession and absolution. ". . . Now we can't even believe the man Jesus Christ, though I used to believe all that rubbish. Flail away and slay us for being unwilling to believe that good man! Oh, I would be hurt if I were God!"¹

Nevertheless, it is Christ Himself who hears the confession and absolves, and not only the pastor:

"This ought especially to be taught, that confession's not made to man but to Christ. Likewise it isn't man who absolves but Christ. But few understand this. Today I replied to the Bohemians, who insist that God alone remits sins and are offended by my little book on the keys. Wherefore one should teach that men make confession to Christ, and Christ absolves through the minister, for the minister's mouth is the mouth of Christ and the minister's ear is the ear of Christ. It's to the Word and the command that one should pay attention, not to the person. Christ sits there, Christ listens, Christ answers, not a man."²

Luther does not limit his teaching concerning confession only to that which takes place in mutual consolation between Christians. He extends the proper meaning of confession to include the very life-style of each Christian in terms of persevering with faith: "Here confession means perseverance, for St. Paul means to say, 'Faith must express itself and be confessed, and one must abide in it, otherwise faith disappears again. . . . Accordingly . . . confession means perseverance in one's whole life, as Christ said, 'He who endures

¹ Ibid., #582, Summer or Fall, 1533, p. 104.

² Ibid., #5176, Between August 7 and 24, 1540, p. 394.

to the end will be saved' [Matt. 10:22]."¹

Finally, in response to a particular case in point, Luther summarizes his thoughts about the relation between what is confessed in private to a pastor and what may be legitimately brought forth as evidence in a civil court. He speaks here about the "Seal of Confession" that we would do well to remember when involved with this kind of a difficult situation:

Somebody asked, "Doctor, if a parish minister absolves a woman who has killed her infant child and afterward the matter becomes public through others, should the parish minister, when asked, offer testimony in this case before a judge?"

"By no means", said the doctor [Martin Luther], "for the forum of conscience is to be distinguished from the forum of the civil government. The woman didn't confess anything to me; she confessed to Christ. But if Christ keeps it hidden, I should conceal it and simply deny that I heard anything. But I would say privately to the woman when she came to me for absolution, 'You whore, don't you ever do that again!'"

"Doctor, what if that woman said that she had been absolved by you and wished to be set free for the reason that Christ had discharged her. Therefore, she would say, the judges can't decide anything against her."

The doctor replied, "I repeat that civil matters must be distinguished from ecclesiastical. If I were summoned to appear in this case I would deny it again, for I'm not the person who should speak, testify, etc., in the political forum but in the forum of the conscience. Therefore I would say, 'I, Martin Luther, don't know anything at all about whether she was absolved. Christ knows, for he's the one with whom she spoke, to whom she confided something or didn't, who (as he certainly knows) absolved her or didn't. I know nothing about it because I don't hear confession; it's Christ who does.'"²

¹ Ibid., #5234, Between September 2 and 17, 1540, p. 402.

² Ibid., #5178, Between August 7 and 24, 1540, pp. 395-396. For more information on Luther's concept of separating matters of the conscience from matters of the civil courts, see Appendix, Table Talk #5179, August 7-24, 1540.

Sense of Humor

Perhaps one of the most pleasant revelations from an in-depth study of the Table Talks (and Letters)¹, is Luther's remarkable sense of humor. "No picture of Luther would be complete without making his humor conspicuous. He was as fond of a joke or a good story as was Abraham Lincoln; his letters and table-talk are as full of puns as are Shakespeare's plays. . . ."² John Mathesius, one of the recorders of the Table Talk describes Luther as "von Natur ein hurtiger und frolicher Geselle."³ We can speculate that this trait of personality may well have been one redeeming feature for him in times of bitter external opposition, or in times of pre-occupation with doubts and despair of self. "Humor is often the safety-valve in a nature already over-burdened with pressure."⁴

As we have already noted⁵, whatever insights Luther discovered about himself or the Word in his earthly pilgrimage, are the insights he readily shared in his pastoral care with others. The same holds true for his use of humor.

Let us review very briefly some "specimens". The first takes the form of a practical joke, which is not recorded in the Tischreden (as far as I know), but is found in the "Introduction" to Hazlitt's

¹ E.g. LW 49, Letters II, "To Gregory Brück, August 5, 1530, pp. 394ff.

² Preserved Smith, The Life and Letters of Martin Luther (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911), p. 325.

³ Quoted by Preserved Smith, Luther's Table-Talk - A Critical Study (New York: AMS Press, 1907/1970), p. 95.

⁴ Vergilius Ferm, Cross-Currents in the Personality of Martin Luther, Op. cit., p. 87.

⁵ See Part One: "Luther's Search for Self-Identity".

1873 English translation of the Table Talk:

. . . An anecdote, told by Luther himself to Dr. Zinggreff,¹ amusingly illustrates the assiduity of these German Boswells. During a colloquy, in which Dominus Martin was exhibiting his wonted energetic vivacity, he observed a disciple hard at work with pencil and paper. The doctor, slyly filling his huge wooden spoon with the gruel he was discussing by way of supper, rose, and going up to the absorbed note-taker, threw the gruel in his face, and said, laughing lustily: "Put that down too!"

While there is considerable doubt about this incident actually occurring, since it is prefaced with Luther's sharing it with Dr. Zinggreff (who was born fifty years after Luther's death),² yet it may still give us a glimpse of the humorous in concert with the following: "Joy and good humor with reverence and moderation is the best medicine for a young man--yea, for all men. I, who have passed my life with mourning and a sad face, now seek and accept joy wherever I can find it."³ In Luther's mind, Christ was not a somber person who kept to himself either: "Can you not see that our Lord Jesus led a life in company with others while He was on earth? He was not much alone; there was always noise and excitement, and many people around him. . . ."⁴ . . . "God has permitted us to play with apples, pears, nuts and to joke about all kinds of created things. But with His majesty, we are not to do so. . . ."⁵

Luther loved to poke fun for example at the loquacity of his wife

¹ Hazlitt, Table Talk, Op. cit., p. x.

² See Smith, Table Talk - A Critical Study, Op. cit., p. 81.

³ Quoted by Smith, Ibid., p. 95.

⁴ Appendix, Table Talk, #1329, January 1 - March 23, 1532.

⁵ Appendix, Ibid., #3186c.

Katy. One time he recommended her to a guest as an ideal German teacher: . . . "She's very fluent. She's such a ready speaker that she's much better at it than I am. However, eloquence in women shouldn't be praised; it's more fitting for them to lisp and stammer!"¹ On another occasion he teased Katy about the possibility of polygamy, until she finally put a stop to it!

[Martin Luther said,] "The time will come when a man will take more than one wife."

The doctor's wife responded, "Let the devil believe that!"

The doctor said, "The reason, Katy, is that a woman can bear a child only once a year while her husband can beget many."

Katy responded, "Paul said that each man should have his own wife" [1 Cor. 7:2].

To this the doctor replied, "Yes, 'his own wife' and not 'only one wife', for the latter isn't what Paul wrote."

The doctor spoke thus in jest, for a long time, and finally the doctor's wife said, "Before I put up with this, I'd rather go back to the convent and leave you and all our children."²

Katy once criticized the preaching of John Bugenhagen, who was well known for his notoriously long sermons. Luther replied humorously: "Pomeranus [Bugenhagen] preaches the way you women talk. He says whatever comes to mind. Dr. Jonas is accustomed to say, 'One shouldn't hail every soldier one meets'. And it's true, Pomeranus often takes everybody he meets along with him. Only a fool thinks he should say everything that occurs to him! . . ."³

Luther could easily jest with his friends such as Dr. Jonas . . . "would you rather be a poet, a cook, or a baker? Jonas responded: God

¹ LW 54, Table Talk #4081, November 4, 1538, p. 317.

² Ibid., #1461, Between April 7 and May 1, 1532, p. 153.

³ Ibid., #5489, Summer or Fall, 1542, p. 428.

knows that I would not want to be a baker! -- The doctor replied: I would also not advise it! This truly is your proper vocation; if they were eagerly to strive for a year, you could still talk them into a bag!"¹

He also delighted in poking fun at his opponents: "The Franciscans are the lice of our Lord God which the devil placed in Adam's fur coat; preaching monks are the fleas which are eternally biting one another like the sparrows and the swallows!"²

I do not want to answer Cochlaeus'³ book against me, for then he will be much more angry than if I were to answer to him. I will not do it alone for this reason, lest he receive the distinction he is looking for in giving response to my writing. I am especially pleased that he has drawn me with seven heads, but it is a shame that the seven heads cannot bring about one neck, or be worth a neck! When the son of Marchiones saw the book he said: Aha, if Luther now has seven heads he will be invincible since they cannot even conquer him with one head, etc!"⁴

... "I would rather die at the hands of the devil than of the Emperor, for then I would die through a greater Lord; also I would like to have him eat a little of me, which would not agree with him, and he would have to vomit it up again!"⁵ ... Re: the Peasants: "If the piss-holes would govern, things would go badly; let them make cheese, milk cows, cook; that is their place!"⁶ ... "The world is

¹ Appendix #4870.

² Ibid., #2650.

³ "John Cochlaeus (1479-1552), a bitter critic of Luther whose polemical writings established the traditional Roman Catholic interpretation of the Reformer." LW 54, p. 137, no. 38.

⁴ Appendix, #2258b.

⁵ Ibid., #927.

⁶ Ibid., #3195.

like a drunken peasant. If you lift him into the saddle on one side, he will fall off on the other side. One can't help him, no matter how hard he tries. . . .¹ . . . "The bishops didn't dare touch a single monk because when a sow cries the whole herd comes running!"² . . . "The pope is the cuckoo, the church the lark. Wherever the lark is, there the cuckoo also likes to be; for he thinks he can sing a thousand times better than the lark. Thus the pope places himself in the church. But just as the cuckoo is good for something to be sure, to announce summer, so also the pope [is good for something]: to announce to us the Day of Judgement!"³

Before analyzing Luther's use of humor in the pastoral care he offered others, I wish to add a few general comments here concerning the relationship between humor and Christianity. Elton Trueblood writes:

Any alleged Christianity which fails to express itself in gaiety, at some point, is clearly spurious. The Christian is gay, not because he is blind to injustice and suffering, but because he is convinced that these, in the light of the divine sovereignty, are never ultimate. He is convinced that the unshakable purpose is the divine rule in all things, whether of heaven or earth (Eph. 1:10). Though he can be sad, and often is perplexed, he is never really worried. The well-known humor of the Christian is not a way of denying the tears, but rather a way of affirming something which is deeper than tears.⁴

¹ LW 54, Table Talk, #630, Fall, 1533, p. 111.

² Ibid., #416, December, 1532, p. 68.

³ Appendix, Table Talk, #5590, New Year, 1543.

⁴ Elton Trueblood, The Humor of Christ (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1964), p. 32.

In more specific terms, Trueblood adds this implication for theology:

"If Christ laughed a great deal, as the evidence shows, and if He is what He claimed to be, we cannot avoid theological conclusion that there is laughter and gaiety in the heart of God. . . . If we take this seriously we conclude that God cannot be cruel, or self-centered, or vindictive, or even lacking in humor."¹

Drawing upon the exacting inquiry of Kierkegaard, Trueblood continues:

[Kierkegaard]. . . was not surprised at the connection which exists between deep religious experience and humor. He believed that the religious individual discovers the comical in the largest measure, partly because, in religion, men are acutely conscious of sharp inconsistencies. Every inconsistency, once it is really made manifest, is potentially humorous. The German philosopher, Schopenhauer, considered this to be the central feature in all laughter. Laughter, he thought, is 'the sudden perception of incongruity' between our ideals and the actualities that are before us. . . .

Though we do not know the ultimate secret of laughter, even laughter at ourselves, we can see that contradiction, or at least apparent contradiction, has something to do with it. . . .²

Another author makes a very important point, that humor on a deeper level does not separate us from the situation, person, or problem at hand: "With our smiles and laughter we show our sympathy with the person who fights against some difficulties and struggles for his or her progress. We are actually taking part in the play or game. . . ."³

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. 39.

³ Jakob Jonsson, Humor and Irony in the New Testament (Reykjavik: Bokautgafa Menningarsjods, 1965), p. 19.

'Great humor' is not the attitude of the careless who wish to be absent from the battle of existence or indifference to the problems of life, but rather the attitude of one who knows and notices all the ugly, tragic, and evil things about him. He is also interested in the welfare of mankind, but in spite of the suffering and the loss of so much that is great and beautiful, he does not lose his sense of contact with the 'stream of values' that will break through all hinderances. . . .¹

Then turning to "Religious Humor", Jonsson refers also to Kierkegaard . . . "it is only through an intimate contact with God in faith in Jesus as Son of God, and the reception of God's grace, that man is able to reconcile himself to the tragic and be convinced of the preservation of values. . . . "Great humor' is an attitude towards life . . . that kind of attitude towards life which makes humor not only possible, but also natural and spontaneous. . . ."² Jonsson finally refers to Luther as . . . "one of the classical examples of a religious character with a highly developed sense of humor. . . his religious joy seems to lead towards the sentiments of humor, so that his joy results in "tanzen und springen",--also the "tanzen und springen" of the tongue."³

We will now take note of some specific examples where Luther recommended humor, cheerfulness, or gaiety in his pastoral care first to those who were anxious or despondent: "Nothing is more harmful than melancholy. It eats the marrow in the legs as it is written;

¹ Ibid., p. 25.

² Ibid., p. 27.

³ Ibid., p. 28.

melancholy dries out the bones. [Prov. 17:22]. Therefore, let a young man be happy. . .¹

"Those who are troubled with melancholy", he [Martin Luther] said, "ought to be very careful not to be alone, for God created the fellowship of the church and commanded brotherliness, as the Scriptures testify, 'Woe to him who is alone when he falls', etc. [Eccles. 4:10]. To be gloomy before God is not pleasing to him, although he would permit us to be depressed before the world. He does not wish me to have a long face in his presence, as he says, 'I have not pleasure in the death of the wicked' [Ezek. 33:11] and 'Rejoice in the Lord' [Phil. 4:4]. He desires not a servant who does not expect good things of him. . . ."

"Having been taught by experience I can say how you ought to restore your spirit when you suffer from spiritual depression. When you are assailed by gloom, despair, or a troubled conscience you should eat, drink, and talk with others. If you can find help for yourself by thinking of a girl, do so. . . .²

Therefore I advise you young fellows. . . Beware of melancholy, for it is forbidden by God because it's so destructive to the body. Our Lord God has commanded us to be cheerful. In this world sadness generally springs from money, honor, study, etc. My temptation is this, that I think I don't have a gracious God. This is because I am still caught up in the law. It is the greatest grief, and, as Paul says, it produces death [11. Cor. 7:10]. God hates it, and he comforts us by saying, 'I am your God.' [Ps. 50:7]. I know his promise, and yet should some thought that isn't worth a fart nevertheless overwhelm me, I have the advantage (that our Lord God gives me) of taking hold of his Word once again. God be praised, I grasp the First Commandment which declares, 'I am your God [Exod. 20:2]. I'm not going to devour you. I'm not going to be poison for you.' . . .

. . . So you young fellows, even if you are sad, seek whatever relief you can. I absolve you of all pastimes through which you seek recreation, except such as are manifest sins, no matter whether they are eating, drinking, dancing, gaming, or anything else. . . .³

. . . "When the devil can bring this about [a state of anxiety], it means that imagination has produced the effect. On this account

¹Appendix, Table Talk #5380, April, 1542.

²LW 54, Table Talk #122, November 30, 1531, pp. 16-18.

³Ibid., #461, February 19, 1533, pp. 75-76.

his thoughts ought to be changed. He ought to think about Christ. You should say to him, 'Christ lives. You have been baptized. God is not a God of sadness, death, etc., but the devil is. Christ is a God of Joy, and so the Scriptures often say that we should rejoice, be glad, etc. This is Christ. Because you have a gracious God, he won't take you by the throat.'"

"A Christian should and must be a cheerful person. If he isn't, the devil is tempting him. . . . Christ says, 'Let not your hearts be troubled [John 14:27]. Trust in me', etc. This is a command of God: 'Rejoice!' [Matt. 5: 12]."

Jerome Weller (1499-1572), served eight years as tutor to Luther's children.² Apparently, he was very shy and bashful which led him into prolonged fits of melancholia. In a letter addressed to Weller, July 1530, we have an excellent example of "paradoxical intention"³ by way of humor in Luther's spiritual care:

My dear Jerome:

You must believe that this temptation of yours is of the devil, who vexes you so because you believe in Christ. You see how contented and happy he permits the worst enemies of the gospel to be. Just think of Eck, Zwingli, and others. It is necessary for all of us who are Christians to have the devil as an adversary and enemy; as Saint Peter says, "Your adversary, the devil, walketh about."

¹ Ibid., #522, Spring, 1533, pp. 95-96.

² 1527-1535.

³ See Viktor E. Frankl, Man's Search for Meaning - An Introduction to Logotherapy (New York: Pocket Books, 1959/1973), p. 196ff: Paradoxical intention. . . "consists in a reversal of the patient's attitude, inasmuch as his fear is replaced by a paradoxical wish. By this treatment, the wind is taken out of the sails of the anxiety. . . Such a procedure, however, must make use of the specifically human capacity for self-detachment inherent in a sense of humor. This basic capacity to detach one from oneself is actualized whenever the logotherapeutic technique called 'paradoxical intention' is applied. . . Cf. Gordon E. Allport, The Individual and His Religion (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), p. 92: "The neurotic who learns to laugh at himself may be on the way to self-management, perhaps to a cure. . . ."

Excellent Jerome, you ought to rejoice in this temptation of the devil because it is a certain sign that God is propitious and merciful to you. You say that the temptation is heavier than you can bear, and that you fear that it will so break and beat you down as to drive you to despair and blasphemy. . . . Try as hard as you can to despise those thoughts which are induced by the devil. In this sort of temptation and struggle, contempt is the best and easiest method of winning over the devil. Laugh your adversary to scorn and ask who it is with whom you are talking. By all means flee solitude, for the devil watches and lies in wait for you most of all when you are alone. This devil is conquered by mocking and despising him, not by resisting and arguing with him. Therefore, Jerome, joke and play games with my wife and others. In this way you will drive out your diabolical thoughts and take courage. . . .

. . . Be of good courage, therefore, and cast these dreadful thoughts out of your mind. Whenever the devil pesters you with these thoughts, at once seek out the company of men, drink more, joke and jest, or engage in some other form of merriment. Sometimes it is necessary to drink a little more, play, jest, or even commit some sin in defiance and contempt of the devil in order not to give him an opportunity to make us scrupulous about trifles. We shall be overcome if we worry too much about falling into some sin.

Accordingly, if the devil should say, "Do not drink", you should reply to him, "On this very account, because you forbid it, I shall drink, and what is more, I shall drink a generous amount." Thus one must always do the opposite of that which Satan prohibits. . . . When the devil throws our sins up to us and declares that we deserve death and hell, we ought to speak thus: "I admit that I deserve death and hell. What of it? Does this mean I shall be sentenced to eternal damnation? By no means. For I know One who suffered and made satisfaction in my behalf. His name is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Where he is, there I shall be also." Yours, Martin Luther.¹

Similar advice was given to Jonas Von Stockhausen, Captain of the police force in the town of Nordhausen in Thuringia. Luther's letter is dated November 27th, 1532:

Honored, brave, dear Lord and Friend:

Good friends have informed me that the evil one is tempting you severely with weariness of life and longing for death. My dear friend, it is high time you cease relying on and pursuing your own thoughts. Listen to other people who are not subject

¹Theodore G. Tappert, ed. Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel, Op. cit., pp. 84-87. (Note: Luther was absent from his home when he wrote this letter).

to this temptation. Give the closest attention to what we say, and let our words penetrate to your heart. Thus God will strengthen and comfort you by means of our words. . . .

But the best counsel of all is this: Do not struggle against your thoughts at all, but ignore them and act as if you were not conscious of them. Think constantly of something else, and say: "Well, devil, do not trouble me. I have not time for your thoughts. I must eat, drink, ride, go, or do this or that." In like manner say: "I must now be cheerful. Come back tomorrow", etc. Undertake to do something else that you are able--whether play or something else--just so that you free yourself from these thoughts, hold them in contempt, and dismiss them. If necessary, speak coarsely and disrespectfully, like this: "Dear devil, if you don't do better than that, kiss my toe, etc." I have no time for you now." . . .

Herewith I commit you to the keeping of our dear Lord, the only Saviour and real Conqueror, Jesus Christ. May he keep his victory and triumph over the devil in your heart. May he cause all of us to rejoice in the help he gives you and the miracle he performs in you. We confidently hope and pray for this in accordance with his command and promise to us. Amen. Martin Luther, Doctor.²

Luther's use of humor in his pastoral care, teaches some rather obvious theological lessons. God does not want us to be gloomy, depressed, or despondent. According to Luther, these negative insidious experiences come from evil. Hence, his method of humor, gaiety, good cheer, proved quite effective in combatting these incapacitating moods. Its roots were deep within paradoxical Christianity³, which holds the potential for the laughable. This was

¹"Kanstu mir nicht neher kommen, so lecke mich" (WA, Br, Vi, p. 388).

²Tappert, Op. cit., pp. 89-90.

³The theme of the cross is saving life by losing life . . . See Part II: Luther's Paradoxical Theology . . . It may be noted here also, that while the perceptive will appreciate Luther's use of humor and paradox, it will be missed by those who lack this insight; i.e. those who lack a sense of humor emotionally, and are quite literal-minded like Nicodemus of old facing the radical concept of re-birth. (John 3:1ff). Cf. Trueblood, Op. cit., pp. 42ff.

perceived by Luther, a champion of paradox in life and theology; and as we have seen, actualized by him to the benefit of many who sought out his pastoral advice and guidance.

Pastoral Care of Self

It is assumed that, if there is to be pastoral care for those in need, it must be offered via another person. Within the Christian tradition, it is acknowledged that one of the ways the Holy Spirit speaks to people is through the office and person of the Christian pastor.¹ What is not so obvious within this assumption, however, is that the Christian pastor should have received, and continue to receive, adequate pastoral care for himself in order to serve his people effectively.

Luther teaches us a great deal about the importance of pastoral care to self. He knew well the proverb: "Physician, heal thyself",² a challenge directed originally to his Lord; but also an on-going challenge to himself and all those who serve as Christ's pastors. As long as he lived, Luther never forgot the spiritual counsel of his "brothers" offered to him both in the monastery at Erfurt and throughout his turbulent career as Reformer: "One should be glad", he said one day, "to have a brother who says, 'Brother, do this, for it is the call of your superior or of God (which is a call of faith)

¹ See above: "Absolution and Confession"; also Wayne E. Oates, Protestant Pastoral Counseling (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), Chapter III, "The Holy Spirit as Counselor", pp. 57ff: "The New Testament teaching with reference to the Holy Spirit is indispensable wisdom for the practice of pastoral counseling. . ."

² Luke 4:23.

or of an equal (which is a call of love)."¹

Early during Luther's stay in the monastery, he described his mood as predominately one of sadness: "I was very pious in the monastery, yet I was sad because I thought God was not gracious to me. I said mass and prayed and hardly saw or heard a woman as long as I was in the order. . ."² Therefore, he very much needed someone, as noted above, to say: "Do this!" It turned out that this person was a fellow-monk who was able to give this kind of direction to Luther. Unfortunately, the name of this "brother" has been lost. . . . "Son, what are you doing?" said the venerable teacher to his pupil, who with many tears was deploring his temptations, 'do you not know that the Lord has commanded us to hope?' 'By this one word, 'commanded', confesses Luther, 'I was so strengthened that I knew that the absolution was to be believed. . .'³ Perhaps it was also the help of this same pious fellow-monk to which Luther refers in the Table Talk:

"When I was in spiritual distress a gentle word would restore my spirit. Sometimes my confessor said to me when I repeatedly discussed silly sins with him, 'You are a fool. God is not incensed against you, but you are incensed against God. God is not angry with you, but you are angry with God.' This was magnificently said, although it was before the light of the gospel."⁴ . . .⁵

¹ LW 54, Table Talk #518, Spring, 1533, p. 95.

² Ibid.

³ Quoted by August Nebe, Luther as Spiritual Advisor, trans. Charles A. Hay and Charles E. Hay (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1894), p. 11.

⁴ "Luther refers to his experience as a monk before the beginning of the Reformation", LW 54, p. 15, n. 35.

⁵ LW 54, Table Talk #122, November 30, 1531, p. 15.

Probably the most influential spiritual guide for Luther during his formative years in the monastery was the Vicar General of the Augustinians, John Staupitz. Staupitz was well schooled in the spiritual piety of his day; but perhaps more important, he also showed a great deal of warmth and empathy for those in distress. At one point Luther acknowledged: "If it had not been for Dr. Staupitz, I should have sunk in hell."¹

Luther expresses his appreciation for Staupitz and gives him the credit for directing his attention to Christ, thereby unleashing the Reformation emphasis upon the Gospel: ". . . my good Staupitz said: 'One must keep one's eyes fixed on that man who is called Christ.' Staupitz is the one who started the teaching [of the Gospel in our time]."²

On another occasion, Staupitz reminded him further: "Christ does not alarm, but comforts."³ Finally, Luther found himself set free from the bonds of his morbid pre-occupation with sin and self, when he took hold of Staupitz's advice: "You want to be an imaginary sinner and to regard Christ as an imaginary Saviour. You must accustom yourself to think that Christ is a real Saviour and that you are a real sinner. God does nothing for fun or for show, and he is not joking when he sends his Son and delivers him up for us."⁴ Luther

¹Quoted by Roland Bainton, Op. cit., p. 53.

²LW 54, Table Talk #526, Spring, 1533, p. 97.

³Quoted by Nebe, Op. cit., p. 11.

⁴Ibid., p. 12.

also acknowledged later that it was a casual remark by Staupitz that "struck like a sharp arrow in his soul" concerning repentance: . . . "only that repentance is genuine which begins with love to righteousness and to God."¹

Most modern day pastors have had the following experience repeated many times in their ministry. We are called upon to help someone and yet we do not know how. We encounter certain difficult situations where there are no obvious answers. Try as we may, it seems impossible to understand or empathize fully with the troubled person before us. Rather than being overwhelmed by a sense of inadequacy during these times, we can be encouraged by Staupitz's example of on-going friendship with Luther. He, too, had to admit many times, that he did not have the answers either; and yet, the pastoral relationship continued as strongly as ever. . . . "When I complained about such spiritual assaults to my good Staupitz, he replied, 'I don't understand this; I know nothing about it.'"² . . . "I often made confession to Staupitz, not about women but about really serious sins. He said, 'I don't understand you.' This was real consolation!"³

Even though there were no immediate answers to his problems, Luther sensed in Staupitz a fellow-sufferer who would stick with him, to discover together new insights into the Christian faith. At times

¹ Ibid.

² LW 54, Table Talk #1288, Between December 28 and 31, 1531, p. 133.

³ Ibid., #518, Spring, 1533, p. 94.

Staupitz himself grew discouraged with the way things were going in history for example, and was not afraid to speak about it with Luther:

"This is what Staupitz said to me when he was overcome by sadness:

God grant patience! After all, nothing remains unpunished. And all history testifies that God's coming . . ."¹ In terms of Christian

perfection, Luther recalled: "Staupitz taught me a new art. He said he would never want to be perfect. He had lied to God too often, yet it did not help. This seemed amazing to me, and yet it is true. We

do not become perfect, and that is that!"² In reference to law,

Luther remembered the deep insight of Staupitz who said: "There is a great mountain. 'You must cross it'--the law says; 'I will cross

it'--says presumption; 'You cannot'--says conscience; 'Then I won't attempt it'--says despair."³ Concerning God's paradoxical action of

"striking down" in order "to raise up" Luther recounted Staupitz's answer in this way:

"While I was in Erfurt I once said to Dr. Staupitz, 'Dear Doctor, our Lord God treats people too horribly. Who can serve him as long as he strikes people down right and left, as we see he does in many cases involving our adversaries?' Then Dr. Staupitz answered, 'Dear fellow, learn to think of God differently? If he did not treat them this way, how could God restrain those blockheads? God strikes us for our own good, in order that he might free us who otherwise be crushed'."⁴

¹ Ibid., #5284, October 3, 1540, p. 406.

² Appendix, #4868, May 6-16, 1540.

³ Quoted by Nebe, Op. cit., p. 11.

⁴ LW 54, Table Talk #94, Early November, 1531, p. 11.

Upon leaving the monastery and attaining great public acclaim with the Reformation, Luther never regarded himself as all sufficient. From time to time, he sought pastoral comfort for himself from others such as John Bugenhagen,¹ Justus Jonas,² Philip Melanchthon,³ and his wife Katy:

"Right there at this table, when the rest of you were in Jena, Pomeranus [Bugenhagen] sometimes consoled me when I was sad by saying, 'No doubt God is thinking: What more can I do with this man? I have given him so many excellent gifts, and yet he despairs of my grace!' These words were a great comfort to me. As a voice from heaven they struck me in my heart, although I think Pomeranus did not realize at the time what he had said and that it was so well said.⁴

. . . Often when I was troubled by something, Pomeranus or Philip or even my Katy would speak to me, and I was comforted as I realized that God was saying this because a brother was saying it either out of duty or out of love. For God says that we should listen to Christ, but Christ says that we should listen to the apostles.⁵

On May 1, 1532, Luther was overtaken by a severe dizzy spell. Katy sent for help. Soon John Schlaginhaufen (recorder of this Table Talk), Jonas, and Melanchthon arrived: . . . "Dr. Martin said to Jonas, 'Dr. Jonas, let's make an exchange. I'll take your stone, and you take my weak head.' Then Master Philip said, 'If the sicknesses of all

¹John Bugenhagen (1485-1558) of Pomerania was one of Luther's co-workers.

²Justus Jonas (1493-1555) was Luther's colleague at Wittenberg University. See Martin Lehmann, Justus Jonas (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1963).

³Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560) was also a colleague of Luther's at Wittenberg University. See Clyde L. Manschreck, Melanchthon, The Quiet Reformer (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958).

⁴LW 54, Table Talk #122, pp. 15-16.

⁵Ibid., #505, Spring, 1533, p. 89.

men were exchanged, it would probably be as Herodotus¹ said: "every man would want to have his own sickness again, and no man would be willing to exchange it."²

When Nicholas Hausmann passed away November 3rd, 1538, it is interesting to observe the way Luther's friends went about gradually sharing the sad news. Since Hausmann was an old and trusted friend of Luther, the friends sought to minister to Luther by staying with him once the news of the death was made known:

. . . We kept this sad news about his very dear friend from the Rev. Father, Dr. Luther. Then we took turns--his wife, Philip, Jonas, and I³--in telling him, first, that his friend was not well; second, that he was gravely ill; and finally, that he died quietly. Luther was deeply moved by this death. While sitting among good friends he broke into tears again and again and said, "Thus God takes away those who are good. Afterward he'll burn the chaff. It's in accordance with the saying in the Scriptures, 'The righteous man perishes, . . . devout men are taken away', [Isa. 57:1.] The times are perilous. . . . God help us to remain steadfast in his Word and to better ourselves!"

"He was an exceedingly dear friend of mine!"

So he sat in great sorrow the whole day with Justus Jonas, Philip Melanchthon Master Joachim Camerarius⁴, Caspar von Koeckeritz⁵. Among these he sat, sad and full of tears.⁶

¹"Herodotus was a Greek historian (d. 425 B.C.)", Ibid., p. 155, n. 107.

²Ibid., #1493, May 1, 1532, p. 155.

³Anthony Lauterbach, recorder of this Table Talk.

⁴"Joachim Camerarius (1500-1574) was, like his friend Philip Melanchthon a humanist and an educator. He taught in Tübingen and Leipzig, but was in Wittenberg on a visit at this time." Ibid., p. 319, n. 278.

⁵"Caspar von Koeckeritz (d. 1567), a member of the Saxon nobility and a friend of Luther, had just settled in Wittenberg. . . . 1537. In 1530 Luther had dedicated to Koeckeritz an exposition of Psalm 111; cf. WA 31¹, 391-426." Ibid., p. 236, n. 146.

⁶Ibid., #4084, November 6, 1538, p. 319.

Receiving pastoral care for himself from others, did not preclude that Luther accepted or believed everything offered. At times he could be quite critical of the advice and guidance by his friends. For example, he felt Melanchthon gave too much importance to astrological signs:

"I regret that Philip Melanchthon adheres so strongly to astrology. He's very much deluded, for he's easily affected by signs in the sky and he's deceived by his own thoughts. He has often been mistaken, but he can't be dissuaded. Some time ago when I came from Torgau feeling quite weak, he said that I was fated to die then. I was never willing to believe that he was so serious about this business. I don't fear celestial signs, for our creation is above all the stars and can't be subject to them, though our bodies may be. I'm not afraid of the chasm.¹ I'll leave it to the clever philosopher to hold it in esteem. Let Hans Metzsch² fear it!"³

However, when "the chips were down" and Luther was stricken with a severe illness in 1532, he still called for his friends to minister to him: . . . "About four in the morning he was troubled by a ringing in his ears, and this was followed by an extraordinary faintness in his heart. He commanded Master Philip Melanchthon, Master Eisleben (who was then present), and me⁴ to be summoned at once in order that he might have somebody to speak to. . ."⁵

¹Cf. Ibid., #3507, December 16, 1536: "Between six and seven o'clock on December 16 a mighty crash of thunder was heard, preceded by a flash of lightning, following a week of bitterly cold weather. The mathematicians call this a chasm, and it indicates dryness in the air. . ."

²"The town prefect in Wittenberg was Hans Metzsch, taken to task often by Luther for his profligate life." Ibid., p. 47, n. 152; cf. Tappert, ed., Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel, Op. cit., pp. 279-282.

³Ibid., #3520, Between January 1 and 14, 1537, pp. 219-220.

⁴Veit Dietrich, the recorder of this Table Talk.

⁵Ibid., #157, January 22, 1532, p. 23.

Many more examples could be given from Luther's experience to illustrate the importance of personal soul care for the pastor himself. In short, it's not only good advice by Luther, but also recognized more and more today that a pastor has a "down to earth" Christian responsibility to care for himself, spiritually, emotionally and physically.¹ Usually this care will come through the ministry of other

¹ See Henri J.M. Nouwen, Creative Ministry (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1971), pp. xxff: "So, ministry and spirituality never can be separated. Ministry is not an eight-to-five job but primarily a way of life, which is for others to see and understand so that liberation can become a possibility. . ."; Karl Rahner, Servants of the Lord (Herder: Palm Publishers, 1968), Chapter II: "Today's Priest and His Faith", pp. 47ff.; Thomas J. Mullen, The Renewal of the Ministry (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1963), pp. 27ff.; "In actuality the Protestant ministry has deserted a basic truth which the Reformation fathers made clear. That truth is simply that the Christian religion cannot be practiced by a special group for another group. Christian faith is a matter of personal devotion, personal relationship to God, and personal living for all Christians--not by a few, not by the specially trained, and certainly not by those professionally paid for the job. Yet, due to the expectations of our society for the ministerial role, an actual retreat to a pre-Reformation meaning of ministry has taken place. . ."; Wayne C. Clark, The Minister Looks at Himself (Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1957), Chapter IV, "The Problem of Doubt", pp. 63ff cites a number of suggestions for handling doubt; e.g. proper rest, budgetting of time; meditation on Scripture and God's presence, etc. However, this author does not deal with the whole matter of one pastor receiving care from another, that comes out so strongly in Luther's examples above. Certainly in terms of loneliness rampant among the general population, the clergy are not immune. The friendship and ministry of others can again be most helpful. For a more specific analysis of loneliness see: Raymond Chapman, The Loneliness of Man (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963); Harold Blake Walker, Loneliness (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1966); Robert S. Weiss, Loneliness -- The Experience of Emotional and Social Isolation (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1973); Harvey H. Potthoff, Loneliness: Understanding and Dealing With It (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976) and Thomas Merton, No Man Is an Island (New York: Harcourt, Bruce and World, Inc., 1955), p. 12: "Great priests, saints like the Cure d'Ars, who have seen into the hidden depths of thousands of souls, have, nevertheless, remained men with few intimate friends. No one is more lonely than a priest who has a vast ministry. He is isolated in a terrible desert by the secrets of his fellow men."

clergy or laity alike, if the pastor will permit himself to be helped in times of need.

To summarize this Chapter, we have been discussing the "Nature" or some of the essential qualities of Luther's pastoral care. In general we noted the ability to give and receive care is in itself an essential human characteristic. In more specific reference to pastoral care, we examined the Divine source; confession and absolution; use of humor; and pastoral care for the person of the pastor himself. Most of the primary sources were drawn from the Table Talks, although other Luther Works were quoted to fill in "the gaps".

It is necessary now to address our subject from another perspective; that is the function or "characteristic action" of Luther's pastoral care.

Chapter X: The Function of His Pastoral Care

In this Chapter we will observe Luther's Seelsorge in action. He once remarked: "God placed his church in the midst of the world, among countless external activities and callings, not in order that Christians should become monks but so that they may live in fellowship and that our works and the exercises of our faith may become known among men. For human society, as Aristotle said, is not an end in itself but a means [to an end]; and the ultimate end is to teach one another about God. . . ."¹ He also said: ". . . The right, practical divinity is this: Believe in Christ, and do thy duty in that state of life to which God has called thee . . ."² In order to explore this "practical divinity", we will examine Luther's pastoral activity in addressing the human condition in general, and then in terms of specific topics such as temptation, melancholia, illness, marriage, the devil, etc.

The Human Condition -- In General

In the Table Talk there are many lively discussions by which Luther illustrates his understanding of our basic human condition. For example, he says human life is like a ship in need of a "pilot" to chart a safe course through its earthly existence:

Our life is like the sailing of a ship; as the mariners in the ship have before them a haven towards which they direct their course, and where they will be secure from all danger, even so the

¹LW 54, Table Talk #3993, August 31, 1538, p. 307.

²Hazlitt, Table Talk #VII, p. 4.

promise of everlasting life is made unto us, that we therein, as in a safe haven, may rest calm and secure. But seeing our ship is weak, and the winds and waves beat upon us, as though they would overwhelm us, therefore we have need of a good and experienced pilot, who with his counsel and advice may rule and govern the vessel, that it run not on a rock, or utterly sink and go down. Such a pilot is our blessed Saviour Christ Jesus.¹

He analyzes this human condition further by saying: "The life of no human being is all tranquility. Each one has his own temptations, even though he be upset. For no one is content with his lot. The married man wishes to be single; the single man to be married; the master to be servant, and the servant master; the pauper rich, and the rich man desires ever more."²

Luther marvelled at the arrogance and self-assurance of people in general who continued to harden their hearts even in the face of so many uncertainties of life:

"It's remarkable that men should be so arrogant and secure when there are so many, indeed countless, evidences around us to suggest that we ought to be humble. The hour of our death is uncertain. The grain on which we live is not in our hands. Neither the sun nor the air, on which our life depends, lies in our power, and we have no control over our sleeping and waking. I shall say nothing of spiritual things, such as private and public sins which press upon us. Yet our hearts are hard as steel and pay no attention to such evidence."³

Therefore, Luther concluded: "It is impossible for a human heart, without crosses and tribulations, to think upon God."⁴

What does the Christian community have to offer this human

¹ Ibid., #DCXC, p. 362.

² Appendix, #3816.

³ LW 54, Table Talk #87, Early November, 1531, p. 10.

⁴ Hazlitt, #DCXXXIV, p. 336.

predicament? According to the Scripture, Luther would answer, we have faith and love drawn from the vast spiritual resources of our heavenly Father: "Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the merciful Father, the God from whom all help comes! He helps us in all our troubles, so that we are able to help others who have all kinds of troubles, using the same help that we ourselves have received from God."¹ He describes the relationship between faith and love by drawing on the insight of St. Paul in Galatians 5:6: "Faith is active in love, that is, that Faith justifies which expresses itself in acts. Now, it is assumed by some that the fruits of Faith make Faith to be Faith, although Paul intends something different, namely, that Faith makes the fruit to be fruit. Faith comes first and then love follows."² In another place he points out that while we can have love for God and others, love is thought of primarily in regard to people, faith to God: ". . . There are two tables [of the Decalogue], the first and the second. Love belongs in the second table. It's superior to all the other works there. On the other hand, [in the first table] it is commanded: 'Fear God. Listen to his Word.'³

¹ II Corinthians 1:3-4, Good News Bible (Toronto: Canadian Bible Society, 1976).

² LW 54, Table Talk #458, Early 1533, p. 74.

³ Ibid., #5601, Spring, 1543, p. 463.

We are alluding here to Luther's central Reformation teaching on justification.¹ It is interesting to see how he explains this doctrine within the informal setting around his table:

Martin Luther gave a very clear and apt explanation of the article of justification by showing its resemblance to the relation of a father and a son in this way: "A son is born an heir, is not made one, and inherits his father's goods without any work or merit. Meanwhile, however, the father commands and exhorts his son to be diligent in doing this or that. He promises him a reward or gift in order that in return for it he may obey more readily and freely: 'If you're good and listen, if you study diligently, I'll buy you a nice coat. Come here to me and I'll give you a beautiful apple.' In this way the father helps his son in his weakness, although the inheritance belongs to him on other grounds. This is done for the sake of pedagogy.

"God also deals with us in this way. He coaxes us with promises of spiritual and physical things, although eternal life is given freely to those who believe in Christ as children of adoption, etc. So it ought to be taught in church that God will repay good works, save in the article of justification, which is the origin and source of all other promises. One should say, 'Believe and you will be saved; do what you will, it won't help you [to be saved].' Accordingly we should remember that those promises and rewards are the pedagogy by which God, as a very gentle father, invites and entices us to do good, serve our neighbour," etc.²

Further, upon examining candidates for ordination, a proposition was put forward to be debated: "Faith, justifies; faith is a work; therefore works justify."³ After a time limit, Luther replied: "Faith justifies not as a work, or as a quality, or as knowledge, but as assent of the will and firm confidence in the mercy of God."⁴ Then he

¹ See Part Two: Chapter IV: "Simultaneously Righteous and Sinner".

² LW 54, Table Talk #3600, June 18, 1537, p. 240.

³ Ibid., #4655, June 16, 1539, p. 359.

⁴ Ibid., 359-360.

continued: "For if faith were only knowledge, then the devil would certainly be saved because he possesses the greatest knowledge of God. . . . Accordingly, faith must be understood otherwise than as knowledge. In part, however, it is assent."¹ Finally, faith has profound implication not only in terms of a right relationship to God and life everlasting, but it also implicates life here and now: "Whoever believes rightly, will experience the right conduct [now]. . ."², and have peace even in the midst of trials and temptations.³

The Human Condition in Particular

In light of the Scriptures and the human condition, the Christian pastor is called to exercise two basic functions in his pastoral care: "To nourish and defend must be brought together in the pastor; otherwise if there is no defense, the wolf devours both the sheep and the feed together!"⁴ Another Table Talk amplifies these two basic functions in this way:

An upright shepherd and minister must improve his flock by edification, and also resist and defend it; otherwise, if resisting be absent, the wolf devours the sheep, (and the rather⁵), where they be fat and well fed. Therefore St. Paul presses it home upon Titus, that a bishop by sound doctrine should be able both to exhort and to convince gainsayers; that is, to resist false doctrine. A preacher must be both soldier and shepherd. He must nourish, defend, and teach; he must have teeth in his mouth, and be able to bite and fight.

There are many talking preachers, but there is nothing in them save only words; they can talk much, but teach nothing uprightly.

¹ Ibid., p. 360.

² Appendix, #730.

³ Ibid., #3344.

⁴ Appendix, #648.

⁵ This phrase is unclear in the text.

The world has always had such Thrasons, such boasting throat-criers.¹ There is also the promise for the pastor that 'Whoever hears you', says Jesus, 'hears me' [Luke 10:16]."² In seeking a pastor, to fulfill the above, Luther says: . . . "every Christian congregation has the privilege and permission according to holy, divine Scriptures to seek, choose, and elect pastors and preachers, who preach and proclaim to them the unadulterated pure Godly Word and Gospel, and to feed and nourish the souls with the divine word whereupon a soul lives and consciences are comforted. . . ."³

If a pastor is to nourish and defend those who are troubled in conscience or suffer in other ways, he must first offer acceptance to all who seek his help: . . . "nothing is so genuine as that which wells up spontaneously. . . ."⁴ He must be patient with them.⁵ Perhaps most important, he must be willing to offer words of comfort and hope in an advisory capacity without any coercion: "One ought never, nor can one force anyone to believe. For even when people hear something out of Holy Scripture or read it themselves and think about it, yet it may not persuade them."⁶

¹Thomas S. Kepler, ed., The Table Talk of Martin Luther, #342, Op. cit., p. 240.

²Appendix #411.

³Ibid., #4075, October 17, 1538.

⁴Appendix #4001.

⁵Ibid., #2173 and #3643.

⁶Ibid., #4915.

Temptation -- Pride and Envy -- Sin

Each age in the chronological span of a person's life has its own unique temptations: "Young men are tempted by attractive girls; at thirty years of age, men are tempted more by money; forty year olds by honor, and sixty year olds by glory, [saying], 'Am I not self-righteous?'"¹ Further, "Satan tempts us where we are the weakest . . ."² "That Christ our Saviour died for our sin we can easily say, because the words are easy. But when it comes to the crunch, when the devil in temptation hides Christ from our eyes, and tears the Words of Grace out of our hearts, then we realize that we really haven't learned much. . ."³ "In all temptations, one should see to it that our thoughts do not dwell upon the temptations. If one does that, then soon the fall into sin follows. Because where the snake puts her head into a hole, soon her whole body follows. There is no holding back!"⁴

From his own experience and reflection on the Scriptures, Luther taught that temptations were necessary and in fact useful to us: . . . "No one can be pious and reach a life of tranquility, who does not feel the temptations of the flesh. As Paul exclaimed: 'O wretched man that I am', etc. [Rom. 7:24]. Therefore temptations are the best medicine against the security of the flesh from which Epicureanism is

¹ Ibid., #1601.

² Ibid., #3669.

³ Ibid., #6629.

⁴ Ibid., #407, FB 3, 170 (26,88).

born."¹ He continues:

"But such temptations are not only necessary for us, but they are good and useful for us. Otherwise, we would continue to go along without any fear of God; would not call upon Him for help; for whoever is healthy and happy does not need a physician nor comforter. Thus the devil could easily deceive him. In addition temptation is also useful in making us live in the fear of God; walk circumspectly; pray without ceasing; grow in the knowledge of Christ and learn to understand the power of His Word. And even though we as yet are weak, yet the power of our Lord Christ is strong in the weak [11 Cor. 12:9].²

The gravest temptation, however, is the temptation to neglect faith:

... "For faith ought to conquer all other temptations and calamities. If faith succumbs to temptation, all the others, even the smallest, attack the human being. But where faith remains, it is possible to despise the sharpest calamities. . . ."³

Since Christ was tempted in the body like we are, Luther holds that He is our best advocate and source of comfort. In Him, we discover God's grace revealed under the temptation or trouble at hand: "To sum up, Christ tempted in our flesh is the best advocate before God in all temptations. He is the president, while we are merely respondents. Even though God's anger is manifested in our calamities, if we repent and believe we will find the grace and goodness of God hidden under the anger; just as power [strength] is hidden under the weakness, if only we continue in hope and do not be

¹ Ibid., #4737, February 2, 1539.

² Ibid., #837.

³ Ibid., #3678.

offended by such masks, and continue to pray."¹

Pride and envy can also plague the human spirit and cause problems. The basic reason for this, according to Luther's analysis,² is that pride and envy are often disguised as divine good: "Envy and pride are two sins which dress themselves up, like the devil does, in divinity. Envy pretends to be justice, and pride, truth."² This leads us to one of the central issues in Luther's theology, a reality that is most often ignored in contemporary times³; and that is sin. In God's sight human beings are sinners. They rely upon themselves and what they accomplish, without any regard to the fact that they are totally and completely dependent upon God and all His blessings. Let us now look a little more closely at this deep tendency present in all, Christian and non-Christian alike.

Luther draws out the distinction by St. Augustine between original and actual sin. . . . "Namely, that original sin is to covet, lust, and desire, which is the root and cause of actual sin; such lust and desire in the faithful, God forgives, imputing it not unto them, for the sake of Christ, seeing they resist it by assistance of the Holy Ghost."⁴ Luther says our whole orientation to life is wrong⁵ because

¹ Ibid., #3933.

² Ibid., #382.

³ See Karl Menninger, Whatever Became of Sin? (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1973/1974).

⁴ Hazlitt, Table Talks #CCXLIV, p. 135.

⁵ Cf. Tappert, ed., Luther's Letters of Spiritual Counsel, Op. cit., p. 14.

we are (by nature) rebellious against our Creator: "We are all sinners by nature--conceived and born in sin; sin has poisoned us through and through; we have from Adam a will, which continually sets itself against God, unless by the Holy Ghost it be renewed and changed."¹

For the Christian, original sin is like a wound that remains after baptism. . . "yet it is becoming better and is constantly in the process of healing, although it is still festering, is painful, etc.

So original sin remains in the baptized until their death, although it is in the process of being rooted out. It is rendered harmless, and so it cannot accuse or condemn us."²

What are the consequences of sin? "No sinner can escape his punishment, unless he be sorry for his sins. For though one go "scott free" for a while, yet at last he will be snapped, as the Psalm says: 'God indeed is still judge on earth.'"³ Some one asked another question about sin and sickness:

. . . How these two sentences in Scripture might be reconciled together; first, concerning the sick of the palsy, where Christ says: "Son be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." Where Christ intimates that sin was the cause of the palsy, and of every sickness. Second, touching him that was born blind, where John says: "That neither he nor his parents had sinned." Luther answered: In these words Christ testifies that the blind had not sinned, and sin is not the cause of blindness, for only active sins, which one commits personally, are the cause of sicknesses and plagues, not original sin; therefore the sins which the sick of the palsy himself committed were the cause of the palsy, whereas original sin was not the cause of the blindness

¹ Hazlitt, Table Talk #CCXLIV, p. 135.

² LW 54, Table Talk #138, Between November 30 and December 14, 1531, p. 20.

³ Hazlitt, Table Talk #CCL, p. 138.

of him that was born blind, or all people must be born blind, or be sick of the palsy.¹

Luther makes the connection here between actual sins committed by a person and consequences to physical health. He also points out the emotional havoc that can be caused by unrepented sin, leading one into either extreme despair or presumption:

"The sin which Judas committed when he betrayed Christ² was a small sin because it could be forgiven. But to despair of grace is a greater sin because it cannot be forgiven, for God has determined for Christ's sake to forgive the sin of those who believe. This sin is so great and wicked that it leads either to despair or to presumption. Consequently one ought to be disposed to say, 'It is true. I have sinned. But I will not despair on this account or commit the sin again.' However, it's a calumny to conclude from these words of mine that it is permissible to sin and then to believe, for one can't believe in Christ unless one declares and resolves not to sin again. Sin carries us down to despair or up to presumption. In either case the sin is not repented of, for is either exaggerated or not acknowledged at all."³

The reality of man's fallen condition that Luther found "too much" is the natural tendency to justify one's self and actions:

"Dear Lord God, it is enough to have sinned without trying to justify oneself! That isn't tolerated in a home. The father of a household doesn't allow it. It burns in one's heart if a person who sins tries to justify himself. When you confess a sin and yet do not cease from it, it is a grievous sin and is contempt of God, but it's not sin against the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, when you know you are wrong and nevertheless try to defend yourself, this is too much."⁴

Luther adds to this discussion by referring to sins against the First and Second Tables of the law.

¹ Ibid., #DCCXXV, p. 381.

² See Matthew 26:47-50.

³ LW 54, Table Talk #273, May 18, 1532, p. 37.

⁴ Ibid., #388, November 30, 1532, pp. 60-61.

May our Dear God permit me to fall into such sins only, which I know and recognize that they are sins, such as murder, theft, adultery, etc., and not on the contrary into such sins which are not recognized as sins. Our Lord God is not angered more than when one defends sin and denies that one has done wrong, thus Saul.¹ For indeed the sins one does not recognize are against the First Table of the Law; but the sins recognized are against the Second. Saul fell into sins against the First Table; David² truly sinned against the Second. And those who sin namely against the Second Table can come to their right senses and respond to the preaching of repentance, the others, however, not so. The former sanctify the Name of God and seek His name; the others arrogate to themselves wisdom and power; these two [wisdom and power] God wills alone to Himself. If however, one does not wish to grant this to Him. . . God will not stand for it." [Deut. 29:19, Nu. 16:22].³

Functionally, how does a pastor offer care to sinners? In short, Luther says: "A preacher should needs know how to make a right difference between sinners, between the impenitent and confident, and the sorrowful and penitent. . ."⁴ After all he reminds us, this was the method of our Lord: "Christ well knew how to discriminate sins; we see in the gospel how harsh he was towards the Pharisees, by reason of their great hatred and envy against him and his Word, while, on the contrary, how mild and friendly he was towards the woman who was a sinner."⁵

Melancholia and Suicide

Perhaps it was because Luther experienced such prolonged and intense periods of acute melancholia himself, the most severe

¹ 1 Samuel 15:10ff.

² 11 Samuel 11ff.

³ Appendix, Table Talk #877.

⁴ Hazlitt, Table Talk #CCCIII, p. 227.

⁵ Ibid., #CCXLVIII, pp. 137-138.

episodes in 1527,¹ that he could empathize so fully with fellow sufferers. He learned profound lessons for himself and later shared these with others during their times of agony and despair. These lessons proved over and over again to be essential in his opinion to a proper and more comprehensive understanding of life and the Scriptures.

The Table Talks give us very valuable first hand accounts of how Luther offered pastoral care to those wrestling with melancholia, or depression. These same documents also offer in some detail his theological assessment of each case discussed.

One of the first things Luther advises a person who is down-cast is to avoid solitude. On February 18, 1538, Philip Melanchthon became very depressed over the "stubbornness" of his son-in-law.² The result was that Melanchthon became very withdrawn and despondent, unable to find any comfort in this agitated state. Luther sympathizes with his old friend during a visit, and then discusses with others present at the time³ that for Melanchthon to recover, he needs companionship rather than keeping solely to himself:

"He is gnawing at his own heart", said Luther. "I, too, often suffer from severe trials and sorrows. At such times I seek the fellowship of men, for the humblest maid has often comforted me. A man doesn't have control of himself when he is downcast and

¹ See Part One: Chapter II, for a description of his chronic depression of 1527. Note also the definition of "geistliche Anfechtung" given by Roland Bainton, Op. cit., p. 42.

² George Sabinus. . . apparently would not permit his wife to travel to Wittenberg to visit her father.

³ Dr. Cruciger (1504-1548)--Luther's secretary and colleague;

alone, even if he is well equipped with a knowledge of the Scriptures. It is not for nothing that Christ gathers his church around the Word and sacraments and is unwilling to let these be hidden in a corner. Away with monks and hermits! These are inventions of Satan because they exist apart from all the godly ordinance and arrangements of God. According to the plan of creation every man is either a domestic or a political or an ecclesiastical person. Outside of these ordinances he is not a man, unless he is miraculously exempted. Accordingly a solitary life should be avoided as much as possible."¹

Luther offers the same kind of advice to Jerome Weller² who was very depressed and troubled in 1538: "'Woe to him who is alone', the preacher says [Eccles. 4:10]. When I'm morose I flee from solitude. Christ was himself tempted by Satan when our Lord was alone³ in the wilderness."⁴

This pastoral advice "to flee solitude" was in direct contradiction to the prevailing "mood"⁵ of the day and its religious teachings. These teachings encouraged people to keep to themselves if they wanted to learn more about Christ and life. It's interesting to note how

Lorenz Zoch--a lawyer in Wittenberg; and Jacob Milich (1501-1559) was a professor of medicine also in Wittenberg.

¹ LW 54, Table Talk #3754, February 18, 1538, p. 268.

² Weller was a professor of theology from 1539 onward in Freiberg.

³ See Matthew 4:1-11.

⁴ LW 54, Table Talk #3799, March 29, 1538, p. 276.

⁵ J. Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages (E. Arnold, 1924; Penguin New Edition, 1955), pp. 150 and 138: "At the close of the Middle Ages, a sombre melancholy weighed on people's souls. Whether we read a chronicle, a poem, a sermon, a legal document even, the same impression of immense sadness is produced by them all. It would sometimes seem as if this period had been particularly unhappy, . . . it was fashionable to see only its suffering and misery, to discover everywhere signs of decadence and of the near end--in short, to condemn the times or to despise them. . . . No other epoch had laid so much stress as the expiring Middle Ages on the thought of death. An everlasting call of memento mori resounds through life."

Luther responds to this philosophy, not only in terms of emotional health and well-being, but also in terms of the first and second tables of the law:

"The papists and Anabaptists teach: If you wish to know Christ, try to be alone, don't associate with me, become a separatist. This plainly diabolical advice which is in conflict with the first and the second table [of the Decalogue]. The first table requires faith and fear [of God]. According to the second commandment, this is to be preached and publicly praised before men and is to be discussed among men. One must not flee into a corner. So the second table teaches that one must do good to one's neighbour. We ought not to isolate ourselves but enter into companionship with our neighbour. Likewise it [this notion] is in conflict with marriage, economic life, and political existence and is contrary to the life of Christ, who didn't choose solitude. Christ's life was very turbulent, for people were always moving about him. He was never alone, except when he prayed. Away with those who say, 'Be glad to be alone and your heart will be pure.'"¹

Luther continues his analysis of root causes of melancholia by pointing to the confusion of law and gospel as a contributing factor in some cases: "The teaching of law and gospel are altogether necessary, but they must be distinguished even when they are conjoined, otherwise men will despair or become presumptuous."² In another place he says: "This art, to distinguish law and gospel, really to separate them from each other is easily learned as far as words are concerned. But when it comes to experience in life and heart, then it becomes very hard and difficult to understand."³

A specific case in 1532, illustrates personal mood deflation arising out of a confusion of law and gospel:

. . . Then the Doctor asked: "Why are you so down-hearted?"

¹ LW 54, Table Talk #1329, Between January 8 and March 23, 1532, pp. 140-141.

² Ibid., #3799, March 29, 1538, p. 276.

³ Appendix, Table Talk #6717.

I [John Schlaginhaufen] answered: Oh, dear Doctor, I find myself dwelling on thoughts that are so sour bitter, and I can not do anything about it. I am unable properly to distinguish law and gospel.

The Doctor answered: . . . If God gave us a strong unfaltering faith, we would soon become proud, finally despise Him, and tickle ourselves therewith! If He were to give us knowledge of the full impact of the law, we would lose our minds and not know where to hide in heaven or on earth. Therefore, it is best that God deals with us in this way so that we may recognize our poverty and misery, holding fast to that which Christ commands us. He will make right what we have done wrong. . . .

Then I replied: dear Doctor, does it then behove me to remain in fog and sin?

The doctor: only that you might be justified when you speak and convincing when you discern. [Ps. 51:4].¹

For Luther, it was the devil who was behind this confusion of law and gospel. "He [the devil] is quite agile. If he hasn't exempted the patriarchs, the prophets, and the prince of prophets, Christ, he will not spare us. He can make the oddest syllogisms: 'You have sinned. God is angry with sinners. Therefore despair!' Accordingly we must proceed from the law to the gospel and grasp the article concerning the forgiveness of sins. . . ."²

Luther found that becoming angry at something or for some cause, proved to be very helpful for him: "I never work better than when I am inspired by anger; when I am angry, I can write, pray, and preach well, for then my whole temperament is quickened, my understanding sharpened, and all mundane vexations and temptations depart."³ However, he suspected quite correctly, that unexpressed anger or

¹ Ibid., #1557, May 20, 1532.

² LW 54, Table Talk #3798, March 29, 1538, p. 275.

³ Hazlitt, Table Talk #CCCXIX, p. 187.

hostility would accomplish the opposite and become another root cause of depression.¹ This he found true for himself at times and his depressed friend Dr. Jerome Weller:

Thereupon Dr. Weller arrived very troubled and depressed. Luther comforted him and told him to give his heart to the Lord and seek fellowship with men. Luther asked whether he was angry with God or with Luther or with himself.

Weller replied, "I confess that I am murmuring against God."

To this Luther said, "God will give up nothing. I, too, often honor God in this way. When I should procure good incense for him, I bring him the stinking pitch and fetid dung of murmuring and impatience. If we didn't have the article concerning the forgiveness of sins (which God has promised surely to keep) we'd be in a bad way."²

By inquiring into the existence of unresolved anger, Luther helps bring it to consciousness and encourages its expression. Thereby, the sufferer soon feels much better.

When we discuss unexpressed hostility in a person dominated by feelings of melancholia, we cannot ignore the subject of suicide.³ As

¹ See Frank Lake, Clinical Theology, "A Theological and Psychiatric Basis to Clinical Pastoral Care" (London: Darton Longman and Todd, 1966), pp. 115ff.: "That rage and aggressive emotions are always hidden in the roots of the truly depressed person is the unanimous view of psychoanalysts. . . . Depression is sometimes referred to as a 'frozen state of rage' . . . It must, however, be kept in mind that the rage does not subjectively exist in the patient's conscious awareness. The rage and its transmutation are unconscious. The patient subjectively and consciously is only aware of depression and its related effects. . . ."

² LW 54, Table Talk #3798, March 29, 1538, p. 275. Cf. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, Questions and Answers on Death and Dying (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1974), p. 24: To a question: "How do you help a person who is angry toward God?" Dr. Kübler-Ross answers: "I would help him to express his anger toward God because God is certainly great enough to be able to accept it."

³ For detailed studies on suicide see the following: Doman-Lum, Responding to Suicidal Crisis (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), p. 14: "In the modern world, suicide is an international phenomenon. The World Health Organization estimates that on an average throughout the world at least 1,000 persons commit

far as could be determined, there are only two Table Talks in which Luther gives his analysis theologically. In the first place, suicides are not to be thought of as eternally condemned by God, since they are over-powered by the evil forces of the devil:

"I don't share the opinion that suicides are certainly to be damned. My reason is that they do not wish to kill themselves but are overcome by the power of the devil. They are like a man who is murdered in the woods by a robber. However, this ought not be taught to the common people, lest Satan be given an opportunity to cause slaughter, and I recommend that the popular custom be strictly adhered to which it [the suicide's corpse] is not carried over the threshold, etc. Such persons do not die by free choice, or by the law, but our Lord God will dispatch them as he executes a person through a robber. Magistrates should treat them quite strictly, although it is not plain that their souls are damned. However, they are examples by which our Lord God wishes to show that the devil is powerful and also that we should be diligent in prayer. But for these examples, we would not fear God. Hence he must teach us in this way."¹

In the second place, Luther reiterates this same interpretation: "It is very certain that, as to all persons who have hanged themselves, or

suicide every day and that there is an annual toll of over half a million suicidal deaths in various countries. . . . Then, too, for every successful suicide, there are at least 8-10 attempts. . . ."; James Hillman, Suicide and the Soul (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1964); Howard W. Stone, Suicide and Grief (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972); Norman L. Farberow and Edwin S. Shneidman, eds., The Cry for Help (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965); Jacques Choron, Suicide (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972); Paul W. Pretzel, Understanding and Counseling the Suicidal Person (New York: Abingdon, 1972); Aaron T. Beck, Harvey L.P. Resnik and Dan J. Lettieri, eds., The Prediction of Suicide (Bowie: The Charles Press, 1974); and Ernest Leogrande (Photographs by George Alpert), Second Chance to Live (New York: Da Capo Press, 1975).

¹ LW 54, Table Talk #222, April 7, 1532, p. 29.

killed themselves in any other way, 'tis the devil who has put the cord round their necks, or the knife to their throats."¹

It was Luther's conviction that God did not intend that we harm ourselves or that we be sad and downcast. Rather, we are to be cheerful and enjoy life. Therefore, it was his further conviction that it was indeed evil or the devil who was the source of most melancholy: . . . "despondency and sadness comes from the devil, for he is lord of death [Hebrews 2:14], especially when a person is sad and afraid as if God were not a gracious God."² . . . "In cases of melancholy and sickness, I conclude it is merely the work of the devil. For God makes us not melancholy, nor affrights nor kills us, for he is a God of the living. Hence the Scripture: "Rejoice, and be of good comfort." God's Word and prayer is physic against spiritual tribulations."³

Luther expands this diagnosis a little more and offers some pastoral encouragement by way of a prescription against the onslaughts of the devil:

All heaviness of mind and melancholy come of the devil; especially these thoughts, that God is not gracious unto him: that God will have no mercy upon him, etc., Whosoever thou art, possessed with such heavy thoughts, know for certain, that they are a work of the devil. God sent His Son into the world, not

¹ Hazlitt, Table Talk #DLXXXV, p. 315.

² Appendix, Table Talk #832, FB 3m 103 (26,3).

³ Hazlitt, Table Talk #DC, p. 322.

to affright, but to comfort.

Therefore be of good courage, and think, that henceforth thou art not the child of a human creature, but of God, through faith in Christ, in whose name thou art baptized; therefore the spear of death cannot enter into thee; he has no right unto thee, much less can he hurt or prejudice thee, for he is everlastingly swallowed up through Christ.¹

More will be presented on Luther's encounters with the devil in this regard and in other matters, a little later in this Chapter.

Health -- Illness, Mind and Body

In the journal, Pastoral Psychology, Henrik Ivarsson, Director of Evangelism, Church of Sweden, writes the following criticism:

"Luther has very little to say about the problem of illness and health. . . . He limits himself more or less to the problem of maintaining 'the temporal peace' and is not overly interested in the problem of health."²

This criticism is not fair and rather unjust. It's not fair, because it ignores the fact that over a period of some twenty-five years, Luther spent a lot of time interpreting and analyzing his own faith in regard to his re-occurring illnesses.³ It is unjust, because flowing out from this personal experience and in relation to friends and parishioners, he also spent a great deal of time visiting and encouraging those who were ill in body, mind or soul.

¹ Ibid., #DCXXX, pp. 334-335.

² Henrik Ivarsson, "The Principles of Pastoral Care According to Martin Luther", Pastoral Psychology, Vol. 13, #121, February, 1962, p. 25.

³ See Part One: Chapter III.

In a Table Talk "How Dr. Martin Luther Visited and Comforted the Sick", we have the following detailed account, based upon an actual observation of this phase of Luther's pastoral ministry:

Whenever Dr. Martin Luther encountered any sick person, whom he visited during his weakness of body, he spoke with him in a very friendly manner, drew near to him and asked firstly about his illness, what sickness he had; how long he had been weak, which physician he had engaged; and what kind of medicine had been prescribed for him? Afterwards, he began to ask whether in this bodily weakness he had waited patiently before God? When he had now learned how the sick man had resigned himself in his weakness, and what was his attitude toward God, if it was apparent that he resolved to endure his illness patiently, because it had been sent by the gracious and fatherly will of God, and that he acknowledged himself to have deserved this affliction because of his sins and was prepared willingly to die if it pleased God; there-after the Doctor began to praise highly such a Christian resolution and purpose as a work of the Holy Spirit. And he declared that it is a great kindness of God when one in this life acquires true recognition of God and believes in Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, and can submit his will to God's will. Then he encouraged the sick to continue steadfast in this faith by the help of the Holy Spirit and offered to pray fervently to God on his behalf. If the sick person began to thank the Doctor and say that he did not deserve to be visited by him, he usually replied: that it was his office and duty, and that there was no need to thank him for it. Then he counselled them to be of good cheer, to fear nothing, recalling for them that God was their gracious God and Father, in confirmation of which he had given them good signs and documents in his Word and Sacraments, in order that we poor sinners might be delivered from the devil and hell, so has the Son of God willingly given Himself to death for us and reconciled us to God.¹

We learn here that Luther encourages a patient by using a "friendly approach", moving close to the patient and showing interest in the diagnosis and prescription for cure. Any lay visitor can do the same.

¹Appendix, Table Talk #2194b, FB 4, 254. Cf. Translation of a similar text in Tappert, Op. cit., pp. 36-37. Another record of how Luther comforted a sick woman is found in Appendix #3677.

However, what interests us in terms of pastoral care to the sick, is the fact that Luther takes several additional steps. He inquires concerning the spiritual attitude of the sufferer in response to his ailment. Further, he makes some assessment of the quality of a patient's faith. If things appear to be in order, then he encourages the patient by offering a pastoral prayer on his behalf.

In this regard of offering spiritual care for patients in addition to medical care, Luther observes how the two realms are different:

The physicians in sickness consider only of what natural causes the malady proceeds, and this they cure, or not, with their physic. But they do not see that often the devil casts a sickness upon one without any natural causes. A higher physic must be required to resist the devil's diseases; namely, faith and prayer, which physic may be fetched out of God's Word. The 31st Psalm is good thereunto, where David says: "into thine hand I commit my spirit." This passage I learned, in my sickness, to correct; in the first translation, I applied it only to the hour of death; but it should be said: my health, my happiness, my life, misfortune, sickness, death, etc., stand all in thy hands. . . .¹

This is not to suggest that Luther was advising patients to stay away from physicians. On the contrary, they needed medicine as much as they needed to eat when they were hungry;² but each again in its own order: "Accordingly a physician is our Lord God's mender of the body, as we theologians are his healers of the spirit."³ . . . "I don't deny that medicine is a gift of God and I don't reject this

¹ Hazlitt, Table Talk #DCCXXXIX, p. 382.

² Cf. LW 54 Table Talk #360, Fall, 1532, p. 54: "Thus I replied to Hohndorf [mayor of Wittenberg] who inquired of me when he heard from Karlstad that it's not permissible to make use of medicine. I said to him, 'Do you eat when you're hungry?'"

³ Ibid., p. 53.

knowledge, but where are the physicians who are perfect?"¹ Hence, physicians too, are in need of Divine forgiveness and only on this basis can they survive: "It isn't possible for the physician to be excused [in malpractice], except through the forgiveness of sins. He must go to this for help. Otherwise, if he acts by his own righteousness, he is of the devil."²

Furthermore, Luther noted the value of a proper diet and sleep: "It's true he said that a good diet is the best medicine when it suits the individual. . ."³ "Sleep is a beneficial and necessary work of nature. . . I think it's a most annoying thing for a sleeping person to be disturbed in his rest."⁴ . . . "A good regimen is worth a great deal. So if I feel tired and nevertheless adhere to my regimen, go to bed by the ninth hour, and have a restful night, I will be refreshed."⁵

Luther highly praised the hospitals in Italy and the kind of medical and nursing care Italians received there: The following picture is quite vivid:

Then Luther spoke about the hospital care of the Italians, how well provided their hospitals are: "They are splendidly built, the best food and drink are at hand, the attendants are very

¹ Ibid., #3733, February 5, 1538, p. 266.

² Ibid., #577, Summer or Fall, 1533, p. 103.

³ LW 54, Table Talk #3801, April 2, 1538, p. 277.

⁴ Ibid., #3985, August 27, 1530, p. 306.

⁵ Ibid., #3733, February 5, 1538, p. 266.

diligent, the physicians are learned, the beds and coverings are very clean, and the bedsteads are painted. As soon as a sick man is brought in, all his clothes are taken off in the presence of a notary and are faithfully kept for him. He is then dressed in a white smock and laid in a handsomely painted bed with clean sheets. Two physicians are fetched at once. Attendants come with food and drink, served in immaculate glass vessels; these are not touched with as much as a finger but are brought on a tray. Honorable matrons, who are completely veiled, come in, minister to the poor for several days without identifying themselves, and then go back to their homes.¹

While Luther recommended that patients consult physicians in their illness; take the medications prescribed; follow proper diet and regimen of sleep; yet he went beyond these "natural" cures to the spiritual and emotional.² Here he makes a unique contribution that is valid even in our modern day: "...the power of the mind is so great that it can even change the body. When I said that I could not believe this, he answered, 'You do not know what the power of the mind is.'"² On another occasion, we read: "The conversation then turned to Martin Bucer,³ who as a result of his very great cares and endless labors has grown old, although he is not yet fifty years old. Luther responded, 'What one thinks can very well make a person old, and so can work.'"⁴ "...Nothing is more harmful than melancholy. It eats the marrow in the legs as it is written: melancholy dries out

¹ Ibid., #3930, August 1, 1538, p. 296.

² LW 54, Table Talk #323, Summer or Fall, 1532, p. 45.

³ Strassburg reformer, (1491-1551). See Hastings Eells, Martin Bucer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931).

⁴ LW 54, Table Talk #3843, April 19, 1538, p. 282.

the bones. [Prov. 17:22]. Therefore, let a young man be happy. That's why I write on my table: melancholy has killed many, etc. [Eccl. 30:25]."¹

Another interesting example can be cited about the relation of mind and body, drawn from the time Weller came to Luther complaining about flux:²

On the day Dr. Weller was confirmed in the receipt of his call, he tormented himself with his anxious thoughts. This worked against his health, a perpetual flux burdening him. Luther answered: This I can easily believe that anxious thoughts cause flux. For in proportion that the spirit is occupied with worries, sleep and digestion of food is impeded. For as much as the spirit is not healthy, the body must pay. Thus Augustine has well said: the soul is healthier where it loves, the more it endows with life. For all excessive emotions and passions exhaust the body; the body without the spirit is dead, like a horse without the one who directs it. But a quiet [peaceful] spirit cares for the body. Therefore cogitations [worried thoughts] are to be resisted as much as possible. Thus for me the gravest trouble is to battle with these intensive thoughts.³

Hence, Luther was way ahead of his time in addressing psychosomatic illness.⁴ He held that cures could often be found, not simply in treating the physical body, but also in consciously and deliberately offering therapy to the mind and spirit of the sufferer as well.

¹ Appendix, #5380.

² Running sore(s).

³ Appendix, Table Talk #3860.

⁴ See James C. Coleman, Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life; Second Edition (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1956), Chapter VII: "Psychosomatic Disorders", pp. 230ff. Included in this Chapter is a discussion of such disorders as duodenal ulcer, insomnia, obesity, hypertension, asthma, migraines, rheumatoid arthritis, exophthalmis, goiter, neurodermatitis, and mucous colitis, etc..

Marriage--Parents--Children

Luther's Seelsorge had a profound impact upon domestic life. This was not only true in terms of his own marriage and family,¹ but also in broader terms touching . . . "German domestic relations for the next four centuries."²

To begin, he speaks about the troubles outside and within the bonds of marriage that go back to the root cause of original sin:

"He who takes a wife is not idle, for marriage keeps him busy. To remain content in celibacy confronts one with temptations that are not trivial, as the experienced know. On the other hand, the annoyances of married life are [almost] unbearable to men. Accordingly Socrates is reported to have given a good answer to a man who was contemplating marriage: Whatever you may do, you'll regret it. In paradise, marriage must have been very pleasant. Flesh and blood were different then. But we have become so infected with original sin that there's no kind of life which, once undertaken, isn't a matter of regret at times. This is the fault of our original sin, which has defiled and deformed all human nature. It seems to me that it is the pleasantest kind of life to have a moderate household; to live with an obedient wife, and to be content with little." He [Martin Luther] looked up into heaven and sighed, "Dear God, how art thou to arrange things so as to please us?"³

If there were no such arrangement of marriage at all, and if everyone was sexually "free", Luther speculated people would soon grow tired of this freedom: "I think if God had commanded women to take on every man who happened along and in like manner commanded men to take every woman who came by--in short, if things were the opposite of what they are--people would earnestly have sighed for the institution of marriage."⁴

¹ See Part One, Chapter II, "Marriage, Family Life and Household".

² Roland Bainton, Op. cit., p. 298.

³ LW 54, Table Talk #3508, Between December 16 and 18, 1536, p. 218.

⁴ Ibid., #5381, April, 1542, p. 415.

There is more to marriage than just the matter of a convenient, less exhausting, arrangement between the sexes. In Luther's view, "the act which attracts sex to sex is a divine ordinance."¹ . . . "The longing of a man for a woman is God's creation--that is to say, when nature's sound, not when it's corrupted as it is among the Italians and Turks."² He spoke more in praise of marriage, by saying: ". . . [Marriage is] the divine institution from which everything proceeds and without which the whole world would have remained empty and all creatures would have been meaningless and of no account, since they were created for the sake of man. 'So Eve and her breasts would not have existed, and none of the other ordinances would have followed. It was for this reason that, in the power of the Holy Spirit, Adam called his wife by that admirable name Eve, which means mother. . . .'"³

According to Luther, it was high time these insights and conclusions about the dignity of marriage were again shared with the people through a renewed ministry of the gospel. He found all the church fathers, except Augustine, sadly lacking in any spiritual direction for marriage:

"None of the fathers, furthermore, wrote anything memorable about marriage. Jerome⁴ was a real monk's warden. He wrote in a quite ungodly fashion about marriage; he paid attention only to the sensual pleasures in marriage. In truth, the fathers fled to it for no reason except the trials of the flesh. They wished to avoid a drop of voluptuousness and fell into an ocean

¹ LW 54, Table Talk #4153, November 25, 1538, p. 324.

² Ibid., #1659, Between June 12 and July 12, 1532, p. 161.

³ Ibid., #3528, Between January 14 and 31, 1537, p. 223.

⁴ Ibid., p. 8, n. 2: "Jerome (d. 420), one of the most learned of

of sensual pleasures. Only Augustine wrote a good statement about marriage. He said, 'If anybody can't live chastely, let him take a wife and go in security to the judgement of the Lord.'¹

In another place, Luther says: "God has placed a garland over marriage which is big enough to maintain it, even though the pope and devil are hostile to it. In the state of marriage one is better nourished than outside of it."²

Marriage requires more than just physical attractiveness: "There's more to it than just a union of the flesh. There must be harmony with respect to patterns of life and ways of thinking. The bonds of matrimony alone won't do it."³ Luther also adds: . . . "If a man intends to take a wife, let him be serious about it and pray to God, 'Dear Lord God, if it be thy divine will that I continue to live without a wife, help me to do so. If not, bestow upon me a good, pious girl with whom I may spend all my life, whom I hold dear, and who loves me.'"⁴

Once a couple has decided to marry, it was Luther's opinion that they should go ahead quickly and not have a long engagement: "Postponement is dangerous on account of foul-mouthed people who are incited by Satan. Friends of both parties generally start unseemly

the Western fathers of the church, was often criticized by Luther for his interpretation of the Bible."

¹ Ibid., #2867b, January 2, 1533, p. 177.

² Appendix, Table Talk #3187a.

³ LW 54, Table Talk #5524, Winter of 1542-1543, p. 444.

⁴ Ibid.

rumors. . . .¹

In the Table Talk, there are many different marital cases presented to Luther for his pastoral advice and counsel. It's interesting to study his remarks in response. Firstly, he draws a distinction between what should be properly dealt with by a pastor and what should be left to the discretion of lawyers and other civil authorities. Pastoral care, he asserts, offers consolation for troubled consciences and should not rule in regard to such matters of inheritance, guardianship, or other legal marital problems:

"The pastor in Zwickau wrote me about marriage cases. I'll give him something to remember me by for implicating me in such matters that belong to the government! There are external things that are concerned with doweries and inheritances. What do they have to do with us? We advise people only in matters of conscience, and now the government wants to impose these other matters upon us. What's more, when our counsels and opinions displease them, they don't carry them out, no matter how good they may be. We're shepherds of consciences, not of bodies and bodily matters. . . .²

Is adultery simply a matter to be dealt with by the civil authorities? Or, is it also a matter of conscience, which is then the proper domain of a pastor? Luther answers that from the perspective of the Scriptures, there are two kinds of adultery: "The first is Matthew 5[:27-28], which nobody escapes. The second is John 8[:3-11] and is horrible. Yet it is praised, so that a prominent man said to Luther, 'I don't think adultery was such a great sin'. But it is a sin against God, against the Holy Spirit, against civil authority,

¹ Ibid., #3179a, June, 1532, p. 191.

² LW 54, Table Talk #3267, Summer, 1532, p. 194. Cf. Ibid., #4068, October 15, 1538, p. 315; Ibid., #414, December, 1532, pp. 65-67.

against domestic life. For an adulteress puts a stranger into the home as heir and cheats her husband."¹

Following this insight, it is clear in Luther's thinking, that adultery of both kinds has serious consequences. In the first kind, that of secretly lusting after a member of the opposite sex, this may well be unknown to the civil authorities; yet it is a matter that can greatly disturb the conscience. Lustful pre-occupation can seriously distort normal behaviour between the sexes. A pastor, or perhaps a psychiatrist, could well be of assistance in such cases.

Whereas adultery of the second kind, where this is actual sexual intercourse between a married person and someone other than the spouse, the consequences are not only a matter of conscience, but also a matter of the civil authorities. As noted earlier, Luther is quite emphatic that pastors and civil authorities correctly distinguish what are commands of God or traditions of men, and act accordingly in the two respective fields.

We should not gain the wrong impression here, thinking Luther was antinomian. Not at all! "For anybody who abolishes the teaching of the law in a political context abolishes government and domestic life, and anybody who abolishes the law in an ecclesiastical context ceases to have knowledge of sin. The gospel doesn't expose sin except through the law, which is spiritual and which defines sin

¹ Ibid., #3510, Between December 16 and 18, 1536, p. 218.

as opposition to God's will."¹ In a public debate with his former friend John Arigola,² he says: "But to reject the law, without which neither church nor civil authority nor home nor any individual can exist, is to kick the bottom out of the barrel. It's time to resist. I can't and I won't stand for it."³

Within this discussion of law and order, we can turn also to the authority and role of parents. The mayor Wittenberg complained in 1537 to Luther that evil days were upon them because of so much trouble between parents and children involving ingratitude and disobedience: Luther answered quoting an old proverb: "'A father can support ten children better than ten children can support one father.' It is not for nothing, therefore, that God urges the Fourth Commandment upon us, 'Honor [your father and your mother] that your days may be long in the land' [Exod. 20:12]."⁴ Upon this very commandment then, the whole principle of authority in the courts rests: "It can be shown by proof that the magistracy is based upon the fourth Commandment. The reason is that obedience is necessary."⁵ Luther ends his remarks on this relationship by saying: "The father should therefore remain father . . . Accordingly the proverb is true: The devil brings up all whom fathers

¹ LW 54, Table Talk #3554, March 21, 1537, p. 233.

² Agricola had been teaching antinomian views publicly. At first Luther paid little attention. But by this time of the Table Talk, he challenges these views. . . he can stand it no longer!

³ Ibid., #3650a, Between November 1 and December 21, 1537, p. 248.

⁴ Ibid., #3751, February 17, 1538, p. 267.

⁵ Ibid., #415, December, 1532, p. 67.

and mothers can't."¹

The parent child relationship is not established and continued only on the basis of legal restraints or coercion. For example, even when children are older Luther felt parents should never force their children into a marriage: ". . . Parents ought not urge their children to marry persons for whom they, the children, have no liking."² Rather, basic to this very important relationship is love: "The love and concern of parents towards children is so great and powerful, that the more they need the help and care of parents, the more diligently and assiduously the parents care for them and support them."³ . . . "He [God] causes us to cherish our children, even though they may be ugly. It is God's work alone!"⁴

Luther's own children gave him a great deal of personal satisfaction and also taught him many profound truths about the faith: "Afterward, watching his son, he [Martin Luther] praised the boy's ingenuousness and innocence: 'Children are better informed in the faith [than adults], for they believe very simply and without any question in a gracious God and eternal life.' He continues: 'Children live together in faith, without reason. It's as Ambrose said, 'There is lack of reason but not of faith.'"⁵

¹ Ibid., pp. 67-68.

² Ibid., #5441, Summer or Fall, 1542, p. 424.

³ Appendix, #1032.

⁴ Ibid., #1598, May 27, 1532.

⁵ LW 54 Table Talk #4367, February 26, 1539, p. 335.

At another time, he marvelled at the Justice of God receiving small children and in effect raising them to a position above the esteem and wisdom of wise men:

On the last day of September, he saw his little children sitting at table. He said: Christ says, "Unless you become as one of these, it is not possible for you to enter the kingdom of heaven." [Matt. 18:3]. Ah, Dear God, you over-do it! If only you would make it more obvious and not raise those children, the little fools, so very high! Where did you command that a wise man be placed after a silly child? How can our Lord God with His judgement and justice prevail, which Paul glorifies: the justice of God! the justice of God! Is this justice that rejects the wise and accepts the foolish? It is necessary here to insist: I believe the Word of God. Let yourself be made captive; our Lord God has purer thoughts than we have. He must refine us (as the enthusiasts say). He must trim off quite coarse chips and branches from us; before he makes such children and little fools of us. Look what fine clean thoughts children have; how they look for heaven and death without any doubts! They are as if in paradise, and in children which are to become saintly, there are always miraculous gestures.¹

One day, while talking with his friend Dr. Justus Jonas, the conversation turned to what can be learned about God from the things at hand in His creation. Jonas was struck with God's blessings as evidenced in the procreation of fruit-trees: "'I have a branch with cherries on it hanging over my table', he said, 'in order that when I look at it I may learn the article about divine creation.'"² Luther, however, challenged him to learn even more about God's continued blessings by studying other gifts at hand, namely his own children:

"Why don't you learn it daily by looking at your children,

¹ Appendix, #4027, September 30, 1538.

² LW 54, Table Talk #3613, Between June 18 and July 28, 1537, p. 245.

the fruit of your body? They're there every day, and surely they amount to much more than all the fruit of the trees! There you may see the providence of God, who created them out of nothing. In half a year he gave them body, life and limb, and he will also sustain them. Yet we overlook them, as if those gifts of God made us blind and greedy, as it usually happens that men become worse and more greedy when they have offspring; they don't realize that every child is apportioned his lot according to the saying, 'The more children the more luck'. Dear God, how great are the ignorance and the wickedness of man, who doesn't think about the best gifts of God but does just the opposite."¹

Luther was amazed at how children could look so much like their parents and grandparents in the succeeding generations.² But, he also recognized: "Bad evil parents sometimes procreate good children. It happens occasionally that pious parents have bad children as the proverb states: distinguished parents, noxious children; evil parents, good children. Korah was an evil villain but his descendents were the best. Eli was also of this kind, so also Gideon. David was pious, but he had an evil son."³

Parents are instructed to baptize their children early upon the command of Christ as recorded in the Scriptures:

When Jesus Christ directed his apostles to go and instruct and baptize all nations, he meant not that children should be excluded: the apostles were to baptize all the Gentiles; young or old, great or small. The baptism of children is distinctly enjoined in Mark X:14: "The kingdom of God is of little children." We must not look at this text with the eyes of a calf or of a cow vaguely gaping at a new gate, but do with it as at court we do with the prince's letters, read it, and weigh it; and read it and weigh it again and again, with our most earnest attention."⁴

¹ Ibid.

² Hazlitt, Table Talk #CXXXIII, p. 70.

³ Appendix, #5425, April 11-June 14, 1542.

⁴ Hazlitt, Table Talk #CCCLI, p. 201.

Luther noted the value of a good cry for children: "When young children cry lustily, they grow well and rapidly, for through crying, the members and veins are stretched out, which have no other exercise."¹ However, when it comes to crying as the result of punishment, Luther always felt this should be balanced with appropriate praise: . . . "children should be brought up in such a way that they don't become timid. A father who is a Demea² makes his children either dispirited or hopeless; accordingly they do what they would otherwise probably avoid doing . . . 'Praise and punishment belong together; one should be very friendly [to children] and yet at the same time be ready to whip them.'"³

Concerning the peculiar grief that parents experience in the death of a child, Luther was in a unique position to offer pastoral comfort and advice. This was due in large measure to the lessons he and his wife learned, grieving over the death of this little "Lena".⁴ Their sorrow as parents was so deep and profound that their friend Melanchthon gave the following reflection: "'The feelings of parents are a likeness of divinity impressed upon the human character. If the love of God for the human race is as great as the love of parents for their children, then it is truly great and ardent.'"⁵

¹ Ibid., #DCCXXXIV, p. 381.

² A stern and severe character.

³ LW 54, Table Talk #5571, Spring, 1543, p. 457.

⁴ See Part One: Chapter II, for an unusually clear and complete record of this sorrowful event.

⁵ LW 54, Table Talk #5497, September, 1542, p. 432.

Some time later, Luther was able to offer pastoral care to grieving parents in ways that are still instructive today. For example, he met with the parents of a young man who, with the permission of his parents, had travelled to Italy and died there because of a higher fever.¹ The parents were extremely remorseful, feeling responsible for his death, having given permission for the trip. Luther brought comfort by reminding them, among other things,² of their good intentions for their son: "Your heart witnesses to you, that you would far rather have him alive, yes, would far rather die yourselves and far rather lose all your property. Therefore, lay aside these scruples of conscience, for your heart and will testify otherwise as to your feelings toward your son."³

A very important part of Luther's pastoral advice to these parents is recorded near the end of the Table Talk. While on the one hand, he acknowledges and accepts the unique grief of parents, on the other hand he says: "Set a limit to your sorrowing; forget it cleanly and submit to God's will which is better than ours. All is well with your son. Eat and drink. Do not wear yourself down too much, for you are yet to be of service to many people. For sorrow dries out the

¹ See Appendix, #4747, December 1, 1537, for details.

² E.g. that their son was "upright and obedient" and experienced a Christian death. This should give them joy, since their son was in fact responding to the highest calling of his heavenly Father, etc.

³ Ibid., #4747.

marrow of the bones."¹

There is both personal sympathy and definite spiritual direction in Luther's pastoral care of grieving parents. One more case will be presented here which is a striking account of his advice to Dr. Benedict Paul, whose son was accidentally killed when he fell off the roof of a house, (Only short portions will be quoted):

"Although it be nowhere forbidden in Holy Scripture to mourn and grieve for the death of a godly child or friend--nay, we have many examples of the godly, who have bewailed the death of their children and friends--yet there ought to be a measure in sorrowing and mourning. Therefore, loving doctor, while you do well to mourn and lament the death of your son, let not your grief exceed the measure of a Christian, in refusing to be comforted. . . . But admit the loss a great and heavy one, 'tis no new thing; you are not alone therein, but have companions who have had like misfortunes.--How was it also, think you, with Jacob, when he was informed that his loved son Joseph was torn in pieces by wild beasts? Or what father was ever perplexed and troubled in heart like David, when by his son Absalom he was persecuted and driven out of his kingdom, and then that son, in a state of rebellion, was slain and damned? Doubtless, David's heart at that time, with great grief, might have melted away. . . . Therefore know, loving brother, that God's mercy is greater than our tribulations. . . . Your son is very well provided for; he lives now with Christ. . . . Your suffering is only a corporal cross. You are a good logician, and teach others that art; make use thereof yourself now; put it in practice; define, divide, conclude, distinguish that which is spiritual, and separate it from that which is corporal."²

To summarize, we can see from these cases cited how Luther's Seelsorge significantly influenced marriage and family life in his day. In Chapter X, we will note more of his influence in dealing specifically with Christian education for families, in terms of the resource of his Small Catechism.

¹ Ibid.

² Hazlitt, Table Talk #DCLV, pp. 343-344.

The Devil--Astrology--Death

Luther was a product of medieval religion. He, along with his contemporaries, " . . . entertained no doubt of the supernatural world, but that world itself was divided. There were saints, and there were demons. There was God, and there was the Devil."¹

This profound belief in God and the devil is certainly evident in the Table Talks.² To a large extent we have already studied some of the theological implications for pastoral care of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. However, to present a more complete picture, we should now examine more closely Luther's views on the existence and direct influence of the devil and evil upon the lives of people.

Before getting into this examination, it might be useful to give some indication of Twentieth Century thinking and experience with the devil:

Curiously enough, the twentieth century that revived the religious heresy that God is dead has paradoxically proposed that the Devil is alive and well, and the forces of evil more active than ever before.

The modern cults of Witchcraft, Black Magic and Satanism created popular demand for books, television plays and films on the subject, culminating in the sensational movie the Exorcist, from the book of that name by William Peter Blatty, 1971. The Warner Bros. movie, released in New York December 26, 1973, started a new wave of interest in demonic possession and exorcism. . . . Many other books on possession and exorcism followed rapidly, and there were fears that the mass interest in the subject would create hysterical illusions of demonic possession. In fact, a number of such cases were reported, whilst in Britain, one man who had been ritually 'exorcised' went away and committed a murder.³

¹ Roland Bainton, Op. cit., p. 44.

² E.g., see the index for the Appendix.

³ Leslie Shepard, ed., Encyclopedia of Occultism and Parapsychology (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1978), Volume 1, p. 236.

Most modern authors who write on the subject, claim to have had some rather extra-ordinary experiences with the devil¹; most tend also to relate this experience to what is written about the devil and evil in the Scriptures², or other literature³. Daily newspapers often carry news-events of "demonic" bizarre behaviour. For example, "Berkowitz Admits Six Murders" . . . New York:--"David Berkowitz pleaded guilty today to all six 'Son of Sam' killings that terrorized the city in a year-long murder rampage. . . . Berkowitz had claimed responsibility for setting 2,000 fires in New York City since 1974. . . . The defendant demanded a trial so he could warn the world about demons. . . ."⁴

¹ E.g. see F.J. Huegel, That Old Serpent--The Devil (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1954), p. 15: ". . . By the time Satan got through with me, I had been reduced to a mere zero in the crucible of a thousand hells. Had I not finally grasped in utter despair Jesus' word as regards the whys and the wherefores of my agony, and through Him who died for me and rose again, triumphed over that old Serpent the Devil-- . . . I dare not think of what the consequences would have been."; and Hal Lindsey, Satan Is Alive and Well on Planet Earth (Grant Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1972), "Introduction", p. 13: ". . . 'We all discovered the reality of our adversary. . . . At times I thought I'd shelve the whole idea [writing this book about Satan], but every time the progress on the manuscript was slowed down, I was shown another reason for the urgency of this message. I have never before come under such personal attack. It was not my imagination. . . .'"

² E.g. see Trevor Ling, The Significance of Satan - New Testament Demonology and its Contemporary Relevance (London: S.P.C.K., 1961); and James Kallas, The Real Satan - From Biblical Times to the Present (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1975).

³ Cf. Maximilian Rudwin, The Devil in Legend and Literature (La Salle: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1931-1959).

⁴ The Star-Phoenix, Saskatoon, Monday, May 8, 1978, p. 2. For an additional contemporary account of another kind of demon-possession, see The Star-Phoenix, Friday, March 31, 1978, p. 1: "'Demons--including Hitler--claimed possessing girl: Aschaffenburg, West Germany (AP) -- A Roman Catholic priest accused of negligent homicide in the death of a young woman he helped to exorcise said at his trial Thursday that 'demons'

The way some modern religious cults operate cannot help but suggest the presence and influence of evil forces in direct opposition to the Divine good as revealed in the Scriptures. Again, from the daily newspaper, one such cult reported in a series of articles is "The Moonies: Lord of Second Advent or Fanatic? . . . Reverend Sun Myung Moon".¹ These articles give detailed first-hand accounts ". . . of the

possessing her forced her to rage and curse 'with the voice of a man'.

A fellow exorcised had said previously that among the demons possessing the young woman were Adolf Hitler and arch-devil Lucifer.

On one occasion, 'six demons were exorcised' from Anneliese Michel, Rev. Ernest Alt told a packed courtroom at the start of a trial unprecedented in post-war Germany.

Alt, 40, and fellow-priest Wilhelm Renz, 67, are charged with negligent homicide in failing to provide medical care for the 23-year-old woman during the exorcism rites, which ended with her death by starvation July 1, 1976.

. . . The two priests had the approval of the local Roman Catholic bishop to rid her of 'demons' they believed were possessing her after four years of unsuccessful treatment for epilepsy.

Alt said he had based his opinions on Michel's condition and on 'the true teachings of the church'.

. . . Renz recorded the demon-ridding sessions, adding commentary, and played excerpts during a 1976 television interview broadcast soon after Michel died.

Astounded German viewers heard what sounded like a horse voice, shouting and at times cursing. Renz said in the interview the voice was that of Michel but it was being used by demons inside her body to protest the exorcism.

Among the demons he listed Hitler, Lucifer, Judas, Roman Emperor Nero, biblical fratricide Cain and a defrocked priest named 'Fleischmann', he said.

Michel's father, testifying before the court, said he and his wife had always known no doctor could cure their daughter. . . 'We laid her into the hands of God', he said, insisting that the family was being persecuted for their 'faith in God' in 'a trial that we cannot understand.'"

¹ Ibid., March 6-11, 1978 (Copyright by The Montreal Star, 1978). For a detailed analysis of the Unification Church and its founder Sun Myung Moon, producing one of the most controversial religious movements of this generation, see Frederick Sontag, Sun Myung Moon and the Unification Church (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1977).

cult's indoctrination camp, [literally] . . . of a new messiah who wants to conquer and subjugate the world--and the saga of some 40 people from two cities who banded together to save one of many Montrealers who have fallen under the messiah's spell."¹ It appears from this documentary and many other contemporary accounts that the devil and his followers have great power to tempt and mislead many in our modern-day societies.

In any case, the main thrust of this dissertation is to present Luther's thoughts on the subject and his pastoral response as given in the Table Talk. As noted at the beginning of this section, for Luther and his contemporaries, there was no doubt about the existence and supernatural power of God and the devil.

To answer the question: "How does one identify the devil?", Luther gives the following graphic description in reference to the Ten Commandments:

"As our Lord God is [for] the thesis of the decalogue, so the devil is the antithesis of the decalogue. Whoever would like to have a true picture of the devil, let him study the decalogue or Ten Commandments. The devil's head is made up of all the vices and shameful acts against the First Commandment, such as not believing in God, not fearing Him, nor trusting, nor loving Him. The sins against the Second Commandment are the mouth and tongue of the devil such as blaspheming God, complaining about Him and taking His Name in vain. The transgression of the Third Commandment such as refusing to hear God's Word, slandering it, despising it, persecuting it, and letting his servants die of hunger and disregard of all worship, these are the ears and neck of the devil.

In the other Table of the Ten Commandments, the devil's body is pictured and described. The devil's breast is the Fourth

¹ Ibid., Monday, March 6, 1978, p. 15.

Commandment, where parents are not honoured and the government not obeyed, by not serving and helping the parents, being ashamed of them and showing a lack of respect for them; likewise [in regard to government] where riot is instigated against those in authority. The Fifth Commandment, that is killing, raging, hating one's neighbour and being hostile to him, wishing evil to all people; to be envious and gladly to do harm; this is the devil's heart. To break the Sixth Commandment by committing adultery, whoredom, sodomy, being unchaste, lascivious with the face, words, mouth and gestures; this is the devil's belly. The Seventh Commandment, to help no one, to steal from others either by force or cunning, to rob, take, swindle or otherwise hurt people; to honour no agreements, seal or document; to sell shoddy goods, not to pay wages that have been earned; these are the hands of the devil. Thereafter, the Eighth Commandment, to speak evil of the neighbour, to gossip behind his back, to slander him and to put shame and dishonour upon him, this is the devil's will.

Such a friendly picture the devil makes! . . . This rogue, the devil, is described by the Lord Christ in John 8, with a few words, calling him a liar and murderer. In the First Table of the Law, he lies by leading Christians astray with heresy, error, false teaching and wrong divine service; and the more pious people are, the greater the temptation.

The service honouring Moloch was a glorious and glistening display in which the devil led people to kill their own dearest little children and sacrifice them, thereby, to gain great holiness. As it also happened in the Papacy, whoever wanted to be the holiest and best Christian, stuck his children into the monasteries and establishments to become monks and priests. In addition in the Second Table, the devil is a murderer; for what murders, sorrows and misfortune he causes, is witnessed by daily experience.¹

• A variant text portrays this picture of the devil in very similar terms. However, there is the additional interpretation about followers of the devil, pointing out that: "A godless human being is an image or copy of the devil. . . . Imagine an evil, shameful, lying, despairing, spoilt, godless, blasphemous person, whose intentions and thoughts are directed above all to act in every possible way against God and to sorrow and harm man. There you see the devil incarnate."²

¹ Appendix, Table Talk #1010.

² Ibid., #1010, FB 3, 4 (24,1).

Given the above description of the devil's influence, some one asked Luther one day why we are drawn more easily by the terrifying tug of evil, rather than the goodness and comfort of Christ? The answer given reflects our human tendency to listen more readily to our own thoughts rather than the thoughts given by God's Spirit:

"We are better skilled and lean more to doubt than to hope. Hope comes from the Holy Spirit and is His Work; but doubt comes from our spirit and is our own doing. That is why God has prohibited us by the highest pain and punishment to believe in threats and penalties, but rather to believe in His promises and rewards. Hope and faith are better than thinking and speculating."¹

Reflecting on the case of Job in the Old Testament, Luther gives his opinion that God permits the devil and his evil shenanigans in order to test us, but all within some very definite limits:

"The devil has two things with which he goes about his work. These are murder and falsehood [John 8:44]. God commanded, 'You shall not kill' [Exod. 20:13] and 'You shall have no other gods' [Exod. 20:3]. Against these two commandments Satan is constantly acting. He may and can do nothing else than lie and murder."

At this point I [John Schlaginhaufen] asked him [Martin Luther] whether the devil uses his power by God's permission or by God's command. He replied, "Oh, no! The power he uses is not commanded. Good gracious, no! But our Lord God doesn't stop him. He looks through his fingers [i.e. acts as if he did not notice it]. It's as if a great lord saw that somebody set his barn on fire, did nothing to prevent it, but merely winked at it. This is what God does to the devil."

Then I introduced contrary testimony from Job: "Behold, he is in your power; only spare his life" [Job 2:6].

"In the case of Job, [Luther replied,] the devil had power with

¹ Ibid., #388, FB 2, 184.

God's permission. It was as if God said, 'This one time I'll make a concession to you, but spare his life.'¹

It was also Luther's opinion that the devil was not only powerful,² but that he could accomplish some rather unusual feats. Based in part upon medieval superstitions, Luther gives a number of intriguing stories in the Table Talk. In one case, the devil was able to change places bodily with an infant in a crib. There-after he was able to distress and greatly frighten the parents.³ In a fantastic apparition, he took on the appearance of Christ, as Luther, a young woman and others in Wittenberg, experienced.⁴ In another case, it was felt that the devil not only could bring about illness, but could in fact change the chemical composition of the "medicine and drugs" in their boxes.⁵

When a man by the name of Osiander, once ventured the skeptical opinion, that there was nothing to all these stories or those involving Poltergeists (noisy spirits), Luther replied that he still believed them to be true:

Osiander always has to be different. I have experienced at close hand once when I was tired, praying my canonical hours, a loud noise came from back of the stove so that I was greatly frightened. Since I became aware that it was the devil's doing, I went to bed and prayed God saying: "Thou hast put all things under His feet" [Ps. 8:7] by reason of Thy Son. If the devil is

¹ LW 54, Table Talk #1252, Before December 14, 1531, pp. 128-129.

² Appendix, #831.

³ Ibid., #2529b.

⁴ Ibid., #610.

⁵ Ibid., #3580. . . . For additional incredible tales, see LW 54, Table Talk #3601, Between June 18 and July 28, 1537, p. 241.

able to harm me, let him do so! And thus I fell asleep. On another occasion, I was once in Rebetal, and there was such a clatter of pots, that I thought heaven and earth would collapse. But I soon caught on it was the doings of the devil. So I lay down and slept. In a third instance, I once came from mass and looked out of my cell into the garden. There I saw a large black sow running about the garden, where no sow after all was able to enter; and she soon vanished. That, too, was the devil. Fourthly, when I was at Wartburg, near Eisenach, I was shot at out of the blue with nuts, which too, was the work of the devil. Thereupon, I went to bed. These I have experienced myself. This is the truth. Also, once I found a dog lying in my bed. I took him and threw him out of the window. Since he did not cry out, I asked whether there were dogs in the castle. The captain said: No! Then it must have been the devil, I said.¹

The devil was considered the source or father of all lies and maliciousness.² In addition, he was thought to be in league with sorcerers: "God gave power to the devil and sorcerers over people in a two-fold way: firstly over the godless, when He wants to punish them for their sins; secondly, over the pious, when He wants to test them, to see whether they wish to remain constant in faith. Without the consent of God and our own, the devil cannot harm us. . . ."³

Perhaps more important than all these unusual powers, appearances, and leagues, Luther warned that the devil had an uncanny ability to confuse the doctrine of law and gospel. The following Table Talk reveals some of the serious consequences and also shows how Luther

¹ Ibid., #5358b, Cf. LW 54, #3814, April 5, 1538, pp. 279-280.

² Ibid., #1374, January 1-March 23, 1532.

³ Ibid., #6348.

responds to this challenge:

"It's the supreme art of the devil that he can make the law out of the gospel. If I can hold on to the distinction between law and gospel, I can say to him any and every time that he should kiss my backside. Even if I sinned I would say, 'Should I deny the gospel on that account?' It hasn't come to that yet. Once I debate about what I have done and left undone, I am finished. But if I reply on the basis of the gospel, 'The forgiveness of sins covers it all', I have won. On the other hand, if the devil gets me involved in what I have done and left undone, he has won, unless God helps and says, 'Indeed! Even if you had not done anything, you would still have to be saved by forgiveness, for you have been baptized, communicated, etc.'"

"So don't be too daring. The distinction between law and gospel will do it. The devil turns the Word upside down. If one sticks to the law, one is lost. A good conscience won't set one free, but the distinction [between law and gospel] will. So you should say, 'The Word is two-fold, on the one hand terrifying and on the other hand comforting'. Here Satan objects, 'But God says you are damned because you don't keep the law.' I respond, 'God also says that I shall live.' His mercy is greater than sin, and life is stronger than death. Hence if I have left this or that undone, our Lord God will tread it under foot with his grace. . . ."

Luther gives more pastoral advice in responding to the devil's challenge to the peace and assurance of a Christian:

"[The devil says,] 'Behold, you are weak. How do you know, therefore, that God is gracious to you?' Then the Christian must come and say, 'I have been baptized, and by the sacrament I have been incorporated [in Christ]; moreover, I have the Word.'

"The devil objects: 'This is nothing, for many are called, but few are chosen' [Matt. 22:14].

"Reply: 'They lose what they were baptized for. They don't accept it. They fall away again. They hold on to the law and forget Christ. . . .

"But a Christian remains firmly attached to Christ and says, 'If I'm not good, Peter wasn't either, but Christ is good.' Such are the elect. Others say, 'God is gracious to me because I hope

¹ LW 54, #590, Summer or Fall, 1533, pp. 106-107.

to amend my ways¹, but this is only a gallows repentance; the heart isn't in it. Although the wicked sometimes have compunctions (so they call them)--that is, promise themselves that they will be good--they soon depart from the straight path and seek to merit a reward. But a Christian says, 'I wish to do as much as I can, but Christ is the bishop of souls. To him will I cling, even if I sin.' It is thus that one has assurance."¹

Luther advised also that we should not give too much attention to dreams, as these too can be the work of the devil: "Troubled dreams are of the devil, because everything that serves death and terror and murder and lies is the devil's handiwork. . . . I don't pay attention to either dreams or signs. I have the Word, and that I let suffice."²

There is an interesting case recorded that illustrates Luther's counseling a young apprentice to a blacksmith who claimed to have seen ghosts, "nocturnal apparitions"³, and therefore did not go to his work for several days. After Luther had met the youth and was given details of the case, he said:

. . . one should not be too quick to believe any and everybody, for many fabricate such things; even if he saw a ghost he should not leave his calling. Thereupon Luther questioned the youth about his conversation with Satan and said to him, "See to it that you don't lie. Fear God, hear God's Word, return to your master's house, and do the work of your calling. If Satan comes back, say to him, 'I won't obey you. I'll obey God, who has called me to this work. Even if an angel should come from heaven [and tell me otherwise], I'll remain in my calling.'"⁴

To conclude this discussion on the devil, Luther strongly urges that any person so tormented, should not try to deal single-handedly with this "rogue". . . "The church and the ministry of the Word were

¹ Ibid., #501, Spring, 1533, pp. 86-87.

² Ibid., #508, Spring, 1533, p. 90.

³ Ibid., #3694, January 10, 1538, p. 258.

⁴ Ibid.

instituted for this purpose, that hands may be joined together and one may help another. If the prayer of one doesn't help, the prayer of another will."¹ Finally, one must realize that ultimately Christ is our best defense: "Christ fights with the devil in a curious way--the devil with great numbers, cleverness, and steadfastness, and Christ with few people, with weakness, simplicity, and contempt--and yet Christ wins. . . .He'll preserve his sheep in the midst of wolves. . . ."² Herein lies the power for the Christian pastor to exorcise the devil, through prayer in Christ's name. This spiritual therapy is so powerful. . . ."that the devil must leave a person."³

Astrology

There was a sharp difference of opinion between Luther and some of his students at Wittenberg, including his colleague Melanchthon, about the subject of astrology. When one student, Wolfgang Minkwitz, spoke highly about what can be learned from astrology, Luther took issue with him:

. . . astrology is not a science because it has no principles and no proofs. On the contrary, astrologers judge everything by the outcome and by individual cases and say, 'This happened once and twice, and therefore it will always happen so.' They base their judgement on the results that suit them and prudently don't talk about those that don't suit.

"My Philip has devoted much attention to this business, but he has never been able to persuade me to accept it. . . ."⁴

¹ Ibid., #469, Spring, 1533, p. 78.

² Ibid., #5031, Between May 21 and June 11, 1540, p. 379.

³ Appendix; #1170. This Table Talk gives more details on "How Devils are Exorcized".

⁴ LW 54, #2834b, December 8, 1532, p. 173.

Luther continues his criticism of astrology in another place by listing the following reasons:

... First, the calendars never agree. One astrologer prophesies that it will be warm, another that it will be cold. I think it should be understood that this is so: it's cold outside and warm behind the stove. Second, when a child is born, the rays of all the signs above the horizon or of all the planets or stars are said to reach that child. For the child is, as it were a poppy seed in comparison with the smallest star. Now, I ask, why is it that all stars don't affect that child equally if all reach him equally? Third, why does the effect occur outside of the uterus, at the very hour and minute when the infant comes out of the uterus, and not in the uterus? Shouldn't the stars have influence in the uterus as well as outside of it? Do you mean to suggest that the stars care about a little skin on the woman's belly when otherwise the sun gives life to every member? Fourth, Esau and Jacob were born under one sign and in rapid succession. Where did the diversity of their natures come from? The astrologers rack their brains about this but they can't offer a solid explanation."

Thereupon somebody said, "Doctor, many astrologers agree that in the case of your horoscope the constellations that presided over your birth showed that you would bring about a great change."

The doctor [Martin Luther] replied, "There's nothing sure about the time of my birth. Philip² and I disagree by a year on this. In the second place, do you think that our cause and my activity have been placed under the direction of your uncertain art? Ah, no! It's something else. It's God's work alone. You'll never persuade me otherwise."³

A further critique of astrology is translated in the Appendix.⁴ Here Luther charges astrology with its inability to come forth with some really important predictions of the future such as, "How long will one live?" His pastoral concern for people is most pointed and

¹ See Genesis 25:21-18, concerning Esau and Jacob born twins.

² LW 54, #5573, Spring, 1543, p. 458, n. 119: "Philip Melanchthon held at one time that Luther had been born in 1484, but later agreed with the best family tradition that the year was 1483."

³ Ibid., p. 458.

⁴ Appendix, #678, FB 4, 582 (70,4).

direct when he takes up a theological assessment of astrology as . . .
"invented and imagined by the devil in order that people in marriage
and in all God-pleasing professions and positions might be terrorized.
They see nothing good in the stars and cause consciences to be
frightened because of coming bad luck, which after all is uncertain
and lies in the hands of God. They vex and torture the whole of life
with such evil dispositions, cunning and useless thoughts."¹ He
concludes with a stern warning: "To believe the stars, to trust them,
or to fear them is idolatry, a sin against the First Commandment of
God."²

Death

In a seminar on "Death and Dying", Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross
defined death for us as "a catastrophic destructive force that completely
overwhelms us", to the point that emotionally, death becomes the
"greatest crisis" we will have to face.³ What is of utmost importance,
however, is the kind of attitude we adopt, concerning the terminus of
our earthly existence. Will our attitude be one of fear, to the extent
of phobic anxiety; or will it be one of opportunity for growth? The
function of Luther's pastoral care, based upon his theology and experi-
ence, is to encourage the latter: "God help us to remain steadfast in

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid.

³ See Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, On Death and Dying (New York: The
Macmillan Company, 1969/1971), and Questions and Answers on Death and
Dying, Op. cit.

His Word and to better ourselves!"¹

Luther admits that at times he cannot help but marvel at the positive attitude of many pagans (or heathen), to the subject of death and dying. It's instructive to learn how he understands this phenomenon; based upon his observations of the world scene: "I have often wondered what caused the pagans to write such beautiful things about death, since death is so cruel and ugly. But then when I think about the world, I am not surprised at all. Among themselves, they have had to suffer so many mischiefs by their rulers, which hurt them and the only way they could be free of this is by way of death."²

Comparing the attitude of many Christians toward death which is at times much less positive than the pagans, Luther gives this theological interpretation:

"Christians could easily suffer death if they didn't know that God's wrath is connected with it. This circumstance makes death a bitter thing for us. The heathen, on the contrary, die confidently; they don't see God's wrath but think death is the end of man. They say, 'It doesn't amount to anything but a bad moment.' But Cicero³ put it excellently, 'Afterward we'll be nothing or we'll be altogether blessed.' It's as if he would say, 'Nothing bad can happen to us as a consequence of death.'"⁴

Even though there is this theological "weight" attached to death for the Christian, Luther points out that at the same time there is

¹ LW 54, #4084, November 6, 1538, p. 319.

² Appendix, #1944; note also the variant text FB 1, 221 (4,13).

³ "M. Tullius Cicero (106-43 B.C.), eloquent Roman orator and statesman, was a model of Latin style." LW 54, p. 223, n. 84.

⁴ LW 54, Table Talk #3140a, May 15, 1532, p. 190.

comfort theologically for the Christian:

"Astonishing is the stupidity of a man who fears death. Death is common to all men, and nobody can escape it. Cicero was able to comfort himself very well as a heathen in the first book of the Tusculans.¹ How much more ought Christians do this, for they have Christ, the destroyer of death, and have [eternal] life and the resurrection. Even if we'd like to live longer, it's a brief interval at best. It's like many of you traveling to DÜben;² some of you will arrive there about the fourth hour and others about the seventh or eighth hour, but all of you will have to put up there for the night. So Adam had preceded us by only a few hours; he has hardly had more than one night's rest more than us."³

Put in another way, in reference to the deaths of Adam and Christ, Luther indicates the profound implications: "When Adam lived, that is when he sinned, death devoured life; when Christ died, that is, was justified, then life, which is Christ, swallowed up and devoured death; therefore God be praised, that Christ died, and has got the victory."⁴

Luther shows in the Table Talk that it is not natural for one to be happy about the prospects of dying: "I don't like to see examples of joyful death. On the other hand, I like to see those who tremble and shake and grow pale when they face death and yet get through. It was so with the great saints; they were not glad to die. Fear is something natural because death is punishment, and therefore something sad..."⁵ He continues this reflection by referring to the

¹ Tusculan Disputations. Cf. LW 54, p. 223, n. 84.

² DÜben was a village where travellers usually spent the night because it was midway between Wittenberg and Leipzig. LW 54, p. 296, n. 194.

³ LW 54, Table Talk #3928, August 1, 1538, pp. 295-296.

⁴ Hazlitt, Table Talk #DCCLII, p. 390.

⁵ LW 54, Table Talk #408, December, 1532, p. 65.

Scriptures:

"...According to the spirit one dies willingly, but according to the flesh the saying applies, 'Another will carry you where you do not wish to go' [John 21:18]. In the Psalms and other histories, as in Jeremiah, one sees how eager men were to escape death. 'Beware', Jeremiah said, 'or you will bring innocent blood upon yourselves' [Jer. 26:15]. But when Christ said, 'Let this cup pass from me' [Matt. 26:39], the meaning was different, for this was the Same who said, 'I have life and death in my heart' [John 5:21,24]. . ."

Further, death is undesirable because there is the added emotional pain of separation: "There is no sweeter union than that in a good marriage. Nor is there any death more bitter than that which separates a married couple. Only the death of children comes close to this; how much this hurts I have myself experienced."²

The greatest problem in dealing with death and dying is unresolved fear. . . ."Fear of death is death itself and nothing else. Anybody who has torn death from deep down in his heart does not have death or taste it."³ When someone challenged this statement, saying it was the pain involved in the dying process that was greater, Luther replied: "Ask my wife Katy if she felt anything when she was really dead."⁴

She herself responded, "Nothing at all, Doctor."

Thereupon Dr. Martin Luther continued, "For this reason I say the greatest thing in death is the fear of death. It is written in the Epistle to the Hebrews [2:9], 'that by the grace of God he

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., Table Talk #250, Between April 20 and May 16, 1532, p. 33. (Reference is here made by Luther to the death of his daughter Elizabeth, August 3, 1528)..

³ Ibid., Table Talk #5493, September, 1542, p. 429, Cf. Hazlitt #DCCXLI, p. 385.

⁴ Ibid., p. 429. (Katy was deathly ill in 1540).

might taste death for every one.¹ We are blessed if we don't taste death, which is very bitter and sharp. How great the pain of tasting death is we can discern in Christ when he said, 'My soul is very sorrowful, even to death' [Matt. 26:38]. I regard these as the greatest words in all the Scriptures, although it is also a great and inexplicable thing that Christ cried out on the cross, 'Eli, Eli, etc.' [Matt. 27:46]. No angel comprehends how great a thing it was that he sweated blood [Luke 22:44]. This was tasting and fearing death. Creation consoles the Creator¹ and the disciples noticed nothing of these things," etc.²

In dealing with this great fear about "taking the next step" in death, Rörer, one of the recorders of the Table Talk, remarked how Luther had helped him in this regard one time earlier. Apparently Luther suggested that just before the moment of death, there would probably be the opportunity to be encouraged by personal conversation with Christ. Rörer shares these words with Luther: "I have at some time heard a word from Your Reverence that has often comforted me, namely, 'I have prayed our Lord God that he may grant me a blessed end in order that I may depart from this life, and I'm sure he'll do it. Just before I die I'll speak with Christ my Lord, even if it should be but a brief word.'"³

In response to this, Luther said, "I'm afraid I'll go suddenly and silently, without being able to utter a single word."⁴ To which, Melancthon reminded them: "Whether we live or die we are the Lord's [Rom. 14:8]. Even if you should fall down the stairs or should suddenly expire while you are writing, it wouldn't matter. Let it be! The devil

¹Cf. Luke 22:43.

²LW 54, #5493, p. 430.

³Ibid., Table Talk #5495, September, 1542, p. 431.

⁴Ibid.

hates us but God protects and keeps us."¹

Luther encourages us not to be overly fearful of death. He offers this pastoral advice and comfort, in addition to the above, based upon the Scriptures: "Don't be frightened, your Father has arranged accommodation for you. [John 14:2]. . ."² "I am the resurrection and the life" Words of Jesus [John 11:25]. If this be true, a Christian should reasonably despise death, at least not fear it, just so that in this matter he does not despise God."³ . . . "We must suffer death, but this is the wonder miracle, that whoever clings to God's Word will not feel death, but just go thence as in a sleep", [John 8:51]."⁴

In presenting the glorious Christian hope of the resurrection of the dead, Luther makes reference to this hope already signalled at the time of Abraham and Jonah in the Old Testament: "Abraham had to believe in the resurrection of the dead, when he was willing to kill Isaac in whom he had the promise of offspring, as the Epistle to the Hebrews states. . ."⁵ "Believers are like Jonah cast into the sea, no rather, they are cast into the belly of the whale! This account is of the greatest consolation and most certain sign of the resurrection. It would be absolutely ludicrous and incredible if it were not written in Sacred Scriptures [Jonah 4:1ff]."⁶ Ultimately, our

¹ Ibid.

² Appendix, #4838, July, 1543.

³ Ibid., #4836, July, 1543.

⁴ Ibid., #4835, July, 1543.

⁵ Ibid., #485.

⁶ Ibid., #736.

hope of the resurrection centers in Christ and His resurrection:

"Since Christ has risen, He has drawn everything with Him. All mankind must rise, even the godless. But while we are still living in this world, it is like a houseowner, who takes a trip and says to his child or servant; 'Here are the gold coins, use them for food and other necessities till I come back.'

Also all creation is a figure or picture of future resurrection. It comes alive when summer comes; it grows and becomes green, which nobody would have believed in the winter; if one had not experienced it before.

The same with Christ's going to heaven, He took everything with Him and sits at the right hand of God the Father, [Eph. 5:30]. And because we are members of His body, we are with Him in heaven, where we will be rulers of everything like Christ; except that He remains the First Born among His brethren.

Therefore a Christian who believes, looks at the sun and everything we have in this world, as if it were not there, but thinks all the time about future life in which he is ready to receive, even though it doesn't seem that way. [Rom. 8:9]. 'For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.'¹

In contemplating this life after death, Luther says. . . "Although I'm sure it has been given to us by Christ and that it is ours even now" because we have faith, it won't be made known to us until hereafter. It isn't given to us here to know what that creation of the next world is like, for we can't fathom this first creation of the world and its creatures."²

Before closing this discussion on death, it is interesting to note Luther's reaction in two Table Talks to Plato's teaching about the pre-existence of the human soul:

"How can Plato speak about this matter? I believe that God made the whole man from the dust of the earth, for the text [Gen. 2:7] says that God made man. 'Man' doesn't mean the body alone but always means the body and the soul, and accordingly the Scriptures call the soul 'the breath of life' [Gen. 2:7].

¹ ibid., #6602, FB 1, 334 (7,33).

² LW 54, #3951, August 7, 1538, p. 297.

Since the soul was in that instance made with the body, so when a child is born today the soul is created together with the body, contrary to Plato. Although all others disagree, it's my opinion that the soul isn't added from the outside but is created out of the matter of the semen. This is my reason: If the soul came from somewhere else, it would be made bad by contact with the body, but the soul isn't bad by chance but by nature. Consequently the soul must be born out of corrupt matter and seed and must be created by God out of the matter of a man and a woman.¹

For Luther, man is to be considered a unit or a whole, and not conveniently divided by philosophical reasoning into body and soul. He expands on this basic view of man in the following:

Some said that after the soul has escaped from the mortal body, it immediately migrates to heaven, as Christ said, 'Today you will be with me in Paradise' Luke 13:43.

To this he Martin Luther responded, "Yes, what does this word 'today' mean? It's true that souls hear, feel, and see after death, but how this occurs we don't understand. Where do those stay who hang on the gallows? If we try to figure this out according to [our conception of time in] this life, we're fools. Christ has given his answer, for his disciples were undoubtedly just as curious. He said, 'He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live' John 11:25. Similarly Paul wrote, 'Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's' Rom. 14:8."

Before this he had said to his wife, "Yes, you, too, are already in heaven. Christians, both those who are dead and those who are living, await a resurrection of the dead. Abraham lives too. God is God of the living, Matt. 22:32. Now, if one should say, that Abraham's soul lives with God but his body is dead, this distinction is rubbish. I will attack it. One must say, 'The whole Abraham, the whole man, shall live.' The other way you tear off a part of Abraham and say, 'It lives.' This is the way the philosophers speak: 'Afterward the soul departed from its domicile' etc.² That would be a silly soul if it were in heaven and departed its body! . . ."

¹ Ibid., #5230, Between September 2 and 17, 1540, p. 401.

² Ibid., p. 447, n. 95: "Luther seems not to have had any particular philosopher in mind here but to have referred to the interest which philosophers in general showed in the question of the immortality of the soul."

...While occupied with disputation men will let the article concerning justification go. If only we would study in the meantime how to believe and pray and become godly! We're not content with that which we can understand and insist on disputing about something higher, which we can't possibly understand and which our Lord God doesn't want us to understand. That's the way human nature is. It wishes to do what is forbidden; the rest it ignores and then starts asking Why? Why? Why? This is what happens when philosophy is introduced into theology. When the devil came to Eve with the question Why? the same was up. One should be on one's guard against this. It's better to fall on one's knees and pray to Our Father. This will help more.¹

Luther concludes this discussion of "soul and body" with an appropriate comment in light of the above: "Dear Lord God, protect us from the devil, and also from ourselves!"²

To summarize this Chapter, we have been studying the function of Luther's Seelsorge as it addressed the general human condition, in terms of faith and justification; and as it addressed the human condition in particular; temptation, sin, melancholia, influence of the devil, health and illness, etc. From these topics, illustrated with many specific cases, the breadth and depth of his pastoral activity became very evident, under the motto: "True theology is practical and its foundation is Christ. . ."³

In the next Chapter, there will be another conceptualization to Luther's pastoral care by interfacing it with traditional themes and practises. What did Luther retain of his religious heritage?

¹ Ibid., #5534, Winter of 1542-1543, pp. 446-448.

² Ibid., p. 448.

³ Ibid., #153, Between December 14, 1531 and January 22, 1532, p. 22.

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What did he modify or replace completely? This investigation will focus on "Resources of His Pastoral Care".

Chapter XI: Resources of His Pastoral Care

To guard against overstating the singularity of Luther's Seelsorge, we will make an attempt in this last chapter to broaden our focus, to include some traditional themes and practises of his day. As we study his use and modification of these sources, we will be better equipped to appreciate the uniqueness of his over-all contributions to pastoral care.

It must not be assumed that Luther was the only one who cultivated the art of Seelsorge in the sixteenth century. Within the Christian tradition, concern for soul care had numerous exponents and a rich legacy, stretching all the way back through the Middle Ages, the Church Fathers, to the time of the New Testament and Christ Himself! "Luther's famous quest for the certainty of personal salvation--um ein gnadigen Gott zu kriegen--had long been the religious quest of Renaissance man, . . ."² Therefore, Clebsch and Jaekle continue their appraisal of the late Middle Ages by writing: "For the young Luther, as for many another before him, individual, auricular confession became a central religious act demanding complete personal involvement and ultimate concern, if a man were to know himself forgiven and made righteous by God. Influential pastors were skilled spiritual masters able to impart to or elicit from individuals an assurance of their spiritual well-being."³ These authors close their remarks with this

¹ See John T. McNeill, A History of the Cure of Souls (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1951), Chapters IV-VIII for an excellent survey.

² William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle, Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1967), p. 27.

³ Ibid.

summary: "Luther's fundamental challenge to medieval catholicism was not that it wrongly concerned itself with divine-human reconciliation, but that it made this reconciliation too easy and too mechanical."¹

The Scriptures and Sacraments

It is well known that Luther reacted strongly against the traditional view of repentance evident in his day because of the "ecclesiastical abuse" of indulgences.² It may not be known as well that Luther was not in fact the first to criticize this practise; rather he followed in the footsteps of others such as John Wyclif and John Hus.³ However, capitalizing upon the newly invented printing press, Luther succeeded where the others failed: He soon gained wide-spread public support for his objection against the indulgences and preaching of John Tetzel the local salesman.⁴

It is not my purpose to present the polemics, complicated and

¹ Ibid.

² See Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church, Op. cit., pp. 302ff.

³ See John T. McNeill, Op. cit., Chapter VIII, pp. 163ff.

⁴ Ibid., p. 64: ". . . The circumstances of the indulgence sale then being promoted were peculiarly offensive to the moral sense--more so, perhaps, than Luther fully knew. What aroused him was that simple people were being deceived; they were led to believe that if they bought indulgence certificates they could be sure of salvation and that when the coin clinked in the box the souls of their loved ones in purgatory flew up to heaven . . . Sobald der Pfennig im Kasten klingt, Die Seele aus dem Fegfeuer springt, (When in the chest the penny rings, The soul from purgatory springs)."

prolific, that erupted on both sides over this fundamental challenge to the church of the day.¹ Rather, I wish to indicate simply, that even as Luther challenged this commercialization, he still retained the basic Christian doctrine of confession and absolution as taught in the Scriptures: "There is something great about the employment of the keys and of private confession when the conscience can be put to rest. Consequently I'm unwilling to discard absolution."²

Since we have already studied Luther's teaching on "confession and absolution"³, the main point here is to illustrate further the abundant resource of the Scriptures for Luther's reforms and his pastoral care. Almost everything he wrote or advised can be traced directly back to the Scriptures. Again, reliance upon the written Word was nothing new in terms of medieval Catholic theology.⁴ Even Luther admitted the fact that . . . "the pope has the forgiveness of sins, the Word, and the sacraments but he doesn't have the use [or fruit]. Accordingly one must distinguish between the use and the fact."⁵

¹ See LW 31, Career of the Reformer 1.

² LW 54, Table Talk #4362, p. 334.

³ See Part Three: Chapter VIII.

⁴ Paul Tillich, A History of Christian Thought, ed. Carl E. Braaten (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1968), p. 242: "Whenever you see a monument of Luther, he is represented with the Bible in hand. This is somewhat misleading, and the Catholic Church is right in saying that there was biblicism throughout the Middle Ages. . . ."

⁵ LW 54, Table Talk #3330a, May or June, 1533, p. 198.

The principle of biblical interpretation that proved to be "new" and crucial for Luther in order to get beyond the mere "fact" to the proper "use" of the Word, was his orientation to the message of Christ in the Bible, the forgiveness of sins, new hope and salvation: "One searches and finds God in His Word about Christ. If you want to be sure, without endangering your conscience and salvation, then refrain from speculating, searching, and brooding with human reasoning about what God is like or what is His Divine Will. Outside of His Word and His Son Jesus Christ, God cannot be found. You should learn to know God by the way Holy Scripture describes Him, as St. Paul says: 'For in the wisdom of God, etc.' [1 Cor. 1:21-23]."¹

A second hermeneutical principle was necessary in Luther's view to derive maximum benefit from the resource of the Scriptures. Christ's Word recorded there must be carefully distinguished as law and gospel.² Luther admits that this is an on-going task for all of us, a task which he himself had not perfectly mastered. "Because I've been writing so much and so long about it, you'd think I'd know the distinction, but when a crisis comes I recognize very well that I am far, far from understanding. So God alone should and must be our holy master."³ Then he adds:

"Whatever is Scripture is either law or gospel. One of the two must triumph: the law leads to despair, the gospel leads to salvation. I learn more about this every day, and Duke George⁴ could too. The gospel is life. The pope drove me to this; he

¹Appendix, Table Talk #6512, FB 1, 42 (1,36).

²See Part Two: Chapter V.

³LW 54, Table Talk #1234, Before December 14, 1531, p. 127.

⁴A bitter critic of the Reformation.

opened my eyes to it. It is as Augustine¹ said to himself: the heretics provoke us to search the Scriptures. Otherwise nobody would learn about them."²

This distinction between law and gospel has double significance. Not only is it crucial to a correct interpretation of Scripture, but in Luther's view it is also crucial in terms of pastoral care to people: "The Word of God should be rightly divided, and with care, for people are of two kinds. On the one hand are the contrite, who need consolation. On the other hand are the rigid ones, to whom apply the law, threats, examples of wrath, the fire of Elijah³, the waters of the flood, and the destruction of Jerusalem; these must be attacked at once and must be made to feel terror."⁴

Because the Scriptures were so important to Luther as the source of his spiritual life and activity, in 1532 he remarked: "'For some years now', . . ., 'I ~~have~~ read through the Bible twice every year. If you picture the Bible to be a mighty tree and every word a little branch, I have shaken every one of these branches because I wanted to know what it was and what it meant.'"⁵

What about the relation of the Church Fathers to the Scripture? Luther claimed that when he was a student at Erfurt University, he was

¹ Expositions on the Book of Psalms, LV, 23.

² Ibid., Table Talk #626, Fall, 1533, p. 111.

³ Cf. 1 Kings 18:20-40.

⁴ LW 54, Table Talk #4044, October 7, 1538, p. 313. Cf. Appendix #1557, "Law and Gospel, plus Mood Deflation".

⁵ Ibid., #1877, October 21, 1532, p. 165.

taught to give preference to the Fathers over Scripture: "Dr. Usingen,¹ my teacher, said to me when I loved the Scriptures so much, 'What is the Bible? One must read the ancient doctors, for they sucked the truth out of the Bible. The Bible is the cause of all sedition'."²

Whereas later in 1538, Luther offered the following remarks: "The more I read the books of the Fathers, the more I find myself offended; for they were but men, and, to speak the truth, with all their repute and authority, undervalued the books and writings of the sacred apostles of Christ."³ " . . . We must read the Fathers cautiously, and lay them in the gold balance, for they often stumbled and went astray, and mingled in their books many monkish things."⁴ In turning

to specifics, Luther says the following:

. . . One passage or one text from the Bible is worth more than the glosses of four writers who aren't reliable and thorough. Suppose I take the text, 'Everything created by God is good' [1 Tim. 4:4]; food, marriage, etc., are created by God; therefore [they are good], etc. The glosses contradict this: Bernard,⁵ Dominic,⁶ and Basil⁷ wrote and acted otherwise. But the text itself overcomes the glosses. The dear fathers were held in high esteem; meanwhile what they did to the Bible was wrong. Ambrose⁸ and Basil were quite dull, and Gregory Nazianzen⁹ was accused of writing nothing

¹ (1465-1533).

² LW 54, Table Talk #1240, Before December 14, 1531, pp. 127-128.

³ Hazlitt, Table Talk #DXXX, p. 288.

⁴ Ibid., DXXIX, p. 288.

⁵ Bernard of Clairvaux, (1091-1153).

⁶ Dominic (1170-1221) began the Dominican Order.

⁷ Basil the Great (330-379), bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia.

⁸ Ambrose, (ca. 340-379) bishop of Milan.

⁹ Gregory of Nazianzus (329-390), a prominent Eastern theologian,

honestly about God in his poetry and son.¹

The proper attitude for study and reflection upon the Bible is one of humility:

"The Holy Scriptures require a humble reader who shows reverence and fear toward the Word of God and constantly says, 'Teach me, teach me, teach me!' The Spirit resists the proud. Though they study diligently and some preach Christ purely for a time, nevertheless God excludes them from the church if they're proud. Wherefore every proud person is a heretic, if not actually, then potentially. However, it is difficult for a man who has excellent gifts not to be arrogant. Those whom God adorns with great gifts he plunges into the most severe trials in order that they may learn that they're nothing. Paul got a thorn in the flesh to keep him from being haughty.² . . ."³

Since the Bible held such a prominent place in Luther's life and work, he deplored the endless production and study of secondary books, including his own writings:

"There will be a boundless flood of books, for any and everybody will be writing a book to feed his pride, while others will increase this evil in quest of gain. So the Bible will be burned under a mass of literature about the Bible, and the text itself will be neglected, though the experts in the text are the best men in every discipline. A good disciple of Bartolus⁴ is a good lawyer. But today everybody hastens to consult writers."

"As a young man I made myself familiar with the Bible; by reading it again and again I came to know my way about in it. Only then did I consult writers [of books about the Bible]. But finally I had to put them out of my sight and wrestle with the Bible itself. It's better to see with one's own eyes than with another's. On this account, because of the bad example, I wish that all my books were buried. Otherwise everybody will imitate me and try to become famous by writing, as if Christ had died for."

wrote some poems in the artificial, rhetorical style of his day, including many that were autobiographical." LW 54, p. 353, n. 382.

¹LW 54, Table Talk #4567, May 7, 1539, p. 353.

²Cf. 11 Corinthians 12:7.

³LW 54, Table Talk #5017, Between May 21 and June 11, 1540, p. 378.

⁴Bartolus de Sassoferrato (1314-1357), was a professor of law at Bologna.

the sake of our fickle glory and not for the hallowing of his name."¹

We have already alluded briefly to Luther's work of translating the Bible, beginning with the New Testament in Wartburg Castle.² The Table Talk gives us additional pictures of this arduous work, and illustrates clearly Luther's approach in handling the Scriptural texts. In 1532, he says there were two basic rules followed in translation:

"First, if some passage is obscure I consider whether it treats of grace or of law, whether wrath or the forgiveness of sin [is contained in it], and with which of these it agrees better. By this procedure I have often understood the most obscure passages. Either law or gospel has made them meaningful, for God divides his teaching into law and gospel. . . ."

"The second rule is that if the meaning is ambiguous I ask those who have a better knowledge of the language than I have whether the Hebrew words can bear this or that sense which seems to me to be especially fitting. And that is most fitting which is closest to the argument of the book. The Jews go astray so often in the Scriptures because they do not know the [true] contents of the books. But if one knows the contents, that sense ought to be chosen which is nearest them."³

However, ten years later, Luther says that there were actually three rules. These are somewhat different from the ones listed above:

2-3
... First, the Bible speaks and teaches about the works of God. About this there is no doubt. These works are divided in three hierarchies: the household, the government, the church. If a verse does not fit the church, we should let it stay in the government or the household, whichever it is best suited to. Second, whenever equivocal words or constructions occur, that one would have to be taken which (without, however, doing injustice

¹ LW 54, Table Talk #4691, Between July 1 and 10, 1539, p. 361.

² See Part One: Chapter 11: "Exile to Wartburg Castle".

³ LW 54, Table Talk #312, Fall or Summer, 1532, pp. 42-43.

to the grammar) agrees with the New Testament. Third, sometimes a sentence seems to be in conflict with the whole [message of the] Bible. So the rabbis have greatly corrupted all the Scriptures with their glosses and relate everything only to the coming of the Messiah, to his supplying us with food and drink, and to his dying afterward. This is rubbish! Accordingly we simply throw it out, and we have taken many sentences like this from Foster. When he said, 'Ah, the rabbis interpret it this way', I said, 'Could your grammar and points¹ allow you to render the sentence so that it rhymes with the New Testament?'

"Answer: 'Yes.'"

"Then take it!"

"The result was that they themselves marveled and said they never in their lives would have believed it."²

In any case, Luther says that what is required in translating the

Bible is a good combination of grammar and experience:

"It's not enough to know the grammar of a biblical passage. One must observe the sense, for a knowledge of the matters treated brings with it an understanding of the words. Lawyers wouldn't understand the law unless it dealt with matters known to them by experience. Nobody could comprehend the words of Vergil's Eclogues³ unless he was first sure about the contents. If he knew whether an eclogue was about Augustus or Julius Caesar⁴ it would then be easy to apply the words.

In the case of the Bible I hold fast to the meaning. Often learned grammarians like Forstemius⁵ came and I indicated what something meant to the people as if I understood neither Greek nor Hebrew nor Latin. I said, 'Master Forstemius, can the grammatical construction bear this sense?' Then he replied, 'Most assuredly!' So at last he was convinced that we translated the Bible with great care."⁶

¹ Vowel points in the Hebrew text.

² LW 54, Table Talk #5533, Winter of 1542-1543, p. 446.

³ Poems about the life of shepherds.

⁴ Roman emperors during and following Vergil's life-time.

⁵ Hebrew professor in Leipzig.

⁶ LW 54, #5002, Between May 21 and June 11, 1540, pp. 375-376.

Nietzsche has been quoted earlier in praise of Luther's German translation of the Bible as a "master-piece of German prose".¹ But there were others who charged: "In the interest of his new doctrine, Luther took the liberty to alter the sacred text without warrant..."²

Grisar continued his accusations by giving examples: "Luther's reproduction of Rom. 11:28 would have it that man is justified by faith alone. In this passage, Luther arbitrarily inserted the word 'alone'... The word 'alone' in the Pauline text is an obtrusive recommendation of Luther's principle heresy and subjective falsification..."³

⁴Luther was quite aware of this criticism. In a treatise on translating in 1530, he replied that the word 'alone' in Romans 3:28 was no falsification:

I knew very well that the word solum (solely) does not stand in the Latin and Greek texts, and the papists had no need to teach me that. True it is that these ~~four~~ letters s-o-l-a did not stand there. At these letters the assinine dunces stare as a cow stares at a new door. Yet they do not see that this is the meaning of the text and that the word belongs there if a clear and forceful German translation is desired. I wanted to speak German, not Latin or Greek, since I had undertaken to speak German in the translation. But it is the nature of our German language that when speaking of two things, one of which is granted while the other is denied, we use the word "solely" along with the word "not" or "no". Thus we say: The farmer brings only grain and no money; no, I have no money, but only grain; I have only eaten, not drunk; did you only write, and not read it? There are innumerable cases of this kind in daily use...

We must not, as these jackasses do, ask the Latin letters how to speak German; but we must ask the mother in the home, the children on the street, the common man in the market place, how this is done. Their lips we must watch to see how they speak,

¹See Part One: Chapter 11, "At Wartburg Castle".

²Hartmann Grisar, Martin Luther: His Life and Work, Op. cit., p. 424.

³Ibid.

and then we must translate accordingly. Then they will understand us and notice that we are talking German with them. . . .¹

After completing his translation of the Scriptures and revising it from time to time, Luther realized that it was impossible to produce a perfect work. Consequently, he left a challenge for his critics, to try to do a better job if they could:

Of course the mud will stick to the wheel, and no one will be so dull that he will not desire to display his mastery over me and find fault with me here and there. Well, I shall let them go at it. From the beginning of my labor I have carefully considered the fact that I would more easily find ten thousand to find fault with it than a solitary soul to do a twentieth part of it after me. If anyone is so far more learned than I am, let him undertake to translate the entire Bible into German and thereafter come again to tell me what he is able to do. If he does a better job than I did, why should people not prefer him to me?²

Finally, it should be quite clear by now that Luther's love for the Scriptures was not based primarily upon its literary merits. Rather, in the Scriptures his religious quest for a gracious God was satisfied. As a consequence, his life and pastoral work were transformed. Hence, the Bible was studied tirelessly, in a class by itself, because it revealed Christ, the Lord of all life:

Holy Scripture is full of divine gifts and virtues. All the books of the Gentiles teach nothing whatever about faith, hope, and charity. In fact, they know nothing about these divine virtues. They look only at that which lies before them (praesentia). "Trust, hope in the Lord" (Ps. 42:5)! Even if we had only the Psalter and Job, we would certainly see my point. . . . In short, Holy Scripture is the greatest and the divine book, full of

¹WA 30 II, 636f., trans. Plass, Op. cit., Volume I, p. 107.

²EA 63, 24, trans. Plass, Ibid.

consolations for all trials, for about faith it teaches differently from what reason can see, above love differently from what reason can expect. More than this. It teaches these virtues to shine forth in days of adversity, for it points to the existence of another life beyond this miserable one.¹

Use of the Sacraments

The Word and Sacraments belong together in Luther's reformation teachings. As such they are the spiritual-life centre for the church at large as well as for individual Christians. Luther emphasized over and over again, "God will not deal with us except through his external Word and sacrament."²

On the basis of his study of the Scriptures, Luther reduced the traditional number of Sacraments from seven to two, namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper.³ In so doing, he found himself in debate with the Romanists on the one hand, and the sectarians on the other.⁴

It is not my purpose here to get into this historical-theological debate. The doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Lord's

¹WA, TR V, Table Talk #6276, trans. Plass, Op. cit., p. 109.

²Martin Luther, The Smalcald Articles, 1537, Part III, Article VIII, "Confession", ed. Theodore G. Tappert, The Book of Concord (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 313.

³LW 35, Word & Sacrament I, pp. XIIff.

⁴Ibid., p. XIV: "From an initial reinterpretation of the Lord's Supper directed mainly against the Romanists (Vols. 35-36), Luther found it necessary, in 1525, to take an increasingly firm stand against sectarians like Thomas M  nzer, and sacramentarians, like Zwingli (Vols. 36-37), which brought forth his classic expositions of the subject in the years 1527-1528. Against the double front of Romanists and sectarians Luther thereafter carried forward the defense of his understanding of the sacrament (Vol. 38). This defense ranged from the Marburg Colloquy (1529), through the lull of the Wittenberg Concord

Supper has already been discussed briefly in Chapter VII¹, in debate with Zwingli. Rather, I wish to focus upon the Sacraments as additional resources of pastoral care in the on-going work of the Christian church on earth. In fact, Luther says the very continuation of the Word and Sacraments is a strong indication of God's presence and power: "The fact that Baptism, the Sacrament of the Altar, preaching, faith, the Holy Scriptures, and the confession of the name of Christ continue in the world up to the present time should be proof plain enough for anyone that this kingdom of Christ is being maintained and preserved solely by divine and almighty power. . . ."²

Research in the Table Talk reveals much more of this pastoral dimension to the value of Sacraments in the lives of people, first in terms of assurance of grace and salvation. In this regard, Luther speaks of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as "Documents and Seals of Heaven":

Heaven is a gift that has been freely given me. I have documents and a seal to prove it. That is, I have been baptized and partake of the sacrament. Therefore, guard your documents well lest the devil tear them up; that is, remain in the fear of the Lord and pray the Lord's Prayer. . . . God could not have made me more certain of the blessed joy of the saved and the gospel than by the suffering and death of His Son. When I believe He has conquered death and had died for me, and look upon the promise of the Father, then I am well taken care of and have the documents in order with the seals of Baptism and the Sacrament properly attached to them.³

(1536), to his short-lived resumption (1544) of controversy against Bullinger in Zurich as well as the roving Caspar Schwenkfeld."

¹Part Two of this dissertation.

²LW 13, Selected Psalms 11, p. 282.

³Appendix, Table Talk #894.

In disputations with the devil, often Luther could find comfort and relief only in the objective fact: "I have been baptized, and by the sacrament I have been incorporated [in Christ]: moreover, I have the Word. . ."¹ As noted several times before, what worked for Luther was then shared by way of pastoral advice with others. In the following conversation, Luther suggests Baptism and the Word are gifts to lift the spirit:

Dr. Martin Luther asked Dr. Hieronymous Weller: "How are you doing?" To which he answered: "Poorly and cast down; I don't know what I am doing." Thereupon Dr. Martin Luther answered: "Have you not been baptized? Oh what a great gift of God is Baptism, which the Turks and other infidels do not possess. Above this God's Word is a great gift and the Grace of God; therefore, we ought to thank God from the heart that we have His Word. For it is God Who comforts and strengthens, gives power and might; thereupon He has given us His Holy Spirit as a pledge and token of good faith."²

In response to other difficult questions such as predestination, Luther again returns to the eternal significance of Baptism and the Word in settling the issue: "I have been baptized and I have the Word, and so I have no doubt about my salvation as long as I continue to cling to the Word. When we take our eyes off Christ we come upon predestination and start to dispute. . . . This is our nature, that we are always running away from the Word."³

Luther continued the traditional practise of baptizing infants. "The church has baptized infants for a thousand years, and God has given the Holy Spirit to those who have been baptized as infants. . . .

¹ LW 54, Table Talk #501, Spring, 1533, p. 86.

² Appendix, Table Talk #894, FB 2, 263 (17,2).

³ LW 54, Table Talk #365, Fall, 1532, pp. 57-58.

Christ commanded that all nations be taught and baptized, and this included children. Again, it isn't the minister as a person who baptizes, but it's Christ who baptizes. Now if an infant is baptized by Christ, how can I take this away and say that he isn't baptized?"¹ This teaching was in direct confutation of the anabaptists and others on the issue.² It's intriguing to follow Luther's argument further, as he reflects pastorally upon what is the pre-requisite for baptism anyway:

"You say you don't baptize children because they don't believe. Why do you preach the Word to adults who don't believe, unless perhaps in the hope that they may believe? You do it on the strength of God's command alone. For if you baptize me because I say I believe, then you baptize on account of me and in my name. Therefore, since you don't know whether I believe or don't believe, you do it only because of God's command. It isn't necessary to exclude children, since as a rule you baptize all, whether they believe or not."

"It would be a terrible thing if I were baptized on the strength of my confession. What would you do if you learned privately that a man who publicly desired baptism or the sacrament [of the altar] was an unbeliever? You couldn't deny it to him, and yet you would know that he is without faith. So Christ offered the sacrament to Judas. Therefore, anybody at all should be baptized unless he has been publically convicted of a crime, and let his faith and salvation be committed to God's keeping."³

¹ Ibid., #650, Fall, 1533, p. 113.

² See Appendix, Table Talk #839; 861; and 5989e. Luther could also see no objection to giving the Lord's Supper to young children. . . . "There is no urgency about the sacrament of the altar. . . . When in 1 Corinthians [11:28] Paul said that a man should examine himself, he spoke only of adults because he was speaking about those who were quarreling among themselves. However, he doesn't here forbid that the sacrament of the altar be given even to children." (LW 54, Table Talk #365, Fall, 1532, p. 58).

³ LW 54, Table Talk #549, Fall or Summer, 1533, pp. 98-99.

On this same point, Luther made a further distinction, in opposition to his opponents, between the institution and effects of Baptism:

. . . The Anabaptists and Waldensians¹ rest the sacraments on the faith of the person, and therefore they reject the baptism of infants, arguing that one ought first to teach and only afterward to baptize.² I respond: There Christ spoke not of the institution but of the effect [of baptism]. If I should hold that the baptism of children is without effect, it doesn't follow that they should be rebaptized when they grow up and believe, for if some at Mount Sinai hadn't believed in the law³ (whether or not they believed in God), would it have been necessary to make a law again after they had come to believe? It's one thing to have the effect of a work and it's another to have the work. Everything depends on distinguishing between the work of God and the work of men. The work of God is unchangeable."⁴

A great benefit of the Sacraments, along with their value as Divine signs or objective aids to religious devotion, is that they maximize spiritual attention upon the individual person.⁵ In other words, Baptism and the Lord's Supper help personalize and particularize soul care to individuals within the spectrum of Christian fellowship. Regardless of the misery or Anfechtung a person may be experiencing, he can often find with the Lord's Supper for example, unique spiritual comfort and strength. While he may be suffering in various ways, yet he needs no longer to feel alone and can say: "Though I am a sinner

¹Late medieval religious dissenters in France and Italy -- followers of Peter Waldo (ca. 1108). However, they practised infant baptism in spite of Luther's lumping them together here with the Anabaptists.

²Cf. Mark 16:16.

³Cf. Exodus 19:17-20:17.

⁴LW 54, Table Talk #650, Fall, 1533, pp. 113-114.

⁵See Henrik Ivarsson, Op. cit., p. 21, and Luther's Small Catechism, Part VI, "The Sacrament of the Altar", Tappert, Book of Concord, Op. cit., p. 352.

and have fallen, though this or that misfortune has befallen me, nevertheless I will go to the sacrament to receive a sign from God that I have on my side Christ's righteousness, life, and sufferings, with all holy angels and the blessed in heaven and all pious men on earth. If I die, I am not alone in death; if I suffer, they suffer with me. [I know that] all my misfortune is shared with Christ and the saints, because I have a sure sign of their love toward me.¹

Because Luther wished to stress the value of Christian fellowship, even as individuals gather to receive the Sacrament, he was, therefore, rather reluctant to permit private Communion. This caution was given out of concern for individual consciences and for the fellowship at large. The following is a case in point regarding a request by some Hungarian students to receive private Communion in Latin, because they did not understand the German language:

... Luther replied that the wish to communicate privately would give a bad example in the church. Even if they do not understand the words, nevertheless they know that this is the true ordinance of God and institution of Christ, Christ's testament, and that in our church it is offered publicly and in common through the Word and in the Word. Therefore they ought never to separate themselves from the church, for it would be much safer for their consciences and less offensive to the church if they would take the sacrament in the public fellowship. And this is what they did, obediently and thankfully.²

Luther also objected to the practise of communing oneself. This issue was raised in the case of a certain individual, terminally ill, who administered the Sacrament to himself: "At least two persons must always be there, the one who gives and the one who receives. So in an

¹ LW 35, Word and Sacrament I, p. 54.

² LW 54, Table Talk #4020, September 22, 1538, p. 311.

emergency a woman can baptize, but the child doesn't baptize himself. If a person can't have access to the sacrament, faith is enough, according to that word, 'Your faith has made you well.' [Matt. 9:22]."¹

The validity of the Sacraments rests in Christ's Word: "Baptism is water and the Word. How? Does the minister make it so? No, but because it's Christ's institution. Bread and wine also become the body of Christ because Christ is ordained."² Therefore, the character or reputation of a pastor does not detract from the substance of the Sacrament offered.³

Finally, in response to the pastoral problem of whether one should offer the Lord's Supper to convicts, because of the very real danger of unbelief and deception, Luther says:

... "This doesn't concern the one who administers. His only concern should be that he offer the true Word and the true sacrament. I don't worry about whether he [the communicant] has true faith. I give the sacrament on account of the confession, which I have heard, the condition of his heart be what it may. I wager a thousand souls that the absolution and the sacrament are right. I must believe him when he says he is penitent. If he deceives me, he deceives himself. Nevertheless, the sacrament is true and the absolution is true. It is as if I were to give somebody ten pieces of gold and he took them to be only ten coppers. The gold is right in front of his eyes. If he doesn't

¹ Ibid., #5579, Spring, 1543, p. 460.

² Ibid., #659, Early in the year 1535, p. 119.

³ See Ibid., #574, Summer or Fall, 1533, p. 100: "I take the case of a minister who is quite a scoundrel, and even an epicurean, and who believes that he administers nothing but bread and wine, although the entire church believes that it is body and blood. What should be done in this case? I answer: The mouth is deceived, but faith is not deceived. Nevertheless; if the minister should say the words [of institution] so that the church hears them, it is the unbelieving priest who is in peril and not the church which believes the words and receives what the words say and faith relies upon. . . .", etc.

know what he's taking, the fault is his and the loss is his."¹

In summary, perhaps one of the best ways to illustrate Luther's attitude, in offering pastoral care based on the resources of Scripture and Sacraments, is to contrast the fundamental differences between the approach of the spiritual and civil kingdoms:

"Our Lord God has reserved the best rule for himself and his church, where one proceeds not in the exercise of law but in voluntary freedom. For Christ says, 'I baptize you, I catechize you, I absolve you, I preach to you, I comfort you. If you believe, you have this treasure, if you don't believe, the loss is yours. I don't forfeit anything as a consequence.'

"On the other hand, civil rule proceeds by demand: 'Do this, don't do that!' 'If you don't obey', says the magistrate, 'and you do me an injury, I'll punish you. However, if you obey me, it will be of benefit to me.'

"Thus the civil government seeks its advantage with certain rigid demands. Christ's rule, however, looks to our benefit and allows us pleasing discretion. . . ."²

We would do well as pastors to adopt this approach of the Christian Kingdom in the pastoral care we offer our people.

Prayer and Preaching

In Martin Luther's "Preface" to the Large Catechism of 1529, we find some very strong words addressed to the clergy in regard to their own devotional lives and the lack of pastoral care among their people. ". . . we see to our sorrow that many pastors and preachers³ are very negligent in this respect. Some . . . behave . . . as if they were pastors or preachers for their bellies' sake and had nothing to do but live off

¹ Ibid., #325, Summer or Fall, 1532, p. 45.

² LW 54, Table Talk #3388b, Fall, 1533, p. 199. Cf. Appendix, Table Talk #6598, FB I, 320 (7.18).

³ Prediger (preachers) were charged with one duty. . . regular preaching; whereas Pfarrherren (pastors) were permitted to exercise the complete ministerial office.

the fat of the land. . ."¹ He then concludes these introductory remarks by saying: "Such shameful gluttons and servants of their bellies would make better swineherds or dogkeepers than spiritual guides and pastors."²

This strong language was meant to jolt the clergy of Luther's day out of their complacency concerning the care of their own souls and their neglect concerning the exercise of their pastoral duties: "It would be fine if every morning, noon, and evening they would read. . . at least a page or two from the Catechism, the Prayer Book,³ the New Testament, or something else from the Bible and would pray the Lord's Prayer for themselves and their parishioners. In this way they might show honor and gratitude to the Gospel, through which they have been delivered from so many burdens and troubles. . ."⁴

The Resource of Prayer

In Luther's pastoral activity, most often we see him recommend the unique gift and practise of prayer. He was not only a theorist in terms of what he was recommending to others, but above all else he was an experienced practioner.⁵ "Whenever a good Christian prays, 'Dear Father, thy will be done,' God replies from on high, 'Yes, dear child, it shall indeed be done in spite of the devil and all the

¹ Martin Luther's Preface, Large Catechism, Tappert, Book of Concord, Op. cit., p. 358.

² Ibid.

³ In 1522, Luther wrote the Betbüchlein ("The Little Prayer Book"), to replace the traditional devotional books.

⁴ Martin Luther's Preface, Large Catechism, Op. cit., p. 358.

⁵ See Part One, Chapter III: "Prayer Life".

world."¹

Since we have already dealt with Luther's vigorous personal prayer-life, at this time we shall note some further thoughts and applications of prayer as recorded in the Table Talk. Here he reiterates the "experiential" theme as concrete evidence of the efficacy of prayer:

"Well then", Dr. Martin Luther said, "No one believes how powerful and strong prayer is and how much it can accomplish, except that person who has learned from experience, and tried it. But it is a positive thing when one feels the great need that drives him to prayer. This I know, that as often as I have earnestly prayed, that it was a most serious thing with me, so then I was graciously heard and received more than I prayed for! God indeed occasionally delayed, but it came nevertheless. Jesus Sirach says: 'The godly pious Christian's prayer does more for health than the medicine of physicians!'"²

Melanchthon's recovery from his deathly illness in 1540 certainly underscores this claim that earnest prayer is more beneficial in certain cases than all the healing arts of medical science. Apparently, Dr. Sturz, Melanchthon's physician, had exhausted all known medical prescriptions, but to no avail. His patient lapsed into unconsciousness and his eyes became glazed over. Julius K stlin gives the following account of Luther's action:

"Heaven help us!" exclaimed Luther, "how has the devil maltreated this Organon (instrument)!" Luther turned to the window and prayed, at a later time recalling: "There God had to take it. I cast the whole sack at his door and rubbed His ears with all the promises I could recount from Scripture that He would hear prayer; that He would have to answer my prayer, if I were to trust His promises." Then Luther took hold of Melanchthon's hand and spoke earnestly to him, saying among other things that

¹ Martin Luther's Large Catechism, Third Part: "The Lord's Prayer", Op. cit., p. 424.

² Appendix, Table Talk #886, FB 2, 228 (15,1).

God did not wish the death of a sinner, but that he live; that Melanchthon should not become a suicide, but should trust the Lord. The sick man began to breathe again. After looking intently at Luther he asked him to let him depart. But Luther answered, "By no means! You have to serve the Lord some more. . . . Philip, eat, or I'll excommunicate you!"¹

The conclusion of this particular episode is that Melanchthon indeed recovered from this illness, and lived to serve the Lord another twenty years!

Prayer serves as a preservative and works wonders in the church as a whole as well as for individuals. However, in order to benefit from this vast Divine resource, we need to be persistent in our supplications:

Prayer preserves the church, and hitherto has done the best for the church; therefore we must continually pray. Hence Christ says: "Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

First, when we are in trouble, he will have us to pray; for God often, as it were, hides himself, and will not hear; yea, will not suffer himself to be found. Then we must seek him; that is, we must continue in prayer. When we seek him, he often locks himself up, as it were, in a private chamber; if we intend to come in unto him, then we must knock, and when we have knocked once or twice, then he begins a little to hear. At last, when we make much knocking, then he opens, and says: What will ye have? Lord, say we, we would have this or that; then, say he, Take it unto you. In such sort must we persist in praying, and waken God up.²

Being persistent in intercessory prayer also is blessed by God

¹ Julius KBstlin, The Theology of Luther, Volume II, trans. Charles E Hay (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1897), p. 173. Cf. LW 54, Table Talk #5565, Spring, 1543, pp. 453-454: . . . "Many people have been preserved by prayer, as we prayed Philip back to life. Ah, prayer accomplishes much." Here Luther gives another hint about his deep conviction that this fervent prayer rescued Melanchthon from the grave.

² Hazlitt, Table Talk #CCCCXXIX, p. 196.

with results that can be seen. Luther gives two examples: the first has to do with the conversion of St. Paul as a direct result of Stephen's prayer!¹ . . . "The faith of one person may obtain another's whole conversion. Accordingly it's said that Paul was converted and saved by Stephen's prayer. However, Paul wasn't accepted on account of Stephen's faith, but Stephen's faith obtained faith for Paul from God and by this faith he was saved in God's sight."² The second is the response of God to the prayer³ of St. Augustine's mother:

. . . She prayed to God that her son might be converted. But nothing seemed to help. She approached all sorts of learned men and asked them to persuade her son. At length she proposed to him that he marry a Christian girl in order that she might bring him back, but it didn't work. But when our Lord God came along he acted effectively and made such an Augustine out of him that he's now called an ornament of the church. So James said very well, 'Pray for one another', etc.; for 'the prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects' [Jas. 5:16]. This is one of the best verses in that epistle. Prayer is a powerful thing, if only one believes in it, for God has attached and bound himself to it [by his promises]."⁴

Christian prayer is certainly not always verbal or audible:

"Upright Christians pray without ceasing; though they pray not always with their mouths, yet their hearts pray continually, sleeping and waking; for the sigh of a true Christian is a prayer. As the Psalm saith: 'Because of the deep sighing of the poor, I will up, saith the Lord', etc. In like manner a true Christian always carries the

¹ Cf. Acts 7:59, 60.

² LW 54, Table Talk #5565, Spring, 1543, p. 453.

³ Augustine writes in his Confessions, 3,11;6,1;8,12, concerning his mother Monica's prayers and activities on his behalf.

⁴ LW 54, Table Talk #5565, Spring, 1543, p. 453.

cross, though he feel it not always."¹

A striking example of prayer within the confines of one's own heart and mind is that of Moses as he confronts the Red Sea.²

Luther expounds the inner spiritual anguish that he imagines Moses experienced, at that moment of seemingly insurmountable obstacle, the crossing of the Sea:

When Moses, with the children of Israel, came to the Red Sea, then he cried with trembling and quaking; yet he opened not his mouth, neither was his voice heard on earth by the people; doubtless he cried and sighed in his heart, and said: Ah, Lord God! what course shall I now turn myself? How am I come to this strait? No help or counsel can save us; before us is the sea; behind us are enemies the Egyptians; on both sides high and huge mountains; I am the cause that all this people shall now be destroyed. Then answered God, and said: "Wherefore criest thou unto me?" as if God should say: What an alarm dost thou make, that the whole heavens ring! Human reason is not able to search this passage out. The way through the Red Sea is full as broad and wide, if not wider, than Wittenberg lies from Coburg, that so doubtless, the people were constrained in the night season to rest and to eat therein; for six hundred thousand men, besides women and children, would require a good time to pass through, though they went one hundred and fifty abreast.³

Again, even though this internal turmoil was apparently not verbalized, yet the Lord heard and answered with a parting of the waters, providing a way of escape for the Israelites.

Through his life, Luther preferred the Lord's Prayer and the Psalms as models for his own devotional life. If he had to make a choice, it appears the Lord's Prayer would be chosen above the

¹ Hazlitt, Table Talk #CCCXXVII, pp. 195-196.

² See Exodus 14.

³ Hazlitt, Table Talk #CCCXXXII, p. 194.

Psalms: "The 'Our Father' is my prayer, that I pray and by good fortune I sometimes add something out of the Psalms so that the thoughts are mixed together, etc. No prayer is equal to the Lord's Prayer. I'd rather pray it than any Psalm."¹

The value of the Lord's Prayer for pastoral care is given by Luther in yet another short but powerful analysis: "The Lord's Prayer binds the people together, and knits them one to another, so that one prays for another, and together one with another; and it is so strong and powerful that it even drives away the fear of death."²

In summary, prayer is a Christian pastor's vital, viable option, calling upon this spiritual resource for himself and others. The human encounter between pastor and a troubled parishioner, takes on a unique, additional dimension with prayer. Not only is it a shared awareness of the problem by two human beings, but a distinct awareness of sharing that concern with Divine presence. The pastor is really only a guide in directing the parishioner to a spiritual dialogue with his Heavenly Father, through faith in Christ. Therein he receives the necessary guidance and strength to continue his life with new perspective and hope. This, in part, was Luther's style and dynamic understanding of prayer.

Preaching

Public preaching was another important traditional practise in

¹ Appendix, Table Talk #421.

² Hazlitt, Table Talk #CCCCXXVIII, p. 196.

the church that Luther continued and adapted according to his Reformation insights into life and the Gospel.¹ From a homiletical manual by Jerome Dungersheim, 1514, we learn that preaching was considered to be a very high calling: ". . . a clergyman ought to have received a good education and attained the age of thirty before he be permitted to preach."²

This matter of age, no doubt, was one of the reasons why Luther was so reluctant at first to accept the assignment as preacher at the Wittenberg Castle Church. He was soon to receive his Doctorate in Theology, but was still only twenty-eight years of age! In a Table Talk with Lauterbach, he recalls his hesitancy even though Staupitz urged him to accept:

Ah my friend, I had the same experience. I feared the pulpit perhaps as greatly as you do; yet I had to do it; I was forced to preach. At first I had to preach to the brethren in the refectory. Ah, how I feared the pulpit! Under this pear tree I advanced fifteen arguments to Dr. Staupitz; with them I declined my call. But they did me no good. When I finally said, "Dr. Staupitz, you are taking my life; I won't be able to endure it three months", he replied, "In God's Name! Our Lord God has many things to do: He is in need of wise people in heaven, too."³

Staupitz succeeded in his urging and persuading. Luther began

¹ See LW 51, Sermons I, pp. XIff. . . . "The Weimar edition contains more than two thousand sermons, transcripts of stenographic notes made by listeners, printings of individual sermons, various postils, and running expositions of books or parts of books of the Bible. This is estimated to be about two-thirds of the sermons actually preached between 1510 and 1546." p. XII.

² Stanley D. Schneider, "Luther, Preaching and the Reformation" in Interpreting Luther's Legacy, eds. Fred W. Meuser and Stanley D. Schneider (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969), p. 121.

³ WA, TR III, #3143b, trans. Schneider, ibid., p. 121.

uninterrupted preaching from that time (1511) onward until a few days before his death in 1546: "Often I preached four sermons on one day. During the whole of one Lent I preached two sermons and gave one lecture every day. This was when I first preached on the Ten Commandments¹ to a large congregation, for to preach on the catechism was then a new and uncommon thing."²

A Roman Catholic author, John P. Dolan, gives a brief review of the content of a typical medieval sermon:

Preachers were preoccupied with the theme of sin and the grim face of death waiting for the moment of merited punishment. There was an emphasis on the horrors of hell and the sufferings of the damned. Their sermons were filled with descriptions of burning trees on which hung the souls of those who did not attend church services, vultures gnawing at men's vitals, venomous serpents stinging the unholy, boiling lakes, frozen fens, heated ovens and vile dungeons. Scripture, when quoted, was completely torn from its living historical context. Its personalities and their saying were distorted and mutilated into passive conveniences for moral dilation. Everywhere the emphasis was on the negative side of man's salvation, his sins, and punishment.³

Within the life of the medieval church as pictured in this summary above, Luther was influenced greatly by two dominant movements at the beginning of his preaching career, namely "scholasticism" and "mysticism".⁴ Scholasticism taught him to select a proposition from the Church Fathers or Scripture. The whole sermon was then developed

¹ Luther preached these sermons, 1516-1517.

² LW 54, Table Talk #3843, April 19, 1538, p. 282.

³ John P. Dolan, History of the Reformation (New York: The New American Library, 1965), p. 186.

⁴ See Schneider, Op. cit., pp. 123ff.

out of that basic theme, using primarily the art of allegorical interpretation. While Luther retained the approach of addressing basic themes, he soon discarded the use of allegory:

"When I was a monk I was a master in the use of allegories. I allegorized everything. Afterward through the Epistle to the Romans I came to some knowledge of Christ. I recognized then that allegories are nothing, that it's not what Christ signifies but what Christ is that counts. Before I allegorized everything, even a chamber pot, but afterward I reflected on the histories and thought how difficult it must have been for Gideon to fight with his enemies in the manner reported.¹ If I had been there I would have befouled my breeches for fear. It was not allegory, but it was the Spirit and faith that inflicted such havoc on the enemy with only three hundred men. Jerome and Origen contributed to the practise of searching only for allegories. God forgive them. In all of Origen there is not one word about Christ.²

In 1540, he gives another explanation for his move away from the allegorical to a more literal interpretation of Scriptures:

"...When I was young I was learned, especially before I came to the study of theology. At that time I dealt with allegories, tropologies, and analogies and did nothing but clever tricks with them.³ If somebody had them today they'd be looked upon as rare relics. I know they're nothing but rubbish. Now I've let them go, and this is my last and best art, to translate the Scripture in their plain sense. The literal sense does it--in it there's life, comfort, power, instruction, and skill. The other is tomfoolery, however brilliant the impression it makes."⁴

¹ Cf. Judges 7:1-23.

² LW 54, Table Talk #335, Summer or Fall, 1532, pp. 46-47.

³ "According to the fourfold method of biblical interpretation in the late Middle Ages, scholars sought various meanings in the text. In addition to the literal meaning there were believed to be other meanings: an allegorical (doctrinal), a tropological (moral), and an analogical (pertaining to the future) meaning." *Ibid.*, p. 406, n. 173. Cf. Warren A. Quanbeck, "The Search for a New Method" in Luther Today, ed. Gerhard Belgum, "Martin Luther Lectures", Vol. 1 (Decorah, Iowa: Luther College Press, 1957), pp. 60-81.

⁴ LW 54, Table Talk #5285, Between October 3-19, 1540, p. 406.

While Luther gave up allegory, he continued throughout the rest of his life, as noted above, to retain the scholastic idea of putting forth a straight-forward, uncomplicated theme in his sermons: The following discussion on preaching illustrates this point: "In my preaching I take pains to treat a verse of the Scriptures, to stick to it, and so to instruct the people that they can say, 'That's what the sermon was about.'"¹ In any case, one can not go wrong in following this method. After-all, it was the style of our Lord: "When Christ preached he proceeded quickly to a parable and spoke about sheep, shepherds, wolves, vineyards, fig trees, seeds, fields, plowing. The poor people were able to comprehend these things."²

On another occasion, Luther gave the same kind of advice in this way:

"One ought to bare one's breast in the pulpit and feed the people with milk, for a new church grows up every day which is in need of the first principles. Therefore, one should serve the milk by diligently teaching the catechism; high thoughts and subtleties should be reserved for the clever in private. I don't want to be conscious of Doctors Pommer, Jonas and Philip in my preaching: for they know the substance of my sermon better than I. Accordingly, I do not preach for them, but I observe my little Hans and Elsie. It would be a foolish gardener, who in a large garden would wish to attend only to the best flowers and neglect all the rest. Therefore see to it that you teach purely and simply, taking into account the lack of learning of the common man; do not concern yourselves so much with the others [distinguished persons who might be present]."³

¹ Ibid., #1650, Between June 12-July 12, 1532, p. 160.

² Ibid.

³ Appendix, Table Talk #3421.

This quality to preach "simply" had its roots not only in a scholastic notion of propositions, but also in the second predominate movement to influence Luther, namely "mysticism".¹ This meant that the personal dimension gained more and more attention in Luther's preaching, in a time when the typical preacher tended to be very abstract and out-of-touch with everyday life and problems: "Cursed be every preacher who aims at lofty topics in the church, looking for his own glory and selfishly desiring to please one individual or another. . ."² No doubt this concentration upon the personal element is one important reason why his preaching was such a resource for Seelsorge: "We ought to direct ourselves in preaching according to the condition of the hearers. . ."³ In another place he said:

"One should preach about things that are suited to a given place and given persons. A preacher once preached that it's wicked for a woman to have a wet nurse for her child, and he devoted his whole sermon to a treatment of this matter although he had nothing but poor spinning women in his parish to whom such an admonition didn't apply. Similar was the preacher who gave an exhortation in praise of marriage when he preached to some aged women in an infirmary."⁴

To accomplish this important task of relevant preaching in terms that people can easily understand, it will be necessary for the preacher to vary his style: "A preacher is like a carpenter. His tool is the Word of God. Because the materials on which he works vary, he ought not always pursue the same course when he preaches. For the sake of

¹For a detailed treatment of a "profound kinship with medieval mystics" see Bengt R. Hoffman, Luther and the Mystics (Minneapolis: Augsburg PH, 1976).

²LW 54, Table Talk #3573, Between March 28 and May 27, 1537, p. 235.

³Hazlitt, Table Talk #CCCCVII, p. 228.

⁴LW 54, Table Talk #1322, Between January 8 and March 23, 1532, p. 138.

the variety of his auditors he should sometimes console, sometimes frighten, sometimes scold, sometimes soothe, etc."¹

Luther felt a preacher should always be well prepared and disciplined enough to guard against speaking "off-the-cuff" at length about any topic that comes to mind: "There is no art to holding long sermons; but to preach rightly and well, this is the task and this the labour!"²

"...Only a fool thinks he should say everything that occurs to him. A preacher should see to it that he sticks to the subject and performs his task in such a way that people understand what he says. Preachers who try to say everything that occurs to them remind me of the maidservant who is on her way to market. When she meets another maid she stops to chat with her for a while. Then she meets another maid and talks with her. She does the same with a third and a fourth and so gets to market very slowly. This is what preachers do who wander too far from their subject. They try to say everything all at once, but it won't do."³

Therefore, it is important to know when to stop preaching a particular sermon: "The sign of a good speaker is that he stops when people suppose the most important interesting part is about to come. In as much however, truly, when the hearers tire and look for the end; that's a bad sign. . . . This is true of a preacher too. When one says: he got 'washing around' and was unable to come to a stop, that is a bad sign!"⁴

¹ Ibid., #234, Between April 7 and 15, 1532, p. 31.

² Appendix, Table Talk #3419.

³ LW 54, Table Talk #5489, Summer or Fall, 1542, p. 428.

⁴ Appendix, Table Talk #3422. Cf. LW 54, Table Talk #3910, July 7, 1538. . . "Luther said, . . . 'I have learned this art: When I have nothing more to say I stop talking'. . ."

In the following dialogue, Luther gives significant insights into the theological and emotional elements involved in preaching. His initial response is in answer to a question: where does preaching gain its power so that both the godless and the God-fearing are stirred in their hearts?

... "From the First Commandment of God: 'I the Lord, thy God am powerful and zealous [against the godless] and do well and am merciful [to the God-fearing], etc.' For God desires and commands that fiery hell be preached to the proud; paradise to the pious; punish the devil ones; comfort the pious, etc."

Then Forsten said: "I have not heard more than three whose preaching so touched my heart as yours, Sir Doctor; M. Cordati; and M. Roerer. How does it happen that others are not able to move and touch the heart as these three do?"

Dr. Martin answered: "The reason is that the instruments and tools are different, just as one knife cuts better than another."

Then Forsten said: "I should like to learn this art, so that I could speak to the hearts and consciences of the people; but my sermons are so cold that I am often ashamed when I again leave the pulpit and think afterwards, thus and thus, you should have held forth."

Dr. Martin said: "Dear Forsten, in this thing you should not judge and condemn yourself, even as you are unable; others ought to judge. Often I, too, am ashamed of my sermon soon after I have finished; and I suppose it to have been very cold. But others have praised it to me afterwards! For it commonly happens that that which pleases us is not pleasing to others, and vice versa."¹

In other places he adds more of his views about the crucial importance of preaching to children and the uneducated in a congregation:² However, when it comes to the matter of academic debate, Luther considered this an entirely different matter: "... I prefer to preach in an easy and comprehensible fashion, but when it comes to academic

¹ Ibid., Table Talk #868, FB 2, 373 (22,15).

² See Ibid., Table Talk #5200 and #5903; Cf. Ibid., #3421.

disputations watch me in the university; there I'll make it sharp enough for anybody and will reply, no matter how complicated he wants to be."¹

One day a student, Conrad Cordatus, asked Luther if he would teach him in a brief way how to be a good preacher. Luther's response to the question at first was upsetting to the student: "First you must learn to go up to the pulpit. Second, you must know that you should stay there for a time. Third, you must learn to get down again."² The account continues:

He added nothing in addition to these words, and as a result Cordatus was quite angry. Yet at length it occurred to him that the doctor had hit the mark very well. Anybody who keeps this order will be a good preacher. First, he must learn to go up to the pulpit, that is, he should have a regular and divine call. Second, he must learn to stay there for a time, that is, he should have the pure and genuine doctrine. Third, he must also learn to get down again, that is, he should preach not more than an hour. . .³

What great Christian truths or which books of the Bible should one concentrate upon sharing from the pulpit? Luther replies that it depends upon the situation at hand: "The Psalter, St. John's Gospel and St. Paul, for those who must do battle against the heretics; but for the common man and young people, the other Evangelists. David has Psalms which teach prophecy, prayer, and give thanks. . . ."⁴ Luther boldly asserts that even though we pattern our preaching along the

¹ LW 54, Table Talk #5047, Between May 21 and June 11, 1540, p. 384.

² Ibid., #5171b, Between August 7 and 21, 1540, p. 393.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Appendix, Table Talk, #790.

lines of Christ Himself, yet our preaching has the potential of becoming a more powerful influence upon more people than in those former days:

"At the time of the apostles and our time the Gospel and Divine Word are preached much more powerfully and widely than in the time of Christ. For Christ did not have the respect nor such large numbers of hearers as the apostles had, and which we now have. As Christ Himself says to his disciples: 'You will do greater works than I.' [John 14:12]. I am only a little mustard seed, but you will be like grape-vines with branches upon which the birds will nest. As if the Lord Christ were to say: I have preached only in a corner of the Jewish land, but you will preach publicly from the roof-tops and throughout the whole world, proclaiming the Gospel to all peoples!"¹

Herein lies a great deal of encouragement for preachers of all ages!

To close there is a great deal of inspiration here for making effective use of the preaching resource for the on-going program of pastoral care, as a servant of the people and the living Lord: "So be of good courage and pray."² Perhaps all of us as contemporary preachers would find our task more exhilarating for ourselves and our hearers if we were more conscious of Luther's insights discussed above. Perhaps too, we might also gain an experience similar to that of the distinguished preacher of recent times, Fosdick: "It was a great day when I began to feel that a sermon could be immediately creative and transforming."³

¹ Ibid., #687, FB 1, 72 (1,84).

² LW 54, Table Talk #1590, Between May 20 and 27, 1532, p. 158.

³ Harry Emerson Fosdick, Living of These Days (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), p. 99.

Small and Large Catechisms

The Small and Large Catechism, 1529¹, are rooted deeply within Martin Luther's pastoral concern for the unmet spiritual needs of the people. He makes reference to this in the "Preface" to the Small Catechism:

The deplorable conditions which I recently encountered when I was a visitor² constrained me to prepare this brief and simple catechism or statement of Christian teaching. Good God, what wretchedness I beheld! The common people, especially those who live in the country, have no knowledge whatever of Christian teaching, and unfortunately many pastors are quite incompetent and unfitted for teaching. Although the people are supposed to be Christian, are baptized, and receive the holy sacrament, they do not know the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, or the Ten Commandments, they live as if they were pigs and irrational beasts, and now that the Gospel has been restored they have mastered the fine art of abusing liberty.³

Out of this earnest concern for the spiritual welfare of the common people and also to be of assistance to pastors, Luther wrote the catechisms: The Small Catechism was dedicated to the head of the family, to teach it to all in his household. The Large Catechism was directed to the clergy: "I therefore beg of you for God's sake, my beloved brethern who are pastors and preachers, that you take the duties of your office seriously, that you have pity on the people who are entrusted to your care, and that you help me to teach the catechism to the people, especially those who are young."⁴

Probably no other writing from the Reformation has so profoundly

¹ See Tappert, ed., The Book of Concord, Op. cit., pp. 337-461.

² The visits Luther refers to here are those he made to congregations in Saxony and Meissen, October 22, 1528-January 9, 1529.

³ Tappert, Op. cit., p. 338.

⁴ Ibid.

influenced the lives of the German people, and others wherever the Lutheran doctrine has been taught, than the Catechisms.¹ McGiffert describes the Small Catechism as . . . "a most beautiful summary of Christian faith and duty, wholly devoid of polemics of every kind and so simply and concise as to be easily understood and memorized by every child. . . . The versatility of the reformer in adapting himself with such success to the needs of the young and immature is no less than extraordinary. Such a little book as this it is that reveals most clearly the genius of the man."²

It would not be correct to assume that there were no other catechisms available. On the contrary, Luther recognized and later adapted some of the medieval catechical materials and style of presentation: "He knew of the manuals written for the preparation of young people for the confessional, at which time they were asked questions, or were 'catechized' by their priests on the Creed, Lord's Prayer, Ten Commandments (after the tenth century), Ave Maria, and so on. . . . He also came to realize that instruction . . . was not widespread that the manuals contained such ballast in the form of untrustworthy legends of the saints and inconsequential details."³

Some of the traditional features he retained in his Catechisms were the Ten Commandments, Apostles' Creed, Lord's Prayer, Baptism

¹Harold J. Grim, "Luther's Catechisms as Textbooks" in Luther and Culture - "Martin Luther Lectures IV" (Decorah: Luther College Press, 1960), pp. 119ff.

²Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Martin Luther, The Man and His Work (New York: The Century Co., 1914), p. 316.

³Grim, Op. cit., p. 121.

and the Lord's Supper, etc., along with the question and answer method of instruction. What he modified on the other hand, was the previous emphasis on works righteousness, plus the many rules and regulations common in medieval times. In place of these "externals" . . . "the catechisms now contained the much-neglected essentials of the Christian faith, based solely on Scripture."¹

Why can Luther's Catechisms be listed as resources for his Seelsorge? The answer lies in their reliance upon the objective realities of salvation and at the same time upon their personal warmth and subjectiveness. This can be illustrated for example by referring to Luther's explanation to the Three Articles of the Apostles' Creed, (Small Catechism):

The First Article: Creation . . . Answer: I believe that God has created me and all that exists; that he has given me and still sustains my body and soul, all my limbs and senses, my reason and all the faculties of my mind, together with food and clothing, house and home, . . . ; that he provides me daily and abundantly with all the necessities of life, protects me from all danger, and preserves me from all evil. . . .

The Second Article: Redemption . . . Answer: I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, delivered me and freed me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil. . . .

The Third Article: Sanctification . . . Answer: I believe that by my own reason or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church he daily and abundantly forgives all my sins, and the sins of all believers, and on the last day he will raise me and all the dead and will grant everlasting life to me and to

¹ Ibid., p. 122.

all who believe in Christ. This is most certainly true.¹

This tremendous personal assurance of salvation, anchored in what God the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier has done, is probably nowhere more dramatically and simply portrayed in all of Luther's writings, than it is here in the Catechism. What a resource for family pastoral care!

It's true that the Small Catechism was written primarily for instructing young children and youth in the essentials of the faith. Luther remarked on one occasion in 1543 near the end of his life: . . . "youth is the church's nursery and fountainhead."² Hence, he challenged everyone, opponents and colleagues alike, not to neglect nor forsake instructing the children in the church. But, the catechism was much more than simply a resource in teaching children; it also became a vital document for adults as well. Luther confessed that he had not mastered it completely and continued to use it as a devotional guide:

As for myself, let me say that I, too, am a doctor and preacher--yes, and as learned and experienced as any of those who act so high and mighty. Yet I do as a child who is being taught the Catechism. Every morning, and whenever else I have time, I read the recite word for word the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Psalms, etc. I must still read and study the Catechism daily, yet I cannot master it as I wish, but must remain a child and pupil of the Catechism, and I do it gladly.³

¹Tappert, Book of Concord, pp. 344-345. (I have taken the liberty to underline "me" and "my", to draw attention to this subjective personal element in confessing the objective truths of the Christian faith).

²LW 54, Table Talk #5557, Winter of 1542-1543, p. 452.

³Martin Luther's Preface, The Large Catechism, Tappert, Op. cit., p. 359.



Luther also referred to the Catechism as the Bible of the layman, . . . "in which the whole content of Christian doctrine necessary to be known for salvation by each Christian, is included."¹

In summary, the Catechism with clear expositions of the eternal Scriptural truths, and personalized adaptation of these truths, were, and continue to be prolific resources for pastoral care of all ages. Therefore Luther concludes his evaluation of the catechism by saying: "It is the most complete and best doctrine, and should continually be preached; all public sermons should be grounded and built thereupon. . . . In the Catechism, we have a very exact, direct, and short way to the whole Christian religion. For God himself gave the Ten Commandments, Christ himself penned and taught the Lord's Prayer, and the Holy Ghost brought together the articles of faith."²

Marriage of Clergy

At first glance the Reformation doctrine permitting clergy to marry may seem out of place as a resource for on-going pastoral care. However, upon closer investigation we soon discover that Luther felt even his severest critics would have conducted themselves differently if they had married. For example, Luther says the following about St. Jerome: "I know very well that he has done me much harm. He scolded women and gossiped about other women who were not

¹Appendix, Table Talk #6288, Cf. #6287.

²Hazlitt, Table Talk #CCLXVII, p. 153.

present. "I wish he had had a wife, for then he would have written many things differently."¹

Luther opposed enforced clergy celibacy because of some basic theological and practical reasons. These reasons later served immeasurably to enhance his Seelsorge especially in terms of marital and family life.

With the personal well-being of the pastor himself upper-most in Luther's mind, he says: "To remain continent in celibacy confronts one with temptations that are not trivial, as the experienced know."² ". . . Celibacy has hindered many good things, like the bringing to life of children, the activity of the state, and economic life. . . . Horrible crimes have proceeded from it, like fornication, adultery, incest, fluxes, dreams, fantasies, pollutions."³ Then using data from church history and the Scriptures, he speaks at some length about the tyranny and burden of enforced celibacy:

"When he was quite old, Augustine still complained about nocturnal pollutions. When he was goaded by desire Jerome beat his breast with stones but was unable to drive the girl [whom he had seen dancing in Rome⁴] out of his heart. Francis made snow-balls and Benedict lay down on thorns. Bernard macerated his harassed body until it stank horribly. I believe the virgins also have temptations and enticements, but if there are fluxes and pollutions the gift of virginity is no longer there; then the remedy of marriage which God has given should be taken hold of.

"People who occupied stations at least as high as ours lived in the estate of marriage. Peter had a mother-in-law,⁵ and

¹ LW 54, Table Talk #445, Early 1533, p. 72.

² Ibid., #3508, Between December 16 and 18, 1536, p. 218.

³ Ibid., #4368, February 26, 1539, p. 335.

⁴ A later version of the text adds this phrase in brackets.

⁵ Cf. Mark 1:30.

therefore had a wife too. So James, the brother of the Lord, and all the apostles were married, except John. Paul counted himself among the unmarried and widowers,¹ but it appears that he was married in his youth according to the custom of the Jews. Spyridion, bishop of Cyprus² was married. Bishop Hilary³ had a wife, for when he was in exile he wrote a letter to his little daughter in which he urged her to be obedient and to learn to pray. He wrote that he had been at the home of a rich man who promised that if Hilary's daughter behaved he would send her a golden cloak. In such a childlike way Hilary wrote to his little daughter. I marvel that the holy fathers contended with such juvenile temptations and did not feel the loftier ones when they occupied such high offices."⁴

In another place, Luther speaks quite openly about the problems of enforced celibacy in the monasteries:

Then he lamented the horrible temptations to pollution in the monasteries. "Almost every night the brothers were bothered by them, so that they didn't dare celebrate mass the next day.⁵ But when a large number of masses that had been imposed on us and appointed for us had to be omitted on account of our refusal, it became public, and the prior conceded that anybody at all could and should celebrate mass, even if he had had nocturnal pollutions. Phew!"⁶

Luther probably over-states his concluding remark by saying: "If the institution of marriage had stood firm, monasticism wouldn't have amounted to anything."⁷

¹ Cf. I Corinthians 7:8.

² Fourth Century.

³ Bishop of Arles (ca. 401 - ca. 450).

⁴ LW 54, Table Talk #3777, February 24, 1538, pp. 270-271.

⁵ Cf. this rule in Bede, The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation, XXVII, 9th question.

⁶ LW 54, Table Talk #3921, July 21, 1538, p. 295.

⁷ Ibid., #4322, Between January 12 and 15, 1539, p. 328.

In challenging the traditional view of celibacy, Luther realized that he was running against canonical law.¹ . . . "The marriage of priests is permitted by civil law but with the addition of the penalty that a priest who marries is suspended [from his office]."²

Accordingly, the penalty was more severe in the case of monks and nuns under vows. "the law says that whoever violates a nun is liable to death."³

Without getting into the development of this new doctrine or the complicated polemics against enforced celibacy, let us rather note Luther's positive approach to marriage and its "spin-off" in terms of pastoral care.

Luther's advice to clergy, based upon the authority of the Scriptures is quite straight forward: "My advice is that matrimony again be made free, and that everyone be left free choice to marry or not to marry. . . . For since God has not bound them, no one else ought to bind them or can bind them, even though he were an angel from heaven, still less if he be only a pope."⁴ Further, Luther shows

¹ See William N. Lazareth, Luther on the Christian Home (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), p. 170: . . . "Ever since marriage was suddenly included among the church's sacraments at the Council of Florence (1439), canon lawyers had the last word on all disputed marital controversies among the faithful. Most of these cases were channeled through the Dataria of Rome, a legal clearing house which suffered from a particularly evil reputation ever since its creation by Pope Innocent VIII (1484-1409). . . ."

² LW 54, Table Talk #1346, Between January 8 and March 23, 1532, p. 142.

³ Ibid.

⁴ PE 11, 120.

pastoral concern for the clergy who had already "married" but who were forced to live hypocritical lives in regard to their vows of celibacy. He advises them to obey "God rather than man" and to bring their spouses and families out into the open:

You will find many a pious priest against whom no one has anything to say except that he is weak and has come to shame with a woman, though both parties may be minded with all their heart to live together always in wedded love and troth, if only they could do it with a clear conscience, even though they might have to bear public shame. Two such persons are certainly married before God. And I say that where they are thus minded, and so come to live together, they should boldly save their consciences. Let him take her as his wedded wife, and live honestly with her as her husband, caring nothing whether the pope will have it so or not, whether it be against canon law or human law. The salvation of your soul is more important than tyrannical, arbitrary, wicked laws, which are not necessary for salvation and are not commanded by God.¹

Luther next gives three arguments to clarify his position on clergy marriage. First, most often a priest needs a woman to care for the domestic matters of his household. This help he can have with the blessing of the pope, so long as he does not sleep with her. However, "It is as though one were to put fire and straw together and command that it should neither smoke nor burn."² Secondly, "Marriage belongs to the realm of creation and not redemption and is therefore a civil rather than an ecclesiastical concern. Salvation is not endangered by a pious, God-fearing marriage, and the pope should have no jurisdiction over such 'physical external' matters which are not

¹ PE II, pp. 121-122.

² Ibid., p. 122.

peculiarly Christian but common to all humanity."¹ . . . Luther says:

"The pope has as little power to command this, as he has to forbid eating, drinking, the natural movement of the bowels, or growing fat."²

Thirdly, ecclesiastical authority must be bound to the laws of God. . . .

"Rome has freed what is bound (faith), and bound what is free (marriage):

Although the law of the pope is against it, nevertheless, when the estate of matrimony has been entered against the pope's law, then his law is at an end, and is no longer valid. For the commandment of God which decrees that no one shall put man and wife asunder, take precedence of the law of the pope; and the commandments of God must not be broken or neglected for the sake of the pope's commandment. . . . For Christ has set us free from all human laws, especially when they are opposed to God and the salvation of souls, as St. Paul teaches in Gal. 5:1, 1 Cor. 9:4ff; 10:23.³

There are at least three additional ideas in Luther's interpretation of marriage in general that have a bearing on clergy and laity alike. One idea is that marriage is a safe-guard against sin: "Whoever does not feel fitted for celibacy because he has to work at his chastity should call upon God's name and enter into marriage. A young man should marry by the time he is twenty, a young girl by fifteen or eighteen."⁴ However, there is also a good measure of realism in Luther's writings. Marriage is not a magic cure for sin residing within a person:

But in all this praise of marriage, I would not have the basic

¹Lazareth, Op. cit., p. 173.

²PE II, p. 122.

³Ibid., p. 123.

⁴WA 1011, 304, trans. Lazareth, Op. cit., p. 212.

fact of sin obscured. As it says in the fiftieth [fifty-first] Psalm, all man's flesh and blood is corrupted through Adam since we are all conceived and born in sin. Nor are man's sexual relations sinless in marriage either. It is only that God embellishes them out of grace because the order of marriage is his own personal handiwork, and he preserves all the good which he has planted within it even in the midst of all the surrounding sin.¹

The second basic idea to marriage in general has to do with personal enhancement of the spouses, because the marriage estate for Christians is understood as pleasing to God and has His blessing:

The world says of marriage: "Brief joy and long sadness." . . . But Christians believe that it is God Himself who institutes marriage. It is he who brings a man and wife together and ordains that they bring forth children. For God does not lie, and he has given his Word in order that men might be certain that the estate of marriage is well-pleasing to him in its nature, works, suffering, and everything else that belongs to it (Gen. 1:28). Now tell me, how can a man know more peace and joy in his heart than in the confidence that the nature and works of his office are well-pleasing to God?²

Thirdly, marriage offers the opportunity for "the noblest and most precious work of all, which is the rearing of children in the knowledge and love of God:

You see how rich the estate of marriage is in good works. For into the bosom of the family places children who are conceived from the parents' own bodies and in need of their Christian works. For example, in making known the gospel message to them, parents act as the children's apostles, bishops, and pastors. In short, there is no greater, more noble power on earth than the religious and civil authority exercised over their children.³

Here we see some of the uniqueness of Christian marriage in Luther's view: ". . . that man seeks in marriage nothing other than the opportunity to nurture his children in praise and honor of divine

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., p. 219.

³ Ibid., p. 220.

service."¹

Out of this "seed-bed" of a positive Christian approach to marriage, for clergy (and laity), Luther still could not come up with easy answers to some of the difficult marital cases that were brought to him for counsel. We have already seen his distinguishing between civil, "external" matters, and internal matters of the conscience. The proper task of a pastor, he felt, was to deal with the latter. However, it's no secret that Luther gave pastoral advice in some cases, where he moved into the civil "arena" himself. The result is that his counsel in these cases is still rather embarrassing today. For example, in the Table Talk we discover that he advised breaking the law of the land in order to console consciences:

. . . A certain man took a wife, and after bearing several children she contracted syphilis and was unable to fulfil her marital obligation. Thereupon the husband, troubled by the flesh, denied himself beyond his ability to sustain the burden of chastity. It is asked, Ought he be allowed a second wife? I [Martin Luther] reply that one or the other of two things must happen; either he commits adultery or he takes another wife. It is my advice that he take a second wife, however, he should not abandon his first wife but should provide for her sufficiently to enable her to support her life. . . .

"In such cases in which the conscience was troubled I have often offered counsel not according to the pope but according to my office, according to the gospel. Nevertheless, I warned the persons involved not to make this judgement of mine public. I said to them, 'Keep this to yourselves. If you can't keep it secret, take the consequences.' I won't make such judgements public because I don't have the authority to carry them out. . . .²

¹ Ibid., p. 183.

² LW 54, Table Talk #414, December, 1532, pp. 65-66.

To understand Luther's position better, we must realize that he holds strongly to the Christian love ethic rather than one of legalism: "The last word in the Christian faith is not human perfection but divine forgiveness."¹

Concerning the matter of divorce, Luther suggests that it may well be in some cases that the most loving Christian action would permit it in view of the "hardness" of the human heart:

As to divorce, it is still a moot question whether it is allowable. For my part, I so greatly detest divorce that I prefer bigamy to it, but whether it be allowable, I do not venture to decide. Christ himself, the Chief Pastor, says in Matt. 5:32, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, excepting for the cause of fornication, maketh her commit adultery; and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery." Christ, then, permits divorce, but for the cause of fornication only.²

I, indeed, who, alone against all, can decide nothing in this matter, would yet greatly desire at least the passage of 1 Cor. 7:15 to be applied here. Here the Apostle gives permission to put away the unbeliever who departs and to set the believing spouse free to marry again. Why should not the same hold true when a believer--that is, a believer in name, but in truth as much as unbeliever as the one Paul speaks of--deserts his wife, especially if he never intends to return? I certainly can see no difference between the two.³

Yet it is still a greater wonder to me, why they compel a man to remain unmarried after being separated from his wife, and why they will not permit him to remarry. For if Christ permits divorce for the cause of fornication, and compels no one to remain unmarried, and if Paul would rather have one marry than burn (1 Cor. 7:9), then he certainly seems to permit a man to marry another woman in the stead of the one who has been put away.⁴

¹ Lazareth, Op. cit., p. 195.

² PE 2, p. 271.

³ Ibid., p. 272.

⁴ Ibid.

Perhaps one of the most criticized cases of Luther's marital counsel was with Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, 1532-1547.¹ Luther advised a secret bigamy in preference to a public annulment of the marriage. It seems Lyth̄er gave this advice in this exceptional case based upon the practise of polygamy in the Old Testament, which was not condemned by Christ's teaching in the New Testament.. But Luther's position was even more precarious when he advised that the arrangement be kept secret, and if that was not possible he urged Philip to tell a Notluge, "good, strong white lie"² to prevent a public scandal. Needless to say the private counsel became public, because Philip could not keep a secret, nor was he any good at telling lies! Luther reacted: "How our papists will cry out! Let them cry! . . . If the landgrave has sinned, it is indeed a sin and an offense. We have given the best professional opinions . . . God won't forsake us and his Word. . . even if we are guilty of sins. . ."³

In summary, Luther taught that marriage of clergy (and laity) was part of the Divine plan for most people. Forced celibacy, he felt,

¹LW 54, p. 379, n. 57: "Landgrave Philip of Hesse, a prominent evangelical prince who had been unhappily married to the daughter of Duke George of Saxony, and had been resorting to a succession of prostitutes, finally decided to end his immoral conduct by marrying Margret von der Sale. The theologian Martin Bucer interceded in his behalf with Luther and Melanchthon, who reluctantly gave their approval to the proposed marriage on condition that the arrangements be kept secret. On March 4, 1540, the marriage took place. When it became widely known soon after, a scandal resulted."

²LW, Br, 9, 3513, n. 14.

³LW 54, Table Talk #5096, June 18, 1540, p. 388.

was in direct violation of God's intention as revealed in Scripture. Rather, clergy and others should have the freedom to marry if they wish, as a means of personal fulfilment, safeguard against sin, and as service to neighbour in terms of wife and children. In the area of difficult marital disputes, Luther made mistakes; although he sought always to advise the best in terms of Christian love as opposed to law. All in all, marriage for clergy has the potential of great blessing, not only in terms of personal growth for the clergy, but also in terms of offering more effective marital and family pastoral care.

Fables, Proverbs, and Other Things

It has become obvious throughout this research that Luther's primary resource for his Seelsorge has been the Word of God as found in the Scripture and his personal experience reflecting on that Word. However, we should not conclude that the Scripture was his only source of insight or inspiration for his work. The Apostles' Creed for example, impressed him as being nothing less than the work of God's hand: "I believe the words of the apostles' creed to be the work of the Holy Ghost; the Holy Spirit alone could have enunciated things so grand, in terms so precise, so expressive, so powerful. . . . This creed, then, should be the constant object of our most serious attention."¹

¹Hazlitt, Table Talk #CCLXIV, p. 152.

The last section of this Chapter will survey resources other than Scripture, Sacraments, Creed, Catechisms, etc., that Luther used to draw out practical truths for his pastoral care. This will help complete the picture of his sources which were varied and almost everywhere present!"

Fables and Proverbs

Luther had high praise for Aesop's Fables.¹ He describes them as ". . .The most delightful stories and descriptions. . .next to the Bible. . .containing. . .Moral teaching, that if offered to young people, will contribute much their edification."²

Then Martin Luther told the following fables, apparently to the delight of all those who sat at table with him:

1. The Wolf and the Lamb

"The wolf said to the lamb, 'You have muddied the water for me.' Answer: 'By no means; you are standing above me [in the brook].' So he excused himself by simply referring to the circumstances. "[Wolf:] 'You have nibbled off my meadow near the woods.' Answer: 'But I have no teeth, for I am still young.' "For the third time [the wolf said], 'Your father once did this to me.' Answer: 'What does it have to do with me?' "The wolf nevertheless burst forth, 'No matter how smart you try to be in excusing yourself, I'm going to devour you anyhow.'"

2. Another Example, About Gratitude

The Wolf and the Crane

"While the wolf was devouring the lamb a bone got stuck in his throat. He implored a crane with his long neck to remove the bone from his throat. When this was done the crane asked for a reward. The wolf replied, 'Am I supposed to reward you? The

¹LW 54, Table Talk #3490, Between October 27 and December 4, 1536, pp. 210ff. Cf. John W. Doberstein, "Luther and the Fables of Aesop", in Lutheran Church Quarterly, ed. Theodore G. Tappert, et al., Volume XIII, 1940, pp. 69ff.

²LW 54, Table Talk #3490, Op. cit., p. 211.

fever take you! You ought rather thank me that I didn't bite off your neck!"

3. Another Fable, Where Might is Right
About Leonine Society

"The lion, allied with a wolf, an ass, and a dog, captured a deer. The lion asked for his share. The wolf, being famished, divided the game into four equal parts. For this he had his throat cut by the lion, who pulled the wolf's hide off over his ears. Seeing this, the ass gave all four parts to the lion. The lion asked, 'Who taught you to divide this way?'

"The ass replied, 'That doctor over there with the red biretta,' as he pointed to the mangled wolf.

"Happy is he who is made wary by the peril of another."

4. Another Fable
Everything Should Not be Said Everywhere

"The lion invited all animals to his evil-smelling cave. He asked the wolf how it smelled, and the wolf replied, 'It stinks.'

"Then the ass, desiring to flatter the lion, said, 'It smells good.'

"When asked in the third place the fox said, 'I have a cold in my head.' Isn't this proverbial reply fitting? 'I have a cold in my head' means 'I am not at liberty to say anything.'"

5. Another Fable
Against Presumption and Temerity

"A certain merchant was buying bearskins from a hunter. Although the hunter had only twelve bearskins he sold the merchant thirteen. When he was to deliver the thirteenth, he took the merchant to a bear and said, 'Here it is.'

"The merchant answered, 'Give it to me.'

"When the hunter tried to stab the bear, the bear took hold of him, pulled his skin off over his head, and bit him in the ear as he left. When the hunter returned from the woods the merchant asked, 'What did the bear whisper into your ear?'

"Answer: 'He advised me not to sell twelve bearskins for thirteen today.'"

At another time there was a discussion about the origin of monasticism. Some one said: ". . . it is manifest that the devil is the author of the monks; when he wished to imitate God, the author of the priests, he made the mold too large, and it turned out to be a

¹ Ibid., pp. 211-213.

monk."¹ To this Luther replied: "That's an appropriate fable, for a monk is useful neither for the church, nor for the state, nor for domestic life. Accordingly the devil has to make monks, who obscure the works of God. In the church they're of no use, civil government they defame, and of marriage they think and teach callously."²

Luther also told the fable about a fly when he was discussing his proud and boastful opponents: "A fly was sitting on a load of hay and when it was brought in and unloaded, a great cloud of dust arose. 'Phew, the devil,' said the fly, what a dust one fly can raise."³ Then he added, these pompous critics think they do me great harm with their charges. But they are like a flea who fell off a camel and said: "I'll bet you felt as if a great burden had been taken off your back!"⁴

Luther gave many proverbs himself, although collections of these proverbs (Sprichwörterammlung) like the fables, are quite fragmented. Some are recorded in the Table Talk, copied directly from a list Luther had written on the wall by the stove:

Writings of Luther by his own hand, near the stove:
Whoever is faithful in the least, is also faithful in much;
whoever is unjust in the least is also unjust in much [Luke 16:10].
The reason: chewing a rag, dogs learn to devour leather.

¹ Ibid., Table Talk #4322, Between January 12 and 15, 1539, p. 327.

² Ibid., p. 328.

³ Quoted by Doberstein, Op. cit., p. 72.

⁴ Ibid.

Also: whoever is diligent in the least is also diligent in the great.

Whoever does not esteem the penny, will never be lord of the gulden.

Whoever wastes an hour, will also well waste a day.

Whoever despises little things will never attain to the large. Whoever rejects the head will not possess the chicken.

Jesus Sirach: carelessness in small things leads little by little to ruin. [Sir. 19:1].

Problem 18: Whoever is lost in his own doings, is a brother of the one who condemns himself.

When I lay the foundation of thrift, it's too late to save when there is nothing left to save.

Thrift is great revenue. The penny saved is richer than the penny spent.

Whoever looks down on a letter [of the alphabet] will nevermore acquire great learning.

Whoever doesn't want to live off a 100fl, will also not live off a thousand.

The hairy head afterwards is the opportunity for baldness.¹

The following are some examples of Luther's proverbs that were recorded during dinner conversations:

Things will never go well with anyone who dishonours preachers and women. That is, preachers have the office of preaching; women the office from whence the state is created. Who despises these, despises God and mankind.²

He spoke of the astonishing ingratitude of the world, which always wants things differently from that provided. No matter what is done it "gapes". This is the best proverb against the world: I will let you have it by mouth, since you will not hear, you can take it by mouth!³

A wife had a knife fall off the table to the ground. He said: there is a proverb--one ought not stop a knife in its fall, but keep hands and feet clear; to do otherwise would be very harmful!⁴

¹ Appendix, Table Talk #4801, May, 1541.

² Ibid., Table Talk #3664.

³ Ibid., #4687.

⁴ Ibid., #3617.

He also wrote many proverbs in the form of poems. In translating these pieces, some of the rhyming quality is lost. Here are a few examples:

(Re: Psalm 112:1)
This Word is really true
And not one hair will be missing
Until it is all fulfilled
Even if hell's hordes
Delay it a few years
The time will come
When it will be revealed
And everything will become clear
And everybody can freely talk about it
And witness that God keeps His Word and teaching!¹

(Re: Christ said:)
I am the light, though none see me,
I am the way, though none take it
Almighty I am, yet none fear me.
Merciful, yet none trust me.
I am faithful, yet they do not believe me.²

Verse by Luther
All would be well in this world
If everyone would tend to his own affairs,
And diligently wait upon his vocation,
Then could he stand before God.³

Rhyme by Luther
Good works devoid of favour,
Is a certain kind of Judas labour!⁴

Re: Gold, God
I know a word that has an "I",
Whoever sees it quickly desires it.
But when the "I" is gone and removed,
There is nothing better in heaven nor earth.
If now you have a wise mind,
Tell me what the word is.⁵

¹ Ibid., #5619.

² Ibid., #5879.

³ Ibid., #5890.

⁴ Ibid., #5891.

⁵ Ibid., #4857k.

While Luther gave proverbs himself, at times he was also quite fond of quoting others. For example, he recommended some German proverbs as these references show:¹ No doubt Luther enjoyed all of these fables and proverbs, and delighted in sharing them with others for "edification", because of his keen sense of humor.² This 'sterling' quality of character was of immense help in his pastoral care of self and others, especially in times of personal stress or accelerated opposition to the Reformation.

Other Things

During the time of the Reformation, it was very popular, traditionally, to appeal to saints and relics for spiritual comfort. Luther admits that while he was a monk: "I chose twenty-one saints and prayed to three every day when I celebrated mass; thus I completed the number every week. I prayed especially to the Blessed Virgin, who with her womanly heart would compassionately appease her Son."³ However, following his "Tower" experience,⁴ he became more and more critical of these forms of devotions: . . . "I used to worship saints who hadn't even been born!"⁵ And the claims made for relics are unfounded: "It is claimed that the head of St. John the Baptist is in Rome, although all histories show that the Saracens opened

¹ Ibid., #5334; #5359; and #5425.

² See Part Three, Chapter IX, "Sense of Humor".

³ LW 54, Table Talk #4422, March 20, 1539, p. 340.

⁴ See Part One, Chapter I.

⁵ LW 54, Table Talk #515, Spring, 1533, p. 92.

John's grave and burned everything to powder. Yet the pope is not ashamed of his lies. So with reference to other relics like the nails and the wood of the cross-they are the greatest of lies."¹

In another Table Talk, Luther probably overstates his case again, but he charges that all the legends concerning saints are outright lies:

"It's a singular calamity from the devil that we have no legend of a saint that's untainted. The legends of the saints are so full of shameful lies that it's astonishing. It takes hard work to correct them."

He [Martin Luther] was at that time reading the legend of St. Catherine,² and he said, "This is in conflict with all of Roman history. Maxentius³ drowned in the Tiber at Rome and never got to Alexandria. Maximinus⁴ was there, and one can read about him in Eusebius.⁵ Since the time of Julius Caesar,⁶ and long before, there was no king in Egypt. It must have been a desperate scoundrel who so troubled Christendom with such lies. Surely, he must be sitting at the bottom of hell.

"We used to believe such monstrous things and didn't dare utter a sound against them, even if we recognized them as such; but we didn't. Therefore give thanks to our Lord God, you young fellows, and be godly, so that you don't some day believe such things or even more outrageous ones!"⁷

Given this sharp critique of two popular aspects of sixteenth century piety, it's remarkable to observe Luther's pastoral response

¹ Ibid., #1273, December, 1531, p. 131.

² The Feast of Catherine of Alexandria was November 25. (Ibid., p. 475, n. 32).

³ Ibid., n. 33: "Marcus Aurelius Valerius Maxentius was Roman Emperor from AD 306-312."

⁴ Ibid., n. 34: "Galerius Valerius Maximinus was Roman Emperor from AD 308-314."

⁵ Ibid., n. 35: Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 8, 14.

⁶ B.X. (100-44).

⁷ Ibid., #5674, 1544, pp. 475-476.

to the situation of a student, Martin Weyer, who was preparing himself to visit his critically ill father. Apparently, the father was a devout Catholic, quite used to all "papistic usages", while the son was a convert to the Reformation faith: Here is Luther's reply:

... He [Martin Weyer] should in every way accommodate himself to his father, under no circumstances offend him, and adapt himself to his fasting, praying, invocation of the saints, and hearing of masses. At the same time, Luther said, through the Word of God the son should instruct his parent in the doctrine of justification and the words of the Creed. Above all, he should diligently impress upon him the preaching of Jesus Christ, and only after all this should he dwell on his upright life and his pure conversation. Then there will be hope for the father. If the father should not be changed by all this, the son must bear his infirmity, pray, and commend him to God. He should take care in every possible way not to offend his father by his liberty but should become the spiritual father of him who is his physical father. If for this purpose he adjusts himself to his father, he will not sin by attending mass and other profane rites.¹

This case is so remarkable, because it illustrates Luther's pastoral concern is in the final analysis still more important in his mind than correct doctrine. There is no taking advantage of a dying man. There is a kindliness instead of callousness. There is genuine acceptance without condition. There is a gentle persuasion in terms of the "new" faith, and yet it's all left in God's Hands even if the sick man should not alter his former beliefs and practises. Modern day pastors could well learn a valuable lesson here in relating to those who need our spiritual care in crisis situations, but who do not give evidence of faith like ours, or any faith at all!

¹ Ibid., #4568, May 7, 1539, pp. 353-354.

One of the most popular works by Luther on spiritual care, The Fourteen Consolations, 1520¹ is another remarkable attempt at overcoming the negative spiritual themes and practise of his day with the positive,² based upon the Scripture. According to the legends of the time, there were fourteen spiritual saints, who had appeared with the Christ-child in an usual vision to a Franconian shepherd in 1446.³ Prayer to these fourteen saints was therefore believed to be very helpful in time of illness or extreme distress.⁴

This Work by Luther was in response to a request to write something of comfort for the elector Frederick the Wise of Saxon, who was seriously ill. In accepting the challenge, he made the attempt to transform the traditional appeal to the fourteen saints with fourteen themes of spiritual care. The first part of the Work is a reflection on seven evils; the second part deals with seven blessings from God for the faithful Christian.

¹ LW 42, Devotional Writings I, "Fourteen Consolations", trans. by Martin H. Bertram, pp. 119ff.

² Cf. Clebsch and Jaekle, Op. cit., pp. 209-210.

³ LW 42, p. 119.

⁴ Ibid., n. 2: "The fourteen saints were: Denis of Paris (headache and rabies); Erasmus, called Elmo (colic and cramp); Blaise (throat ailments); Barbara (lightning fire, explosion, sudden and evil death); Margret (demonic possession and for pregnant women); Catherine of Alexandria (philosophers and students); George (soldiers); Achatius and Eustance (hunters); Pantaleon the Physician (tuberculosis); Giles (epilepsy, sterility, insanity); Cyprian the Deacon (demon possession); Vitus the Martyr (epilepsy); Christopher the Giant (travelers). Various areas substituted local saints for some of those listed here. The plague years of the fourteenth century may have helped to promote the cult."

Since this treatise is over fifty pages in length, it is impossible to quote extensively here. However, I shall give several brief excerpts from Luther's introductory comments:

In speaking of the consolation which Christians have, the Apostle Paul in Romans 15:4 writes, "Brethren, whatever was written, was written for our instruction, so that through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope." In this passage he plainly teaches us that our consolations are to be drawn from the Holy Scriptures.

The Holy Scriptures approach the matter of comfort in a two-fold manner, insofar, as they present to our view both blessings and evils, wholesomely intermingled. This is in accord with the word of the preacher, "In the day of evil be mindful of the good, and in the day of the good be mindful of evil" Eccclus. 11:25. The Holy Spirit knows that a thing has only such value and meaning to a man as he assigns to it in his thoughts. Whatever he regards as trivial and of no value will affect him only slightly, whether it be love when it comes to him or pain when it goes away. Therefore, the Spirit tries with great effort to draw man away from thinking about things and from being affected by them. When he has accomplished this, then man is indifferent about things no matter what they may be. Therefore, the diversion is best effected through the Word, by which our present thought is turned from the thing that moves us at the present moment to something that is either absent or does not move us at the moment. It is thus very true that we shall find consolation only through the Scriptures, which in the days of evil call us to the contemplation of our blessings, either present or to come, and, in the days of blessing, point us to the contemplation of the evils.

For a better understanding of these two series of pictures or images, let us divide each into seven parts.

The first part will deal with the evils. First we shall consider the evil within us; second, the evil before us; third, the evil behind us; fourth, the evil on our left hand; fifth, the evil on our right hand; sixth, the evil beneath us; and seventh, the evil above us.¹ . . .

. . . We must therefore absorb and consume whatever evils we have to bear, so that they will not only not grieve us, but will delight us. This will come true if this image finds its way into

¹ Ibid., pp. 124-125.

our heart and abides in the innermost affections of our mind. This is the first panel. The second follows.

The second part also consists of seven images, the opposite of the seven in the first part. Of these, the first represents the internal blessing; the second, the future blessing; the third, the past blessing; the fourth, the infernal blessing; the fifth, the blessing on the left hand; the sixth, the blessing on the right hand; and the seventh, the supernatural blessing.¹

Luther made use of the "simple" things of life before his eyes in reflecting more deeply upon the Divine-human realities. One day as he was listening to a nightingale singing and frogs croaking, he said:

"That's the way it is in the world. This nightingale is Christ, who proclaims the gospel. He's drowned out by the clamor of the heretics, of Eck, Cochlaeus, and Faber, who shout with great might."²

At another time, he drew out a lesson on faith and unbelief, watching timid birds:

When some birds built a nest in his garden and always flew away when we passed by, he [Martin Luther] said, "Dear little birds, don't fly away. I wish you nothing but good. If only you'd believe me! [Then he turned away from the nest and said], This is how we should believe God--that he wishes us well with his whole heart. He who has given his Son for me certainly doesn't want to kill us."³

"One evening Dr. Martin Luther saw a little bird settle for the night on the branch of a tree and said, 'This bird has had its supper and will sleep now in peace with no concern for the morrow or for lodging.' As David said, 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.' The bird sits blissful on his bough and lets God take care of him. Alas if Adam's fall had not corrupted all, what a wonderful creature of God man would have been, endowed with all knowledge and wisdom! How blessed would have been his life without toil,

¹ Ibid., p. 144.

² LW 54, Table Talk #4543, April 28, 1539, p. 351.

³ Ibid., #3223a, June 9, 1532, p. 192.

misfortune, and sickness! He would not have been plagued by the fear of death and would have delighted in all God's creatures. What a joyous change there would have been in all things, just as now in this vale of misery, God gives us in many creatures a foretaste of the resurrection."¹

Luther's dog Toepel provided him with an example of concentration:

When Luther's puppy happened to be at the table, looked for a morsel from his master, and watched with open mouth and motionless eyes, he Martin Luther said, "Oh, if I could only pray the way this dog watches the meat! All his thoughts are concentrated on the piece of meat. Otherwise he has no thought, wish, or hope."²

We have already seen how much Luther admired his children and reflected upon their simple, yet profound trust.³ In an additional Table Talk, he recommends the blessing of children: "I am richer than all the papist theologians in the whole world. . . . I have three children born in wedlock, and that is more than any papist theologian has."⁴ . . . "The life of children is most blessed and best. They have no earthly cares, they do not see the churches rent by the radicals, they feel no pangs of death and hells, they have only pure thoughts and joyous fantasies."⁵

The faith of a young child is real and remarkably vivid: One day Luther's five year old, Anastasia, was speaking at length about angels, Christ and eternal joy in heaven, to which Luther said: "'My

¹WA, TR IV, #4110, trans. Roland Bainton, "Luther's Single Faith" in Luther Today, Martin Luther Lectures, Volume I (Decorah, Iowa: Luther College Press, 1957), pp. 7-8.

²LW 54, Table Talk #274, May 18, 1532, pp. 37-38. Cf. Appendix, Table Talk #869, and #3349.

³Part One, Chapter Two, "Marriage, Family Life, and Household".

⁴WA, TR II, #2579, trans. Bainton, Luther Today, Op. cit., p. 9.

⁵Ibid., #2507b, trans. Bainton, Ibid., p. 11.

dear child, if only we could hold fast to this.' 'Why, Father', she asked, 'don't you believe it then?'. . . "Children accept it all', he said, 'without question, and that is why Christ commended them as our teachers.'"¹

For this reason, Luther found that before God, he was on the same level as his children, relying solely on the same child-like faith, trust, and simplicity in spiritual matters:

"I am abashed", Luther says, "that no matter how much I may be a doctor, I still have to go to school with Hans and Magdalene, for who among men can understand the full meaning of this word of our God, 'Our Father who art in heaven'? Anyone who really believes these words will be bound to say, 'He is the God who holds the heaven and the earth in His hands. Because He is my Father and I am His son, who can harm me? I am the lord of heaven and earth and all that is therein. The Angel Gabriel is my servant and Raphael is my watchman and the angels, in every need, my ministering spirits. My father who is in heaven has given them charge over me lest I dash my foot against a stone; and while I am affirming this, my God suffers me to be thrown into prison, to be drowned, or beheaded.' Then faith falters and in weakness I cry, 'Who knows whether it is true?' There is no harder word in Scripture than the word Thy in the petition, 'Thy will be done,'"²

It was necessary, therefore, for Professor Martin Luther, Doctor of Sacred Theology, to continue his study day after day at the same "spiritual" school attended by his Hans and Magdalene!

To Summarize

In this Chapter, I have attempted to point out some of the resources to Luther's pastoral care. It became apparent throughout

¹ Ibid., WA, TR I, #660, trans. Bainton, Ibid., p. 11. Also translated in LW 54, Table Talk #660, April 5, 1533, p. 120.

² Ibid., WA, TR II, #2047, trans. Bainton, Luther Today, Op. cit., pp. 11-12.

the years of Luther's pastoral endeavors, that he adapted and transformed many traditional themes and practises. In this process, we noted he accepted some things with little modification, e.g. use of Scripture, Sacraments, prayer, preaching, etc. However, with others, there was a more radical reformation: marriage for clergy, Catechisms, substitution for saints and relics, etc.

It has also been my intention within this investigation, to give a broader frame of reference from which better to appreciate the uniqueness of Luther's contribution to pastoral care at that time and now. In the last Chapter that follows there will be an attempt to give a theological analysis of Luther's pastoral care.

Chapter XII: Theological Analysis of His Pastoral Care

When we attempt to analyze Luther's understanding of pastoral care theologically, we must take into account his profound and complex notion "the priesthood of all believers" and its relation to the "spiritual office".¹ To facilitate this study, let us first review some of Luther's basic views on the general priesthood, authority and call, and the ordained ministry, drawing upon his own Works and Table Talks. Second, there will be a more detailed analysis of the relationship between the priesthood of all and the spiritual office, again with the assistance of Luther's Works and other scholarly interpretations. Third, additional comments will be offered reflecting Luther's further contributions in terms of the "personalized" Word and the Office of Keys.

Luther formulated this intriguing Scriptural doctrine in 1520.² While it is impossible to make an exhaustive study here, yet a limited presentation will still prove helpful, particularly in terms of the relationship of this doctrine to the spiritual office.³

¹See Wilhelm Brunotte, Das geistliche Amt bei Luther (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1959), for a careful, systematic presentation of this question based on six basic writings of Luther. Later in this Chapter, specific references will be cited from this work.

²Martin Luther, "An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Reform of the Christian Estate", 1520, trans. Charles M. Jacobs in Three Treatises (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960).

³See Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, Op. cit., "The Evangelical Priesthood", pp. 313ff.; Other works that deal with this subject before and after Luther are the following: Cyril Eastwood, The Royal Priesthood of the Faithful (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963); ("An Investigation of the Doctrine from Biblical Times to the Reformation"); G.H. Gerberding, The Priesthood of Believers, "In

He begins this Reformation teaching by rejecting the traditional idea of two distinct realms: the "spiritual estate" of the pope, bishops, priests and monks, and the "temporal estate" of the princes, lords, artisans, and farmers.¹ No one, he asserts, should take such a distinction to heart and be frightened by it: ". . . all Christians are truly of the 'spiritual estate' and there is among them no difference at all but that of office, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12."²

From this premise of all Christians belonging to the same "spiritual estate", Luther continues in this same treatise to give another of his most daring statements:³ "Through baptism all of us are consecrated to the priesthood, as St. Peter says in 1 Peter 2, 'Ye are a royal priesthood, a priestly kingdom.'"⁴ . . . He next gives an example to illustrate this teaching more clearly:

. . . If a little group of pious Christian laymen were taken captive and set down in a wilderness, and had among them no priest consecrated by a bishop, and if there in the wilderness they agree in choosing one of themselves, married or unmarried, and were to charge him with the office of baptizing, saying mass,

Its Relation to Inner Mission Work or Christian Social Service" (Published by the Inner Mission Board of the United Lutheran Church in America, 1920; Shirley C. Guthrie, Jr., Priests Without Robes, "The Priesthood of Believers" (Richmond: The CLC Press, 1964); and Karl H. Hertz, Everyman a Priest (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960).

¹Luther, "An Open Letter. . .", Op. cit., p. 14.

²Ibid.

³See Part Two, Chapter VII: ". . . I will therefore give myself as a Christ to my neighbour", is another example.

⁴Luther, "An Open Letter. . .", Op. cit., p. 14.

absolving and preaching, such a man would be as truly a priest as though all bishops and popes had consecrated him. That is why in cases of necessity one can baptize and give absolution,¹ which would be impossible unless we were all priests. This great grace and power of baptism and of the Christian Estate they have well-nigh destroyed and caused us to forget through canon law.² It was in the manner aforesaid that Christians in olden days chose from their number bishops and priests, who were afterwards confirmed by other bishops, without all the show which now obtains. It was thus that Sts. Augustine, Ambrose, and Cyprian became bishops.³

Luther did not mean that every baptized Christian should exercise his priestly office in public. This would lead to utter chaos. No, rather, there must be a consensus by a Christian community to choose certain dedicated persons with suitable training, to preach the Word in public and administer the Sacraments: "Therefore, a priest in Christendom is nothing else than an office-holder."⁴ If he should be removed from office, he would become a layman again like all the rest. With this radical interpretation, Luther discards the traditional teaching of characteres indelebiles.⁵

¹ Ibid., p. 15, n. 9: "Lay-baptism in view of imminent death is a practise as old as the Christian Church. The right of the laity to administer baptism in such cases was expressly recognized by the Council of Elvira, in the year 306, and the decree of that Council became a part of the law of the Church. The right of the laity to give absolution in such cases rests on the principle that in the absence of the appointed official of the Church any Christian can do for any other Christian the things that are absolutely necessary for salvation, for 'necessity knows no law.'"

² Ibid., n. 10: "The canon law, called by Luther throughout this treatise and elsewhere, the 'spiritual law', is a general name for the decrees of councils and decisions of the popes, collected in the so-called Corpus juris canonici."

³ Ibid., pp. 14-15.

⁴ Ibid., p. 16.

⁵ Ibid., n. 11: "The character indelebilis, or 'indelible mark',

There is then no essential difference between the clergy and laity, except as to their respective office and work. This, Luther claims, is the correct interpretation of the Scriptures in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and 1 Peter 2: "We are all one body of Christ, the Head, all members one of the other."¹ " . . . A Cobbler, a smith, a farmer, each has the work and office of his trade, and yet they are all alike consecrated priests and bishops, and everyone by means of his own work or office must benefit and serve every other, that in this way many kinds of work may be done for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the community, even as all the members of the body serve one another."²

What is the significance of this Reformation doctrine to the work of pastoral care? In the first place, it restores some of the true character of the Christian church. Luther reacted strongly against those of his day who taught that the church is built up mainly by new additional ceremonies: "They don't realize that building up the church means to lead consciences from doubt and murmuring to faith, to knowledge, and to certainty."³ It is in this whole area of consolatio fratrum (Christian conversation and mutual comforting) that the

received authoritative statement in the bull Exultate Deo (1539). The Council of Trent defined the correct Roman teaching as follows: "Since in the sacrament of orders, as in baptism and confirmation, a character is impressed which cannot be destroyed or taken away, the Holy Synod justly condemns the opinion of those who assert that the priests of the New Testament have only temporal power, and that those once rightly ordained can again be made laymen, if they do not exercise the ministry of the Word of God."⁴

¹ Ibid., p. 16.

² Ibid., p. 17.

³ LW 54, Table Talk, #3323b, Spring, 1533, pp. 195-196.

priesthood of all believers can greatly supplement and undergird the work of the ordained ministry:¹ Luther suggests that both clergy and laity alike should "leave the door open" for this personalized ministry.

Three Twentieth century writers make the following comments about pastoral care and the priesthood of the faithful. Dr. Seward Hiltner, after surveying the contemporary scene, asks the question: "Is there no universal pastorhood to go along with the universal priesthood?"² The implication is that as we renew the concept of every believer a priest, we should also be renewing the idea of every believer a pastor. . . .Dr. Howard Clinebell suggests a creative partnership between the clergy and laity: "The unmet needs in every church and community are so numerous and varied that a clergyman working alone can only scratch the surface. A church's caring ministry to the community's lonely, sick, aging, bereaved, shut-ins, strangers, institutionalized, and a host of other suffering human beings, can be tripled or more by involving trained laymen in pastoral work."³ . . .Dr. Hester also encourages the same partnership (clergy and laity) within the Christian community. While Luther has given us some theological reasons for this development, Hester adds empirical evidence from the behavioural sciences:

¹See Part III, Chapter IX: "Confession and Absolution".

²Seward Hiltner, Preface to Pastoral Theology (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958), p. 37.

³Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling, Op. cit., p. 284.

The theological imperative to equip the laity to do pastoral care resonates with recent developments in community psychiatry and in counseling. Specialists in psychiatry and in counseling are recognizing that laypersons can be trained to do effective crisis intervention and responsible counseling. L.I. Dublin asserts that "the lay volunteer was the single most important discovery in the fifty year history of the suicide prevention movement. Nothing of any significance happened until he came into the picture." . . . research done by [Robert] Carkhuff¹ and his associates shows that often the trained layperson functions in a more helpful way with the counselee than the professional person who has had formal counseling training.²

In a theological summary, Luther says the blessings that can be realized through the priesthood of all believers, not only has human "helpfulness" according to the training and experience of the lay people involved, but it has the quality of the Divine. In speaking about private confession, one Christian to another, he writes:

" . . . I rejoice that it exists in the church of Christ, for it is a cure without equal for distressed consciences. For when we have laid bare our conscience to our brother and privately made known to him the evil that lurked within, we receive from our brother's lips the word of comfort spoken by God Himself. And, if we accept this in faith, we find peace in the mercy of God speaking to us through our brother."

¹ See Robert R. Carkhuff, Helping and Human Relations: A Primer for Lay and Professional Helpers (New York: Rinehart, and Winston, 1969), 2 vols.

² Richard L. Hester, "Toward Professionalism or Voluntarism in Pastoral Care", in Pastoral Psychology, Vol. 24, n. 4 (231), Summer, 1976, pp. 313-314.

³ LW 36, Word and Sacrament II, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church", p. 86.

Authority and Call

From our earlier discussion in Chapter VIII we have discovered within the theology of Luther, that flesh and Spirit or the human and the Divine are intimately inter-related.¹ In following the debate with Zwingli, it became quite clear that Luther held that the two natures, human and Divine, were equally and fully present within the person of Christ. This suggested further, that the words and deeds of Christ were not only human activities by a mere man, but also the Divine activity of God Himself. The implication for pastoral care is most striking! Christ's pastors, possessing within themselves and their office His Spirit, share words of comfort and hope not only in simple human terms but also in terms of the "Trans-human". This is because of Divine authority and call. For Luther, human words and actions can in fact bear the Divine. It is this intriguing connotation that we will next explore briefly.

Luther begins by giving a short review of God's revealed plan to address people through other people. He refers to the time of the patriarchs, Christ, the apostles and then to his own experience:

... So it was said of Rebekah² that she did not inquire of God but of Shem or some other patriarch. For God always had certain persons and places in the world. He sent Moses, and when Moses said something they had to concede, 'Not Moses, but God has spoken.'

"After Moses God sent Christ. His teaching is also certain and his person is sure, and so we are not mistaken in concluding, when we hear something from him, that it is God who has said it. For he said from heaven, 'This is my Son, listen to him' [Matt. 17:5]. Afterward, when Christ went away, he sent apostles

¹ Part II, "Luther's Paradoxical Theology".

² Cf. Genesis 25:22.

and instituted sacraments (baptism and the Lord's Supper), so that when these are present and are heard and received we can truly say, 'God says this.' Often when I was troubled by something, Pomeranus¹ or Philip² or even my Katy³ would speak to me, and I was comforted as I realized that my God was saying this because a brother was saying it either out of duty or out of love. For God says that we should listen to Christ, but Christ says that we should listen to the apostles."⁴

. . . This is our greatest honor that we have this ministry and God is so close to us. For whoever hears Christ, hears God Himself; whoever hears St. Peter or a preacher, hears Christ and God talking to us. As He says: he that heareth you, heareth me [Luke 10:16]. And Paul to the Galatians: you accepted my word as the Word of God; in truth, that it is!⁵

No one has the authority himself to take over the public office of pastoral ministry. It is an office that is given or bestowed by way of an orderly call within a Christian community:

. . . In this Word we see more clearly and surely than by any light or assurance whence priests or ministers of the Word are to be sought, namely, from the flock of Christ alone, and nowhere else. We have clearly shown that to each one is given the right of ministering in the Word, and indeed that he is commanded to do so if he sees that teachers are lacking or if those in office are not teaching correctly, as Paul affirmed in 1 Cor. 14 [28ff], so that the power of God might be proclaimed by us all. How much more, then, does not a certain community as a whole have both right and command to commit by common vote such an office to one or more, to be exercised in its stead. With the approval of the community these might then delegate the office to others.⁶

¹ John Bugenhagen, of Pomerania.

² Philip Melancthon.

³ Luther's wife.

⁴ LW 54, Table Talk, #505, Spring, 1533, pp. 88-89.

⁵ Appendix, Table Talk, #5294.

⁶ LW 40, Church and Ministry II, p. 36.

Luther emphasized this point strongly because of the many "fanatics" or "enthusiasts" of his day who organized small dissenting cells of people around themselves.¹

What constitutes an "orderly call" for Luther? He answers that God calls a person into the office of the public ministry in two basic ways: one is the inner call communicated directly by the Divine Spirit, e.g. in the past there were the experiences of the Old Testament prophets and St. Paul in the New Testament.² The other is an outer call that comes "mediated" through others. In the case of the former, there must be some "outward signs and witness" to prove itself. In the latter, no such extra-ordinary signs are necessary since others prayerfully request an individual to assume a pastoral office:

. . . But when he [St. Paul] says "through man", I take this to refer to those who have a divine calling, but one that has come through man.

God calls in two ways, either by means or without means. Today He calls all of us into the ministry of the Word by a mediated call, that is one that comes through means, namely, through man. But the apostles were called immediately by Christ Himself, as the prophets in the Old Testament had been called by God Himself. Afterwards the apostles called their disciples, as Paul called Timothy, Titus, etc. These men called bishops, as in Titus 1:5ff; and the bishops called their successors down to our own time, and so on to the end of the world. This is a mediated calling, since it is done by man. Nevertheless, it is divine.³

¹ See Appendix Table Talk #839; #2595; #3957; #5434.

² See Exodus 3:10; Isaiah 6:8-9; Jeremiah 1:2-10; Acts 22:21; Galatians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Colossians 1:1, etc.

³ LW 26, Lectures on Galatians, 1535, p. 17. Cf. Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, Op. cit., pp. 331-332: ". . . For Luther it is always of decisive importance that the community has the authority to choose and to call its servants of the Word. At the same time,

Luther claims that this whole process, of calling a pastor in an orderly fashion, is extremely important, not only for the sake of good order in the Christian community, but also for the pastor himself: "The call, therefore, is not to be despised. For it is not sufficient if a man has the Word and the pure doctrine. He must also have the assurance of his call, and whoever enters without this assurance enters only in order to kill and destroy. (John 10:10). For God never prospers the work of those who are not called. . . ."¹

Therefore we who are in the ministry of the Word have this comfort, that we have a heavenly and holy office; being legitimately called to this, we prevail over all the gates of hell (Matt. 16:18). On the other hand, it is dreadful when the conscience says: "You have done this without a call!" Here a man without a call is shaken by such terror that he wishes he had never heard the Word he preaches. For by his disobedience he sullies all his works, regardless of how good they are, so that even his greatest works and deeds become his greatest sins.²

However, the vocation of serving as a Christian pastor remains as a distinct office and function within a Christian Community. It is based upon a Divine call given through the invitation and election of fellow Christians. "It is true that all Christians are priests, but not all are pastors. For to be a pastor one must be not only a Christian and a priest but must have an office and a field of work

however, he follows the example of the New Testament described in Acts and the pastoral epistles by wanting the bishops, if they are genuine bishops, to participate. They may not, however, call without the approval of the community. . . . Luther distinguishes normal situations from emergency situations. In an emergency situation, for example, the government may call a preacher or an individual may even take the office upon himself, if a community does not exist which would be in position to call a pastor for itself. But all of these are exceptions. . . . A call issued through the church, however, is a call from Christ Himself."

¹ Ibid., pp. 19-20.

² Ibid., p. 20.

committed to him. This call and command make pastors and preachers."¹

Ordained Ministry

Above we have discussed some basic accents in Luther's theology pertaining to the authority and call to pastoral ministry. In the Table Talk, we are given a great deal more information on Luther's thought relating to the nature of an ordained pastoral ministry. To a large extent, this office is defined functionally: "Men are not ordained in order to make or produce anything or make baptism or the Word but are to give and administer these."² In another place, Luther defines a minister [or pastor] "as one who is placed in the church for the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments."³ The importance of being called is again repeated: "No man should undertake anything, except he be called thereunto. Calling is two-fold; either divine, which is done by the highest power, which is of faith; or else it is a calling of love, which is done by one's equal, as when one is desired by one's friend to preach a sermon. Both vocations are necessary to secure the conscience."⁴

Who should be ordained into the pastoral ministry? Luther gives

¹ LW 13, Selected Psalms, p. 65.

² LW 54, Table Talk, #659, Early in 1535, p. 119.

³ Ibid., #574, Fall or Summer, 1533, p. 100.

⁴ Hazlitt, Table Talk, #CCCXC, p. 222.

a number of preferences. The first has to do with some preliminary experiences and responsibilities such as teaching school: "I wish nobody would be chosen preacher unless he had first kept school. Now all the young fellows want to start out as preachers and flee from schoolwork. But if a young man has kept school for about one to ten years, he can leave with a good conscience, for it involves much work and is held in low esteem."¹ As already noted there is the important matter of a personal call into the ordained ministry. Luther says we should indeed boast about our call. Not to gain special recognition, or prestige or financial gain, but to glorify God and the ministry He has given us: "The reason for our proud boasting is that we are in a divine calling and in God's own work, and that the people need to be assured of our calling, in order that they may know that our word is in fact the Word of God. This, then, is not a vain pride; it is a most holy pride against the devil and the world. And it is a true humility in the sight of God."²

After a period of instruction and disciplined study of the Scriptures, those sensing a call to pastoral ministry are encouraged to volunteer their services if there is a pastoral vacancy:

Young people must be brought up to learn the Holy Scriptures; when such of them as know they are designed for the ministry present themselves and offer their service, upon a parish falling void, they do not intrude themselves, but are as a maid

¹ LW 54, Table Talk, #5247, Between September 2 and 17, 1540, p. 403.

² LW 26, Lectures on Galatians, 1535, pp. 20-21.

who, being arrived at woman's estate, when one makes suit to marry her, may do it, with a good and safe conscience towards God and the world. To thrust out another is to intrude; but when in the church a place is void, and thou sayest: I will willingly supply it, if ye please to make use of me; then thou art received, it is a true vocation and calling. Such was the manner of Isaiah, who said: "Here I am; send me." He came of himself when he heard they stood in need of a preacher; and so it ought to be; we must look whether people have need of us or no, and then whether we be desired or called.¹

As to the natural abilities of a pastor, Luther would like to see the following in a candidate:

A good preacher should have these properties and virtues: first, to teach systematically; secondly, he should have a ready wit; thirdly, he should be eloquent; fourthly, he should have a good voice; fifthly, a good memory; sixthly, he should know when to make an end; seventhly, he should be sure of his doctrine; eighthly, he should venture and engage body and blood, wealth and honor, in the Word; ninthly, he should suffer himself to be mocked and jeered of every one.²

Personal devotion to the Lord is considered of paramount importance:

"Preachers must be endued with a great spirit, to serve people in body and soul., in wealth and honor, and yet, nevertheless, suffer and endure the greatest danger and unthankfulness."³ Luther goes on to explain what he means, by drawing on the interaction of Christ with Peter: "Hence Christ said to Peter thrice: 'Peter, lovest thou me?' Afterwards he said: 'Feed my sheep'; as if to say: Peter, if thou wilt be an upright shepherd, and careful of souls, then thou must love me; otherwise, it is impossible for thee to be an upright and a

¹ Hazlitt, Table Talk #CCXC1, p. 223.

² Ibid., #CCCXCVII, p. 225.

³ Ibid., #CCCCXI, p. 229.

careful shepherd; thy love to me must do the deed."¹

Logic and rhetoric were also considered important by Luther:

A preacher should be a logician and a rhetorician, that is, he must be able to teach, and to admonish; when he preaches touching an article, he must, first, distinguish it. Secondly, he must define, describe, and show what it is. Thirdly, he must produce sentences out of the Scriptures, therewith to prove and strengthen it. Fourthly, he must adorn it with similitudes; and, lastly, he must admonish and rouse up the lazy, earnestly reprove all the disobedient, all false doctrine, and the authors thereof; yet, not out of malice and envy, but only to God's honor, and the profit and saving health of the people.²

These positive qualities or virtues are necessary for the proper conduct of the pastoral office, because it doesn't take long for people to notice any defect that might detract from the pastoral ministry offered. "The defects in a preacher are soon spied; let a preacher be endued with ten virtues, and but one fault, yet this one fault will eclipse and darken all his virtues and gifts, so evil is the world in these times. Dr. Justus Jonas has all the good virtues and qualities a man may have; yet merely because he hums and spits, the people cannot bear that good and honest man."³

Pastors who are faithful in their calling, will also find their needs taken care of by the Lord: "When we leave to God his name, his kingdom and will, then will he also give unto us our daily bread, remit our sins, and deliver us from the devil and all evil."⁴

¹ Ibid.

² Ibid., #CCCCXIX, pp. 232-233.

³ Ibid., #CCCXCVII, p. 225.

⁴ Ibid., #CCCCXV, p. 231.

Therefore, Luther felt strongly that local congregations should provide adequate sustenance for their pastors. It's interesting to follow his argument on this point, debating some who felt pastors/priests should serve freely and not expect any remuneration from the community:

"Their priests do teach for hire." Some there be who abuse this sentence, wrestling it against good and godly teachers and preachers, as if it were not right for them to take the wages ordained for the ministers of the church, on which they must live. They produce the sentence where Christ says: "Freely ye have received, freely give." They allege also the example of St. Paul, who maintained himself by the work of his hands, to the end that he might not be burdensome¹ to the church.

These accusations proceed out of hatred to the function of preaching, to which Satan is a deadly enemy. These ungodly people, by filling the ears of the simple with such speeches, not only occasion the preachers to be condemned, but also the function of preaching to be suspected; whereas they ought, with all diligence, to endeavor that the ministers, for the Word's sake, might again be restored to their honest dignity.

It is true, as Christ says: "Freely ye have received, freely give"; for he will have the chief end of preaching to be directed to God's honor only, and the people's salvation; but it follows not that it is against God for the church to maintain her ministers, who truly serve her in the Word, though it were against God and all Christianity, if the ministers of the church should omit the final cause, for which the office of preaching is instituted, and should look and have regard only to their wages, or aim at lucre and gain, and not uprightly, purely, and truly proceed in the office of teaching.

Like as the ministers of the church, by God's command, are in duty bound to seek and promote God's honor, and the saving health and salvation of the people, with true and upright doctrine, even so the church and congregation have command from God to maintain their ministers, and honorably nourish and cherish them; for Christ says: "Every laborer is worthy of his hire." Now if he be worthy, then no man ought to cast it in his teeth that he takes wages. St. Paul more clearly expresses himself: "The Lord hath also commanded, that they which preach the gospel, should live off the gospel." He puts on the office of the law, and says: "Do ye not know, that they which do minister about holy things, live off the things of the temple? And they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar." Moreover he makes use of a very fine similitude, saying: "Who goeth a warfare at any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of the fruit thereof?" But especially mark the comparison which he gives in his epistle to the Corinthians: "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter

¹"Burthensome" is the spelling of this word in Hazlitt's translation of this Table Talk.

if we shall reap your carnal things?" Indeed, every Christian, but especially the officers of the church, ministers, and preachers, should so carry themselves that they fall not into suspicion of being greedy and covetous: yet they must not so conceive it, as if it were wrong to receive of the church and assembly, that which is needful for the maintenance of the body.¹

In short, the ordained pastoral ministry is of vital importance to the community of faith. Within this office Luther localizes the public responsibility of preaching the Word, administering the Sacraments, and comforting the distressed. In so doing the pastor ministers to the saints in order that they too might in turn minister to others.²

The Spiritual Office and Priesthood of all Believers

There is usually basic agreement among theologians concerning Luther's teaching about both the spiritual office as such and the priesthood of believers. However, when it comes to interpreting the relationship between these two doctrines in Luther, there are many differing opinions. In the past century there are those such as Julius Stahl who held strictly to a Divinely appointed ministerial office.³

¹ Ibid., #CCCCXX, pp. 233-234.

² Ephesians 4:11-12: "It was he who 'gave gifts to mankind'; he appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers. He did this to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service, in order to build up the body of Christ."

³ Brunotte, Das geistliche Amt bei Luther, Op. cit., p. 10: "Stahl contends for this understanding of the spiritual office in reference to Luther, in which he emphasizes that the office not only practises its functions by the authority of God, but also that it has the right and call to claim these functions by Divine authority alone and not by 'any commission or concession of the congregation'. . ." Ibid., p. 11: "Stahl makes a theological distinction between congregation and the Church. 'Congregation means the people who are united in the faith.' Church means the Divine institution above the people. The congregation comes into being through the will and action of people, their inward commitment to faith, their outward joining. The Church is an institution, the Kingdom founded of God and continually maintained by

The office came into being because of a specific ordering by God Himself. It was God who gave the Word and Sacraments. Therefore, it was God who decreed that certain persons be responsible to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments. Hence, Stahl's understanding of Luther's position is that God's authorization is the single most decisive component to the origin of the spiritual office.

Among those theologians who held an opposing view is J.W.F. Hbfling. He contends that the origin of Luther's spiritual office was not on the basis of Divine ordering alone, but rather originated directly, by inner necessity, out of the priesthood of all believers.¹ "For the first thirty years of our century most scholars accepted Hbfling's interpretation of Luther's view and made the

God. The doing of the congregation is a work of people directed towards God or done in obedience to God's commands - its common faith, worship, and virtuous life. The work of the Church is an efficacy of God's founding directed towards people: the proclamation of the Gospel; the administration of the Sacraments; the exercise of the office of the Keys. The preaching, absolution, administration of the Eucharist, etc. is done in the name of the Church, not in the name of the congregation. The clergy are servants of the Church, not of the congregation. . . . In spite of several counter indications, Stahl's presentation leads to an institutional conception of the spiritual office. . . . It is to the spiritual office alone that the proclamation of the Gospel, attributed to the Church as an institution of the Sacraments, the exercise of the office of Keys and excommunication. The priesthood of all believers, on the other hand, is of a quite different nature. . . . (It) is a personal attitude for personal salvation, the office is an attitude used as a tool in the household of salvation."

¹ Brunotte, Op. cit., p. 13.

general ministry of all Christians the basis of the special ministry, which existed solely for reasons of outward order."¹

Three German scholars, W. Ebert, M. Doerne, and E. Wolf, each working independently of the other, in the 1930's, developed a new view. Whereas earlier, the Divine origin of the spiritual office and the "derived" origin from the general priesthood were taught in opposition, now these two alternatives were brought together. These three scholars held both to be of crucial importance in Luther.²

In working out his definition of the spiritual office, Luther had to respond both to the Roman Catholics on the one hand and the fanatics on the other hand. Against the former, he sought to reject the idea that the ordained office meant to officiate at the sacrifice of the mass. On the contrary, his emphasis was continually on the general responsibility of all Christians by virtue of their baptism. to preach the Gospel.³ In opposition to the fanatics, however, he pointed to the concept "Office of the Church". The ordained office has a specific function within orderly parish life. To Luther, "Office" had at least two basic meanings - office of the Word and office of the Church. In regard to the first meaning, this is a function of the ministry of all believers; in regard to the second, this is an ordering of the church itself, both under the direction of

¹ Lennart Pinomaa, Faith Victorious, Op. cit., pp. 126-127.

² Brunotte, Op. cit., pp. 22-23.

³ Pinomaa, Op. cit., p. 127.

God Himself.¹

To deal more specifically with the connection between the office and general ministry, let us turn again to Luther's treatise 'The Babylonian Captivity of the Church'. In the first place, he argues, there is no difference fundamentally between the ordained priest and all Christians in terms of receiving both the bread and wine. "For here the Word and example of Christ stand unshaken when he says, not by way of permission, but of command: 'Drink of it, all of you' [Matt. 26:27]. For if all are to drink of it, and the words cannot be understood as addressed to the priests alone, then it is certainly an impious act to withhold the cup from the laymen when they desire it."² Priests and laymen alike have equal right to receive the Sacrament in both kinds.

Likewise in receiving the Word and spiritual counsel, both enjoy equal status in Luther's thinking, and may approach another "brother" directly for that consolation:

In the first place, Christ speaks in Matt. 18 [15-17] of public sins and says that if our brother hears us, when we tell him his fault, we have saved the soul of our brother, and that he is to be brought before the church only if he refuses to hear us, so that his sin can be corrected among brethren. How much more will it be true of secret sins, that they are forgiven if one brother freely makes confession to another? So it is not necessary to tell it to the church, that is, as these babblers interpret it, to the prelate or priest. On this matter we have further authority from Christ, where he says in the same chapter: "Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" [Matt. 18:18]. For this is said to each

¹ Ibid.

² LW 36, Word and Sacrament II, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," 1520", p. 21.

and every Christian. Again, he says in the same place: "Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my father in heaven" [Matt. 18:19]. Now, the brother who lays his secret sins before his brother and craves pardon, certainly agrees with his brother on earth, in the truth which is Christ. Of this Christ says even more clearly, confirming his preceding words: "For truly, I say to you, where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" [Matt. 18:20].¹

In this passage, Luther is not addressing an emergency situation. Absolution is thought of as an ongoing "ordinary" function of all believers, one to the other. Hence, Luther demonstrates in the first parts of this treatise that the general priesthood and the spiritual office are of equal status in personally receiving and sharing the Sacraments and Word.

To end our analysis of this treatise at this point would be to miss out on an important principle in Luther's teaching about the "two" forms of ministry. There is an important presupposition by Luther to place the spiritual office, in one sense, above that of the general ministry:

Let everyone, therefore, who knows himself to be a Christian, be assured of this, that we are all equally priests, that is to say, we have the same power in respect to the Word and the sacraments. However, no one may make use of this power except by the call of a superior. (For what is the common property of all, no individual may arrogate to himself, unless he is called.) And therefore this "sacrament" of ordination, if it is anything at all, is nothing else than a certain rite whereby one is called to the ministry of the church. Furthermore, the priesthood is properly nothing but the ministry of the Word - the Word, I say; not the law, but the gospel.²

¹ Ibid., p. 87.

² Ibid., p. 116.

While both ministries are valid and equal, yet Luther here presupposes the spiritual office as having a broader and necessary function, that of public ministry in the church and community.¹ This is one distinguishing feature between the two ministries.

There is another way, according to Brunotte, whereby the spiritual office and general priesthood are distinguished in the same treatise by Luther. This distinguishing mark is that of vocation.² The "full-time" activity of those in office is different from those who are not in office. In addition to that personal equality before the Word and Sacraments those called to the spiritual office have another assignment and responsibility, to take the initiative and serve God's Word and Sacraments to all who will receive them. They are simply making use of the spiritual resources that belong rightly to the whole church. In another treatise, Luther continues the same theme in that the one who aspires to the spiritual office, "should let himself be called and chosen to preach and to teach in the place of and by the command of the others."³ Therefore, the authorization to fulfill this vocation publicly is ordinarily received from the congregation as a whole and not from the person himself, that is when

¹ Brunotte, Das geistliche Amt bei Luther, Op. cit., p. 51.

² Ibid., p. 56. For a study by a leading Swedish theologian, that aims at integrating Luther's statements on vocation with his theology, see Gustaf Wingren, Luther on Vocation, trans. Carl C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957).

³ LW 39, Church and Ministry I, "That a Christian Assembly or Congregation Has the Right and Power to Judge All Teaching and to Call, Appoint, and Dismiss Teachers, Established and Proven by Scripture", p. 310.

one serves as a priest to the priests. However, it is also interesting to note that Luther mentions an exception to this "ordinary" principle. This is the situation where a Christian finds himself a priest where there are no other priests:

...if he is in a place where there are no Christians he needs no other call than to be a Christian, called and anointed by God from within. Here it is his duty to preach and to teach the gospel to erring heathen or non-Christians, because of the duty of brotherly love, even though no man calls him to do so. This is what Stephen did, Acts 6-7, even though he had not been ordered into any office by the apostles. Yet he still preached and did great signs among the people. Again, Philip, the deacon and Stephen's comrade, Acts 8 [:5], did the same thing even though the office of preaching was not commanded to him either. Again, Apollos did so too, Acts 18 [:25]. In such a case a Christian looks with brotherly love at the need of the poor and perishing souls and does not wait until he is given a command or letter from a prince or bishop. For need breaks all laws and has none. Thus it is the duty of love to help if there is no one else who could or should help.¹

The concern here for souls perishing without the Gospel takes precedence over congregational call, ordination and installation.

But this is the exception rather than the rule in Luther's theology.

In summary, scholars have shown that Luther retained these basic ideas concerning the spiritual office and priesthood of all, throughout his lifetime. The spiritual office is based upon a specific ordering by God Himself. Brunotte concludes that when Luther speaks about the origin of the office, he does so in terms of "Divine command" and not simply as a rationalization based upon practicality.² While Luther argued strongly for the general ministry of all Christians also revealed in the Scriptures, still he promoted the special public

¹ Ibid.

² Brunotte, Das geistliche Amt bei Luther, Op. cit., p. 399.

functions of the spiritual office dependent and yet independent of the ministry of all. Both ministries enjoy an equality personally before the Word and Sacraments. They are intimately related for mutual support and encouragement. In the final analysis, however, they are distinguished only by their respective functions.

The Personalized Word

In Part One we have taken note of the tremendous appeal of Luther as pastor among the people of his day.¹ Large numbers came to his home to seek his personal advice and counsel, hence the vast collection of the Table Talk. He was equally popular in the pulpit, often preaching several times during the week. There were several thousand letters, the majority of which contained spiritual counsel. His devotional writings were printed and reprinted almost as quickly as he could write them. All of this "empirical" evidence points to his wise spiritual insights and breadth of pastoral concern.

It would be incorrect historically to give the impression that Luther was the only one offering effective pastoral care at the time of the Reformation. Clebsch and Jaekle give the following brief summary of this historical epoch:

A rich variety of interpretations and expressions of the pastoral function of reconciling were produced by the Reformation movement both in protestantism and catholicism. Hardly a more skillful master of leading individuals to certain salvation ever lived than St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus. The Italian Gaspar Cardinal Contarini welcomed the new religious emphasis upon the justification of individual sinners before God.

¹ See Chapter IV, "Pastoral Implications."

In the Rhineland, Martin Bucer, and after him John Calvin, developed systems of ecclesiastical discipline which worked out in detail the ways in which reconciliation of the believer with God involved reconciliation with his fellow believers. In English-speaking Christianity, William Tyndale and other early Protestants understood reconciliation with God to launch lives into horizontal reconciliation; the procedure for both thrusts was found in the biblical covenant, understood as a contract between God and man, and between man and man.¹

However, Luther made his unique contributions not only in terms of new understanding of Christian doctrine, but also in terms of a new understanding of all life. The Reformation challenged pastors to become involved again with the common circumstances of people and their families. Soon pastors, (including Luther), began to identify more closely with ordinary people when, for example, clerical marriage was reintroduced. This meant that pastors assumed their responsibilities economically and socially like all others who managed their own households. "True to the medieval understanding of priests as persons empowered to dispense sacramental grace, catholicism could not take that step, but instead revised the education of the clergy and accepted as normative the Jesuit's social involvement in place of the traditional monastic withdrawal from society."²

In any case, part of the genius of Luther's pastoral care is that it identified rather closely with the struggles and challenges of those around him. He learned not only to "transmit" new doctrines

¹ Clebsch and Jaekle, Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective, Op. cit., p. 27.

² Ibid., pp. 27-28:

on paper or in the lecture hall, but more effectively, he discovered ways to "transact" these new words and phrases into abundant Christian living. Over and over, Luther emphasizes the significance of the spoken or "personalized" Word of God. No longer does he consider the Word simply as some "silent" sacred information. Rather he upholds the Word as "living" or "coming" to us from outside of ourselves. Through his own astute observations, Luther recognized early in his career the value of Words spoken audibly in providing an indispensable emotional spiritual impact. "Perhaps your temptation is too severe to be relieved by a brief letter; it can be better cured, God willing, by a personal encounter with me and my living voice."¹

It is not difficult to observe how the spoken Word is a consistent, integral part of Luther's theology of the church. "The Church is not a pen house, but a mouth house. . . . Thus it is the manner of the New Testament and of the Gospel that it must be preached and performed by word of mouth and a living voice."²

In his early commentary on the Psalms, 1519-21, Luther says:

Christ did not write anything, but He spoke it all. The apostles wrote only a little, but they spoke a lot. Notice: let their voices be heard; it does not say: let their books be read. The ministry of the New Testament is not engraved on dead tablets of stone; rather it sounds in a living voice. Through a living Word God accomplishes and fulfills the Gospel.³

¹Tappert, Luther: Letters of Spiritual Counsel, Op. cit., p. 101.

²WA 10 I 2, p. 48.

³WA 5, p. 537.

Even at this early date, we are given this remarkable insight by Luther. The Word of God must be addressed to us verbally and accepted in faith. This was quite a different position than many in his day who approached the Scriptures exclusively as history; as a record only of past events. He says:

It is not a Christian way of preaching, if you preach Christ only in a historical manner; that is not to preach the glory of God. That is done only if you teach that the life and death of Christ took place in order to help us to righteousness and salvation. Thus we may know that He did not do it all for His own benefit, but in accordance with the will of His Father, and we may know that everything which is in Christ belongs to us. . . . They are mere fabelists who preach the passion of Christ in an historical sense without its use and fruit, which means we are made the work of God's hands.¹

The Scriptures are more than a historical record of God's past activity. In Luther's view, these documents come alive, not only through God's power making use of the printed Word in a book, but also in the spoken, personalized Word of living men expounding those texts.

As we have already learned in Part Two², the Word of God contained in Scripture reveals God's dealing with us in Law and Gospel. This means that the personal Word is always effective, either working salvation by grace through faith, or working condemnation through unbelief. Luther says in "The Freedom of a Christian", "If you believe it, you have it. If you do not believe it, you do not have it." (Glaubstu so hastu - Glaubstu nit so hustu)

¹WA 5, 543.

²Chapter VI, "Law and Gospel."

nit¹).

This does not mean that we have control over God or that we can ultimately defeat His purposes. Rather, it does underscore that God saves through personal faith in His Word as revealed in Christ. He does not save through total disregard of His Word. For this reason we need to be challenged to recognize these personal implications. Most often this challenge will come to us most effectively in the spoken, personalized Word.

Power of the Keys

This last essential aspect of the pastoral office that will be discussed briefly is the "Office of the Keys". In his Small Catechism, Luther gives this definition: "It is that authority which Christ gave to his church to forgive the sins of those who repent and to declare to those who do not repent that their sins are not forgiven."² As a basis for this definition, Luther refers to certain passages of Scripture, that record the Words of Christ to his disciples, such as: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."³ "... Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."⁴

¹WA 7, p. 23.

²The Small Catechism (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House and Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968 Edition), p. 29.

³John 20:23, RSV.

⁴Matthew 18:18, RSV.

However, by the time of the Reformation the power of the Keys had been subjected to great abuse. It was in response to this abuse that Luther wrote his treatise on "the Keys" in 1530.¹ In so doing, he has given us some of the clearest statements about the proper Christian understanding of the Keys.

In the definition above, Luther contends that Christ gave the power of the Keys to the Church, to all the baptized, and not only to bishops or the pope. Therefore, those in the spiritual office exercise this power on behalf of each local congregation. They can remit or retain sins according to Christ's command. Christ has no other keys besides these that He has given His followers. "It shall be one and the same Key, mine² and yours, not a twofold one. While you do your work, mine is already done. When you bind and loose, I have already bound and loosed."³ This principle points again to the value of forgiveness through the spoken Word.

In contrast to the true use of Christ's Keys, Luther places the false use by the Pope among Catholics of that time. Pinomaa gives this brief analysis:

Whereas Christ's Keys are for sinners, the Pope's keys are for the governance of those who consider themselves righteous and sinless. The Pope has established laws and demands works of men. His power is legislative; by his keys he extracts works. Christ, however, uses his true Keys not to demand works but to grant grace. Thus the Pope's keys and Christ's Keys reflect the antithesis between works and faith.⁴

¹LW 40, Church and Ministry 11, "The Keys", pp. 323ff. Cf. Appendix, Table Talk, #4381a, "The Ban--Office of the Keys."

²Referring to Christ.

³LW 40, p. 365.

⁴Pinomaa, Faith Victorious, Op. cit., p. 131.

What was particularly distressful about this notion in Luther's view, is that the focus among Catholics seemed to be always upon the key that binds. "The Pope therefore cannot err in placing a man under a ban; but in declaring absolution he can never do so unconditionally, for such absolution presupposes true contrition and no one can ever be sure in regard to his contrition."¹ Whereas Luther holds that both keys, like Law and Gospel, must not be separated.

Of what consequence is Luther's doctrine of the Keys to pastoral care today? In re-interpreting the power to forgive sins, traditionally held by the Pope and priesthood of Rome, Luther offers new insight into pastoral applications of God's Word. It is God who truly forgives sins because of Christ's redemptive action in the world. Hence, the power of the Keys is central to both the proclamation of the Word and ongoing pastoral care. "Christ gave the Keys to the church for the consolation of men, and he entrusts the Keys to ministers or to Christians."²

The authority to handle the Keys is not dependent upon any one person's claim to the Spirit. Luther is quite clear that it is given to the spiritual office on behalf of the congregation:

"From the passage, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive', etc. [John 20:22,23], some conclude that therefore only those who personally have the Holy Spirit are able to forgive sins. But this isn't the meaning, for Christ gives the Spirit to the public

¹ Ibid.

² LW 54, Table Talk, #600, p. 107.

office and not to a private person, as he has just said, 'As the Father has sent me, even so I send you' [John 20:21]. Consequently he was speaking about those who had been called and who had the authority to preach, administer the sacraments, etc. When somebody has the authority to preach he also has the authority to administer the sacraments. . . .¹

Therefore, in difficult cases, an appeal can always be made to the whole congregation. This is one option the public ministry has because it functions on behalf of all the faithful.

One practical implication of this general principle of the Keys, is that each pastor must become a life-long student of human character and activity. This means that he must learn to discern correctly the difference between the penitent and impenitent. Luther gives one reason why this is important: "A preacher needs to know how to make a right difference between sinners, between the impenitent and confident, and the sorrowful and penitent; otherwise the whole Scripture is locked up."² Another reason is that with a proper theological diagnosis and varied approach³ the local pastor and congregation can become ever more effective as a committed assembly of believers for

¹ LW 54, Table Talk, #512, p. 90.

² Hazlitt, Table Talk, #CCCCIII, p. 227.

³ Cf. Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling, Op. cit., p. 21. "This represents a fresh approach to the task of conceptualizing and thereby understanding the full range of the minister's counseling activities. 'Pastoral counseling' is not a species but a genus of pastoral activities. It is not one entity with one methodology. Instead it is a helping function which requires a variety of methods to be fully effective. . . . To help a person who has never achieved dependable inner standards or controls, the minister must be firm and accepting. . . . In contrast, the counselee with a punitive, hairshirted conscience needs desperately to experience the minister's more permissive side."

reconciliation and growth of those in need.- This is the significance, at least in part, of the Keys to pastoral care.

Summary

This last chapter is an attempt to offer a more detailed theological analysis of Luther's pastoral care. Some of his views on the universal priesthood of the spiritual office, and the relationship between the two, were examined with the help of secondary sources. In many ways those in office and those in general ministry were seen to be of equal status and to enjoy equal privileges before God. However, Luther concludes that the spiritual office has a slightly larger mandate from God in terms of "full-time" public ministry of the Word and Sacraments. In short, Luther held strongly to mutual support and encouragement between the two ministries, involving the spoken or personalized Word of God and a loving, sensitive use of the Keys.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation proves rather conclusively the thesis advanced initially: namely that Luther was in fact a very effective Christian pastor with unusual warmth, compassion, and brilliant religious insights into human problems. It was this vigorous pastoral concern for the spiritual welfare of the people, his Seelsorge, that motivated him to post his Ninety-Five Theses in 1517. Twenty-nine years later, though advanced in years, it was this same pastoral concern that compelled him to leave the comfort of his home, to travel in treacherous winter weather, to bring about the reconcilliation of the feuding Counts of Mansfield. Upon the successful completion of these grueling and exhausting sessions, he died, showing his pastoral concern to the very end of his life.

Drawing from the years between 1517 and 1546, we have analyzed some of the rich legacy of his pastoral theology. The only meaningful conclusion to his being available to questioning students, troubled parishioners, friends in "high" and "low" places, was his care and concern as pastor. How else can one explain the many letters he wrote for spiritual counsel? Or the tremendous popularity of his sermons? Or the great appeal, (up to twenty-four reprints) and extensive circulation of his many devotional writings? Or the vast resource of over seven thousand conversations recorded at meal-time? He was never paid for all this pastoral advice and counsel, even though his wife suggested he should be!

Luther's Activity as Pastor

Luther's pastoral care refers to the whole work of the ordained ministry, from the public proclamation of the Word and Sacraments to

private confession and absolution. It also includes the manifold ministry of the baptized laity. It is Luther's conviction that "both" ministries are necessary for mutual encouragement and for the true mark or character of the Christian Church to be evident on earth.

While our research focuses primarily upon a theological presentation of Luther's pastoral activity, yet it is also evident that his theology is often intensely practical. For example, Luther advises those wrestling with melancholia to flee solitude; to express inner resentments or hostilities, even against God Himself; to avoid dwelling on troublesome thoughts and feelings; and to guard against confusing Law and Gospel, etc. The use of genuine joy and humor, and jesting with the devil, are also encouraged as proper Christian activities. (This approach is much the same as the practise of "paradoxical intention" of the modern school of Logotherapy). In any case, the practical advice is to engage in an activity exactly opposite to the temptation at hand, or to become involved in extraneous matters. Consequently, God will have time to work deep within the unconscious realms, touching the very inner being of the troubled person. Luther also recommended proper diet, sleep and medications be followed; and went beyond this advice to the fascinating relationship between spirit, mind, and body. From his own experience, we noted the crucial importance of pastoral care for the self of pastors; and in the matter of parental grief, we saw how he urged parents to set limits on the grieving process, in order to be comforted and in time to get back to work and living again.

Luther concludes that pastors should remain within their proper field and develop expertise in comforting troubled consciences with the Word and Sacraments. Pastors should not yield to the temptation to move into other realms and try to give advice in civil, political, legal, or business matters. (Luther did not always practise his own conclusions!).

This is not to suggest that the work of lawyers, politicians, policemen, business men, etc., is unimportant or that the Christian faith does not have anything to say in these realms. But it does underscore the fact that most of these necessary endeavors within the proper functioning of government and society will be tended to by someone else, perhaps even in response to his/her own proper Christian vocation as a lay person. But when it comes to helping the troubled hearts, minds and spirits, by offering words of comfort and hope from the Gospel, by proclaiming God's love above all, and God's forgiveness greater than any human guilt . . . this still remains as the ageless task and proper calling of the Christian pastor.

Luther made mistakes in his pastoral care. We have seen some of these mistakes in terms of his relentless prejudices against the pope, peasants, enthusiasts, and Jews, perhaps not without some provocation or grounds. His counseling Philip of Hesse to break the law and secretly marry another wife, proved scandalous. The paradoxical dynamic saint and sinner lived too close an earthly coexistence even within Luther. But he offered the best professional advice he could at the time and then rested the matter and consequences

in God's forgiveness. We would do well to handle our own short-comings in the same way.

Luther made use of many resources out of his tradition in the pastoral care he offered - Scripture and Sacraments, confession and absolution, prayer and ordained ministry. But in many other ways, he reformed the traditions and practices of his day by re-emphasizing the Scriptural teaching of the priesthood of all baptized believers; marriage of clergy; spiritual and emotional impact of the spoken word; and the voluntary aspect of his pastoral care. There is no coercion or pressure "to force" people into the church, or out of their difficulties. In short, an overview of his pastoral approach could be given in terms of his overcoming the negative, spiritually harmful traditions of his day, with the positive wholesome themes from the Scripture; e.g. replacing the medieval superstitions associated with saints and relics, with the good tidings of the Gospel.

Luther's Theology of Pastoral Care

The first theological principle, fundamental to Luther's pastoral care, is its Divine source. God reveals Himself and influences human beings through His Word about Jesus Christ. He is the true spiritual source and motivation of Christian pastoral care. Further, this same God calls disciples of Christ to share His Word in addressing daily problems of salvation, new life, illness, death, and evil. Man is always thought of in relation to God. Therefore, Luther's pastoral care, based upon this fundamental principle is a valuable kind of spiritual therapy offered to combat the forces of

evil within and without the human existential anxieties. It calls attention to the reality of a gracious, loving heavenly Father, made known in the Word and Sacraments; and it points out the great resource of local Christian fellowships, continually holding forth the Divine gift of forgiveness and renewed life. It is God Who initiates, guides, and inspires. It is the Christian community that receives, responds, and serves as "Christ"-servants to others.

Second, the focus of Luther's pastoral care is on justification by Grace, accepted through faith, based upon such Scriptures as Psalms, Romans, and Galatians. However, this does not mean that once an individual has accepted this Christian "formula" that he will have no further problems with temptation or sin. Luther taught a paradoxical theology that rang true to the Scriptures and life. At one and the same time, two apparently contradictory statements are held together to reveal profound truth that would otherwise escape us. A Christian is simultaneously "righteous" and "sinner" - righteous because God no longer imputes judgement upon him because of Christ, and a sinner because he has so deeply ingrained within the very core of his being, the tendency to trust in self rather than God. He is also "bound" and "free" - bound insofar as his own ability is concerned in working out his redemption before a Holy God Who demands perfection, and free to choose among a number of civil, psychological, or vocational opportunities and variables.

The life-long task of the pastor, (and every Christian), is to seek to understand and handle correctly God's Word in terms of law and gospel. The gospel offers freely God's gifts of salvation,

forgiveness of sins and new life. The integration of this paradox, as well as the others, is seen most vividly in the miraculous incarnation of the sinless Divine-human Son of God, Who suffers the ravages of the law and death in order to redeem fallen mankind bound under the same impossible circumstances of the law. In this redemptive activity of Christ on the cross, the absolute Paradox, Luther found the spiritual strength and inspiration to cope and survive.

Third, as Christian theology is paradoxical, so is all of life in Luther's view. This is brought out most dramatically in his own life-long temptations and struggles in Part One. The "Tower Experience" did not end the Anfechtung. In this we can identify very closely with Luther especially in our moods of anguish or despondency, and depending to a certain extent upon our chronological age. For Luther reminds us that the Anfechtung is linked not only to those moments of self-devaluation, but also to the different stages in our journey through life: e.g. sensuous lust is often most troublesome for young people; money, prestige, and honor for middle age; and pride or self-arrogance among the aged. It is Luther's understanding that these various temptations or times of distress have a way of becoming a serious threat to the very existence of personal faith.

Even though Luther detested the times he was plagued by temptation or spiritual turmoil, upon recovering, he still valued these experiences highly. Hence, he felt no one could really become skilled in depth pastoral care without some experience of the

Anfechtung within himself or others. Further, he felt that this was one of the reasons for the superficiality of the spiritualists and sects; they had not been tormented enough! This is not to suggest that the Word is inadequate. The problem is rather with us and our finding the right text! It is precisely in dealing with this problem that experience can be invaluable in helping find the right portion of the Word for whatever situation is at hand.

In these varied and yet common spiritual struggles we find a connection with Luther that is deeper than words alone. We find ourselves, along with countless others, responding to his pastoral care because he knows and addresses our basic human predicaments so well.

Fourth, within these basic struggles and life adjustments, Luther discovered the spiritual anchor to be the objective Word in the Scripture about Christ. Everyone he felt, including the church fathers of old, must rely completely upon this boundless Source, along with the Sacraments, which he held as "documents" or "seals" of true spirituality. Therefore, the Word and Sacraments became for Luther the spiritual life-centre for himself and others.

Fifth, Luther's pastoral activity presupposes and complements his basic theology of the two kingdoms: the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of the world. This doctrine is implicit in Part Two, especially the two-fold use of the Law, and all the way through part Three in terms of the many facets of a pastor's work contrasted with that of all other professionals. It should be obvious that for

Luther the kingdoms are closely related to each other, since God is the Lord and Master of both realms. And yet they are properly distinguished for the sake of the human conscience most clearly in terms of freedom and bondage, Law and Gospel in whatever situation is at hand.

Finally, Luther's pastoral care brings together his complex theology on the priesthood of all believers and the spiritual office of ordained ministry. In his view, there is an intimate relationship between the "two" ministries. Scripture declares all Christians belong to the same "spiritual estate" and are priests by virtue of their baptism. They are, therefore, equal in respect to personal and private use of prayer, the Scripture, and Sacraments. Without devaluating this fundamental concept, Luther taught in addition that the spiritual office was of Divine origin having a "full-time" vocation not only in regard to private but also public pastoral care. Interpreters of Luther have concluded that he held this view to the end of his life.

Statement of Contribution

This dissertation has attempted to bring to light the pastoral orientation of Martin Luther's Reformation activities and some of his theological principles connected with these activities. Since this dimension has been almost completely ignored to date, hopefully this study will help fill that current "gap" in Luther studies.

Luther's pastoral theology endeavored most often to offer spiritual insights in response to situations of distress or other

problems at hand, drawn from the Word of God in the Scripture and his own experience with that Word. As such this approach gives a "timelessness" to his theology that bridges the centuries to our present day.

This study has hopefully made a further significant contribution in giving attention to the vast resource of the Table Talk, also largely neglected in past studies. The Table Talk portrays vividly Luther's "oral" responses to a great variety of situations that would otherwise be lost in the "back-wash" of history. As a result we have a more intimate and complete knowledge of Luther's activity as pastor, and which tends to confirm, deepen, and enrich the understanding we have based upon his written Works alone.

Since only about 10% of the Tischreden had been previously translated into English from the macaronic (German-Latin) Weimarer texts, it should be recognized that the additional 10% or 725 original translations of Table Talk given in the Appendix, represents a further significant contribution to Luther studies. (Perhaps this Appendix should be revised and published at some later date, for more general distribution).

In this revised dissertation an attempt has been made to advance beyond mere descriptions of Luther's pastoral activity to a work that offers more theological analysis. Hence, this thesis is now more truly an introduction to the theological principles of Luther's pastoral care.

Limitations of Study

While the original contribution of this study has been to bring to light some of Luther's pastoral activity and theology based primarily on the Table Talks, this approach brings with it a limiting factor. On the one hand it helps establish parameters for an in-depth study; on the other hand, it limits the presentation to a selection of that which is pastoral in the Table Talk.

While some attempt has been made to include Luther's Letters and other Works as a "check and balance", still to a large extent the study rests on the Table Talk. As a result this work is somewhat similar to the nature of the Table Talk. In other words, relying on many short, "pithy" sayings by Luther, this dissertation as a direct result, tends to be rather unsystematic. At the same time, however, it is quite practical and personal, relating the Divine Word to human interaction.

Suggestions for Further Study

Since this research into Luther's theology of pastoral care has been limited primarily by the Table Talk, additional studies could well explore the pastoral dimension in Luther's primary Works, his exegetical commentaries, sermons, lectures, and certainly his Letters and devotional writings.

There are still some five thousand Tischreden untranslated, which will no doubt yield many additional insights into Luther's pastoral activity. This assignment alone could challenge linguist-critical scholars for years to come!

Finally, more effort could be given to presenting this whole topic within its historical and ecclesiastical setting including

direct references to Biblical themes. This would necessarily involve extensive research and analyses of the large number of secondary sources that might be somewhat related to the topic. In any case, research of this kind would be well worth every effort. Luther's energies of thought, feeling, and spiritual reflection based upon his intriguing encounters with the Word, are almost limitless and timeless. There is a freshness, originality, and depth to his theology of pastoral care that is often nothing short of the extraordinary.

The End.

THE APPENDIX

Preface

Most of Luther's writings are now available in the definitive D. Martin Luthers Werke, kritische Gesamtausgabe, (Weimar, 1883--), 58 + volumes. This Work is normally cited as WA (Weimarer Ausgabe).

The Weimar edition has a section of six volumes (approx. 700 pages each), devoted to the Table Talks: D. Martin Luthers Werke, Tischreden, 1531-1546, edited by E. Kroker, (Weimar, 1912-1921), cited, WA, TR.

Only about 10% of these Tischreden have been translated into English. Probably the best known is Luther's Works, Vol. 54, "Table Talk", Edited and translated by Theodore G. Tappert, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967.

It was from this section, WA, TR, that the 725 original translations in this Appendix were selected. Most of the texts were macaronic (German-Latin), reflecting the academic climate of that time. Dates were included according to the critical efforts of the Weimarer editor. However, in some cases, the Table Talks were of unknown dates, or from "various" years. The headings or captions are not in the text, but were given to indicate the content of each Table Talk.

Criteria for Selection

- 1) For translation purposes, selections were made only from those Tischreden that do not currently appear in English, (as far as could be determined).
- 2) Of primary interest to the subject of this dissertation, those Table Talks were selected that revealed some aspect of Luther's pastoral care or concern: e.g. the Divine-human realities, Christ, the devil, temptations, words of comfort and consolation, thoughts on prayer, preaching, the church, faith, sacraments, spiritual counsel, etc.
- 3) Secondly, and yet important, it was determined to include in the above selection a number of additional Table Talks on different topics, e.g. on political and historical matters, in order to preserve some

of the great variety of the Tischreden. This was also to guard against the possibility of extracting only those Table Talks or portions thereof, that appeared to touch the topic specifically, and thereby ignoring the vast amount of other material recorded in the texts.

- 4) Limited use was made of the FB texts of John Aurifaber, in WA, TR, when these texts seemed to clarify a topic under discussion. Scholars have more recently determined that while the FB texts can be of some assistance, Aurifaber tended to amplify and at times distort the text of the Table Talk. For a more complete discussion of this technical problem, see Luther's Works, Volume 54, "Table Talk", pp. XIff.
- 5) The numbers cited correspond to the number designated for each Table Talk as given in the WA, TR. The following list gives these numbers according to the various volumes:

WA, TR I, #'s 9 - 1174

WA, TR II, #'s 1232 - 2716b

WA, TR III, #'s 3186a - 3906

WA, TR IV, #'s 3908 - 5186

WA, TR V, #'s 5193 - 6445

WA, TR VI, #'s 6508 - 7075

- 6) A general index of names and subjects is included.
- 7) I am very grateful for the help in translation from Mrs. Frieda Oswald, retired librarian of Lutheran Theological Seminary, and Reverend F.W. Lenz, retired Lutheran pastor. Both Mrs. Oswald and Reverend Lenz live in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. (FWL=notes given by Rev. Lenz; and brackets []'s enclose words added by the translator).

M. Vernon Begalke.

WA, TR I

TABLE TALK RECORDED BY VEIT DIETRICH, (Summer and Fall, 1531-1533)

WA, FR I, #'s 9ff

#9 Re: The Ability of the Devil

If the devil has the ability to make a judge out of Christ and obscure Christ, then he also can do more. If I were a devil and could do that, I would also make all the theologians work!

#13 Re: The Certainty of St. John's and St. Paul's Teaching

St. John was singularly full of confidence. He speaks as if what he is speaking about were right there! Thus for St. Paul too, Christ speaks not in vain: "He shall be a chosen vessel for me." Therefore, when one reads Paul, one can pay attention to what he writes with good conscience. I have never read more serious writing in all my days.

FB 4: 398 (59,3) St. John and Paul have been singularly certain in their teaching: In St. Paul and John there is an excellent certainty and fullness; they speak as if it were all before their eyes. Therefore, Christ speaks not in vain: "He [St. Paul] shall be a chosen vessel for me." Thus he made a doctor out of him, and therefore he speaks so confidently about his subject-matter. Whoever reads Paul may build upon his words with good conscience: I, indeed, have never in all my life read more serious writing.

John in his Gospel describes Christ to be rightly, truly, naturally God, a priori, as of the beginning: "In the beginning was the Word, etc." i.e. "Who praises and honors me, he also honors the Father." Paul, however, describes Christ, looking back upon Him and His deeds, as of that which follows, the working [of Christ] when he says: "They tempted Jesus in the desert, etc." Therefore, Christ is rightly and truly God (I Cor. 10:9, Acts 20:28). Now be watchful for yourselves, etc.

#14 Re: Saints and Sinners

Galatians 5: We await justification in the spirit through faith, that , we remain heretics and sinners here [in the flesh]; that there is no other possibility except we be saints in the Spirit. If I had been a Jew, I would have torn Paul to pieces!

#19 Re: Troubled Thoughts - Remedies

When I am occupied with troubled thoughts in political or worldly matters, I read a Psalm or saying of Paul to myself and fall asleep. But thoughts of Satan cost me more. I must make a strong effort before I can extricate myself: but in thoughts worldly or domestic, it is easy to overcome . . . FB 3, 108 (26,9) Remedies against useless thoughts. "Whenever I", said Dr. Martin, "am occupied with thoughts concerning worldly or domestic matters, I read a Psalm or a verse of Paul's and fall asleep. But the thoughts that come from the devil, take something more out of me; then I must make strong efforts, until I can tear myself out of them."

#44 Re: Suffering of the Just

The just man perishes even in his own righteousness -- thus Ecclesiastes (7:16). Count George of Wertheim dies, but the other impious prince lives--as for example Duke George. Nützel dies at Nurnberg, but Ernest of Schönberg recovers.

#46 Re: Experience Makes the True Doctor

A doctor of Holy Scripture, should know [the books of the Bible] well and have mastered how they fit together and harmonize. For example, knowing all the prophets and not just one, e.g. Isaiah . . . and knowing more than one reference of the Law and Gospel . . . Those knowledgeable in law are able to humiliate their disciples, who wish to show off their erudition. But we if we do not have the ability, cannot humiliate our disciples. But experience makes the theologian.

#117 Re: St. Stephen's Death

There is no better way to die than that of St. Stephen who said: "In thy hands I commend my spirit" [Acts 7:58] . . . that one lay aside the list of all sins and merits and die depending upon grace alone.

#129 Re: Zwingli

Zwingli at Marburg, weeping, said: Now God knows that I would desire no one more to be my friends than those at Wittenberg.

#161 Re: God's Goodness Spent in Supplying People

Christ didn't want to be on earth any longer and so gave the Kingdom to his Father and ordained apostles. Of these apostles and others, Paul exclaimed: they also have had enough of life (Phil. 1:23) . . . The same, we also say now . . . It must cost God a lot to supply the world with people.

#162: FB 1, 57 Whereby we know God's goodness: Worldly authority is a sign of Divine grace--that God is gracious and has no pleasure in massacres and killings. Otherwise he would leave everything in chaos without government, also among the Turks and other nations. The same providence is also seen among the wild, cruel, dumb animals: sows, bears, wolves, lions, etc. They would destroy themselves without God's rules of nature, and eat each other according to the Proverb: "Might is right"!

#211 Re: Christ's Passion

We see the extraordinary humility of Christ in his passion. He humbled Himself more for the sake of the devil than for our sake, in order to mock the devil's proud spirit. Thus also he said in the promise to Adam [Gen. 3:15]: I will put enmity between thee and the seed of the woman, which is to say as much . . . I will continue to belabour you!

#238 Re: More Prayer and Scripture

When I had said: I perceive well that one ought to pray more, and that one should not be taught Holy Scriptures more than he had been taught, he said: Oh no, by the same reasoning one should pray that there be no gold, also no sun, because the sun is the cause of all sins found in the Second Table of the law; for if it were always night, no one would kill another, no one would lust after another's wife, etc.

When Luther had received a letter from Spengler, April 15, 1532, concerning the Turks great preparations to attack the Christians, having read the letter, he said to us: Christ our Lord God, will act according to His own Will. Since the Turk by his own peculiar councils carries on with such great presumption, he will suffer the consequences. I am glad to hear the news because that is the way it will go. We will have to be plagued by him [the Turk] first; afterwards he will get what's coming to him.

#248 Re: Dispute With the Devil

The devil argued with me today and accused me of being a thief having plundered the pope and all monasteries. But unwilling to respond to him said: Lick my ass! Then he stoped. Otherwise, one cannot get rid of him.

#261 Re: Bowling and Magistracy

With bowling we have a plain figure of the magistracy. No one intends to take only three pins at a throw, so sure one is of one's skill. And yet it happens that not a single pin is hit, especially when it be young rulers (regents). Thus my friar of Erfurt said to the young [monks]: they all hit 12 pins, even though only 9 are set up.

#277 Re: Original Sin and Resurrection

In the prophets there is nothing about original sin and the resurrection of the dead. This alone is found in the promises, whosoever knows how to find it.

#278 Re: Christ's Descent into Hell

Christ descended into the lower regions, simply means that He is not here on earth, but in a different world that is below, a pit, etc.

#279 Re: Jonah and Job Against Wordiness

The prophet Jonah is expressly against wordiness, thus also Job. I think Job to have spoken in a different way, but that the writer has amplified it. It is very copious. Let a person say it in few words. Thus Virgil conceived Aeneas with many (words). The conclusion of Job however is: a believing person must suffer thus. God indeed gives us enough but one must also experience difficulties. Thus Virgil made many additions to amplify the history in which Aeneas fought for Lavinium.

In Virgil, I think, there are many fatal sounds (or words) such as: Government without faith is doomed so that it must become an absolute rule [dictatorship].

#282 Re: War

War simply takes away everything that God gives: religion, the state, marriage, works, dignity, study, etc.

#288 Re: Restlessness of George Witzel

Of the one [George Witzel] who was a priest in Nimek and produced a book against the Lutherans, he said: He does not now stop, because he has a restless spirit. He must inflict injury [harm] or endure injury, like Zwingli and the others.

#290 Re: Old Testament Altars

When in Genesis an altar is mentioned, it is a big thing, representing the whole cultus, political, economic and religious, brought together in one place. When we read it, we think it happened only once, on one day.

#296 Re: Word and the World

It is always so: When our Lord God comes through the Word, the world is bewildered.

#299 FB 2, 285 Re: Formula How to Baptize a Jew

Dr. Luther advised Dr. Justo Menio (who had asked for advice on baptizing a Jew): One should fill a tub full of water; take the Jew's clothes off, and put a white robe on him. Set him into the water and

#299 FB 2, 285 Re: Formula How to Baptize a Jew . . . continued

dunk him under. He should do that because when the ancient ones were baptized, they walked around in white robes. That is why the first Sunday after Easter is called Dominica in Albis; the baptized ones walked around in white robes. Such a robe could also be worn by the deceased. Because Baptism signifies our death. I believe that Christ was likewise baptized by John in the Jordan . . . But when I get a pious Jew to be baptized, I will lead him to the bridge over the Elbe, put a stone around his neck and throw him into the Elbe, because these rogues scoff at us and our religion.

That is why he advised Mr. Justo Menio not to be taken in by the flattery of the Jews!

#303 Re: Where is Heaven?

Heaven in the Scripture means where the birds fly!

#308 Re: Time and the Turk

In the Church: Time shall conquer and time is to be yielded to . . . When the hour has come, the Turk will fall [Ecclesiastes 3].

#341 Re: Testimony of a Priest

The testimony of a priest is like a sausage. One eats it, then it is passed out and again becomes a sausage, and so on and on.

#351 Re: Luther and the Monks

I have been the Lord's quicksilver which He has thrown into the dough among the monks.

#380 Re: Moses and Paul

This was the attitude of Paul and Moses: "I desire to be blotted out for the welfare of my fellow-men" (Roman 9:3, Ex. 32:32). God cannot dislike such love. Thus they also knew that in God there would be restoration from the "under" world. As Abraham believed that God would restore Isaac to life, if killed, so Moses and Paul were willing to perish in love for their people--God would restore them afterwards.

#382 Re: Envy and Pride

Envy and pride are two sins which dress themselves up, like the devil does, in divinity. Envy pretends to be justice, and pride, truth.

#388 FB 2, 184 Re: We are terrified more by the devil than we are ready to believe in Christ, who consoles us in the recognition of sin (also sin against the Holy Spirit)

Someone asked: "Why do we sooner believe the devil who frightens us, then Christ who comforts us and gives us good promises?" Dr. Martin answered: "We are better skilled and lean more to doubt than to hope. Hope comes from the Holy Spirit and is His work; but doubt comes from our spirit and is our own doing. That is why God has prohibited us by the highest pain and punishment to believe in threats and penalties, but rather to believe in His promises and rewards. Hope and faith are better than thinking and speculating.

Reason sees death ahead. That one should not be frightened by it is impossible. Again that God gave His Son and loves us so much, nobody can talk us into it, so that we could say with all our heart: "Dear God, you did not let your Son be crucified in vain". But this is above all human reason that God is so merciful, not because of our works, but because of his beloved Son. That's hard to believe!

In this Article [of faith] all the sectarian gangs fail, even though they say they believe. I think they all have a bad conscience, which

#388 FB 2, 184 Re: We are terrified more by the devil than we are ready to believe in Christ, who consoles us in the recognition of sin (also sin against the Holy Spirit) . . . continued

I will prove: when they fall or have a misfortune, then they despair like Arius, Münzer, etc. Therefore, I believe they know that they are doing wrong. The same is true of B.V.M. and H.G., they joke about God's Word like Adam did in Paradise, and which the nature of man does all the time. When they sin they think it doesn't matter. So God lets them fall out of sin into the sin against the Holy Spirit, that they sin knowingly and grossly. H.G. fell into this sin. He sees that he is wrong, but he does not stop. He not only remains in that sin, but also does not ask for pardon. That is the sin against the Holy Spirit. But, when you feel it is wrong and have a bad conscience, that is not a sin against the Holy Spirit. When one sins and has a good conscience that is a sin against the Holy Spirit. Of that kind are H.G., H.M., Carlstadt, Münzer, who knowingly make God into a liar.

Oh, dear God, it is enough, yes, too much, that one sins and does wrong: It is enough that one sins, but [worse] one wants to claim to be right in doing so. No landlord keeps such people in his house; anger burns in his heart and grows more vehement when the one who does wrong still claims he is right. If, however, you confess your sin, but still do not leave it, that too is a big sin; it is despising God. But it is not a sin against the Holy Spirit. But when one knows he is doing wrong and defends it that is too much.

Our Lord God has established that no sin be so great, but that when you kneel before Christ and ask for forgiveness, then your sin is forgiven. But H.G. depends upon the Christian church to forgive him and so keeps on. But he will experience differently.

A sinner who repents, and is sorry, admitting and asking for forgiveness, even though he sins again, should not despair . . . The same way I believe that many Kings of Israel were kept in grace and saved, like Ahab. About Solomon, I do not doubt. As we can see all histories point to the forgiveness of sins. Everything depends upon Christ. (Everything is directed to the little point that is called Christ and encircles it!).

#389 Re: Satan

A quotation from Peter [II Peter 2:4]: Satan already has been accused and judged. He lies in the prison from which he ought to be led forth and be given what's coming to him every hour! If he would now have the pain he deserves, he would leave people in peace. But now he has another punishment, envy and hatred, with which he hates Christ and those who belong to Christ.

#392 Re: Destruction of Unbelievers

In the Scriptures, the destruction of the unbelievers always means that our Lord God comes with punishment when the people have forgotten all about Him.

#398 Re: A Young Person like New Wine

A young person is like new wine in that it cannot be contained, but must ferment.

FB L, 213 (3,90) Youth will break out: "A young person is like new wine which cannot be held down, but must ferment and overflow. He always wants to be seen and admired by others, and cannot hold himself back!"

#407 Re: Dealing with Temptations

In all temptation, one should see to it that one's thoughts do not dwell upon it; when this happens it will certainly be followed by ruin and sin because where the snake puts her head into a hole, she will surely crawl after it with her body. There is no defense. Therefore, it is said: resist the beginnings; and the apostle admonishes, resist the devil [James 4:7]. This is indeed true in grave temptations. It behoves us to fear sin, but not to remain in terror, but again turn to grace. Either excess injures. Through great joy, security is engendered; through great terror, despair. So God has forbidden under threat of greatest punishment, not to doubt him and not to trust our own strength and righteousness.

FB 3, 170 (26,88) How to offer resistance in temptation. In all temptations, one should see to it that our thoughts do not dwell upon the temptation. If one does that, then soon the fall into sin follows. Because where the snake puts her head into a hole, soon her whole body follows. There is no holding back! Resist the beginnings, prepare the medicine! And the Apostle Peter warns us to resist the devil in faith, who walks around like a roaring lion seeking some one to devour [I Peter 5:8]. In this manner we must resist severe temptations. It is true, initially, we should be terrified of sin; but we should not remain terrified, but turn to the grace of God. One may do too much in both cases. Great joy may lead to a feeling of security; whereas terror may lead to despair. Our Lord, however, prohibited both with severe punishment, namely not to despair, neither to be too sure of oneself!

#411 FB 4, 519 (66,32) Re: Comparison Between Law, Medicine, and Theology

I have talked a lot about demonstrables and certain proofs that do not fail and are always true. However, in law this means that no case can be given where one can prove a case with absolute certainty. The quarrel is always in lesser points and about the other proposition of the final observation [closing speech]. I like to talk about this [state of] affairs because it differentiates the professions and the ranks of the learned right well; namely that the law concerns morals and deals with things that demand outward behaviour. That is why the Emperor is a moral philosopher, and disciplinarian and teacher. Medicine is natural philosophy, an art that deals with natural things. Nature can not accomplish anything higher than that it takes care of the body and intellect such as good health and morals. A doctor prepares the instrument, the body, which a lawyer should use rightly. After this comes theology which says: we also have something after this earthly life, namely everlasting life that is presented to us by Grace, without our merit, free for the sake of Jesus Christ because of faith.

Aristotle is one of the best teachers in moral philosophy, that is how to live, outwardly, a chaste life. In natural philosophy he is useless. For when he argues about material things, he usually says something about whether or not a thing moves. That would be similar to a doctor saying: your body moves from health to sickness; whoever gets sick was well before! But rather, he (the doctor) should define the illness precisely by its right name.

Theology has its peculiar, exact demonstrables [representative dogmas], grounds and rules: "Whoever hears you, says, Jesus hears me." [Luke 10:16]. You hear me as a servant of God who teaches His Word, that is why you hear God Himself. Whoever is baptised, is baptised by God and is saved. If you are baptised then you are baptised by God and are saved. This we must know that whoever is baptised is saved [religiously]. Although we can not know for certain who believes, nevertheless, it is certain as far as God is concerned; whoever believes is saved. Such peculiar, sure statements of theological fact and rules are neither possessed by

#411 FB 4, 519 (66,32) re: Comparison Between Law, Medicine, and Theology . . . con't.
law nor medicine. Granted, they have common rules, but these do not teach anything absolutely certain.

#417 Re: The Pope and the Devil

The pope can no more crawl to the cross than the devil can say: "Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me"--for if it were possible, he would be in heaven.

#418 Re: Reading the New Testament

We no longer read as diligently in the New Testament as the apostles read in the Old Testament, as appears in the case of Paul [II Cor. 4:6].

#421 Re: Prayer, Psalms and Lord's Prayer

When by chance we discussed prayer, Martin Luther said: I have never in my life prayed the Psalms without taking something out of them. The "Our Father" is my prayer; that I pray and by good fortune I some times add something out of the Psalms so that the thoughts are mixed together, etc. No prayer is equal to the Lord's prayer. I'd rather pray it than any Psalm.

FB 2: 247 (15,32) The best prayer is the Lord's prayer. As we were talking about praying, Dr. Luther said: I have in my lifetime never prayed the Psalter without taking some Psalms out of it. The "Our Father" is my prayer, that I pray and mix in at times something of the Psalms, that they (the despisers and false teachers) are ashamed. The Lord's Prayer is unlike all other prayers. I'd rather pray it than the Psalms.

#424 Re: The Essence of Psalm 50

The sum [essence] of Psalm 50 is: "I do not ask for sacrifice. I ask for thanks, that you let me be God". Let everyone note that it pleases God to invoke and urge the First Commandment, which was commanded on Mt. Sinai. Didn't He say it enough on Mt. Sinai with fire, lightning and thunder? It is possible to accept the Psalter as prophetic, but I will accept nothing as prophecy unless it be quite certainly prophetic; I accept the First Commandment inasmuch as it makes sense [or has a purpose of meaning]. Sacrifice is not why I [the Lord] hates you, but you do not give thanks. The mere outward act is not what He wants because it is to be offered in trust and glory of justice. I think Asaph to have been killed, for our sake, just because he said that the mess be of the devil! In the last time the Gospel is hidden, because He says: do away with this cult [worship] and lay aside the rest, think about giving thanks. The Word of the Creator knocks down all acts of merit; for what can the creature give the Creator which He has not already received?

#425 Re: Our Faith

Our faith is weak yet at the same time powerful; because it is a small cornerstone in the heart, a sighing that can not be described. But there is also the Holy Spirit who understands [the indescribable sighing FWL] FB 2 194 (13,69) Concerning our faith. Our faith is very weak and yet a rock, for it is a cornerstone in the heart, that is an indescribable sighing. With it the Holy Spirit makes it firm what God has promised.

#429 Re: Why We are Denied Perfect Knowledge

Some one asked: Why is not perfect knowledge given to us? The answer; if one were to believe perfectly, then one would not be able

#429 Re: Why We are Denied Perfect Knowledge . . . continued

to eat for joy or do anything. But He (God) wants to preserve this generation of people lest the church perish. He said the world reminds me of a house in need of repair. David and the prophets are the beams. Christ is the pillar in the midst of the house that holds it all up!

#468 Re: Erasmus

I would not accept 100,000 florins and stand in the danger before God, like S. Hieronymus or far less that in which Erasmus stands, who offended me to the uttermost in a certain place, when he responded about faith in Christ,--the villain said: I pass over these little things. Wherefore I condemn Erasmus by the authority of Luther just as [I condemn] Epicurus.

#480 Re: Luther's Work as a Reformer

I began my work trusting our Lord God, but at Augsburg they wanted me to carry it on according to the ways of men. I'd rather risk my head and body twenty times! [to do it God's way].

In the first place I'd hold the Pope to be Pope; they, however, wanted me to hold him to be a god. That caused the fur to fly! [FWL: literally-- . . . that raised a conflict]. In many ways I had the advantage, because I had Holy Scriptures and their writings as weapons for me; otherwise, I would have been stupid for so great a battle. I first approached [knocked on the doors] the universities of Louvain, Cologne and Paris. Since they answered me so slowly, I was strengthened in my cause and thought: This is an art I also understand [That is a game I too can play]. Had I not been a doctor and taken the occasion to scatter their theology, they would have deafened me. Don't I know Jesus? Paul, I know, as the devil there states. Those in the book of Acts were people without faith and wanted to have the honor alone through the name of Jesus. [Acts 19:5].

#485 Re: Abraham's Belief in the Resurrection

Abraham had to believe in the resurrection of the dead, when he was willing to kill Isaac, in whom he had the promise of offspring, as the Epistle to the Hebrews states. Our greatest temptation is to think our Lord God is a liar. Where now is their God? As in the Psalms, did God not keep his promises? [Psalm 42:4, 19:10, 115:2].

FB 4: 284 (49,3) Abraham's faith Concerning the Resurrection of the Dead:

Abraham had to have faith in the resurrection of the dead, when he was willing to kill his son Isaac, through whom after all, God had promised to increase his seed and family like the stars in the heavens; as the Epistle to the Hebrews well indicates [Hebrews 11:17ff]. Our greatest temptation to sin, is to call our Lord God a liar, when the pagans say: "Where is now their God?" As if God does not remain faithful to that which he has promised!

#486 Re: Diet of Augsburg

Our Lord God gave me the victory at the meeting in Augsburg.

#496 Re: The Gospel at Wittenberg

The Gospel at Wittenberg is like the rain falling into water [where it does no good]. Where the fields and crops are, there the sun burns it up. Evil does violence to the Law and Gospel.

#521 Re: The Holy and Evil Spirits

The Holy Spirit is antagonistic and contemptuous of death and all perils. He defies them and says: If God does not want to have me alive,

#521 Re: The Holy and Evil Spirits . . . continued

I am willing to die; if he does not want me to be rich, I want to be poor. But the spirit of the devil perturbs such faith greatly. Therefore, he must speak differently to the vipers and pharisees. As Moses said: He shall rejoice to scatter you.

FB 3,79 (24,110) The difference between the Holy and evil spirits: The Holy Spirit is courageous, despises death and all danger. He says: If God does not wish to have me alive, I want to die; if He will not have me rich, I want to be poor." But the evil spirit makes sad and frightens his own whom after a long time has made them impertinent, presumptuous, and sure of themselves. Therefore, one must speak differently to the brood of vipers, pharisees and hypocrites; indeed as Moses speaks: "He will rejoice when he destroys you." Gladness comes from God, but sadness comes from the devil.

#499: FB 2, 141 (12,84) Re: The Terror of the Law

Concerning the law--some objections and difficulties and how to overcome the distress and terror of the law: The devil and the hypocrites argued with those who confess that one is saved through faith alone. Faith makes righteous. But faith is a work of the law. Therefore, the law makes righteous. Item: Everything that the law orders or commands, and demands, is the work of the law. The law demands faith; that is why faith is a work of the law!

This is the way you should answer, says Dr. Martin: "St. Paul talks about law and distinguishes it from the promises, which are something else than law. The law is worldly, but the Promises are heavenly--God given. He gives us the law to make us alert, brave and humble because the commandments are against the proud and haughty who despise the gifts. A present or a gift can not be a commandment.

Therefore, answer according to the common rule, the way the boys are taught in school: These words are to be understood according to the material they speak of . . . Or, as the lawyers say that the case and whole concern in question should not be taken differently than what the word says.

As St. Paul says, it happens that through oppression of the law, or forced will without the Holy Spirit, it becomes a work of the human will and of the people. The same way you have to understand the verse: "Their works shall follow them" [Rev. 14:13]. Not that one should do something for the deceased. But that their works should remain against the devil, because they died in the Lord.

#540: FB 2, 436 (22,146) Re: Preachers Must be Humble

Dr. Martin Luther said once: "I do not write a book for my sake. I do not preach for my sake, rather because it is written in my heart! What I know; I know! My adversaries bring vain and empty arguments against me, which I could draw up better than they. But we write for the sake of other people, so that the simple, innocent sheep are protected from the wolves; and that those who err may be converted. It is a true saying in theology, that those who know something, know nothing; because whoever hears the Word of God and learns it can not wonder enough about it, nor ever finish learning it. One humbles oneself so that he may always be a pupil.

One has the same experience in politics; that those who are good warriors and able world-leaders do not boast about it, nor put on airs, but live in the fear of the Lord and see to it that they always learn more and more. But the common people, especially the fools, despise these fine people. The same thing happens often in the economic order;

#540: FB 2, 436 (22,146) Re: Preachers Must be Humble . . . continued
those who are very rich pretend they are very poor and can't do a thing. But it is said: "Beware of 'can not'". When one taps on an empty barrel it sounds clear. But a full barrel doesn't sound that clear!

#543: FB 2, 218 (14,30) Re: Why a Christian Suffers Violence

A Christian suffers all the time from the authorities, because they always persecute Christ and God, that is the Law and Gospel. I can also name authorities who rely on their position against which one can offer no resistance. But if one wants to defend and protect himself, he needs the authorities who will protect and stand by him. Therefore, as the authorities are for or against him, so does a Christian suffer. If a murderer or a robber is superior [or has the upper hand] then he is the authority. If, however, he is a faint-hearted murderer, who is weak, then authority is for him and protects him. You must suffer violence but you must not let go of justice, because one thing is violence and the other is justice.

#548: FB 2, 219 (14,32) Re: Vindictiveness or Revenge

The first anger [wrath] is the best, so that kindness (charity) is not lost. But man does not do that; he continues and trusts people. Likewise, the first atonement is the best, so that no more evil takes place. But man continues; he does not let up; he wants revenge. But if one wants to live he has to be finally reconciled. War can not continue forever. If one can not till the land there will be no food. Why are we so foolosh, silly, and made through the devil's instigation, when finally we have to be reconciled anyway and part as friends, when in the meantime all benefits are lost?

#585 Re: Eternal Life

Life after this life must be a great and unspeakable joy, because God risked His Son in its behalf!

#594 Re: Faith in the Scriptures

Great is the argument for faith in the Scriptures, because the Scriptures alone declare the fact of the matter; no Demosthenes nor Cicero tells us how the earth, man, woman, were created, how indeed all things exist and function. Indeed it [Scripture] has persisted in all the world until now. Because the pope, the bishops and Turks do not read the Bible, they fall short; but we, who would like to escape death; we read it!

#610 Re: Luther's Testimony

I have my sign [testimony]: I believe in God the Father, etc. My Lord Jesus came to earth once and permitted Himself to be seen; I do not ask for more, nor wish that he appear again. Even if an angel came from heaven and visibly appeared before my eyes, nevertheless, I would say: I do not believe you!

FB 1, 399 (7,139) Re: The Priority of God's Word . . . Concerning the priority of God's Word, Dr. Martin Luther spoke thus: "Christ came to earth visibly once, dwelt among us and permitted us to see His glory. He has brought about the salvation of mankind according to the considered counsel and providence of God. I do not desire that He come once more, nor that He send an angel. And even though an angel came from heaven and placed himself visibly before my eyes, I would not believe him. I have my Lord Jesus' letter and seal that is His Word and Sacrament. I cling to that and desire no new revelation."

#610 Re: Luther's Testimony . . . continued

To the effect that Dr. Martin desired to remain with the Word of God alone and clung thereto, refusing to believe no other vision, thereof he himself told these histories; he sat in his little room once praying earnestly, thinking about how Christ had hung upon the cross, suffered and died for our sins. Suddenly there appeared a bright light upon the wall, in which a glorious figure of Christ appeared with His five wounds. It looked to the doctor as if it were the Lord Jesus Himself in the body. When he saw this he supposed at first, it were a good thing, but he soon realized that it must be a spectre of the devil. Christ appears to us in His Word and in humble form, as He hung upon the cross and was humbled. That is why the doctor declared to the apparition: "Get away shameful devil!" I know no other Christ than the one crucified and pictured in human form and is preached [as such]. Soon the apparition vanished which had been the devil himself in bodily form.

On the same subject, the doctor told of a virgin in Wittenberg who was sick; a friend of an old housekeeper, to whom also a vision appeared, as if she were seeing Christ in a glorious and beautiful form. Now she would have worshipped this picture, for she thought it was none other than the Lord Jesus. However, when they sent a messenger in haste from the college to the monastery to have Dr. Luther come; he came to the young woman and looked at the picture -- It was just "monkey" business of the devil! He admonished her not to let the devil fool her. There upon she looked at the picture and spat into the face of the picture. Then the devil soon vanished and the picture changed into a large snake, which slithered into bed with the young woman, bit her ear, that there was blood flowing down. The snake soon afterward vanished. This, Dr. Luther saw with his own eyes together with many others.

#613 Re: Human Traditions

I know no better example against human traditions than the ass. It will not permit itself to be bound, and simply wants to dominate [do its own thing]. Therefore, the pope has now forbidden anything else. [i.e., the pope has made laws regarding everything else except the ass! FWL].
- FB 3, 328: "I know", said Dr. Martin, "no better example to compare human traditions than the ass, which will not suffer itself to be bound, wants right away to be boss and have the upper hand and governance. Therefore, the pope who has otherwise left nothing unregulated on the human body and soul, has not regulated the ass. Ceremonies [or regulations] about eating meat, fasting, clothing, place and time, etc., are free and proper, for such neither God's Word nor natural law forbid.

Superstition and external religious observances, abuse in ceremonies, take place when a necessity [law] is made of them, and they are looked upon as a service to God with merit to us. But one can change them. They are only adiaphora, which were instituted for political purpose, namely for the sake of good order, that everything be done in an orderly and honest way in the churches. Just as natural law has been planted in the hearts of all people by God, teaches us by showing how in creation also everything had been made by God in a fine and orderly way. On the other hand, Jesus says, "In vain they worship [serve] me, teaching such doctrines which are nothing than the commandments of me." [Matt. 15:9]. And St. Paul: "though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." [Gal. 1:8]. For the Gospel teaches that we are pious, [acceptable], righteous and blessed before God for the sake of Christ alone.

#614 Re: Ill Wishes by Papists

The papists would speedily annihilate me by death, no rather, more

#614 Re: Ill Wishes by Papists . . . continued
truly, not have me live at all!

I often sleep with a beautiful woman in bed, with my Katy; if it were Cochleus, he would not get up alive!

#615 Re: Depend on Christ Alone

Well then! We have risked it all on the man Jesus. He will not desert us. We risk our body and life on that man. I know no other cause upon which we should take the risk. If Christ lives, therefore, He will know that it is done for His sake. We know the world also knows this. Therefore, he will say to me on the day of judgement: Master Martin, you have preached me, etc. On that man we risk it; He will help us, or else it would all go under.

FB 1, 401 (7,40) On Christ alone should one be defiant and boastful: Well then, we have risked it all on the man the Lord Christ, God's Son. He certainly will not desert us. Our body and life depend upon Him; where He is we will be also. Otherwise, I know nothing about which I would be boastful. Therefore, if Christ lives He will know that we do all things and suffer all things in our preaching and writing for His sake. And this the world also knows, and we know; we risk it upon Him; He will help us, otherwise it must also break and can not continue to exist as it now is.

#645 Re: Pope Above a Council?

Nikalaus de Tudeschis said the rule of a single person is to be preferred to that of the whole council, if it be reasonable or better according to Scriptures. He used the example of Paphnuttit, and because of this opinion was excommunicated.

FB 3, 264 (27,154) Dr. Luther said: "that Gerson was the first through whom our Lord God had, in these last times, begun to illumine the world. He was comforting to many people and their consciences. But the pope condemned him, for he had begun to discuss whether the pope stood above councils. He wrote a dialogue which pleased me very much. He set up two persons: one the detractor, the other the adulator--they dispute about the pope. He would have liked to find a middle way, which would not grant the pope too much, nor too little.

In Augsburg in the year, 1518, when I appealed for a council to the pope, the cardinal called me a Gersonist. When I answered, I am acting on the instruction and command of the council of Costnitz, for the same was the first to oppose the pope and deposed three of them, the cardinal answered: "O that council no longer is valid." The pope had decreed to be above councils and God's Word. But now since the bright light of the Gospel shines forth, there exists a great contempt for the Word of God. And this is what the Lord Christ says: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light!" [John 3:19]. Yet, He also says in the same book: "Believe in the light, while you have it, in order that you be children of the light." [John 12:35]. But we will not listen nor will we permit ourselves to be told that we act like Jews! Thus, Dr. Martin Luther once said to M. Hieronymous Besolde of Nuerenberg. Dr. Martin also, on another occasion, said to Veit Dietrich, that Panormitanus Canonista opened that the rule of a private person is to be preferred to the rule of the whole council, if it be reasonable or better establishes the rules of Scripture. And he cited the example of Paphnut. But for the sake of this opinion he was excommunicated by the pope.

#647: FB 4, 469 (64:7) Re: Whether One may Avenge Oneself

To the verse, where Christ says: "But I tell you, that you do not

#647: FB 4, 469 (64:7) Re: Whether One may Avenge Oneself . . . continued
resist evil", etc. [Matt. 5:39], many solutions and answers are offered. Some say that private and especially personal revenge is forbidden; but these are forbidden by Moses also in the law, otherwise the kingdom and government could not have been able to exist. Therefore, Christ does not forbid separate, personal, self-willed, but public, common official revenge, otherwise He would have been teaching nothing more than Moses. For Christ says to His own: "but you do not do thus". Here three kinds of solutions and responsibilities are given. The first, as the learned schoolmen name it as the case at hand, namely that it must be understood as self-powered and private revenge. Otherwise Christ would have been disapproving, indeed casting aside civil government and the rulers, which was not his intention, nor is it now. But He confirms them as instituted by God [Prov. 8, Gen. 9, II Chron. 19, Romans 13, Matt. 26]. The other that one has to recognize is that the Gospel deals only with spiritual matters and does not tackle worldly matters at all. The third [explanation] is that Christ is not forbidding anything here, which Moses had forbidden, but is only teaching not to abuse the law, since this was being done at the time by the people. The last is a little too weak. The first and former answers are not in harmony with the form and essence of the argument. All they do is to show that it is not proper nor appropriate.

I do not know if I am putting forth my thoughts on this matter or that I have the right solution and understanding; that is that Christ is speaking of the law in simple terms, and is teaching that the righteousness of faith condemns the worldly and civil, or outwardly human righteousness, in order that it might not be thought that they are therefore righteous before God. They are not quarrelling nor yet seeking their rights in the law-courts; and even if this were to happen, then they be willing to let everything be taken from them. Yet, this righteousness of the law would be the right righteousness, which is acceptable to God, etc. Then He [Christ] is teaching against both the political and civil law, and also against that righteousness which God demands in the law.

#648 Re: Two Qualities in a Pastor: To Nourish and Defend

To nourish and defend must be together in the pastor; otherwise if there is no defense, the wolf devours both the sheep and the feed together!

TABLE TALK RECORDED BY GEORGE RÖRER, (1531-1535)

#678: FB 4, 582 (70,4) Re: Against Astrology

In the first place, astrology is looked upon to be a business like the ten categories of the sophists. These they call categories, essentially different from one another, since the whole thing is false and imagined whether such vanities agree with each other and can be harmonized by arguments, solutions and other doings, so much so that people of many sects, Thomists, Albertists, Scotists, etc. for many hundreds of years, have considered them to be more valid than any other thing.

Secondly, astrology does not tell us what one most ought to know; how long will one live; ~~foretells~~ nothing with certainty whether of time or place. It is nothing but guess work; all that is indicated is the person and often it fails at that.

Thirdly, God has determined a certain end. Babylon once said: I want to continue to exist. Rome says: the government has been given me forever, also Alexander and the other empires and kingdoms. Thereof astrology has nothing to say: that a great empire would come into being, nor yet how long it would stand and remain.

Fourthly, Astrology was invented and imagined by the devil in order that people in marriage and in all God-pleasing professions and positions might be terrorized. They see nothing good in the stars and cause consciences to be frightened because of coming bad luck, which after all is uncertain and lies in the hands of God. They vex and torture the whole of life with such evil dispositions, cunning and useless thoughts.

Fifthly, God's creations are assailed with violence and injustice; for God has created them and placed them and fastened them in the firmament, that they illumine the earth, that is to make it joyous and to be good signs, to determine years and seasons as we read in Genesis I and in Deuteronomy: "And God saw that it was good" and "Which God has determined for all nations under the whole heaven".

But they, the star-gazers [lit. star-peekers] and those who would tell fortunes and prophecy the future out of the starry constellations say they darken the earth and are harmful. But, all of God's creations are good, and created by God only for good. Man makes them evil with his abuse. They are signs, not of monsters [but of good]. The darkness is as fearful as a deformed birth.

D.M.L. spoke of the foolishness of certain mathematicians and astrologers, star-peekers, who had prophesied a flood and huge waters for the year 1524, but nothing happened. In the following year, 1525, the peasants rose and became rebellious. But of this no astrologer had spoken a word. He spoke, however, of Mayor Hohndorf: He had a quarter of beer hauled up into his house; with this he was going to wait out the flood, as if he would not have anything to drink when the flood came! But there was actually a conjunction during the time of fury [peasants uprising]; this conjunction was of sin and God's wrath; that was a different conjunction than that in 1524.

To believe the stars, to trust them, or to fear them is idolatry, a sin against the First Commandment of God. Philip spoke thus: "Emperor Charles will live to the 84th year." Thereupon DML said: "The world will not last that long. Ezekiel indicates to the contrary. For if we drive out the Turk, then the prophecy of Daniel has been fulfilled and cancelled, and then the day of judgement certainly stands at the door!"

#684 Re: The Word of Christ

When the emperor speaks a word it can do much; when Christ speaks, He includes heaven and earth with one bite! Therefore, one must look upon Christ's Word differently than the word of humans, for He is true God Himself.

#684a Re: The Episcopate of Moguntino

He (D.M.L.) said at the table: I would gladly wish him, who is my worst enemy, to be pope, for I know of no other suitable person for that position, which is reserved only for the very worst rascals and rogues!

#686: FB 1, 385 (7,116) Re: Blaspheming of Christ

When people so confidently and impertinently slander without compunction, persecute His Word and condemn it, as now the papists together with their followers blinded by the devil and made obdurate with great relish and stupid daring, and miserably drive out and murder many pious people on the ground of their being heretics. Others (such as the riotous spirits, enthusiasts, whether they be anabaptists, sacramentarians, antinomians or others, such as many will come after us) will falsify and do violence to the clear Word. Things are at an end and must soon break.

As happened to the Jews, when they attributed Christ's teaching and deeds to the devil, and blasphemed Him, the whole creation trembled because of it; for it could not bear it. The sun was darkened; the curtain in the temple torn; the earth quaked; rocks were rent; and the graves opened. When the Lord has swept his threshing floor and gathered the wheat into His barns, He will light the straw, etc. Thus, He will do also now and at the end of the world, when the number of the elect has been filled.

#687: FB 1, 72 (1,84) Re: The Powerful Preaching of God's Word

That God's Word during the times of the apostles and in our time is preached much more powerfully and widely than in the days of Christ.

"At the time of the apostles and our time the Gospel and Divine Word is preached much more powerfully and widely than in the time of Christ. For Christ did not have the respect nor such large numbers of hearers as the apostles have, and which we now have. As Christ Himself says to his disciples: "You will do greater works than I" [John 14:12]. I am only a little mustard seed, but you will be like grape-vines with branches upon which the birds will next. As if the Lord Christ were to say: I have preached only in a corner of the Jewish land, but you will preach publically from the roof-tops and throughout the whole world, proclaiming the Gospel to all peoples!"

#689: FB 1, 70 (3,1) Re: Creation Described by Moses in Few Words

Great mysteries in the Scriptures, because they are difficult to understand, are for this reason confused by the unlearned and irresponsible persons in such a way that they bring about various errors and false teachings to their own and many others' damnation [II Peter 3:17]. For this reason, Moses wanted to describe creation in a few words (in a condensed manner). Over against this he allots a whole chapter to the purchase of the acre with the two-fold cave over against Hebron, which Abraham bought from Ephron the Hittite to bury Sarah (Gen. 23). In the same way he describes the many kinds of sacrifices, customs and ceremonies, etc., using many chapters. For he well knew that such things would bring about heresies, etc.

But, when he [Dr. Martin] was asked why the account of the double cavern in the land of Canaan overagainst Hebron, was described so diligently and with so many words by Moses? He answered: "I hold this happened in order that according to the promise of God, his descendants would certainly take the land of Canaan and possess it. That the unbelieving pagans now also could witness that he possessed property of his own in Canaan. And to make sure of this he buried Sarah there and he, Abraham, as well as Isaac and Jacob were buried there afterwards also. (Gen. 25, 35, 50). Likewise, that after his death his descendants, before migrating to Egypt, might not be driven out of Canaan and rejected because of the envy of the godless pagans. For the devil begrudges the pious a bite

#689: FB 1, 70 (3,1) Re: Creation Described by Moses in Few Words . . . continued
of bread, and if they have one, would like even to take that from them!

#692: Re: The Third Chapter of Esdra

The Third chapter of Esdra I cast into the Elbe! In the fourth there are thoughts of Esdra which are beautiful, and there are otherwise some good witticisms therein, such as those concerning wine, women and the King (Esdra 3ff).

#699 Re: The Plain Words of John

John is very uncomplicated and he speaks candidly. One ought to pay attention to what a plain man says. Each word John speaks is worth a hundred! He came to the district of Nazareth [should be Samaria?] and spoke to the women, etc., likewise, when He said: Father glorify the Son (John 17:5), these are words of great simplicity; but if studied diligently they are proud. I believe that this simplicity of John offends Erasmus very much; he thinks: Homer did not speak in that way to us, nor Virgil . . . thus his own reasoning. But, God truly judges truth differently.

FB 3, 411 (37,112) The Argument of the Epicureans is like the Advice of Ciaphas! "I am hostile to Erasmus from the heart", said the doctor, "for he argues just like Ciaphas did who said: "It is better for us if one man dies, than that the whole people perish." It is better for us if the Gospel perish or not be preached than that the whole of Germany, all the princes collapse into each other, and the whole world be stirred up. St. John is an enemy of Ciaphas because of the advice he gave. Christ also gives a blow to Ciaphas; let him pay, when he says to Pilate: "He who has handed Him over to you has the deeper guilt." [John 19:11].

St. John speaks quite simply and candidly; but such a man as our Lord Christ, God's Son says, to that we must pay attention. For every word in John's Gospel weights a hundred [pounds] as for example when he says: "He came to the city of Nazareth and spoke with the women, etc." Likewise, "Father, glorify thy Son, etc." Granted, these are plain and simple words, yes, may even be looked upon as sleepy words, but when one awakens them and places them on the scales they count!

#701 Re: Christ is All

This I would leave behind me, namely that I want Christ alone to be my Lord, not only because of Scriptures and faith, but also by experience, for He was proven it to me. Thus, I have the true Reality and the experience with the Scripture's. But I got it with great difficulty.

#702: FB 3, 118 (26,29) Re: Spiritual Temptations are the Most Difficult

The true Christian Church does not have to battle with flesh and blood, but with the evil spirits under heaven, as St. Paul says: [Eph. 6] And the battle is the most difficult and dangerous. For flesh and blood can only take body, wife, and child, home and land, etc., that which is temporal; but spiritual evils take the soul, eternal life and salvation.

#707 Re: Elijah and Elias

When Elijah called Elias chariot of Israel and his chariteer, so great was the impression of his strength that he could have said: you are the stern and prow. You are to do it all. [II Kings 2:12]. If you are not in the front and the back, all is lost. If you depart thence, where can we hope to stay? What will happen to us?

#709: FB 4, 245 (47,4a) Re: Healing and Forgiveness of Sins

Why does Christ so often proclaim to those who are sick in body the forgiveness of sins, as is recorded in Matthew 9[:2] of the palsied man, and John 9 in the case of the blind man? Answer: "The actual sins one does cause sicknesses, not inherited sin. The sins the palsied man had committed were the cause of his sickness, not inherited sin, such as in the case of the man born blind. God sends no sickness into the world except through the devil; for all sadness or sickness comes from the devil and not from God. But God assigns it and lets it happen, so that we are harmed and punished when we despise Him [Acts 10:38, Luke 13:2ff]. Whatever belongs to death, is the trade of the devil, his work of art, his doing. On the other hand, whatsoever belongs to life, is God's grace and beneficence, which will not permit sadness. The devil is truly our Lord God's hand-man! During the time of the plague, it is the devil who blows into a house; whom he touches he takes away.

NOTE: FB 2, 85 (9,18) Re: What Punishment Goes with Inherited Sin?

The punishment of inherited sin is really not knowing nor acknowledging God--and this is blasphemy; then also not knowing one's neighbour, nor respecting him, doing him every kind of harm, choking and killing him. And thirdly: not knowing oneself, caring for oneself only and serving oneself, seeking one's own advantage even at the cost of harming another.

#715 Re: Let God be God!

God is displeased beyond measure when one does not desire to acknowledge Him to be God. Indeed in the books of Prophecy He inquires: Am I not God? Is there another true God beside Me? Have I no Hand, Arm, Power and Might, to be able to help?

#716 Re: Christ Preached Gratis

Christ indeed preached without pay; nevertheless, He permitted the pious women to give Him things. [Luke 8:23].

FB 1, 360 (7,80) "Christ indeed preached for free without pay, nevertheless the pious, God-fearing women, whom He had healed of unclean spirits and sickness, gave Him of their goods [Luke 8]; taxed themselves and gave Him things, and He accepted what others gave Him voluntarily. [John 12].

Thus, He spoke to the apostles, whom He sent out to preach: "Freely you have received, freely give." [Matt. 10:8]. Not that He forbade them to accept anything for their labor, but that they were not to worry about food, clothing, etc., for wherever they would go, they would find people, who would not let them suffer need. [Matt. 10:12]. As He continues: "When you come into the house, if it be worthy; eat and drink as they provide, for a laborer is worthy of his hire. [Luke 10:5-7; Matt. 10]. And in I-Cor. 9:14, St. Paul says: "You shall not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the corn." And, "they that preach the Gospel should live from the Gospel."

#717 Re: Christ Minted a Coin Once

Christ once minted a coin when He ordered Peter to take the tribute money out of the mouth of the fish. [Matt. 17:27].

FB 1, 360 (7,80) "Christ minted once, when he desired to give the tax money which He was, after all, not obliged to give. 'Go to the sea', He said to Peter, 'and cast a hook and take up the first fish; in the mouth of which you will find a stater (half of a gulden). Give that on behalf of me and you.'"

#720 Re: Faith is Most Pleasing to God

Faith is the service of worship that pleases God most. Hence, Christ

#720 Re: Faith is Most Pleasing to God . . . continued

praised the faith of the Cananite women so much; He does not simply call her a dog, etc. [Matt. 15:26-28], when He said: It is not good, etc. For What follows shows Sully He had not seriously meant all He had said to her.

FB 2, 192 (13,64) Faith is the most pleasing worship to God. "Faith is a service of worship that pleases God most. Therefore, Christ also praises the faith of the women from Canaan, so highly, no longer calling her a bitch, when He said: "It is not good to take the bread from the children, and give it to the dogs"; for what follows, clearly shows, that Christ had not really meant what He said, nor spoken from the heart, but rather in order to exercise her faith."

#724 Re: Christ Alone Can Prevail Against the Cunning of the Devil

The devil has not been promoted to be a Doctor of Theology, but nevertheless he is quite an expert. Christ alone can prevail against him. Cunningly, he can aspire to be God [as when he said]; "All this I give you, etc. [Matt. 4:9]. He does not call Christ Son of God as before, but simply: "You are my creature, and all governing power of the world is mine!" Like Daniel said to God: "You are King!", I am God; it is right to adore Me--Then Christ calls him by his right name: "Get Thee hence, Satan!" This test (of Christ) no one can fathom; if I could preach it adequately, I would gladly die. The devil must have truly shocked Christ: "What I wish to give, I give". These words are majestic, which alone God is competent (to speak). I give you, etc. The devil actually gives; but note well between giving and giving! I shall let it be, Christ grants [that you are king of the world and do things FWL], but I will not worship you because of that. He truly must be an evil spirit, that he dares to assume, that Christ would worship him. Satan must have tempted him with a sight in which He (Christ) could see the glory of the world in so short a time. That was the test! To suppose that one could accept such honor [note 6 says "goods"], and at the same time be son of God!

FB 3, 17 (24, 12) Re: Christ Alone can Overcome the Cunning of the Devil

"The devil indeed is not a recognized doctor [of theology], but otherwise highly learned and experienced, for after all he has now been practising his art, tested and exercised it, carried on his trade, for almost six-thousand years! Against him, Christ alone can prevail. Nevertheless, he tried his art and cunning on Him also when he lustingly said to Him: "If you fall down and worship me, I will give you all the kingdoms of the whole world", etc. He no longer says as previously: "If thou be the Son of God", but simply, "I am god, you are my creature, for all of the might and glory of the world is mine, and I give them to whom I will; if you worship me, I shall give them to you. Christ can not stand this blasphemy, and calls him by his right name saying: "Get thee hence, Satan!", etc.

No one can understand this temptation. If I could preach it [adequately], I would gladly die. The devil must have truly shocked Christ, when he said: "All this is mine; and I give it to whom I will"; for these are words of divine majesty, which are due and proper to God alone.

It is true, the devil gives; but be careful and make a strong distinction between the right giver, who gives all things that we are and possess, in addition His only begotten Son, etc.; and between the arch-murderer, who for a short-time gives to them who serve and worship him; things in such a way that they must afterwards suffer forever. Christ does not deny that he is a lord and price (as He himself has named him), of the world, but does not want to worship him for all that, but says: "Be gone

#724 FB 3, 17 (24,12) Re: Christ Alone can Overcome the Cunning of the Devil
... continued

Satan" You do the same!

He must be an evil, poisonous, thirsty, lustful spirit, that he dares to suppose, that the Son of God would fall down before him and worship him. The arch-villain must have put a spectre before him to show him in a moment all of the kingdoms of the world and their glory, as Luke describes [Lk. 4:5,6] to move Him to consider He would accept such honor, and at the same time, be God's Son.

But, the Lord meets this challenge in the right way: "Be gone, Satan! Thou shalt worship God your Lord, etc." Matthew clearly states: "Jesus was led of the Spirit into the wilderness that He be tempted of the devil". [Matt. 4:1]: This did not take place without severe testing and battle."

#727 Re: The Priesthood of Christ

There is no book in the Scripture in which the priesthood of Christ is more excellently described than in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The priestly office of Christ is of the greatest consolation to the believers, in that He is apriest; that He is King, does not comfort as much since the mind always then thinks Him to be a judge.

FB 1, 319 (7,16) Christ even remains priest and king: "Christ will ever remain priest and king eternally, even though no bishop has consecrated Him nor anointed Him. This does not matter for God Himself has ordained, consecrated, installed and anointed Him, when He says: "Thou art a priest", (Ps. 110:4). There, the "Thou" is greater than the rock in Revelation of St. John, which was longer than 300 miles of road. And Psalm 2:6, "Yet have I set my King upon my Holy Hill of Zion". Therefore, He will indeed remain and all who believe in Him!

In the Holy Scriptures there is no book in which the priestly of the Lord Christ is so well and essentially described as in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Christ's priestly office comforts the God-fearing above all measure: the fact that He is a priest. But that He also is King does not comfort so much; for then the heart things, He is a strict judge."

#730 Re: Right Faith Leads to Right Conduct

Whoever believes rightly, will experience the right conduct. Children believe rightly [without doubting] therefore, etc. For this reason, Christ Himself loved children [Mark 10:13]. Let [suffer], He said, the little children, etc., inspite of their foolish tricks. On the contrary, He hated the wisdom of the world.

FB 1, 80 (3,13) Re: Schwaden [a kind of grass]. Dr. Martin said, "I am of the opinion and believe that "Schwaden" is bread from heaven. Schwaden are gathered early in the morning, as the dew falls, in a sieve; it does not grow, but comes like dew; as soon as the sun has risen, it melts and vanishes. Physicians call it manna; it does not grow on any branch nor herb, but falls with the dew; it is not sown nor planted, comes from the dew only; one shakes the brush-wood, and it falls off; one cooks it as one pleases . . .

Manna is manna. Krammetvogel [some sort of bird] is Krammetvogel; but how do they get there? . . . "Manna, lay early as dew, and at noon it melted", Moses says; It will not suffer to be handled, otherwise it spoils, as when a cook nibbles at it. In the same way, God's Word does not wish to nor can it suffer any addition.

#736 Re: Jonah is Sign of Resurrection

Believers are like Jonah cast into the sea, no rather, they are cast into the belly of the whale! This account is of the greatest consolation

#736 Re: Jonah is Sign of Resurrection . . . continued

and a most certain sign of the resurrection. It would be absolutely ludicrous and incredible if it were not written in Sacred Scriptures. [Jonah 4:1ff]. But thus God humiliates his own [prophet]. But he becomes much worse later, wishing to master God; but the fact is that he wanted to be such a great murdered and to want to destroy a city with so great a population. What a prophet!

FB 4, 421 (60, 15) The History of the Prophet Jonah: "True and pious Christians are like Jonah, who was cast into the sea, yea, even into hell, saw the great fish open its mouth, and lay in its dark belly three days without putrefaction. Just think how he must have felt!

This story is intended to be the highest consolation and sign of the resurrection of the dead for us. It is ludicrous; I myself would not believe it, if it were not in the Holy Scripture. Thus God is wont to humble his own. But he [Jonah] became much worse later; wanted to master God and became a great killer and murderer, when he wished to destroy so great a city in which there were so many people. What a saint!?!"

#739 Re: Nocturnal Fears

Nocturnal fear, it is said, leads to misfortune: light [leads] to felicity. The arrow flying by day are temptations such as: "Command that these stones be made bread, etc." [Matt. 4:3]. Whether it be night or day, black or white, there is nothing to worry about. Whether things become sour or sweet, etc., "I am the Lord; I will not permit that any trouble strike you!" It is a universal consolation which says: Do not fear them which secretly plot nor them that step forth openly. He protects us from secret or open evil and so he uncovers to us all the deceits of the tyrants.

#742 Re: Christ--A Priest Forever

Christ will remain a priest eternally, even though He has not been consecrated by any bishop. Indeed, God Himself ordained Him, when He said: You are a priest forever. [Ps. 110:4]. This Scripture: "You are a priest, etc." is longer and greater than the rock of Revelation which extended 300 thousand paces. [Rev. 21:16].

#745: FB 4, 416 (60,8) Revelation of the Holy Prophets Someone asked re; the revelation of the prophets, "Who always boast: "Thus says the Lord": whether God had spoken to them personally? Then D.M.L. said: "They were very holy, spiritual, diligent people, who with great seriousness pondered divine and holy matters, and reflected upon them; therefore, God spoke with them in their consciences; this the prophets accepted as a certain revelation.

#746 Re: The Jews

Just as living vines are of no other use than to be burned in a fire, even though they have born good fruit, Ezekiel testifies thus: the vines of the Jews are of no further importance, though it be granted that great prophets, apostles and even Christ Himself were born of them!

FB 4, 627 (74,311) The race of the Jews is spoilt. "Just as nothing can be made of the wood and branches of a grapevine that can be used, they are good only to feed a fire--for this the wood of a grapevine is good, that it may be burned and one may use the ashes, as the prophet Exekiel says: even though while it was still on the grapevine it bore its fruit: so too from the Jews, the apostles, prophets and Christ Himself came; but now the race is of no worth.

#767: FB 1, 294 (5,21) Re: The Golden Calf

While Moses was on the mountain with Aaron the high-priest, the people of Israel erected a golden-calf [Ex. 32]. Thereby, they did not intend to honor another god, nor have many gods, but they just wanted to alter God and change the manner of worshipping Him; -contrary to what Mosès had taught and commanded them. And indeed, not all of them, only the most prominent and a part of the people gave their approval. They wanted to demonstrate that God desired to be honored and reconciled with sacrifice of calves.

Such sacrifices were made before the coming of the law, inherited and taken over from their fore-fathers. The worship of the Jewish calf was taken from the Egyptians and came from them, for they honored an ox and idols. The people of Israel did the same as St. Stephen mentioned in Acts 7:41ff. But this kind of worship came from Joseph, who sacrificed heifers and calves.

#776: FB 1, 386 (7,117) Re: No One Ascends into Heaven, Etc. Christ tells John in the third chapter, as if He were to say: "Without me, no one by his own powers, merit, self-chosen holiness, nor by the works of the law, can be pious and righteous before God, nor come into the Kingdom of Heaven. For I alone am and remain in heaven, yet I came down from heaven in order to take you up [into heaven]."

From this it follows, that only those who believe in Christ acquire the forgiveness of sins; become righteous in the sight of God, inherit the kingdom of heaven; for this reason, He came down from heaven into the world, to take unto Himself human nature and by His suffering and resurrection, to rescue us from the power of the devil, sin and death and make us heirs of the kingdom of heaven; as He also says in John, chapter three: "As Moses in the wilderness raised a serpent, so must the Son of Man be raised, [that is crucified and killed] in order that all who believe in Him should not be lost, but have eternal life." [John 3:14,15].

In these three words (ascended up to heaven, coming down from heaven, and to be in heaven) which mean three kinds of time, He sums up, in a few words, His omnipotence. To come down from heaven means that He appeared upon earth, became a human being (equal to us in all things, yet without sin), permitted us to see His glory in His teaching and miracles, and finally He accomplished the salvation of the human race. To ascend up to heaven means that He no longer appears on earth in bodily form. To be in heaven means that He has never left the right hand of God, that is the Godhead, but was ever and ever, and still is in heaven. That He also has never given up the human nature which He took unto Himself; nor will He ever give it up!"

#787: FB 2, 1 (8,1) Re: The Office of the Holy Spirit

"The office of the Holy Spirit is two-fold: In the first place He is a spirit of grace, who shows us that God is gracious and makes us into beloved and acceptable children of God. In the second place, He is a Spirit of prayer, Who prays for us and the whole world, that all manner of evil be turned away from us and all manner of good be ours.

The Spirit of Grace teaches others; but the Spirit of prayer, prays that the Name of God be hallowed.

It is wonderful that one thing can happen and be carried out in various ways and manners. It is a different thing to have the Holy Spirit than to have the revelation of the Holy Spirit; for many had the Holy Spirit before the birth of Christ and yet they did not have the Revelation.

We do not differentiate the Holy Spirit from the faith; He also

#787: FB 2, 1 (8,1) Re: The Office of the Holy Spirit . . . continued is not contrary to it, for He is the certainty Himself in the Word, He Who makes the Word certain for us, that we do not waver therein, but without all doubt believe most certainly. That is the way it is and not different than God's Word teaches and says: He [the Holy Spirit] is not given to anyone outside of the Word, but through the Word."

Dr. Henningus then said: "When you say that the Holy Spirit is certainty before God, that is that one can be certain of His opinion, then all the sects have the Holy Spirit, for all of them indeed claim to be most certain of their religion and teaching."

But, Martin Luther said: "Mohammed, the Pope, the Sacramentarians, Anabaptists and other troublesome spirits have no certainty, and can not be certain of their cause and opinions; for they do not cleave to the Word of God. They do not have anything right; but they cleave to their own righteousness that this or that be done or happen, or else they explain and expound or understand God's Word according to their own reasoning. And even if they do many great works, yet they are in doubt and must remember: Who knows if it pleases God? If I have done enough? I am unworthy!

But a really God-fearing Christian is between these two certainties and says: I do not ask about that. I do not consider my holiness nor yet my unworthiness; instead I believe in Jesus Christ; He is holy and worthy, and offers Himself to me with all of His holiness. What He is and has, God gives, whether I be holy or unholy. As to my person, I am a poor sinner, of this I am certain out of His Word.

Therefore, only the Holy Spirit can say: Jesus Christ is the Lord. He alone preaches, praises and explains Christ. All of the others curse Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is foremost in the matter of teaching; but concerning the hearing, there the Word is foremost and comes first; the Holy Spirit follows; for one must first hear the Word; through it the Holy Spirit works in the heart, with whom and when He wills. Without the spoken word, the Holy Spirit does not work."

FB 2, 245 (15,26) The Spirit of Grace and Prayer "The Spirit of grace has two modes of operation. He works that God becomes well-disposed and gracious to us and that we become His beloved children, in whom He is well pleased. The Spirit of prayer prays for you and the whole world, that all evil be turned away and all good comes. The Spirit of Grace teaches others; the Spirit of Prayer prays that God's Name be hallowed; His Kingdom come; His will be done, etc." [Zech. 12:10].

#790 Re: Preaching the Psalms, St. John and St. Paul

The Psalter, the Gospel of John and Paul are to be preached in the churches and remain for those who have to battle heretics. For general proclamation, truly St. Matthew [should be preached].

FB 4, 409 (59,11) What Books ought to be preached in the churches?

Dr. Martin Luther was asked: "What Books of the Holy Scripture pre-eminently ought to be preached?" He answered: "The Psalter, St. John's Gospel and St. Paul, for those who must do battle against the heretics; but for the common man and young people, the other Evangelists, David has psalms which teach prophecy, pray, and give thanks. Among prophetic Psalms the most outstanding is the 110: "The Lord spoke to my Lord". Among the doctrinal Psalms the pre-eminent ones are the Lamentation, 51, 32, 130, 143 [Psalms of lamentation asking for compassion FWL], for these teach that the forgiveness of sins takes place without the law and without all works; therefore, these Psalms are Pauline. For what else do we see when David says: "But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared." [Ps. 130:4]; or what Paul says: "For God hath concluded

#790 Re: Preaching the Psalms, St. John and St. Paul . . . continued
them all in unbelief that He might have mercy upon all." "That Thou mayest be feared" means that one must take off one's little hat before God, so that no one may boast of self-righteousness, for it is all pure forgiveness, not [self-earned] merit."

#796: FB 4, 416 (60,9) Re: Why Isaiah was Killed

"In the books of the Jews we read that Isaiah was killed by King Ahas, because he said: "I saw the Lord sitting on a high chair, etc." [Is. 6:5]. For Ahas probably said to him: "You lout! How dare you say you have seen the Lord, when God has spoken to Moses: 'Will a man see me and live?' [Ex. 33:20]. You are a heretic; out of your mind, insane and stupid, you blaspheme God and are worthy of death, take him away!" And many are of the opinion this is very much like the truth; that Isaiah was killed for the named reasons, for they could not stand anyone who claimed to have seen greater things and done more than Moses."

#797: FB 3, 413 (37,115) Re: Erasmus Sits Between Two Chairs

"Erasmus could well have served and been useful to the cause of the Gospel, as he had often been admonished in a Christian way, but he did not do so. And now that he would like to do so, he is unable for the matter has now advanced too far and he no longer has the playing deck [of cards] in his hand, but has given it away. He has also expressed himself in this matter to the intent that he no longer wishes to be made use of by the papists. Things are with him like they were with Judas Iscariot; he also was unwilling when Christ admonished him in such a friendly way: "Why do you betray the Son of man with a kiss?" [Luke 22:48], 'My friend, why are you here?'. He could then have stopped and served Christ; but he did not want to. Afterwards, when he repented and wished to do so, he could not, and was cast aside and despised by the Jews also. For this reason a bishop said of Arius, the heretic: 'Arius does not seek the glory of God'. I can say the same thing for Erasmus."

#798: FB 2, 19 (9,16) Re: The Difference Between the Sins of the Pharisees and the Publicans

When the great enmity and envy of Dr. Koch or "Snotspoon" and other opponents from among the papists against Luther and the Gospel were discussed, Dr. Martin said: "Christ knew very well how to make distinctions between sins: for in the Gospel we see clearly how hard He is on the Pharisees because of their great hatred and envy against Him and His Word. Over against this He was very friendly and kind towards the little [humble] woman who was a sinner. [Mr.] Sanctimonius Envy, would rob Christ of His Word, is His bitter enemy, who persecutes and finally kills Him. The greatest sinner grasps the Word, listens to Christ and believes that He alone is Saviour of the world. She washes His feet, anoints Him and refreshes Him with a precious water. Wherefore, Christ said to the pharisee who had invited Him: 'You gave me no kiss, etc.' [Lk. 7:45]. Therefore, dear friends, let us be sinners who humble ourselves and are not haughty and blown up!"

#798d: FB 4, 453 (63,11) Re: Cunz of the Rose

"Cunz of the Rose", D.M.L. said; "Maximilian's servant, a happy, interesting man, must have been a courageous man. For it is told of him, that after he had ridden through a forest and lost his way, it having becomce late, he had to enter into an isolated inn, where the innkeeper was a rogue and a murderer, who, however, received him in a friendly manner. He noticed then a young woman in the inn, weeping bitterly; accordingly, he secretly asked her: 'Why she was weeping?'. She said:

#798d: FB 4, 453 (63,11) Re: Cunz of the Rose . . . continued

'There were nothing but murderers within; therefore, he had better take good care of himself and be cautious.' She wished to warn him because she judged him to be an honest man. She soon told him how he was to conduct himself saying, 'When the innkeeper would have the lights lit and rings a little bell, the peasants would come in, pretending to be guests. When the table had then been set and prepared, he, the innkeeper, would go out of the room and say: 'Trim yourself, light!' Immediately, one of the peasants would put out the light; then they will stab you to death.' All this Cunz of the Rose took to heart. Like a courageous and daring man, he paid attention to his protection. He asked the young women to give him a candle in a lantern, which he secretly covered up and put under the bench. He kept his armour on and his weapons with him. His servants did the same, whom he had warned of the game and to defend themselves bravely. While he then was sitting at the table and waiting, within the hour one of the peasants came and acted as if he wanted to trim the light, but put it out and attempted to stab him. But, he was still wearing his armour, commanded the lantern with the burning light to be brought out, and with his followers put the peasants to flight killing them all. The innkeeper, however, he made a prisoner."

FB 4, 454 (63,12) Re: A Lord Who Journeyed to the Holy Land. D.M.L. said: "A lord journeyed to the Holy Land, towards Jerusalem. After St. Catharine he wanted to go to Mount Sinai. After a day's journey, or several along the way, he noticed several highway robbers coming his way, straight toward him. Quickly, he ordered a table to be prepared and set with whatever food and drink he had taken with him on the way, for the road passed through a wilderness. Now when these fellows came to him, he got up and received them in a most friendly manner, and asked them to be seated and partake of a bit of food and drink with him for this was the custom in his country, to receive and host guests. They sat down, ate and drank with him and were joyful and in good spirits. Then he gave each of them a little souvenir which he had with him. Thus they departed in quite a friendly mood. The next day they returned disguised, took him and his servants prisoner, led him up into a castle; treated him well, gave him presents in return and accompanied him part of the way, refreshed and unharmed! Thus one may win and break the hearts even of enemies, who wish to do you harm--with blessedness, friendliness and mildness. But the latter are God's gifts!

#799: FB 1, 4 (1,2) Re: Proof that the Bible is God's Word

Dr. Martin once proved the Bible to be God's Word and Book in this way: "Everything that exists and is in the world, also how it works and stands, all of this is written in Genesis describing creation; how God has created and made it all, continuing and remaining until the present. King Alexander the Great, the Kingdom of Egypt, the Babylonian Empire, the Persians, the Greeks and the Roman monarchies such as Julius and Augustus, had wanted to destroy and eradicate this book and raged against it in a most violent manner. But they have not been able to do so, nor succeeded in destroying it. All of them have passed on. The Book, however, has remained from age to age unharmed and quite complete as it was written. But Who maintains it? Or, Who has protected it against such great powers? No one except truly God Himself, Who is the Master. It is a great miracle that God has thus preserved and protected this Book for so long; for the world and the devil are very hostile toward it. I do believe the devil has destroyed many good books in the churches, even as he has killed many saints and destroyed them of which we now do not know; but he had to let the Bible remain; also Baptism, the Sacrament of the Altar, the true Body and Blood of Christ; and the office of preaching have remained

#799: FB 1, 4 (1,2) Re: Proof that the Bible is God's Word . . . continued
despite so many tyrants and heretics. These our Lord has protected with extra-ordinary power; for one must baptize, administer the Sacrament and preach, and this no one has been able to prevent nor hinder. The books of Homer, Vergil and similar great men are fine and useful books, ancient, but nothing compared to the Bible.

#807: FB 2, 347 (21,1) Re: Excommunication Ought to be Established Again

"The godless", said Dr. Martin Luther, "possess great power, riches and prestige; we, however, have only one thing a poor, miserable Christ. In temporal things, money and property, prestige and power, they are ahead of us; of Christ they do not ask. We say: you are a great lord in this world, but we are lords in heaven; they have power and goods on earth; we are ahead in having our Lord God's command, Holy Baptism, the Sacrament of the Altar, our Lord Christ's true Body and Blood. This is a heavenly office. When they under a Christian name and appearance want to exercise power, outrage and wantonness, we say: do not agree to be sponsors. Do not go to the Sacrament; have no fellowship with such Christians.

From such excommunication came into the Church with the ancient fathers, as we read of St. Ambrose, the Bishop of Milan, who drove the Emperor Theodosius out the church, because he acted brutally and tyrannically in a city his army had captured causing everyone therein to be killed and stabbed, old and young, virgins and women, though they were innocent.

If, however, they do not claim to be Christians and refrain from applying to themselves the Christian name, we are willing and ready to suffer their tyranny, wantonness and unjust power gladly and with patience of heart, looking upon them as pagans, Jews and Turks, and commit it unto our dear God. Even as St. Ambrose did, when he was driven by his enemies, his adversaries, the followers of the Emperor and his men in office, out of the church and temple. It was demanded of him to turn over to the Emperor the church and its rights and properties. He straightway offered them his neck, stood like a stone wall and said:

'If the Emperor would demand of me what is mine, my house and yard, money and property and the like, I would not deny him this, but let everything go; even though all I possess is poor people. But what belongs to God and the church is not subject to the imperial majesty; he has no right thereto. I am neither able nor willing to take anything from the church, nor turn over what belongs to her, because I am commanded to protest and not to turn over or vacate what is hers.

In addition to all of this I must be concerned about the salvation, well-being and blessedness of the Emperor; for it would be of no advantage to me that I give it, nor to him if he were to receive it. Therefore, dear Emperor do not burden yourself with the thought that you have imperial power and right over that which is God's. Do not exalt yourself, but, if you desire to continue to be Emperor and to govern, be submissive to God. For it is written: 'Render unto God, that which is God's and to Caesar that which is Caesar's' [Matt. 22:21]. Land and people belong to the emperor, the church however to the priests, in which Christ should be judge and not the accused, etc.' And he continued: 'Well then, force I must suffer, sigh, mourn and weep I am willing to do, for these are the weapons of a priest against his enemies. In no other way, should I or am I able to defend myself and resist. Behold, here I stand; here I wish to die, etc.'

He ~~must~~ really have been a daring, faithful man and he must have had a ~~fine~~ Christian courage and spirit. To sum up, the world has only delusions and opinions by which it governs and is led astray, recognizing only that which is temporal and of the present, understanding and knowing nothing that is certain. And however things turn out afterwards, it

#807: FB 2, 347 (21,1) Re: Excommunication Ought to be Established Again .. con't.
[the world] says, I would not have thought it would be thus.

Faith, however, operates with the things that are in the future and not present, nor yet visible which reason can not grasp. Therefore a Christian should not say: I would not have supposed or have thought that; but he should be most certain, that he has to suffer for his Lord Christ's sake, in whom he believes and whom he confesses; he should also carry his cross, be scorned and persecuted. Therefore he is not frightened so much when it happens for he knows beforehand right well out of God's Word, that it is so ordained. The world however and what is in the world continues to live confidently in a swirl, in joys and all lusts, like the richman, the Epicurean, the gourmandizer, who begrudges the fragments to poor Lazarus, lying at his door.

Therefore, I have excommunicated N. because of his whoredom. I do not want him to partake of our Sacrament; he has also not done so since I have had it forbidden him, nor shall he, before he repents. And he [Luther] continued: a certain citizen in W. bought a house for thirty gulden. After he had lived in it for a long time, without doing much work in it, except patching it with lime and painting it, he wanted to sell it for four-hundred gulden. Taking this in consideration, he made up a bill, that if it rented out one could charge twenty gulden for it. Then Dr. M. said: "Does this miserable character consider a rotten beam and a patched-up dirt wall to be convincing justification? If he acts in this way, I will put the bann on him and excommunicate him, that he do without the Sacrament and Christianity and not imagine for a moment that he ought to be in heaven. It would be more than enough if he sold it for one and a half hundred gulden, etc. We must again establish excommunication!"

#810 Re: David Closed His Eyes to Many Things

David was compelled to disregard things [close his eyes] to many things. David was an outstanding man, who openly dared to preach and speak against the false worship of the Jews; and yet he was not able to prevent it. He saw this one sacrifice, that one teach falsely; and this was done by the larger and more powerful parts. If he could have overcome this with force, he would have done so. Since he knew no counsel or help against it, he sang a little song about it and called upon God.

FB 3, 108 (26,8) What can not be stopped even though it be wrong, one ought to have patience with and pray, not condoning it, but rather committing it to God.

"David was a wonderfully excellent man, that he dared publically to teach and speak against the false worship services of the Jewish people; yet he was not able to prevent them. Then he saw one conduct mass and sacrifice, the other teaching falsely. And those who did so were the largest and most powerful group. Had he been able to upset it all and prevent it, he would have done so; since he however, did not know what to do about it nor find help against it, he had to have patience; and he made a little song about it to God, sang it and called upon Him.

FB 4, 412 (60,2) David had to look through his fingers in many matters. "David was a fine, understanding lord and king who was able to close his eyes to many things and look through his fingers! He was well able to lend someone money for a drink (stand treat for someone). He looked at Joab his relative and uncle through his fingers too, for he was unable to shape everything into bolts. David must have been plagued with worse devils than we are, for otherwise he would not have come to so great revelations and knowledge of God, without so great temptations; for they were great! He composed the Psalms and sang them. How is it that we do not so likewise? David was an excellent man that he dared to speak publically, teach, preach, and write against idolatry and the worship of his people's

#810 Re: David Closed His Eyes to Many Things . . . continued

idols, yet nevertheless, was unable to prevent it. For he saw this one sacrificed, the other taught falsehood, and of such as these the largest part of the nation. If by force he had been able to stop it in one attempt, he would have done so; since however, he knew no counsel or help against it, he sang his dear Psalms to the Lord God about it and called upon Him.

Dr. Martin Luther said: "All of the tragedies of the Greeks are nothing compared to the histories of David. What a huge thing to endure that his own son had intercourse with all his wives; that he had to be a widower without having died for the rest of his life. Therefore, our Lord God gave him a young wife when he had become old. What a scandal it must have been among the pagans, that among God's people a father had to experience such a thing from his son. It is a wonder that the other brothers permitted such a thing; they who were children of the other wife.

All kings, princes and rulers, who are in public affairs, sin because of necessity and they do wrong thereby. Therefore, they need the forgiveness of sins. Accordingly I hold that King Ahab humbles himself before me?" [I Kings 21:29]. For to whoever God grants his mouth, that is His Word and Promise, it is well with him, and for this reason blessed; even though Scriptures witness evil of them up to the time of their death, for they had the promise of the future Messiah and believed it and thus grasped the forgiveness of sins in the hour of their death.

I hold the same concerning all of those of whom the Scriptures say: "And he fell asleep with his fathers"; they all went to heaven. For the little words "fall asleep" is an indication of something good in the Scriptures; of whom, however, it is written that he was cut down and killed by his enemies; or that they were torn to pieces by animals and birds and devoured by them; I hold that they were lost and damned.

#817 Re: Erasmus and Lucian

Erasmus stabs through a fence. He does not fight in the open. Thus his books are very poisonous. Dying, I shall prohibit my children from reading his colloquies. for he speaks and teaches under fictitious and strange persons, impious things against the church and Christian faith; things he has made up. Let him ridicule me and other people! But I advise him; do not scoff at God, for He will not be vexed [Ps. 110:1]. Hence, I fear his will be an evil death. I praise Lucian before Erasmus, since he openly derides everything. Whereas the former [Erasmus] impulsively attacks all things sacred and the totality of piety. Therefore, he is far more harmful than Lucian himself.

FB 3, 410 (37,11) Erasmus and Lucian: "Erasmus", Dr. Martin said, "stabs through the fence, does nothing openly; does not freely appear before the eyes of anyone; therefore, his books are very poisonous. When I die, I shall forbid my children to read his colloquies, for he teaches much in them that is godless under strange imagined names and persons; purposely to attack the church and the Christian faith. Let him ridicule myself and others, scoff at us, but let him not ridicule the Lord God. That's my advice, for He will not be mocked. For this reason I fear, he will come to a bad end!

I praise Lucian in spite of all for he derides all things openly. Erasmus falsifies everything which is God's and all piety under the pretense of piety. Therefore he is much worse and more harmful than Lucian".

#826: FB 3, 2 (23,4) Re: Angels are Our Protectors

"It would not be a good thing if we knew how the dear holy angels fight for us so strenuously against the devil and what a hard battle and fight it is. For if we saw how a lone devil can make so many angels

#826: FB 3, 2 (23,4) Re: Angels are Our Protectors . . . continued
work so hard, we would despair. Therefore the Holy Scriptures with only a few simple words says: "He has charged His angels to guard you, etc." [Ps. 91:11]. And, "The angel of the Lord is on guard round those who fear him, etc." [Ps. 34:7]. But do not be dismayed! Do not worry: despair not; do not doubt the angels' care and guardianship. They certainly surround you and are with you. They carry you on their hands. Just how this happens and takes place, do not worry about it; for it is God Who says so; therefore, it is certain!

It is written in the Book of Job [4:18], "He [God] mistrusts His own servants and finds his messengers or angels at fault, namely the bad ones". Dr. Martin Luther once said concerning the angels: "This is what I imagine about the angels, and I stand thereby, the angels even now are in preparation, putting on their armour, arming themselves with their weapons; for the Day of Judgement is already breaking and the angels are girding themselves for the battle, desiring to throw the Turk and the Pope into the abyss [hell].

#830: FB 3, 24 (24,17) Re: Exorcists of the Devil in the Papacy

"The poor people, possessed by the devil under the papacy were not freed of their burdensome spirit by the art, word, or gestures of the exorcists. He does not permit himself to be driven out with simple words such as: "Get thee hence, thou unclean spirit." ~~Heed~~ ~~this~~ the exorcists did not seriously opine, etc. It is the power of God which must do so, and one risks one's life. The devil frightens such a one [an exorcist FWL] enough. This work can not be done without suffering terror! . . .

#831: FB 3, 30 (24,25) Re: The Devil's Power

"Now in our days, Satan is very powerful, proliferating hugely all manner of heresies and vices, driving the self-confident and satiated spirits with falsifications from God's Word, murders, adulteries, thefts, robberies, etc. He does not now play with all kinds of foolish tricks and mummeries as under the papacy; Christ gives the appearance of great weakness. From this we can conclude and suppose that Christ will soon come with the Day of Judgement and again prove and permit His power to be seen.

#832: FB 3, 103 (26,3) Re: How a Christian Ought to Resist the Burdensome Thoughts of Death, Which the Devil Inspires, as if God were Angry with him, When Afterall God sent Christ to Us so that We are to Live Through Him, etc.

"All despondency and sadness comes from the devil, for he is lord of death [Hebrews 2:14], especially when a person is sad and afraid as if God were an ungracious God. This is certainly the work of the devil and his machination. Therefore, if burdensome thoughts occur to you, as if God does not have mercy on you, indeed would let you die in your sins and condemn you; or you were about to give up your life because of fear; then conclude quickly that such thought are of the devil. Why? God does not sadden, terrorize, kill, for He is the God of the living; has also for this reason sent His only begotten Son into the world, not to frighten sinners, but to comfort them. Christ also died and rose from the dead to destroy death which is the work of the devil. Master it and make us alive. Wherefore words such as these and similar words of comfort are often cited: "Be glad; rejoice in the Lord; do not be dismayed; be of good cheer; I have overcome the world; the sting of death have been made dull and notched, yes even broken.

For this reason take courage in such trials and remember you are henceforth not the child of a human being, but God's child through faith in Christ in whose Name you have been baptized. Therefore death cannot thrust

#832: FB 3, 103 (26,3) Re: How a Christian Ought to Resist the Burdensome Thoughts of Death, Which the Devil Inspires, as if God were Angry with him, When Afterall God sent Christ to Us so that We are to Live Through Him, etc. . . . continued

his spear into you. Forasmuch as you belong to Christ, believe in Him and are baptized in Him, death has no claim on you, much less can harm you, for it has been swallowed up by Christ eternally.

But the hateful devil does everything he can to prevent such good and comforting thoughts from God to occur to us during our temptations, or else he darkens and obscures them for us. For the heart of the one who is thus tempted, is at such a time so occupied with burdensome thoughts of the law, with sin and death, that it cannot apprehend the article of justification and the faith, "I believe in Jesus Christ", much less be comforted.

Over against all this, all joy, comfort, peace, good conscience and a heart joyous in Christ comes from God. For the Holy Spirit, in the heart of the believer, is unafraid and not dismayed; yes indeed, he is courage and defiance itself, even in the temptations at death. He speaks out boldly: world, sin, death and hell, leave me in peace; you have no claim on me! If you will not let me live, I am prepared to die in God's name! You shall not succeed, no matter if you knock off my head; I possess One who well can put it on again!"

#835: FB 3, 104 (26,4) Re: The Usefulness of Temptations

"But such temptations are not only necessary for us, but they are good and useful for us. Otherwise, we would continue to go along without any fear of God; would not call upon Him for help; for whoever is healthy and happy does not need a physician nor comforter. Thus the devil could easily deceive him. In addition, temptation is also useful in making us live in the fear of God, walk circumspectly, pray without ceasing, grow in the knowledge of Christ and learn to understand the power of His Word. And even though we as yet are weak, yet the power of our Lord Christ is strong in the weak [II Cor. 12:9].

#837: FB 3, 417 (37,124) Re: Erasmus -- An Enemy of Christ

"This", Dr. Martin said, "I shall have written into my will, and this I call upon you to be witnesses, that I consider Erasmus to be the greatest enemy of Christ, such a one as has not existed in a thousand years! In his catechism, there is no such a word as do this and do not do that. He does not do anything in it except to mislead consciences. And indeed he has written against me in his little book Hyperaspiste, in which he has attempted to defend his book about free will, against which I wrote my book on the enslaved will, which he has not been able to confute, nor will he be able to do so in all eternity. This I truly know and I challenge the devil with all his scales defiantly and yet again defiantly, to confute it. I am certain that unchanging truth is of God. If there be a God in heaven, he [Erasmus] will some day realize what he has done!"

#839: FB 3, 386 (37,71) Re: The Sacramentarians and Enthusiasts

Dr. Martin said of the Sacramentarians, who so vigorously emphasize the spiritual eating and drinking in the Sacrament of the Altar: "God has ordained and instituted both [Sacraments] in a way that one may see and grasp them: Baptism and the Lord Christ's Body and Blood in the Lord's Supper also their purpose, administration and use. The purpose is that they be useful. Now the heretics deny one of the two; either the thing the essence itself, as God has instituted, or the use for which it has been instituted. The sacramentarians and the anabaptists deny the thing, the essence; for they say in the Sacrament of the Altar, there

#839: FB 3, 386 (37,71) Re: The Sacramentarians and Enthusiasts . . . continued
is only bread and wine, not the true Body and Blood of Christ; in Baptism, water alone. The Pope with his followers do not deny the essence, they let it stand as God has instituted it, the office of the keys, Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar; but he [the Pope] has not the right usage. The Enthusiasts and those of rebellious spirit [unstable sectarian gangster types] call the work a papistic thing. The custom and use, they call spirit and claim Him for themselves!

But beware of such spiritualizing! For it is certain that whatever God gives, He gives in a way that can be seen and heard; this too, we ought to accept as a spiritual thing. Thus God wanted to show Himself bodily, and Christ wanted to be capable of being grasped, as John in his Epistle states: "That which was from the beginning, that we have heard, have seen with our eyes and touched with our hands, etc." [I John 1:1]. Thus He also gave us the Spoken Word, Baptism, the Lord's true Body and Blood in the bread and wine, as He hung upon the cross, giving His body for us and pouring out His blood for us, etc.; as we receive it in the mouth, in order that we have everything bodily and visibly. I ask the Swarm-spirits, let them give me an answer: If God be not graspable, how can we be sure that He exists? Ah! They are foolish jack-asses!

The devil spoke out of Marx, Stork, and Carlstadt, the Swarm-spirits, for they said to me, Dr. Martin: "You will get to see enough signs. They, however, meant the riots of the peasants; but at that time I did not understand what they meant. Whatever the devil does, he seals with the imprint of his backside!"

#843 Re: Scarcity of Pastors

Shortly there will be such a scarcity of pastors and preachers that the ones we have now would be scratched out of the earth, if it could be done! Then the Papists and our peasants will see what they have done. Enough physicians and lawyers will remain to govern the world. Two hundred pastors are necessary for every single lawyer. If there be one in Erfurt, that is enough. Not so with pastors. Each village and place needs a pastor. My gracious Lord has enough with twenty lawyers, over against that He needs about eighteen hundred pastors. We shall after an intermediate time have to make pastors out of lawyers and physicians; that you will see!

#848: FB 3, 261 (27,151 and 152) Re: Those Who Recant From Their Heresy

Dr. Martin spoke with great seriousness and certainty, that "N.N. was possessed of the devil, not only spiritually, but also bodily, and that he before his end, as is now plain, has been driven insane and foolish by the devil. Therefore, there no longer was a hope that he would repent and be converted. Therefore, one ought to pray against and not for him, that God remove so poisonous a worm and cast him into the fiery pit.

If one reads through all histories, one cannot find a tyrant, no matter how cruel, who raged like N.N. One does indeed find that they who raged, raged peculiarly and only against the body but not against the conscience, as we see in Pharoah who raged in Egypt. For he [N.N.] does not only wish to probe the consciences, but also force people to believe as it pleases him and the papists. And in this he out-does the Pope, who is satisfied with the bann against those who do not wish to be obedient to his statutes. He has never taken upon himself to probe the consciences and to govern them; he has indeed vexed and tormented them; but did not however coerce them with force to believe, what pleases him as N.N. has done. Therefore, he excells by far all the tyrants and persecutors of the Gospel."

#850: FB 4, 166 (44,15) Re: Godless Government Can Govern Well

Dr. Martin Luther was once told that a prince who was much opposed to the Gospel, nevertheless, was a fine ruler and therefore deserved high praise. Dr. Luther thereupon said: "What does it matter to our Lord God?" He is accustomed to fool the world with such masks. Saul, Ahab and the other godless kings in Israel were happy enough; their counsels and undertakings succeeded well. Their kingdoms were well respected, grew and increased. Now look at David's rule; he really was a pious and god-fearing king and had great good fortune against his external enemies; for he defeated the Philistines, Moab, Edom, and the Syrians. But in his domestic affairs he was the most unfortunate being. There was nothing but scandal around him, because of his adultery. Upon this murder, the rebellion of his children followed, evil talk and the kingdom was taken from him by his own son Absalom. But even though David in his government was not as happy as other godless kings, as far as outward appearances, in spite of this, he was able to speak good words to God and say: "Have mercy on me, God"; this the others were unable to do, and thus he was able to touch the heart of God with his prayer.

#852 Re: Patriarchs Before the Flood

I would give the world for the histories of the patriarchs who lived before the flood. One would then see how they lived, preached, and what they suffered. [I suppose] God must have thought: "I want to cover it up with the flood, for those who come after will not understand it any way. I want to keep it for myself, until we will again come together. Those prophets, apostles and other holy people will acknowledge their priority by far saying: I taught and suffered some fifteen years; they, however, seven hundred or eight hundred and even longer."

#854 Re: Christ and Satan

It is not surprising that Satan is hostile to Christ, that there is implacable hatred and enmity between them, who are of such diverse natures. He smells Christ over a distance of more than a hundred miles. He heard in Constantinople that here at Wittenberg, his dominion was spoken against. But, it is astounding that among people who are of the same nature and united by bonds unbreakable of charity, so great envy, dissension, etc. exists. In the married state who is closer than the wife, than the father to the son, mother to daughter, brother to brother? Yet they are contrary. Indeed it is rare to find harmony among themselves, so that even the Gentiles have noted this.

FB 1, 390 (7,121) Re: Enmity Between Christ and the Devil

"No wonder Satan is hostile to Christ and attacks his Word, kingdom and people with all his power and cunning. It is an old hatred and enmity between them which started in paradise. In addition they are by nature and the cast of their minds completely contrary to each other. He smells Christ over a distance of several hundred miles. In Constantinople he hears that we here in Wittenberg teach, speak and preach against his dominion; senses how dangerous this is for him; therefore, he rages and carries on so horribly.

But it is more astounding, that among us humans (who are of the same nature and bound together so firmly by the bounds of love, so that we ought to love another as ourselves), there can be so much ill-will, envy, hatred, anger, disunity, lust for revenge, etc., that one murders the other. Who is closer to man than his wife? to a son than his father; to a daughter than her mother; than one in-law to another in-law? Well, indeed a brother and sister could not closer related, yet one seldom finds that unity, love and friendship existing between them. Pagans

#854: FB 1, 390 (7,121) Re: Enmity Between Christ and the Devil . . . continued
have noticed this too, and complained about it, but they did not know that this is all the doing of the insufferable devil."

#859 Re: The Resurrection of Abraham

On the last day [Day of Judgement], Abraham shall rise from the dead; he will censure our lack of faith saying: I did not have a hundredth part of the promises you had, and believed nevertheless! Ought not God send the Turks upon us?

FB 2, 174 (13,34) Re: Abraham's Faith When then on the Day of Judgement, Abraham shall rise again from the dead; he will scold us because of our lack of faith and say: "Though I did not have a hundredth part of the prophecies that you have, yet I believed!" And he continued, should not our Lord God send the Turks down upon our necks? The example of Abraham far transcends all reason and human nature, when he overcame paternal love, carrying his only-begotten son Isaac, in whom the promises were contained, that his seed was to be increased like the stars in the heavens and the sand on the sea-shore. Yet, in spite of all that he was obedient to God all the more, being willing to kill and sacrifice his son against the law of nature, What must his feelings have been for three days then; how his heart must have beat! What blows of temptation he must have suffered, that are really quite indescribable.

In the same way Jacob's example, when he in his old age had lost his most beloved son, of whom he did not know otherwise than that he had been killed and devoured by wild animals. "I will go to my grave", he said; "mourning for my son" [Gen. 37:35]. Or in Luther's words: "I will now", he said, "in such sorrow go down to my son in the pit"; which well shows how great his anguish of heart must have been. Thus God trained them by the adversity and misfortune of their children. With these examples he comforted Dr. Benedict Paul, the honorable man and lawyer when his only child, in his absence, fell to his death."

#861 Re: Anabaptists

Against the Anabaptist who negate the baptizing of children, because they do not believe that he spoke thus: How can I know whether a man of advanced age believes? Even if he says he believes, I can in no way be certain [Matt. 18:16]. Out of the mouth of one only no testimony stands, etc.

FB 3, 401 (37,94) Something Else. Dr. Martin speaking against the Anabaptists who claim that one not baptize little children for they have no faith, said: "If I do not know whether an older person, who has come to reason believes, even though he says he believes: what more is there? An act after all is not established on the testimony of one person's mouth! Therefore I can also [in the latter case] not be certain. One ought also not ask what they and we do among ourselves, but simply and single-mindedly pay attention to what God commands and tells us to do saying; you are now to preach, teach, baptize, absolve, administer the Sacraments, God gives, whether one believes or not. You are to consider and be certain, so that we carry out our office whereunto God has earnestly called us with diligence; if we do not do so God will demand and take from us the takent which He has entrusted to us."

#865 Re: Comfort in Temptation

When asked how those who are tempted might be comforted, who do not feel peace as those who are justified and saved, the pious who are justified by faith, Rom.5, he answered: In the first place, admonish such [people] and say that the Christian life is set in the midst of sorrows, conflicts,

#865 Re: Comfort in Temptation . . . continued

afflictions, death, etc. Those who are thus perturbed with anxious thoughts are vexed by Satan; though they are children of God and have a Father in heaven, who accepts them as justified [Heb. 12:5]. "Son do not despise the correction of the Lord, etc." Thus, there are sons of God, whom Satan vexes; therefore, it necessarily follows that God cares for his own and neither condemns nor rejects them. Hence in the midst of tribulations, it behoves them to be joyful and secure, willing to submit themselves to the good ministrations of God. But you might answer to the text of Paul [Romans 5:1]: Believers have peace? Truly they do not have peace in faith, even though it is invisible and transcends all perception, so that in death, even though life is not felt, nevertheless, we must hope that we have it, even though contra-wise in the flesh and senses we have the greatest troubles and disquiet. Hence, David agonizes [Ps. 38:4]: There is no peace in my bones; and Christ on the cross also felt no peace. If at first Christians feel no temptations, how would they cling to the promises and consolations of the Gospel and the proclamation of Grace? Such as these: the poor are to be evangelized; fear not little flock; receive the weak brother; [mutually] console one another [Matt. 11:5; Luke 12:32; Rom. 14:1, II Cor. 12:11]. Accordingly because Christians always suffer afflictions and sorrows, the first and most important command is that we raise and comfort those who are afflicted and in sorrow. And in return those who are in such temptations, on their part, should permit themselves to be raised up and leave behind carping fear.

#867 Re: Comedies

Asked whether it should be permitted to put on comedies, he replied: Boys ought to be permitted to recite comedies; first, the practise of the Latin language; secondly, because in the comedies excellently contrived characters are found, which teach people what is fitting and proper for the servant, the master of the household, the adolescent, the old person; and how far to go in all positions of honor or office so that each may behold himself as in a mirror. To these the deceits and cunning tricks of the "red-light" women and especially the dishonest are described; also the offices of the parents and young men; how fathers, older men, should encourage the young men and their children for marriage; so that in like manner, young people obey their parents and marry. In the comedies, things of the greatest utility and necessary for knowledge are put forth. For no one fittingly can carry out that which is for the public good, without marriage. Nor should the comedies be forbidden because love affairs and occasionally obscene things are contained therein; for the same reason the Bible ought not be read by a Christian, because here and there it contains love stores, etc. Wherefore there is nothing that can be put forth on the account of obscenity to curtail comedies.

FB 4: 592 (72,2) Re: Comedies D. John Cellarius asked D.M.L. for advice; "There is a teacher in Silesia, not unlearned, who has undertaken to lead and play a comedy in Terence. However, many were angered because of this, as though it were not proper for a Christian person to carry out such a play of the pagan poets, etc. What did he [Dr. Martin] think about it?" He then answered: "One ought not to forbid the boys in school from playing comedies, but permit and allow it; firstly, that they get practise in the Latin language; secondly, comedies are well composed, for such persons are depicted and presented, through whom people are instructed and each is reminded of his position and station; and admonished as to what is proper for a servant, a master, a young fellow, and an old man; what looks well and what to do. Yes, in them is put forth and made visible all the degrees of dignities, offices and duties; how each in his station

FB 4: 592 (72,2) Re: Comedies . . . continued

in society ought to conduct himself in his public life as in a mirror.

In addition therein are described and shown the cunning plans and deceit of evil louts; also what is the office of parents and youth; how they are to educate their children and young people, and encourage them for the estate of matrimony, when the time for them has come; and how their children ought to be obedient to their parents, and to the courts, etc. Such things are presented in comedies which are very useful and necessary to know. For good order can not be maintained except through the estate of marriage. Christians should not then flee from comedies altogether, just because occasionally smutty jokes and adulterous stories are found therein. Since by the same reasoning, one should give up reading the Bible. Therefore, it does not amount to anything, to forbid for such reasons the reading and playing of comedies.

Comedies are found among the Romans, and these please me very well, whose most important intention and decisive reason was to discourage adultery and encourage marriage, with pictures and examples from life. For policing and civil government can not exist without marriage. The state of being without marriage, celibacy and adultery are the pestilence and poison of government!"

#868: FB 2, 373 (22,15) Re: Powerful Preaching

Magister Forsten asked Dr. Martin: "From whence comes the art to speak so powerfully, that both the God-fearing and the God-less are moved and take it to heart?" Then he answered and said: "From the First command of God, 'I the Lord, thy God am powerful and zealous [against the godless] and do well and am merciful [to the God-fearing], etc.' For God desires and commands that fiery hell be preached to the proud; to the pious, paradise; punish the evil ones, comfort the pious, etc." Then Forsten said: "I have not heard more than three whose preaching so touched my heart as yours, Sir Doctor, M. Cordati and M. Roerer. How does it happen, that others are not able to move and touch the heart as these three do?" Dr. Martin answered: "The reason is that the instruments and tools are different, just as one knife cuts better than another." Then Forsten said: "I should like to learn this art, so that I could speak to the hearts and consciences of the people; but my sermons are so cold, that I am often ashamed when I again leave the pulpit, and think afterwards, thus and thus, you should have held forth." Dr. Martin said: "Dear Forsten, in this thing you should not judge and condemn yourself, even as you are not able to; others ought to judge. Often I am ashamed of my sermon soon after I have finished, and I suppose it have been very cold; but others have praised it to me afterwards! For it commonly happens, that that which pleases us is not pleasing to others and vice versa."

#869 Re: His Dog, Tolpel

Gazing intently at his dog, Tolpel, he said: Look at that dog! He does not have one fault on his whole body. He has bright eyes, strong legs, beautiful white teeth, a good stomach, etc. These are the gifts of the body in the highest order; and God gives them to such an unreasoning animal!

#875: FB 4, 293 (50,2) Re: How to Judge Who is Damned

I would wish and like to know with all my heart if Zwingli is saved: But I fear the opposite; because Christ commands that we judge and recognize that God will deny them and not acknowledge those who deny Him before people; accusing Him of telling lies. He will not acknowledge them in return: to sum, those who do not believe are already condemned.

The judgement of God that we may attribute to all the godless is

#875: FB 4, 293 (50,2) Re: How to Judge Who is Damned

certain and we may condemn them; unless God desires to grant them a special privilege and disposition [otherwise judgement proceeds in its usual way, FWL]. In the same way, David would have desired with all his heart that his son Absalom be saved; and earnestly sought relief and mercy for him, when he said: "Absalom, my son, my son!" Yet at the same time he did not believe less certainly that he was damned. Therefore, he mourned and wept over him, not only that he had died bodily, but also that he was lost eternally. For he knew that he had perished in rebellion, incest and in being expelled by his father out of the kingdom.

#876: FB 2, 20 (9,19) Re: The Price of Sin is Punishment

God does not fail to punish any sin which is unrecognized nor confessed, especially those against the first tablet of the Law, which some do not consider to be sin, but virtue: "No evil-doer will escape punishment, unless he is sorry for having sinned and repents, as experience teaches. And even though someone may escape on one occasion, nevertheless he will be caught in the end and perish. As Psalm 58:2 says: 'God is still judge upon earth'; that is He does not permit any evil to go unpunished." And he continued: "May our dear God permit me to fall only into the kind of sin I know, understand, and can recognize as sin, such as murder, adultery, theft, etc.; not the kind of sins, which are not recognized to be sin, but rather looked upon as great virtues and holiness. Nothing angers God more than one in addition, defends sin, and claims not to have acted wrongly, like what Saul did. For the sins that are not recognized are against the other Table. Saul sinned against the First, but David sinned against the Second Table of the Ten Commandments. Those sinners who have sinned against the Second Table are easily put right by the preaching of repentance. The others, however, who sin against the First Table, seldom or never are put right, for they claim not to have done wrong but suppose the right.

Those [the former] sanctify God's Name, but these [the latter] claim righteousness, wisdom and power as of their own doing, but which our Lord God claims for Himself. If, however, one will not grant these to Him and says as Moses who writes about the wicked: 'I am doing just fine, for I do as my heart pleases, letting the drunken drift along with the thirsty; if that is his spirit can he claim to be alone clever? God will not put up with this!

#877 Re: Sin Against the First and Second Table of the Law

May our Dear God permit me to fall into such sins only, which I know and recognize that they are sins, such as murder, theft, adultery, etc. and not on the contrary into such sins which are not recognized as sins. Our Lord is not angered more than when one defends sin and denies that one has done wrong, thus Saul. For indeed the sins one does not recognize are against the First Table of the Law; but the sins recognized, are against the Second Table. Saul fell into sins against the First Table; David truly sinned against the Second. And those who sin, namely against the Second Table can come to their right senses and respond to the preaching of repentance, the others, however, not so. These sanctify the Name of God and seek His Name, the others arrogate to themselves wisdom and power; these two [wisdom and power] God wills alone to Himself. If, however, one does not wish to grant this to Him and says: "Let the drunkard and the thirsty go their way together": is such now His Spirit? God will not stand for this! [Deut. 29:19; Nu. 16:22].

FB 2, 85 (11,16) Re: Sins Against the First Commandment "Our dear Lord God", D.M.L. said, "let me rather fall into such sins that I know and

FB 2, 85 (11,16) Re: Sins Against the First Commandment . . . continued
recognize that they are sins, such as murder, theft, adultery, etc.

May He not let me fall into sins, which I do not know as sins. For nothing displeases God more than one who claims not to have sinned, as one can see in the case of King Saul.

Sin that one recognizes to be sin, however, are sins against the Second Table. Saul sinned against the First Table, David against the Second. Therefore, he bettered himself by doing penance. Such sinners who sin against the Second Table, recover themselves when repentance is preached to them, but the others are seldom rescued. Thus these sanctify the Name of God and strive for His kingdom, that is His wisdom, power or might; and these two God wills. If, however, one will not grant Him these two and says instead; things are going well with me, since I live as my heart wishes, so that the drunkards go their way with the thirsty; is this God's Spirit? He will not tolerate it! [Deut. 29:19; Nu. 16:22].

#882 Re: Pastors and Ceremonies

It is necessary for our pastors to be vigilant, so that ceremonies be made and conducted lest the people become neither too wild nor too holy!

FB2, 411 (22,93) Parish pastor's office as it relates to ceremonies:

"We pastors should be on our guard that ceremonies be made and conducted in such a way that the people do not become too wild [unruly], nor yet too holy; otherwise, they become Epicurians or hypocrites and self-righteous." FB 3, 331 (34,5) Concerning the Festival of St John the Baptist: "St. John's festival, the Baptist's, ought to be allowed to remain, for with him the New Testament began; for it is written: 'The law and the prophets have prophesied until John' [Matt. 11:13]. One should also observe it for the sake of the beautiful hymns, which we still read under the papacy, but did not understand." Then one remarked: "The Song of Zacharias is fine." "Yes", Dr. Martin Luther said, "it is fine; for the preface and introduction which Luke makes, expresses it well, when he says: 'And Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, etc.' [Luke 1:67]. We preachers and parish pastors should be watchful and alert that the ceremonies (order of service) be made and conducted in such a way, that the people do not become altogether too wild, nor yet too holy. Whosoever would conduct a service, no matter how small, must grasp the sword in both hands, not like Erasmus who laughs at them for the reason that they appear foolish and laughable. But one in rebuttal might say: God appears also as a fool, commanding foolish ceremonies, such as circumcision, sacrifices, Isaac's slaughtering, etc. How is it that such foolish things, which you laugh at; should please God?" This argument, Erasmus will never be able to solve nor refute; for reason usually despises them when it finds itself floundering in Divine matters. He [Erasmus] does not know the first principle, the firm foundation, namely that one must insist on God's Word and obey it. The article on justification through Christ alone must prevail, otherwise, this thought will ever remain with reason: "Perhaps it does please God well, why do you oppose it?" Did not our God command foolish things? This argument no one can confute, who is not more able than Erasmus. The argument: "The Church declares and commands it", overcomes them all. It would be impossible that a believing person write as many books as Erasmus, and not mix in a single verse or little sentence about Christ!"

#886 Re: Experience Shows Power in Prayer

No one believes the great power and efficacy of our prayers, if he has not learned it by experience. But it is a great thing insofar as one feels the inducement of necessity, and then is able to appreciate

#886 Re: Experience Shows Power in Prayer . . . continued

prayer. This I know, as often as I have prayed seriously, that it was with real earnestness I prayed, so then I certainly was more richly heard and received more than I desired. Our God did indeed delay a little at times, but He heard none-the-less.

FB 2, 228 (15,1) What power in prayer! "Well then", Dr. Martin Luther said, "no one believes how powerful and strong prayer is and how much it can accomplish, except that person who has learned from experience, and tried it. But it is a positive thing when one feels the great need that drives him to prayer. This I know, that as often as I have earnestly prayed, that it was a most serious thing with me, so then I was graciously heard and received more than I prayed for! God indeed occasionally delayed, but it came nevertheless. Jesus Sirach says: "The Godly pious Christian's prayer does more for health than the medicine of the physicians!"

#888 Re: Scolding from God

If God were to scold me as he scolds the pope in Jeremiah, I would soon have to die; but nothing kills the pope!

FB 1, 115 (2,55) God is greatly displeased, when one does not wish to acknowledge Him to be God. "All evil thoughts come from the devil. He causes all misfortunes in all governments and positions ordained by God; and one trusts in God for not permitting it to come to this. Now God is very much displeased, it hurts him, because He is a holy, good, gracious, truthful, Lord -- that one does not want to acknowledge Him to be God, nor accept Him. For He ever laments in the prophets and says: Am I then not God? Is there another true god, other than I? Have I no hand, arm, power and might, to be able to help?

If God were to scold me as He scolds the Pope in the prophets Jeremiah, I would have to die; but the Pope does not care about that, scorns and laughs at it.

#894: FB 2, 263 (17,2) Re: Baptism and the Word are Gifts to Lift the Spirit

Baptism and the Word are the greatest gifts of God: Dr. Martin Luther asked Doctor Hieronymus Weller: "How are you doing?" To which he answered: "Poorly and cast down: I don't know what I am doing." Thereupon Dr. Martin Luther answered: "Have you then not been baptized? O what a great gift of God is Baptism, which the Turks and other infidels do not possess. Above this God's Word is a great gift and the Grace of God; therefore we ought to thank God from the heart, that we have His Word. For it is God Who comforts and strengthens, gives power and might, thereupon He has given us His Holy Spirit as a pledge and token of good faith.

FB 3, 119 (26,32) Re: Comfort in Sadness Dr. Martin Luther looked at D.I.W. and said: "Be of good cheer! You are not the only one to be tempted. I, too, am one of those [tempted] and have much greater sins than you and your fathers. I would rather have been a keeper of a bawdy house or of robbers, than having for fifteen years blasphemed Christ so much, sacrificing Him by means of the mass!"

#896: FB 1, 115 (2,56) Re: The Abuse of God's Name

"I am the Lord thy God", what this means and concerning the abuse of the Name of God: "I am the Lord thy God", years ago was such a ludicrous expression to me. When I read it, I thought: 'Well, who doesn't know that? But now at last I see what God purposes thereby, and I am much more struck with wonder that all the preachers preach: 'I am thy God', such as Carlstad, Zwingli, the Pope; yet all of them lie in their hearts!

#896: FB 1, 115 (2,56) Re: The Abuse of God's Name . . . continued

In order that 'In the Name of the Lord' will remain true, all misfortune begins; it seems to me that the rebellious gangs [peasants] prove this.

Ah, things must be bad in the world! If God's Name were not misused, it would be well on earth. But we simply want to be idolatrous. Thus it was similar in the days of Ezekiel, that God had to say through him: 'If you will worship idols, then do so in the names of all devils (Ex. 20:7) But it is also written, that whoever takes the Name of God in vain, shall not go unpunished'.

Ah, dear God, we are very great sinners, for to sum it all up, we do not believe God; and not to believe and trust Him makes a liar out of Him. But God knows well what kind of creatures we are!"

FB 2, 72 (11,11) The Misuse of God's Name is Against the Second Commandment

"These words: 'I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have no other gods beside me', and again, 'Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain'; seemed to me to be in vain, useless, and ludicrous as for the light of the Gospel. For when I first read them I thought, 'Now who doesn't know that?' But now, praise God, I see what their intention is. Yes, indeed, they are more wonderful than all people together can grasp or express, whoever, they may be. Carlstad, Zwingli, the Pope, and the all the rest, who chatter much about them, nevertheless do not really believe them in their hearts, and so it remains true. All misfortune takes its beginning in the Name of God. In my opinion, the rioting gangs [peasants] and the enthusiasts prove this in all truth. If God's Name were not so misused, it would be a lot better on this earth; but since there is neither measure nor an end to all the abuse, everything is going badly, as we see and experience."

#904: FB 4, 633 (75,1a) Re: Something Else -- the Turks

As the conversation turned to the subject of the Turks, Dr. Martin Luther said: "It will depend upon the number of people brought together; He who is above must bring the victory. Jonathan, King Saul's son, said: "God can also help through a few, etc." [I Sam. 14:6]. God can bring it about that He confuses an army, so that it destroys itself." Then the Doctor's wife said: "Oh, may God protect us from the Turk!" "No!", said Dr. Martin Luther, "He must come sometime and remove the lice from our fur, for us!"

If the Turk should come with so many ships, four hundred, as they say, then the words of Daniel shall be fulfilled: "Upon many waters, etc." If it were God's will that the Turk be defeated in Germany, then Egypt, Persia, etc.; his own lands would fall away from him within half a year.

It is said that the Turk has had four of his sons circumcized, instituting a great celebration with much ostentation, inviting thereto the notables Elias, priest John, the King of Persia, and the Venetians. He is said to be highly respected by his people. For whoever has the sign or passport of the Turk (thus they name VIET) written on golden letters, he can travel through all his lands safely. Thus he maintains peace with fear.

It is also said, that he considers Christ to be a great prophet, yet that his Mohammed is great and higher; for Christ [he asserts] sinned against God with the one saying: "I am the life, the way, the truth!" [John 14:6].

#906: FB 1, 66 (1,70) Re: Tampering with God's Word

Despising and falsifying God's Word arouses God's greatest anger. Dr. Luther said: "God's greatest anger is manifested when He removes the Word from a place, or when it is falsified and not taught purely

#906: FB 1, 66 (1,70) Re: Tampering with God's Word . . . continued
or when He permits people to despise it; and He gave them the Turk and Mohammed for that; to us Germans and Italians, He gave the Pope, and with him all manner of abominations, such as the denial of faith and all anti-Christendom.

There can be no greater manifestation of the anger of God than to be robbed of His Word. We ought to prefer all kinds of plagues, such as the Turks and pestilence rather than to be robbed of God's Word or to have it impure and falsified."

#907: FB 1, 36 (1,32) Re: The Word Defends Against the Devil

With the Word of God, one can defend oneself against the devil: "When the devil", Dr. Luther said, "finds me idle and not thinking about God's Word, he causes me to be stricken in conscience, as if I had not rightly taught, had destroyed and torn up good order [government], and caused such offence and uproar by my teaching. But when I grasp God's Word, I have won the game, protecting myself against the devil, and speaking thus: 'I am certain and know on the basis of God's Word which will not lie to me, that this teaching is not mine, but the Son of God's. After that I defend myself with this that I remember: What does God ask of the whole world, be it ever so big? He has appointed His Son to be King; if the World will not accept Him, they will not be able to upset Him but will have to let Him remain, so firmly and sufficiently has He established Him in His Kingdom. But if the world should dare to wish to knock Him from His throne, He will throw it into one heap, that it must lie in ashes. For God Himself has said: 'This my Son you shall hear' [Matt. 17:5]; and in [Psalm 2:10-12] He says: 'Be mindful then you kings, learn your lesson rulers of the earth; worship the Lord with trembling; render homage to the Son, which means that if you turn against the Son, you will perish with all your kingdoms, dukedoms, governments, orders, laws, might, power, money and property, even as happened to the Jewish kingdoms and all the rest!'"

#916 Re: God Limits Enemies

When the deeds and practises of the papists were mentioned how anxiously they sought to oppress and utterly exterminate us. He said: Let them rage, I say. The Lord has set His limit upon the sea [Ps. 104:9; Job 38:11]. He does permit them to rage and conspire. They will not go beyond their coast. As He contains the waters not with iron but with a sandy shore!

FB 1, 154 (2,131) God has set a limit to the raging of the enemies:
"Let the enemies rage and carry on as long as they wish. God has set a limit to the sea. He lets it rage mightily and the waves strike and race as if they would cover and drown everything. Nevertheless, it must not go over the shore, even though God does not contain the water with an iron, but a sandy shore", this Dr. Martin said, when the practises of the Papists were spoken about, and that they were about to attack us on all sides.

#917 Re: The Spirit and the Flesh

The Spirit is willing; the flesh is weak, this Christ has said [Matt. 26:41]. Likewise Paul in Romans 7[:18] The desire indeed is there, but I see, etc. Willingly, the spirit would totally immerse itself in God, but reason resists [Isa. 42:3]. Our Lord God must have patience here. We have the first fruits of the spirit, not the ten-fold fruits of the spirit [Rom. 8:23].

FB 2, 188 (13,35) Re: Weak Faith "The spirit is willing, but the flesh weak", Christ said [Matt. 26:14]. This He spoke of Himself, even as

#917 Re: The Spirit and the Flesh . . . continued

St. Paul says: "The spirit would gladly give itself completely to God, trust and be obedient to Him; but reason, flesh and blood resist; do not wish or are able to do so. Therefore, our Lord God must have patience with us. The smoking wick He will not extinguish! The believers have only the first fruits of the spirit, not the full perfection and the tenfold portion."

#919 Re: The Devil Against Christ

The devil must not tell me that I am not pious. Nor would I want to be pious, otherwise, the whole treasure of Christ would be lost for me. FB 3, 31 (24,30) The devil's manner against Christ: "The devil must not say to me that I am not pious, nor would I wish to be too pious, that is when I no longer feel sin in me, and hence suppose that I no longer need forgiveness; for thus the whole treasure of Christ would be lost for me, because He himself says: That He is not come for the pious, but for the sake of sinners, to call them to repent and to make them righteous and blessed" [Matt. 9:13]. The devil simply does not want to permit Christ to rule, yet he must let Him rule, whether he likes it or not! For as John says: "He that is in us is greater than he who is in the godless world, etc." [I John 4:4]. That is truly letting him have it!

#923 Re: The Art of Theology

There is no easier art on earth than theology. I would sacrifice all my fingers, except three, that it would be easy for me also. But I can not manage to get through better than to say to the devil: Kiss my ass!

#924 Re: No Longer Fear God

It must in the end come to this, if we would be blessed, that we no longer are afraid of God. For if one should fear Him and flee, ah, to whom shall he go? For if we lose Him, all is lost. One should indeed acknowledge sins, nevertheless in danger we must flee to Him, otherwise, He loses His honor because we do not have Him in our hearts as God. Truly, He ought not be feared, for the Scripture says He is with us before we call.

#926 Re: Consequence of Fear

Are we not poor people because having accepted Grace we should be the first to fear shameful pride, and our God because of this, must hang a "Knutel" on us. [Note #6, p. 468 says in the original "Knutel" looks like "Kimtel" -- a plaque from the middle ages to be hung on the neck of a gossip or thief to humiliate him. FWL].

#927 Re: Death by the Devil Preferred to Death by Emperor

I would rather die at the hands of the devil than of the Emperor, for then I would die through a greater lord, also I would like to have Him eat a little of me, which would not agree with him, and he would have to vomit it up again.

#931 Re: Day of Judgement

On the Day of Judgement, we shall spit at each other, saying: For shame, that you were not bolder in believing Christ, preferring evil things of every kind instead. If I now knew for certain, we would say to secure such glory, I would permit any one to walk upon me with his feet.

#954 Re: Support for Preachers

The hearers of the Word are more obligated to support the preachers so that they may ~~not~~ commit immorality or theft, because of the office of the ministry is of the First Table of the Law and of the greatest importance for the First Commandment.

FB 1, 49 (1,45) The hearers of the Divine Word are obligated to support the preachers. "The hearers of the Divine Word are more obligated to nourish and support the minister, than is specifically commanded them in the Ten Commandments, so that they should not whore around, nor commit adultery, kill, steal; for the office of the ministry is included in the First Table of the Ten Commandments, specifically in the Third Commandment. Thus St. Paul speaking to the Corinthians and also dealing with this subject says: "Whosoever serves at the altar is also entitled to live from the altar; and you shall not muzzle the threshing ox." [I Cor. 9:9,13].

How does the world support the ministry of preaching? Dr. Martin Luther, shortly before his death at Eisleben spoke about this and said: "They now deal quite strangely with the poor preachers. For if they have in their benefice [property intended to support the incumbent] a woodlot, or a meadow with good grass, far- or vineyards, it is cut off from them. They have it divided up just like the one in Aesop's fables, who made a pact with Mercury, that he would share everything he found half and half with Mercury. When he found a bag filled with dates and almonds, he proceeded to shell the almonds and laid the shells of the almonds on one side with the stones of the dates. He then gave the half made up of shells and stones to Mercury, but the nut meat of the almonds and the dates he kept for himself! This is the share the peasant farmers allot to the poor preachers and pastors, nothing more than the empty shells, chaff, weeds and the like."

#956 Re: Comfort for the Tempted

A tempted one is to be consoled thus: Our Lord God is a God of the humble and afflicted, whose power is exhibited in this way [II Cor. 12:9]. For if we were strong, we would become proud. God can not show His power except in our weakness. He will not extinguish the smoking flax. The devil on the contrary wants to exterminate all. God hates and loves temptations; He loves those that provoke us to prayer and faith; He hates on account of those in which we despair. If you are of good cheer then sing a little song and praise God; if stricken [or in a bad mood] call upon God and pray, for God is well pleased by those who fear Him and those who hope all in His mercy [James 5:13; Ps. 147:11; Eccl. 3:1ff]. There is a time for war, for peace, for foolishness, wisdom, sorrow, joy, affliction, temptation. To wit: whoever is weak in faith, desires to be strong. That is an offering that pleases God well in us. Ah, what a part of justification it is to wish to be just!

When he held the Psalter in his hand, the doctor asked him: Do you feel joy from the teaching of this book or the contrary? I most often have been re-created [helped] by it. To this [the other] answered: Satan throws things; in my way be asking which of the things in this writing pertain to you?" To this Martin Luther made the sign of the cross and said: "All things in Scripture, etc. [Romans 15] Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Rebecca, Leah do not now know that we read their stories [histories]. David does not know that we read his Psalms in Germany and comfort ourselves therewith, even as he comforted himself with them. Now, because the devil is capable of the one thing, therefore always hold the Psalter in your hand and read in it. Trust in God, which helped David; it will also help you for God's Word is yeah and Amen!

When you are tempted, ask the devil then: in which commandment is it written? If he does not show you, then say: Run along you worthless

#956 Re: Comfort for the Tempted . . . continued

wretch! Leave alone with your useless pranks! If the temptation will not cease, then excommunicate him In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and say: we are forbidden to accept this coin; for they are not Hungarian, Bohemian or German pennies, but are minted by the devil!

FB 3, 124 (26,39) Comfort for the Tempted: The Lord our God is a God of the humbled and the troubled, who find themselves in temptation, persecution and danger, in which God proves His might and power. For if we were quite strong, we would become proud and haughty, yet God can not exercise His power and prove it in us except when we are weak. He does not extinguish the smoking (glowing) wick; so it is not His will to crush the broken reed.

God loves temptations and hates them He loves them when He is able to provoke and coax us therewith to pray to Him and trust in Him; He is hostile to them, if we despair because of them. "Therefore", D.M. said, "If you feel happy [or if things go well with you], sing Him a little song and praise Him: if things go badly with you, call on God and pray. For the Lord has pleasure in those who fear Him and await His goodness [loving kindness] Ps. 147[:11]. There is a time for peace, a time for war; a time to be foolish, a time to be wise; to be joyful, to sorrow; in the same way there is a time for trouble and a time for temptation.

Whosoever feels that he is weak in faith, he will ever desire to be strong; this food [condition] in us pleases God well and it tastes good to Him. Ah, what so great a part and piece of justification it is greatly to desire to be just and pious! Therefore, do not despair, but be encouraged and comforted with God's Word and the examples found in the Holy Scriptures. For God, who helped all the patriarchs, prophets and saints, will not desert you either!

#992 Re: Christ and the Devil

Christ and the devil are far different in office and work. Thus the former is the protector of life and health, the Creator of heaven and earth; the latter, on the contrary is the author of sin and destroyer of heaven and earth, perpetually destroying all the works of Christ; to sum up, all sickness, calamities and miseries, all the evils that afflict the body and soul are works of the devil. Wherefore, moreover, sometimes there are writing which ascribe evil to God also, this against the Manichaeans who imagined two gods, one the author of good, and other of evil.

FB 1, 413 (7,168) The Opposite Work of Christ and the Devil

"Christ and the devil have quite opposite and contrary-minded works and offices; for Christ gives and maintains life and salvation, indeed everything that is good for the body and soul; He is the creator of heaven and earth. But Satan is the instigator of sin and death, a betrayer and spoiler of heaven and earth, a devastator and destroyer of all the works of Christ; to sum up he initiates and carries out all sickness, misfortune, sorrow, war, murder and all evil that happens on earth. For this reason the Manichaean heretics imagined two gods; one that did the good things, the other the evil."

#1010: FB 3, 7 (24,2) Re: The Devil's Picture and Outlook on the Ten Commandments

Dr. Martin Luther on another occasion said: "The devil does not hesitate or take time off from daily tempting and provoking Christians to sin against the Ten Commandments, especially to act against those of the First Table; in this the big devils must be the army commanders against us. But the sins against the Second Table such as to be given to anger, to kill, commit adultery, fornication, snatch another's goods --

#1010: FB 3, 7 (24,2) Re: The Devil's Picture and Outlook on the Ten Commandments . . . continued

the little young devils, good-for-nothing beggars, can manage [or bring about].

(A. 279; St. 116; S. 106b) A certain person spoke to Dr. Luther that he would like to be able to identify the devil. Dr. Luther answered him and said: "As our Lord God is [for] the thesis of the decalogue, so the devil is the antithesis of the decalogue. Whoever would like to have a true picture of the devil, let him study the decalogue or Ten Commandments. The devil's head is made up of all the vices and shameful acts against the First Commandment, such as not believing in God, not fearing Him, nor trusting, nor loving Him. The sins against the Second Commandment are the mouth and tongue of the devil such as blaspheming God, complaining about Him and taking His Name in vain. The transgression of the Third Commandment such as refusing to hear God's Word, slandering it, despising it, persecuting it, and letting his servants die of hunger and disregard of all worship, these are the ears and neck of the devil.

In the other Table of the Ten Commandments, the devil's body is pictured and described. The devil's breast is the Fourth Commandment, where parents are not honoured and the government not obeyed, by not serving and helping the parents, being ashamed of them and showing a lack of respect for them; likewise [in regard to government] where riot is instigated against those in authority. The Fifth Commandment, that is killing, raging, hating one's neighbour and being hostile to him, wishing evil to all people; to be envious and gladly to do harm; this is the devil's heart. To break the Sixth Commandment by committing adultery, whoredom, sodomy, being unchaste, lascivious with the face, words, mouth and gestures; this is the devil's belly. The Seventh Commandment, to help no one, to steal from others either by force or cunning, to rob, take, swindle or otherwise hurt people; to honour no agreements, seal or document; to sell shoddy goods, not to pay wages that have been earned; these are the hands of the devil. Thereafter, the Eighth Commandment, to speak evil of the neighbour, to gossip behind his back, to slander him and to put shame and dishonour upon him, this is the devil's will.

Such a friendly picture the devil makes! If you would really like to know him, picture to yourself a despairing, godless and profligate evil person, who has a bad conscience and is leading an evil life; there you see the devil incarnate. This rogue, the devil, is described by the Lord Christ in John 8, with a few words, calling him a liar and murderer. In the First Table of the Law, he lies by leading Christians astray with heresy, error, false teaching and wrong divine service; and the more pious people are, the greater the temptation.

The service honouring Moloch was a glorious and glistening display in which the devil led people to kill their own dearest little children and sacrifice them, thereby, to gain great holiness. As it also happened in the Papcy, whoever wanted to be the holiest and best Christian, stuck his children into the monasteries and establishments to become monks and priests. In addition in the Second Table, the devil is a murderer; for what murders, sorrows and misfortune he causes, is witnessed by daily experience.

FB 3, 4 (24,1) Re: A godless human being is an image or copy of the devil: When someone said: "I should like to know more about how the devil looks and is minded", Dr. Martin said: "If you want to know the right appearance or picture of the devil and what his intentions are, really to recognize him, pay attention to all of the Commandments of God, systematically one after another; and imagine an evil, shameful, lying, despairing, spoilt, godless, blasphemous person, whose intentions and thoughts are directed

#1010: FB 3, 4 (24,1) Re: A Godless Human Being is an Image or Copy of the Devil . . . continued

above all to act in every possible way against God and to sorrow and harm to man. There you see the devil incarnate.

Firstly, there is in him no fear, love, faith and trust in God, that He be just, faithful, true, etc.; instead nothing but contempt, hatred, infidelity, despair, blasphemy, etc. There you see the devil's head which is straightway directed against the First Commandment of the First Table.

On the other hand, a believer in Christ deals with the Name of God in a useful manner; proclaims His Word, calls upon Him from a heart in need, thanks Him when things go well; confesses His Word, etc.

The child of the devil, however, does the exact opposite; considers God's Word to be a fable; in terrible ways uses God's Name in vain; besmirches and blasphemes it; scolds and curses in a horrible way while also doing so; calls upon and submits himself to the evil foe, etc. There you see the devil's mouth and tongue, straightway directed against the Second Commandment.

Thirdly, a Christian loves and honours the office of preaching, hears and learns God's Word with the right earnestness and diligence, partakes of the Holy Sacrament according to Christ's command and order; attends the preaching services diligently, not only for his own improvement and comfort, but also as an example for others; he honours and defends faithful servants of the Word; does not permit them to suffer want, etc.

The child of the devil does the very opposite; the office of preaching means nothing to him; he does not listen to God's Word or else very inattentively lets it enter one ear and out again by the other. After all God Himself speaks to us through preachers and reveals His will to us: so he despises it, speaks evil of it, distorts it blasphemously; makes a joke of it, indeed hates and is hostile to the servants, who as far as he is concerned, would have to die of hunger; does not make use of any sacrament, etc. There you perceive the devil's ears, iron neck and nape of the neck, directly in conflict with the Third Commandment, etc.

If you want further to know what the devil's shape or body looks like, listen to the following commandments as found in the Second Table and pay attention:

In the first place, a pious Christian, since God so wills it, obeys his parents, the authorities, his pastors, disciplinarians and school-masters, etc. A child of the devil does the very opposite, does not obey his parents; does not serve nor help them; deserts them in their need, dishonours, despises, saddens them; is ashamed of them if they are poor, scoffs at them when they become old, infirm, childish; he does not obey the authorities; shows them no honour, instead says evil things about them, opposes them and causes others to be disobedient and rebellious against them, etc.; will not be admonished, nor be concerned about punishment, discipline, respect instead of hate, etc. There you have the devil's breast.

Again a pious heart does not envy his neighbour; does not bear ill-will against him; does not desire to be revenged, even though he may have reason; has sympathy for him when sorrow or adversity strike him; helps and protects him as much as he can against those who would destroy his body and life. The child of the devil does the very opposite; if he can not harm his neighbour's body or life, or is unable to murder him with his fist; he will hate and envy him nevertheless; will quarrel with him; is hostile to him from the heart; will not grant him his life. If things go badly with his neighbour, then he is glad and laughs into his fist. There you see the grim murderous heart of the devil.

#1010: FB 3, 4 (24,1) Re: A Godless Human Being is an Image or Copy of the Devil . . . continued

Thirdly, a God-fearing person lives a disciplined chaste life, avoids all prostitution; fears God's wrath and eternal punishment. "Who will judge the fornicator and adulterer, etc." [Heb. 13:4]; and Paul to the Ephesians in 5:5 says: "No fornicator, or unclean person, etc. shall inherit the Kingdom of God." If one is unable to live a clean life, he will act contrary to Paul's advice: "To avoid immorality, let each man have his own wife"; similarly, "Better to be married than burn [with vain desire]" [I Cor. 7:2,9]. But the devil's child does the exact opposite; commits all kinds of immorality and shame with words, gestures and deeds as he has opportunity, by fornication, adultery, incest and sodomy. There you see the devil's belly.

In the fourth place a Godly person supports himself by his work, trade, business, etc. honouring God, he does not dispossess anyone of what is his, yes indeed, he lends, helps and gives to the needy according to his ability, etc. But the devil's child does not help nor give to anyone, not even in the least degree, but is miserly; practises usury, robs and steals, as he is able by force, trickery and cunning, makes use of every advantage to cheat his neighbour and harm him with shoddy goods, false measurements, weights, yardsticks. There you see the devil's hands and pointed claws.

Fifthly, a pious person does not speak evil of anyone, would rather be silent than lie about his neighbour or bear false witness against him. Yes, even if he knows he is guilty, out of love, he covers up his sin; unless he be commanded by the authorities to acknowledge the truth, etc. The devil's child, however, does the direct opposite; he talks behind people's backs; spreads rumours; tells lies against his neighbour from a false heart; distorts what he has spoken rightly; betrays himself also whenever he can. There you see the evil will of the devil.

In the sixth and final place, a Christian does not lust after his neighbour's house, inheritance, property, etc., nor does he abduct his wife or daughter; he does not lead away his servants; instead he allows everything that is his to be undisturbed; indeed helps him wherever he can to retain his own. But the devil's child does the very opposite: plans, desires, seeks a pretext day and night; as he is able by force or cunning to make his neighbour lose his house, yard, acres, land, people, etc.; also to attract his wife to himself; make his family disloyal; make his subjects rebellious; take away his cattle. There you see the devil's desire.

That is the sort of a friendly shape and picture the devil has. Christ has described that villain in a few words and had painted him with bright colours: [John 8:44] where he says: "He is not rooted in the truth" and again: "He is a liar and a murderer"; For by lies [yet under the appearance of truth], he deceives and leads astray pious and godly people; as he caused Adam and Eve to fall in Paradise when they transgressed the Commandment of God and fell into sin and death, etc. Thus, the more pious people are, the greater the danger in which they stand. He does as he pleases and directs the godless, dead in their sins, though living.

Let us therefore, carefully be aware of him; seek refuge with Christ who has crushed his head and saved us from lies, and taught us the truth, as the one right master and teacher, as it is written: "Listen to Him:" [Matt. 17:5]. "He has rescued us from death and gained for us eternal life."

#1019: FB 1, 88 (2,8) Re: Another Question (Re: Universal Salvation)

Since damnation has come to all people because of the fall of Adam, why did not salvation, in the same way, come to all people through Christ, for the greater part of mankind remains godless and damned? Dr. Martin answered: "No one can resolve this question except by a counter-question. When idle spirits demand an answer as to why God is so angered against humankind, that He gives it over completely to death and damnation? One should answer and say: God is not angry at us; for He gave His only begotten Son for the redemption of the human race; therefore, it is not His will that it be lost or damned.

If, in addition, the question be raised: Why does God put the punishment of obduracy upon people so that they perish eternally?; here ask again: Why did God not spare His own Son, but gave Him into shameful death for us upon the cross? Which, after-all, is ever a certain sign of love towards us miserable people, rather than of anger and hatred toward us. It is true that hateful Satan deceived Adam and led him astray but you should hold and consider over against this, that soon after the fall, Adam received the Promise of the seed of the woman, which would crush the head of the serpent and bless the peoples of the earth [Gen. 3:15]. Therefore, we should recognize, take to heart and well consider, that the goodness and mercy of the Father towards the bad, godless world is immeasurably great, so much so that He sent His Son to be its Saviour.

Thus we should not contemplate alone how horribly human nature has been spoilt and blinded by Adam's fall and filled with great and terrible sins, and that as a consequence was subject to all manner of misfortune, sorrow, misery, need and finally death, so that the great part of mankind is godless and will be damned. For God could indeed have been able to avoid all this, if He had either not created the world or people, etc. Instead we ought to pray for more attention to the fact that the dear God has so willed it that things should happen as they have. Therefore, submit to His good Will and do not come along questioning, cleverly and devilishly, Why? Why? about God's Word and Works. For God who is the Creator of all creatures, Lord and sustainer, who governs and orders all things according to His divine, unsearchable wisdom, is not pleased, indeed abhors such questions. Just as a person can not be pleased if another continually plagues him with vexing questions.

In order that we may be certain, who are the saved and who are the damned, He send us His only Son and commanded that we should listen to Him. He has revealed us the Father's Will, namely, "That whoever believes in the Son, has eternal life, but whoever does not believe is already judged." [Jn. 3:15,16]. John the third and sixth chapter similarly says: "Whosoever believes and is baptized, shall be saved; whoever does not believe shall be damned." [Jn. 6:40, Mk. 16:16]. To sum up: we should trust with all confidence in our dear God and believe without doubt, that He is merciful, gracious, patient, and beyond all measure friendly and kind; and that He will certainly fulfill all He has promised and said; and that He is able to do immeasurably more than we can ask or think [Eph. 3:20].

Occasionally, however, God out of considered counsel in wonderful ways beyond human wisdom and reason, has mercy on the one and has the other become obdurate, as the Scriptures tell us of Pharaoh, is not for us to question. Of this we should certainly be cognizant and no doubt that He does not do anything without reason and considered counsel, and certainly if He had to give account to anyone concerning His actions and works, He would be a poor and miserable God.

Therefore, we should be content to have His Word, in which He has revealed His good will to us through Christ. Who, however, puts aside

#1019: FB 1, 88 (2,8) Re: Another Question (Re: Universal Salvation). . . con't.
His Word and without it undertakes to probe with the greatest diligence Divine Majesty, Counsel and Work (as all of those do, who with their own wisdom and speculation, with the Word, seek to investigate the nature of Divine Majesty, Essence and Will): they will not succeed."

#1028: FB 1, 99 (2,21) Re: How God Deals with True Saints

"God acts in His saints and deals with them in an amazing way, contrary to all human wisdom and reason, in order that the God-fearing Christians may learn to depend on the invisible things and through mortification again become alive. For God's Word is a light that shines in dark places, as all the examples of faith show. Esau was accursed, nevertheless things went happily and well with him. He was lord of the land and priest in the church. But Jacob had to flee into another land and live in misery."

(A.32): On another occasion, Dr. Luther spoke about this: "God actually deals with the God-fearing and Christians as with the Godless and non-Christians, yes indeed sometimes even worse. He does not act differently than a father with his son and servant. He beats and strikes his son much more often than the servant; yet he gathers him a treasure for his inheritance; but an evil, disobedient servant, he does not beat with rods, but ejects him out of the house and gives him no inheritance. I can explain this matter in another way as to why God permits his dear children to run through the gamut, suffer and be plagued; the godless He gives enought of everything so that they are able to carry on to their heart's content."

#1031 Re: Adam's Bite into the Apple

Adam's bite into the apple was a fateful bite; all of us must suffer for it. Because of this the ancients truly said: Our fathers consumed sour grapes and our teeth were made dull. We might well want to question our Lord God about this!

FB 1, 191 (3,36) Re: Adam's Bite into the Apple - "The bite into the apple by Adam and Eve, was a fateful thing. We still have to pay for it; for this reason the old Jews may well have said: 'Our fathers ate of the sour grapes of which our teeth have become dull'. We might well want to question our Lord God about this; that we are all destined to die. Therefore Claus Fool (the court jester) said: May misfortune cause my mouth to shatter because I was so greedy!"

#1032: FB 4, 20 (43,140) Re: The Love of Parents Towards Their Children

"The love and concern of parents towards children is so great and powerful, that the more they need the help and care of parents, the more diligently and assiduously (carefully) the parents care for them and support them. For this reason my little Martin is my dearest treasure; for he needs my care and help more than John or Magdalena who are now able to talk and ask for things they want and are in need of; for this reason they do not need as much care. [NOTE: Luther's children: Hans was born June 7, 1526; Elizabeth December 10, 1527; Magdalena December 17, 1529; Martin November 9, 1531; Paul January 28, 1533; and Margaretha December 17, 1534].

#1033 Re: Abraham's Command to Kill Isaac

Dear Lord God, what a pounding of the heart must have ensued when Abraham was commanded to kill his only and most beloved son Isaac! O, how bitter that journey must have been for him! Probably, he told Sarah nothing about it. Here Katy: It is impossible to convince me that God should require such an atrocious thing that one should kill one's own child! The Doctor: Is this so impossible to believe since God was

#1033 Re: Abraham's Command to Kill Isaac . . . continued

willing to have His only begotten Son-crucified, Who was more precious or beloved in heaven or on earth than anything else? He was willing to have His dearest Son crucified for us and suffer the most shameful kind of death. Reason says and judges that God dealt much more gently and fatherly towards Caiphas, Pilate, Annas and the rest than towards His only-begotten and dearest Son, Jesus Christ.

#1049 Re: Two Kinds of Prophecy

One kind deals with worldly matters and governments, of the future state of worldly empires -- what will happen to them. There is much of this about the Persians, Chaldeans, etc.! This kind of prophecy is found in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Daniel, etc. But we do not find this among the Apostles.

Some prophecy however, is about the churches and Christendom; what good or evil will be experienced until the Day of Judgement, concerned with spiritual governance only. This is found in the Apostles, Paul, Peter, and the Apocalypse [Revelations], etc. Such prophecy we also have, even though not as clearly as the apostles, for we have them only at their Words. Thus out of the Word we prophecy through the Holy Spirit, that the papacy, the mass, etc., must fall, also other heresies; the Church will not be crushed. This is what Christ says: John 16:13, "He will announce to you the things which shall come." Both [kinds of prophecy], however, are a gift of God and are to be proven by God.

#1059 Re: The Devil and Black Magic

When by chance during supper mention was made of a certain practitioner of black magic, by the name of Faust, the Doctor spoke seriously: The devil does not use black magic against me, for if he could have harmed me, he would have done so before this. He has indeed had me by the head, but he had to let me go nevertheless! I have had a taste of him, especially when he came with the Scriptures, confusing me as to whether I was dead or alive; he caused me to despair so that I did not know if there was a God, and that I despaired of our God. To sum up, there is no help then or counsel, except God Himself, directly He is able to help one with a few words. The devils who are compliant to magicians, are only the lower class among them and servants. Philip [Melanchthon] also was plagued by a devil.

FB 1, 50 (1,47) God's Word alone overcomes the fiery darts of the devil and all temptations: When at the table one evening, a practitioner of black magic Faust, was mentioned, Dr. Martin spoke with seriousness: "The devil does not use the art of magicians against me; if he had been able to do so and harm me, he would have done so long ago. He has grabbed me by the head often, but has had to let me go! I have experienced the kind of fellow he is. He has often attacked me so severely, that I did not know whether I was alive or dead. He also caused me to despair so that I did not know whether God existed and that I despaired of our dear Lord God altogether. But I was able to protect myself from him with God's Word. There is no better help or counsel available, than that God (with a little word spoken through a human being, or which one grasps otherwise), helps a person. But if we do not have God's Word, we are soon lost and done for, for then he [the devil] can rise and drive people as he wills."

#1090 Re: God Permits Us to Eat, Drink and Be Happy

Our Lord God is well disposed to allow us to eat, drink and be happy. Therefore, he has created so many things for that purpose so that we should recognize and accept Him to be God. For He does not wish it to

#1090 Re: God Permits Us to Eat, Drink and Be Happy . . . continued
have happened that we should say, He did not give us enough; that He was not able to nourish and fill our poor bag of worms.

#1134 Re: Serving God and the Emperor

When one said: "Whosoever has to serve both God and the Emperor, is in a bad way -- such a thing is out of hell, farted out of the ass-hole of the devil, which saying is against the First and Second Tables of the Law and against the voice of Christ: Redner unto Caesar, etc. FB 1, 148 (2,116) Serving God and the Emperor: When one said: "Who serves God and the emperor has little gain", Dr. Martin Luther severely answered: "That has come out of hell, farted out of the back-side of the devil, blasphemous talk, directly against the First and Second Table of the Law. Against the First where God commands: "Thou shalt love the Lord Thy God, with all thy heart, all thy soul and all thy ability [Deut. 6:5] and Him alone serve" [Matt. 4:19]. And against the other: 'Let everyone be subject to the ruler, that has authority over him' [Romans 13]. And Christ speaks, [Matt. 22:21]: 'Render unto God what is God's and unto Caesar, what is Caesar's.'"

#1151 Re: Root of Unbelief is Original Sin

But how is it that we can not believe the Word of God, when, after all, all things spoken of in Scripture have taken place, and added to this, the article of the resurrection of the dead? The cause is original sin.

#1157 Re: The Baal Peor Cult and Pilgrimages

The cult of Baal Peor will have been similar to our pilgrimages. They would have first brought sacrifices; thereafter eaten and drunk immoderately, and after that gone out behind the bushes and there carried on immorally with one another. Our pilgrimages were also like that; held in the woods two or three miles away; and if a pair were not able to come together and carry out their rascality and prostitution otherwise, they went on such pilgrimages under the pretext of religion.

Baal Peor was not a cult as the Jews out of hostility to the Gentiles describe, that the ass-hole was forced openly to defecate; for all idolateries have a kind of religion and sanctity. But I think it was of the kind that is found among us with the Valentinians, the Cypriacs, the Antonians and such, with the purpose that the people be not harmed by the plague such as Antirius's fever or Valtens sickness and similar diseases.

#1166 Re: Wisdom

The beginning of wisdom, etc., is this: that whoever wishes to be wise before God, let him begin by learning the Ten Commandments and the Word of God.

#1167 Re: Law and Gospel

The law in no way avails for righteousness (before God); for rightly understood, it makes people despair; not rightly understood it makes hypocrites. The gospel when not rightly understood makes people secure [in their ignorance FWL]; on the contrary [when rightly understood] it makes pious, joyful people. Therefore, the law is given because of transgressions, that people may long for Christ [Gal. 3:19]. Externally, however, the law serves politics in another way.

#1170: FB 3, 23 (24,16) Re: How Devils are Exorcised

"We must not now, nor can we, exorcise devils with certain ceremonies and words, as beforehand the prophets, Christ and the disciples did.

#1170: FB 3, 23 (24,16) Re: Now Devils are Exorcised . . . continued
 We must pray in the Name of Christ and earnestly admonish the Church to pray, that the dear God and Father of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ by His mercy, rescue the possessed person. When such prayer takes place in faith upon the promise of Christ: 'Truly, I say to you, that if you ask the Father for anything in my Name, etc.' [John 16:23]; then it is strong and powerful, so that the devil must leave the person, as I could cite several instances. Otherwise, we are unable to exorcise evil spirits, utterly unable to do it.

Where one without means, were called by God and had the faith to do miracles, he would be able to drive out devils which possess people physically; as of yore the prophets and apostles, who without means were called by God and had the special command, to drive out impure spirits and perform other miracles. Therefore, they so powerfully prevailed: "That the sick became well who were but overshadowed by Peter's shadow" [Acts 5:15 and 6:]. Luke writes: 'That those who were around Paul held the kerchiefs that had touched his skin over them and their plagues left them and the evil spirits departed from them.'"

People are possessed of the devil in two ways: some physically, some spiritually, as are all the godless. Among those who rage, whom he possesses physically, he has power over the body alone by the will of God, which he then frightens and plagues; but not over the spirit, which he must leave in peace unharmed, so that he is not able to hinder the soul's salvation.

But the godless, who persecute blasphemously the divine doctrine and accepted truth, as lies of the devil, of these, sad to say, there are now many. They are spiritually possessed by the devil, they can not rid themselves of him, but remain (this is terrible to hear) his prisoners. As in the days of Christ, Annas, Caiphas and all of the godless Jews, out of whom even Christ Himself was not able to drive the devil, and now the pope together with all of his mass-saying bishops and adherents, the riotous sectarian enthusiasts and the godless tyrants.

FB 3, 47 (24,64) The devil possesses people in two ways: "People are possessed of the devil in two ways, some physically, according to the outward person and appearance; some spiritually according to the spirit and soul, as all the godless are possessed. Among those who are out of their minds, raging and possessed physically, the devil only has control of the body and plagues it, but not the spirit or soul. Therefore it [the spirit or soul] remains unmoved and unharmed. Out of these it is possible to drive out the devil by prayer and fasting. But the godless and blasphemers are spiritually possessed, these can not be helped or freed; yes, Christ was not able to drive the devils out of Annas, Caiphas and other godless Jews. Therefore, it is much more terrible, indeed, dangerous to be possessed spiritually than physically by the devil, even though the world does not recognize it nor consider it to be so."

#1174 Re: Prophecies Concerning Christ

The prophecies concerning Christ were written in perplexing and obscure ways, so that their meaning would not be revealed before their time [of fulfillment]. Everything was saved for the time of Christ. That prophecy was to be revealed when the proper time came. Thus Moses and the heavenly Father command that they hear this one.

FB 1, 361 (7,83) The prophecies concerning Christ are described in obscure words. "The prophecies that Christ was to take unto himself human nature, are described in such obscure ways, I think, that the devil did not know that Christ was to be conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. For this reason he asks Jesus in the desert, when he tempted him: "Are you the Son of God?" He calls Him Son of God, not that he considered

#1174: FB 1, 361 (7,83) Re: Prophecies Concerning Christ . . . continued Him to be Son of God according to his very essence and nature, but according to the way in which Scripture also calls people, children of God: [Ps. 82:6]. 'You are all children of God'.

This also happened for the reason that such prophecies of Christ, which deal with His sufferings, resurrection, kingdom, before the time of His coming would not be revealed (except to the prophets and other highly-illuminated people) for everything is saved up for and directed towards Christ Who was the only right master, and Who was to reveal the meaning of the Scripture. Therefore, Moses commands his people [Deut. 18:15] 'Him hear' and God the Father says: 'This is my beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased, Him shall you hear.' [Matt. 17:3].

That Peter and the other apostles [as seen in the Book of Acts] do not name Christ God in their sermons with clear words, was not to offend the pious Jews who were yet weak in the faith, but also in order that they should not avoid their sermons and persecute them, and in this way acquire ill-will towards them, as if they were out to proclaim a new God and reject the ancient true God of their fathers, and no longer let Him be relevant.

In spite of this they cite and call attention to the office of Christ and His Work in clear words, to wit: that He is the Prince of life, raised the dead, make people just, forgives sin, hears prayer, illumines the heart, comforts, etc. Thereby they witness and confess sufficiently that He is true God; for these works no created being can do, but God alone.

Occasionally, the apostles cite obscure verses concerning the Divinity of Christ, such as I Cor. 10:[4]. 'They drank of the spiritual rock that followed, which was Christ.' Also, 'Let us not tempt God.' By these words Paul proves that the Son was pre-existent from eternity in fact, before he took human nature upon Himself. At all times He maintained His Church, illuminated, governed, protected, strengthened and made it prevail against the cunning of the devil and the power of the evil world. Thus in John 8, Christ Himself speaks: 'Before Abraham was, I am'; thereby He clearly lets us understand, that He was before man came into being."

WA, TR II

TABLE TALK RECORDED BY JOHN SCHLAGINHAUFEN, (1531-1532)

WA, TR II, #'s 1232 to 1889

#1239. (Before December 14, 1531) Re: Can the Dead Christ be Forgotten?
"Many a dead person has been forgotten; can not one also forget the dead Christ?" a Jew once said . . . which is truly a devilish saying! Nonsense, Dear devil! It is written [of Christ] . . . "Sit at my right hand" [Ps. 110:1] . . . [Therefore, it is necessary to preach Christ and His suffering to the world . . . FB 1, 354].

#1253 (Before December 14, 1531) Re: Canonical Hours

Our Lord God tore me away from the observance of the canonical hours by force in the year 1520, while I was already doing much writing, and was often saving up my hours. On a certain Saturday I added them up one after the other so that I, for a whole day, had neither eaten nor drunk, which weakened me so much, that I couldn't sleep. Dr. Esch had to give me a sleeping potion, which gave me a head-ache afterwards!

#1260 (Before December 14, 1531) Re: The Zwickaulians and Their Pastor

I don't want to have anything more to do with those of Zwickau and will carry my anger with me to the grave, that they so dishonour their devout pastor; and when he comes here I shall ask our devout prince, that this guilt of the Zwickaulians be repaid them as they deserve.

Those who do not honour their pastors are not worthy to be called Christians.

My Wittenbergs are more decent than they of Zwickau; for when I travelled to Worms, they gave me twenty fl. for my purse and paid for the carriage in which I travelled.

#1271 (December 14-28, 1531) Re: The Scarcity of the Doctors

Before two years shall pass, you will see that there will be such a scarcity of learned men, that they would cut them out of boards, or dig them out of the ground, if they only could! It, however, will do no good; for they now sin too much against God.

#1273 (December 28, 1531) Re: Ingratitude for Good Gifts

The gifts of God are not recognized in times of prosperity. If God were to withdraw what we need for our living for one year, oh; what an outcry would be raised in all the world! But now that he over-supplies us, we are all ungrateful; there is no one who gives thanks.

#1275 (December 28, 1531) Re: The "Free" Ministry of Christ

Christ preached for free, nevertheless he permitted the devout women to give Him of their goods. [John 8:2]. He minted only once, that was when He commanded Peter to take the coin out of the fish's mouth [Matt. 17:27].

#1282 (December 28, 1531) Re: The Coming Calamities

Things will yet become so bad on earth, that the people will cry out in all corners of the earth: O dear God, come with your Day of Judgement soon . . . Oh, that it were God's will that the Day come soon! I would even eat a Pater noster that He come tomorrow.

#1285 (December 28-31, 1531) Re: Faith

Faith is a great thing; this the Psalter shows in a fine way. I know that my own faith stands loosely like fur on a sleeve; but the church and faith is ours; that is much! The Lord's Prayer and faith are great

#1285 (December 28-31, 1531) Re: Faith . . . continued

things against the devil. My little Hans and Leni pray for me, as do also many Christians . . . Note: FB 2, 173 (13,29) Faith is a great thing, this the Psalter shows in a fine way. I know that my faith stands, like a fur coat on its sleeves -- if it [my faith] should have to depend on my works; but upon the Word of God it stands firmly, no matter how weak it may be. This is certain and will not fail. But the church and her faith stand at our side, and these do much. Her Lord's Prayer and her faith have great power against the devil. My little Leni and Hans pray for me, also many Christians.

#1329 (January 1-March 23, 1532) Re: Flee Solitude!

FB 3, 164 (26,80) Christians should not gladly want to be alone. Dr. Martin Luther said that the papists and Anabaptists teach that if one would really recognize Christ and keep one's heart pure, one should gladly want to be alone, and not joint in many gatherings. One ought to become a Nicolas Brother [separatist]. This is a devilish persuasion against the First and Second Table of the Law! The First Table demands faith and reverence; this God wants to have preached in the Second Commandment and praised before all people. It behoves us to speak this publically and not creep silently into a corner somewhere. The Second Table teaches that we are to do good to our neighbours. Therefore, we must seek out our neighbour's company and not avoid him. For this reason the teachings of the Anabaptists are against marriage, the family, and secular government. Can you not see that our Lord Jesus led a life in company of others while He was upon earth? He was not much alone; there was always noise and excitement and many people around Him. He was not alone, except when He prayed. Therefore, let them go their own way who say: "Choose gladly to be alone; thus your hearts remain pure". God wants us to go to church and receive there His Word and the Sacrament.

#1333 (January 1-March 23, 1532) Re: David's Temptations (Anfechtungen)

FB 3, 117 (26,26) When David sang this little song: "Absolom, my son; Absolom, my son!" [II Sam. 18:33] What a sorrowful and troubled man he was, having such great sorrow of heart, as these words show, where he speaks with such great sighings and pains. The devout and holy king had such great troubles, that the promise of grace was darkened for him. For even though he had been anointed king, yet he had two sons [heirs] for only eight years. Things went badly in his kingdom. Absolom killed his brother Ammon. The sister was raped by the brother and brought to shame. [II Sam. 3].

There were terrible, horrible examples of perversions, which so darkened the grace of God for him, that he was sorry that he had ever been born or had lived.

"As for me", said Dr. Martin, "If such an evil thing should come about, God forbid, that my son should bring his mother to shame, stab his brother, or organize a conspiracy against me, then I would despair too and say: I am the most miserable of men! I would not be able to endure such a blow from our Lord God. And yet God has done thus to all the patriarchs, whose life and examples have darkened the grace and promises of God more than they illumined them. Here it means: hold firm!"

#1368 (January 1-March 23, 1532) Re: Needed Change

An old man said to me while I was a student in Erfurt: "A change must come and a big one! It can not go on in this way." In my opinion, it has come!

#1369 (January 1-March 23, 1532) Re: Length, Width and Depth of Faith

You know and are aware of everything as well as I am. I made it all known and have kept back nothing, but poured it all out. In length and width you have it all, but in depth you do not have it, for I myself do not have it either.

#1374 (January 1-March 23, 1532) Re: John 8

You do the work of your father the devil, etc. . . . From this it follows, that the devil, a liar from the beginning, at all times tempts with lies, even as he led Adam and Eve astray with lies. With a lie he introduced death, soon thereafter causing Cain to kill his brother. That is the way he continues to carry on. Wherever he arrives, he begins with lies and misleads the people. This does not bother him; he also causes murders, riots and disobedience. Thirdly, when he has gotten people into murders and miseries, he carries on by causing them to despair in such sins, until finally they drown or hang and kill themselves. Consider Judas, the betrayer, whom he first seduced with lies; then drove him to be a betrayer and murderer of his own Lord Jesus; finally driving him to despair so that he hanged himself. Beware of him! He is a liar and murderer. Whosoever serves him and obeys him, he will reward in the end as he did his servant Judas. But, on the other hand, Christ is good for us in this realm also, our Saviour, who has saved us from the devil's lies and murders, daily guarding us. For Christ is our true teacher and master, who has the highest witness from his father [Matt. 17:5] "This is my Son, hear ye him, etc." Martin Luther.

#1449 April 7-May 1, 1532) Re: Call Upon the Lord!

Something stung Mrs. Doctor in her side; then she cried out loud: Ave Maria! -- The Doctor said: Why did you not more rightly call upon Him who is from the beginning? Is not Jesus Christ the one to call upon for all comfort?

#1451 (April 7 - May 1, 1532) Re: Zwingli

Zwingli drew the sword; therefore, he was rewarded as Christ has said: Whosoever takes the sword, by the sword shall he perish. [Matt. 26:52]. If God has received him unto eternal bliss, He has made an exception to the rule in this case!

#1456 (April 7-May 1, 1532) Re: The Death of Luther

I shall pass away before I realize it. Philip Melanchthon replied: Oh, my dear sir doctor, God will help you to recover. The doctor answered: Our Lord God has more to do in being concerned as to how He will resurrect me, than I need to worry about how I am to die.

#1497 (May 1, 1532) Re: Marriage

Doctor Martin Luther said: If someone has a notion to sleep with a woman, he had better put it off until he has his own wife; otherwise, it is nothing but filth and damnation.

It is my opinion that it pleases God when someone takes a wife and sets about to have a child.

#1518 (May 1-7, 1532) Re: Abuse of the Profession of Law

If I make a judgement and find that I have bumped my head; a lawyer comes along and would take over the case, I say: take over in the name of the Lord and leave us in peace. You lawyers would like to lord it over us, but it is written: "You are a priest forever" [Ps. 110:4].

(FB 4, 536 (66,55) The profession of law, as it is described in the Roman pagan books of law, is a fine and good faculty; but now they

#1518 (May 1-7, 1532): FB 4, 536, (66,55) Re: Abuse of the Profession of Law . . . continued

concentrate the outward practice, confuse matters according to various customs in the courts; push things about; arrange things in such a way so that all kinds of dog hair are chopped into the mixture! The ancient rights lie under the bench and every tongue-thresher and procurator is permitted to act as he wishes. They cheat poor people out of their money; tangle with each other in order to get something for themselves and become rich; so there is no end to law-suits. Therefore, this is a dangerous profession and vocation; not that law itself is lacking in the right, but because of the shameful abuse of the same.

#1547 (May 20, 1532) Re: The Dwelling-place of God

Heaven and earth are insufficient for God to make a dwelling-place thereof; but rather, He wishes to live in a human being, even though Isaiah calls the heavens his seat and the earth his footstool: -- not the dwelling-place. Hear the super-Gospel: "And we will come to him and make our abode with him." [John 14:22].

#1553 (May 20, 1532) Re: Satan -- The Prince of the World

Against Thee alone have I sinned, that is, I do not need to speak with anyone that I have sinned, but with Thee [God] alone; it is against Thee alone. [Ps. 51:6]. The devil must necessarily be our enemy, for we oppose him with God's Word. Now he does happen to be a prince; being a prince he must have power; having power he will certainly wish to take revenge on us . . . for if I were a prince and had such an enemy, I would surely be revenged. Satan is the prince of this world. Thus we expect nothing more from the world. For as great as we are, whatever stays in the pants and jacket is worldly and carnal. The Spirit, however, is the real [true] thing. This body is but a little purse in which a few coins are placed of niggardly value!

#1557 (May 20, 1532) Re: Law and Gospel, Plus Mood Deflation

. . . Then the Doctor asked, "Why are you so down-hearted?" I answered: Oh, dear doctor, I find myself dwelling on thoughts that are so sour [bitter] and I can not do anything about it. I am unable properly to distinguish between Law and Gospel . . . The doctor answered: "Yes, my dear master Hans, if you could do that, you would be doctor!" And he got up, took off his baret [doctor's cap] and said: "If you could do that I would say to you, dear doctor John, you are extremely well educated. St. Paul and I have not been able to arrive at that level. When he desired to have the thorn in his flesh removed, St. Paul was told . . . "Let my grace be sufficient for you; you have my Word and command, hold fast to these and let them be sufficient. If God gave us a strong, unfaltering faith, we would soon become proud, finally despise Him and tickle ourselves therewith! If He were to give us knowledge of the full impact of the law, we would lose our minds and not know where to hide in heaven or on earth. Therefore, it is best that God deals with us in this way so that we may recognize our poverty and misery, holding fast to that which Christ commands us. He will make right what we have done wrong . . . Then I replied: dear doctor, does it then behove me to remain in fog and sin? The doctor: Only that you might be justified when you speak and convincing when you judge [discern]. [Ps. 51:4].

#1598 (May 27, 1532) Re: Marriage

God has placed a large cross upon marriage, and yet He maintains it even though the pope and the devil are hostile to it. And there are also many who manage themselves better outside of the state of marriage

#1598 (May 27, 1532) Re: Marriage . . . continued
than within it.

Note: FB 4:43 . . . It is a sure sign that God is hostile to the papacy, because the papacy has been robbed of the blessing of the fruit of the body. We would have to do without, if God had not given desire and love between man and woman towards each other. He causes us to cherish our children, even though they may be ugly. It is God's work alone!

#1600 (May 27-31, 1532) Re: Accusations by the Devil

Is it not a plague, that the villian, the devil wishes to accuse and judge us; and he himself is worse than all humans? What concern is it of his that I have sinned? For I have not sinned against him, but against God; nor is it he who gave me the law. It is written: "Against Thee alone have I sinned." [Ps. 51:4].

Note: FB 3, 11 . . . We know, however, by the grace of God, that we have a gracious and merciful Father in heaven, and Christ our Lord and Saviour has saved us by His precious blood from His anger and ill-will [non-grace] against us.

#1601 (May 27-31, 1532) Re: Temptations to Different Ages

Young men are tempted by attractive girls; at 30 years of age men are tempted more by money; 40 year olds by honor; and 60 year olds by glory, [saying], "Am I not self-righteous?"

#1606 (May 27-31, 1532) Re: Government by Peasants

If the ass-holes were to govern, things would go badly; but rather let them make cheese, milk cows and cock . . . that is their proper profession!

#1626 (June 8, 1532) Re: Payment for Blessings

If I were to presume to advise our Lord God, I would advise Him henceforth no longer, to give anything gratis, but rather to become a merchant. He would no longer give a woman a child, an eye, foot, hand, head, mouth, nose, toe, stomach, liver, lung, or any limb that a person has, except that person pay him 100 florins for each item. I would thus pay my Lord God 100 fls. also for my Katy that she have more milk and 100 florins to counteract my Wolff's [servants] inertia . . . Sir doctor, where the poor be who do not have so much money to buy all these things? . . . He answered they would all have to have enough money but nothing in excess. But stop! Our Lord thinks: If I take all their money, I would have to return it to them gratis; the little folk have to have enough from me: my mercy must continue forever and forever!

#1629 (June 8-9, 1532) Re: Duke George

I am afraid that the cardinal has had Duke George and Margrave Joachim brought to Regensburg, in order that he use them to create some trouble. If this should happen, I shall ask God that the Landgrave invade Duke George's land and punish him thoroughly, even though it would not be good. I see, indeed, that Duke George does not want peace but the opposite. He is indeed an unlucky warrior, as we saw in Friesland. He would not succeed now either; that you will certainly see.

#1635 (June 8-9, 1532) Re: Meaning of "Sinus"

"Sinus" is close in meaning to bosom, a place where someone might conceal something. But when a person is naked, he has no place of concealment. We do not have an exact word in German for this word "sinus", for "sinus" means the use of an arm as a mother holds a child with her hands, arms, or knees; we can't give it in German . . . Thus Lazarus sat in sinu of Abraham [Lk. 16:22]. Thus Christ at the Supper had John in sinu; pressed

#1635 (June 8-9, 1532) Re: Meaning of "Sinus" . . . continued
him to his bosom and put his arm around him [John 13:23].

#1639 (June 11, 1532) Re: Evil World and Signs of Moses

It is my opinion that if Moses had continued to do the miracles which he did in Egypt for two or three years; the people would have become quite accustomed to them, just as one becomes accustomed to the stars and heavenly bodies. So evil is the world, after having been punished, not at all wishing to become better.

Note: FB 1, 237 (4,53) The World becomes tired of God's work. I deem, said Dr. Martin, that if Moses did the signs he did in Egypt for two or three years, one would have become accustomed to them, as one becomes accustomed to the sun, the moon and the stars. So evil is the world, not even wishing to become better, after being punished.

#1674 (June 12-July 12, 1532) Re: Papists and Luther

If God should let me die as a result of the plague, then He will do the papists a great mischief by preventing them from killing and burning me, their worst enemy. Oh, if they only could; they would tear me from limb to limb with their teeth!

#1675 (June 12-July 12, 1532) Re: The One Who Sits at the Right Hand of God

Christ has enemies; this we have to experience; this we will have to feel. But in spite of them, He will remain sitting, and we in and through Him; this I know. [Ps. 110:1].

Note: FB 1, 322 (7,21) Re: Schefflimini -- He who sits at the Right Hand of God . . . Christ has many and great enemies, this we, his little flock, must experience so much that we feel it. But in spite of them all, as up to the present, He will remain seated and we in and through Him; of a truth I know this. And even though we must suffer much and be killed, it does not matter. We dare it all because of His Word: "I live and you also shall live." "Where I am, there you also shall be." [John 14:19 and John 17:24].

#1677 (June 12-July 12, 1532) Re: Devil Bait

I would rather die at the hands of the devil than at the hands of the Emperor or Pope; for I would die through a great lord. But when he shall have a taste of me, that will not agree with him.. He will have to vomit and get no thanks for it. At the appearance of our great God, the Day of His joyous and glorious coming, I will devour the devil in return!

#1700 (June 12-July 12, 1532) Re: The Response of the World to God's Blessings

God is unable to satisfy the world. What more should God do for us in this life? Good days we cannot bear, evil ones we do not want to suffer. If He gives riches, we become proud; if poverty, we despair. Only with shovels lead us to the dance! (i.e. bury us . . . see note below).

FB 1, 98 (2,19) No matter what God does for us, we are not pleased. What can God do with us? Good days we cannot endure; evil days we do not want to suffer. If He gives us riches, we get proud and arrogant, so that no one can get along with us, and we want to be carried about on peoples' hands and be worshipped as gods! If He gives us poverty, we despair, become impatient and murmur against Him. Therefore, it would be best to accompany us with shovels to the dance ("bury us -- Medieval picture of death leading people in a dance step to the grave . . . FWL).

Therefore, that one spoke correctly who said: Misfortune in and from the world you do not wish to endure, and yet you do not wish to depart from the world. What can God do with you? What shall He do who

#1700 (June 12-July 12, 1532): FB 1, 98 (2.19) Re: The Response of the World to God's Blessings . . . continued

gave His only Son [unto death] for you? Why are you afraid to leave this world and go to Him who loved you and died for you? Do you ever suppose that the devil or the world would do for you what God has done? Oh no, never-[Not by a long-shot].

FB 1, 220 (4,9) We are an evil outfit [gang]; we need to believe that God wants to be gracious to us, certainly, because He has given us His Son. Otherwise, we are undone completely and all is in vain.

#1715 (June 12-July 12, 1532) Re: The State

My greatest vexation is the [political] state, for the devil cannot win anything from me in any other way, so he wants to load the affairs of state upon my neck and perturb my conscience. However, when I give advice, it is not followed anyway, and rather it is broadcast that I want to govern. If I do not give advice, then my conscience is bothered again. I don't know what to do about it.

#1728 (June 12-July 12, 1532) Re: War with the Turks

Our victory depends upon God. If we are to defeat the Turks, it depends on God alone; if anyone should boast that it will be by his own doing, let the devil take him!

#1733 (August 12-18, 1532) Re: Peasants

A peasant is much like a pig. If a pig is slaughtered it is dead. In like manner a peasant does not think about life beyond death; if it were not so, he would act much differently. *

#1735 (August 12-18, 1532) Re: Despisers of the Sacraments

Dear Sirs, it is said to us, let us administer the Sacraments of the Church! Whosoever does not want to partake of the sacrament and learn the catechism, to such a one do not go when he is dying; but let him die like a pig. Do not receive such a one nor let him be buried in the church yard.

FB 1, 78 (1,93) My Dear Sirs, Dr. Martin said to the preachers, chaplains and those who were with them, let us administer the churches with preaching, pure doctrine, and sacraments. Whoever will not partake of the sacrament, nor learn the catechism, to such a one you are not to go when he is sick, or about to die; let him die like a pig. Do not have pity on him, nor let him be buried in the church yard, as a frightening and horrible warning to others.

#1736 (August 12-18, 1532) Re: Pope Would be Emperor

The Pope has sought for more than 400 years to become emperor and king. But the Pope is finished in England, for the king has taken charge of all bishoprics; he is also finished in Bohemia, and also in Hungary. Germany still hangs in obedience. -- This he said, when the message was brought to Dr. Martin in Wittenberg, August 12, 1532.

#1740 (August 12-18, 1532) Re: The Devil Wounds Himself

Luther said: When one arrived, with his letter of indulgence to save him from the heat of hell, the letter melted and the seal burnt up!

#1754 (August 12-18, 1532) Re: The Lord's Judgement

Our Lord God sees and permits dogs to excrete, urinate and mess up everything, breaking dishes and plates. But when He begins His judgement [or inspection], He is strict beyond measure. This Luther said to the

#1754 (August 18-22, 1532) Re: The Lord's Judgement . . . continued rulers and princes.

#1760 (August 22, 1532) Re: Peasants Remain Peasants

Peasants remain peasants. You can do what you will for them; but they are like Moses' people. Isn't it so? When man was created, the mouth was put here, the nose there, the eyes in place; but no matter what was done, it was considered unsatisfactory with its faults. Thus the peasants will always remain Moses' folk.

#1763 (August 22, 1532) Re: Death of a Prince cf. Death of a Peasant

Thus Dr. Martin said to elector John Frederick during a meal. It is indeed a more miserable thing when a prince dies, than when a peasant dies who has no authority [or prestige]. A prince will be deserted by all friends, lords and finally must battle with the devil. Then it will be of no value to be recalled that one wished to be dealt with in a more princely fashion. The devil is the author of death. He can bring death about from a sliver of a tree; he has more means to bring about death than all the druggists in the world. If one poison doesn't work, then the other one will.

#1776 (August 22-30, 1532) Re: The Labors of Luther

If I were not to do these things for Him who died for me, the world would not be able to give me enough to write a book or translate the Scriptures. I do not wish to have my work paid for by the world; the world is too small [or poor] to do this. I have never asked my lord of Saxony for a penny while I have been here.

#1782 (August 30, 1532) Re: The Gift of Wood

Dr. Martin: I wonder where our Lord God gets wood: fire-wood, wood for building, wood for cabinet-making, wood for shoes, for pots, chairs, shovels, wagons, etc. Dominus Philip replied: Wood is one of the great necessities that we need in the world.

#1815 (September 20-October 21, 1532) Re: Defense Against Robbers

Sir Heinelt asked: "Would the doctor defend himself, if he were attacked on the Diban heath?" The doctor answered: To the uttermost! I would then be the prince and use the sword, since there was no one else there to defend me. I would kill as many as I could; then take the Sacrament and consider myself to have done a good work! But if I were attacked as a preacher, for the sake of the Gospel, I would with folded hands say: now my Lord Christ, here I am; I preached you. If this be my allotted time, I place myself in your hands, -- and thus die.

#1816 (September 20-October 21, 1532) Re: Testimony About Christ

Christ does not look for more than we speak of him. And yet indeed, if I try to do this, my mouth is paralysed! But Christ responds: "Call upon me and I will hear and save you!" [Ps. 50:15]. How could one have an easier way of serving God or worshipping Him? There is no easier work on earth than true worship of God. He does not command us to cut wood or carry stones, but as great as the evils confronting us, so great is His help flowing to us. I do not promise my servant help when he chops wood for me; and yet Christ wishes to help me in my need. To sum up: the only thing we are short of is faith; for as you believe thus you shall have. If I had faith as the Scriptures demand, I should be able to defeat the Turks alone!

#1818 (September 20-October 21, 1532) Re: Our Eating Habits

We all have something of the animal in us, in our eating habits. The wolf devours sheep, so do we; the fox, chickens and geese -- we do too! The hawk and vulture eat birds, we too; pike eat fish, we also; with oxen, horses and cows we also eat grass. With hogs we eat manure and dirt; internally, everything becomes dirt anyway!

#1822 (September 20-October 21, 1532) Re: Sadness and Joy

I ought to be so happy that I should be completely well and never able to be sad or sick, because of joy. But Satan comes and disturbs me, it not by himself then through "Ki" and others. Heaven and earth, death and life are great things; but faith in Christ is much greater. [Note, according to the FB text by "Ki" Luther does not necessarily mean a papist, but someone from his own camp].

#1831 (September 20-October 21, 1532) Re: A Rustling Leaf

A rustling leaf has no horns. When have you ever heard that a rustling leaf has horns or that it ever has butted someone? And yet, an unbeliever and impious person is afraid of it; but a confident Christian is not frightened. Christ accordingly frightens the impious and makes joyous the believers.

#1841 (September 20-October 21, 1532) Re: A Right Vocation

Whoever has a right [just] vocation does everything with a good spirit and conscience. Things will be successful for such a person as for the Emperor. But whoever does not have a good, honest, or right vocation in life, will be like Ferdinand of Hungary, who counsels and thinks: I want to do thus and thus, and yet all things go backwards and wrong. Even as Muntzer opposed me, so much he sought to destroy things; and I had to go against him, even though unwillingly for I was forced thereto; then God helped me also. Self-defense prevailed.

#1847 (September 20-October 21, 1532) Re: Day of Judgement

I have often wondered why God gave His word to the faithless Wends in Wittenberg! I hold that He gave it to Jerusalem, Wittenberg, and district so that He would have cause to punish their ingratitude on the Day of Judgement.

WA, TR, II, Part 4, pp. 253ff, (Dated: Out of the Year 1530)

#1890 Re: Christ had to be Game for the World

Pilate would not have crucified Christ, if He had not been turned over to him. The Pharisees, Judas, and Pilate, these three counselled for the death of Christ. The Pharisees wanted Christ to be killed because of their envy, greed, and lying tendencies; Judas out of greed for money, and Pilate out of ambition. The first reason is the worst.

#1893 Re: Human Comfort and God's Comfort

Human comfort consists in outward, visible help, which one can grasp, see and feel. God's comfort stands in His Word and promise alone, which cannot be seen, heard, nor felt.

#1894 Re: God's Care for Humans Compared to that of Sparrows

God has created the sparrows; therefore, not one is to fall on the earth without His will. God has not only created human beings, but has permitted His Son to suffer for them. Thus He wills to care for them more than for the useless sparrows!

#1895 Re: The God-fearing and Godless Man

The God-fearing man is punished, in order that he might not be damned with the world; the godless man, however, that he go within himself and become all the more hard-hearted!

#1896 Re: Consequences of our Actions

If we did what we should, not doing what we want, we would have what we ought. But now we do what we wish to do, and therefore, we must suffer what we do not want!

#1899 Re: Temptation/Salvation/Joy

Temptation comes before our salvation and is followed by joy after salvation. Difficulties experienced in building up the faith nevertheless bring about growth. Our Lord God reveals His Will towards mankind in many ways. His Kingdom dwells in people who have been baptized and believe in Christ. These Christians constitute God's Kingdom, even though Christians in this life are plagued and killed. Nevertheless God, their Lord, is alive in heaven and therefore, they too will live!

The devil desire, and it is his work and great joy, to suppress and plague God's Kingdom. If Christians are God's Kingdom, of necessity they will be plagued and oppressed. A Christian will have evil days and suffer much; on the other hand, our Adam -- our flesh -- wants to have good days without suffering. How then can this be harmonized?

Our flesh has been consigned to death and hell, because it has obeyed the devil and turned away from God's commandments. If our flesh is to be saved from death, hell, and recaptured from the devil, it must again keep God's commandments and come to Him. To keep His commandments and come to Him is nothing else than to believe in Christ Jesus; that He is the true Son of God and our Redeemer. To keep His Word, the Word of Christ and His command is nothing else than the cross and love. In the cross we have the hope that nothing can plague us in eternity; and that we are saved out of this life for the life to come. In love however, we have patience; everyone bearing the weakness of the other with good-will, especially when the other suffers. Therefore, whoever considers himself to be a hearer and disciple of divine truth, or desires to be a Christian

#1899 Re: Temptation/Salvation/Joy . . . continued

and wishes to attain to blessedness, cannot be certain of any lasting good in this life. But all his faith, all his hope and love, that is his whole life, will be little more than suffering the cross, persecution, and all manner of adversity!

#1906 A Re: The Loss of Duke Frederick and Duke John

Dr. Martin said; with Duke Frederick "wisdom" and with Duke John "piety" have died. The young noble-men simply want to govern. But they will give the country such a hot time, and put the princes into such a state, that the land and the people will have to find something with which to be cooled off!

#1906 B Re: Luther's Words After Elector John, Duke of Saxony had Left

God looks upon kings and princes, as children look upon a game of cards. Yet a prince is different from a peasant even though both must die. With Duke Frederick "wisdom" and with Duke John "piety" died and henceforth the nobility will govern, now that wisdom and piety have departed. They know that my young lord has a mind of his own and doesn't care much about writing; this pleases them well. He is clever enough. He also has enough determination. The nobility will sermonize him enough to have courage. But, if only they will not lead the country into a sweat bath and lay the prince on the pavement, that the nation and the people will have to be cooled off because of him. If he had half the wisdom of his uncle and half the piety of his father, I would also be willing to grant him half of his stubbornness, and wish him much luck. Our Lord God cannot tolerate pride and must punish evil; for it would not be like Him not to do so. Saxony will have to pay; Thuringia is now being punished; France is also being punished; Venice too, The Frankish nobility has also been punished. If our nobility and those of Meisen will be punished; it will go badly for they are very clever. The nobles and the peasants presume to know the Gospel better than St. Paul and Dr. Martin Luther! Are they despising their pastors? No, they despise the greater Lord. He will despise them in return and be their enemy. He will grab hold of their hats, that they feel it; and He will defend the priests. These nobles wish to govern, but it is neither possible nor do they know how. The pope is indeed intelligent and knows how to govern, even a weak pope knows how to govern better than ten of the nobles in our house!

#1913 Re: Preaching

This would be my advice at this time: one should simply read the text, one chapter after another. Then pray and exhort on morality; that would be the best preaching.

Christ does not desire more than He be spoken of, how He suffered for sin, and that we live unto Him. This the world cannot bear and savagely contradicts me. Christ answers; I shall save you!

This is an easy way to serve God; it could not be easier. It is much more difficult to serve the devil, as can be seen by observing the soldiers and merchants. For a gulden or so they risk body and life to suffer sorrow, hunger, frost and mishap.

#1923 Re: Nobles/Knights/and Priests

Nobles and knights do not believe that priests can be of assistance to them. As the Jews opened: If Christ remains, the Romans will come. But when Christ was taken from them, then the Romans came. Our smart-aleck rulers will also find this out. When the priests are taken from them, they will suffer blow upon blow! [FWL, "Pfaffen" is a word used for priest or pastor in a contemptuous way, e.g. the priests of Baal were

#1923 Re: Nobles/Knights/ and Priests . . . continued
called "Baalspaffen"].

#1924 Re: Baptism and Sacrament as Documents and Seal of Heaven

Heaven is a gift that has been freely given me. I have documents and a seal to prove it. That is, I have been baptized and partake of the sacrament. Therefore, guard your documents well, lest the devil tear them up; that is, remain in the fear of the Lord and pray the Lord's Prayer . . . God could not have made me more certain of the blessed joy of the saved and the gospel than by the suffering and death of His Son. When I believe He has conquered death and has died for me, and look upon the promise of the Father, then I am well taken care of and have the documents in order with the seals of Baptism and the Sacrament properly attached to them.

#1926 Re: Nobility/Pastors/ Cain and Saul

The nobility wish to step upon ministers of the church and the towns with their feet, and in spite of this be well attached to God's Word: like Saul and Cain who also wished to be considered God's servants and close to Him . . . interpreting the Word according to their own way . . . and yet in spite of this putting David and Abel to death.

#1927 Re: Support for Church Services and Schools

The cities must support divine services, schools, and good order. The nobility is not able to do so; nor are they doing it. If the nobility were princes, emperors and kings, I would wish the people to be nothing but pigs and bears! They would, however, have to have no dogs! The nobility will perish, God will punish, for with Him no work counts that is a work of ingratitude and pride.

#1928 Re: Proper View of Good Works

It is difficult for a pious man to cease doing works, for he knows that God wants to have them, and so he does them. If he makes the distinction that God wants to have them, and that one ought to do them, at the same time not depending on them nor building on them for salvation, but that God rewards here upon earth with peace, calm and other gifts, indeed rewards well, I am not to be concerned about it and believe Him; that indeed He Himself wishes to have it so.

#1938 Re: Excessive Eating and Drinking

The cooks in Torgau once asked Dr. Martin: "What have you dear sir doctor accomplished with our princes? There is often nothing but excessive eating and boozing day and night. Then the doctor answered saying: eating and drinking is not to be considered evil, but gluttony and boozing should bring about fasting again. Philip [Melanchthon] works hard and the world can never pay him for his work. He is more clever than all the doctors. And yet the most insignificant court helper excessively eats and drinks more than he eats or drinks!

#1941 Re: Christians Conquer by Suffering

I do not like to see war coming for it is a great plague for the church, and she cannot suffer it; but security is so endangered.

Christians conquer when they suffer, and when they fight, they lose; I am afraid of that.

There is a desire to exterminate the pope and bishops by force; but nothing will come of that. The pope wounds his head whenever he tires to kill the Gospel; our knights will bash up their heads when they attack the pope. God's Word must overcome the pope, no other weapon

#1941 Re: Christians Conquer by Suffering . . . continued
can harm him, for he is the devil. It used to be said; if one strikes out at a spirit, one strikes oneself. A prudent and true proverb! If we attack the pope with the sword we will only hit ourselves.

#1942 Re: Many are Called, but Few Chosen

The world does not understand what God's Word means; all of them claim to be evangelical. But it is written: many are called, few are chosen.)

I do not like to see our princes having such desire to acquire bishoprics, for I fear that after they have devoured themselves to death, they will lose their own property. Cloisters and charitable foundations could be reformed and do much good for they are treasuries of the land. If they be destroyed, those who do so will suffer the consequences.

#1943 Re: Modern Epicureans, Pharisees, and Sadducees

Our pupils and listeners are for the most part Epicureans and judge a sermon according to their own tastes desiring a pleasant time, etc. The Pharisees and Sadducees were enemies of Christ, yet liked to listen to Him; the Pharisees because they wanted to catch Him; the Sadducees because they wanted to scoff at Him.

Our monks are Pharisees, our nobles, citizens, and peasants -- Sadducees. Our nobles, citizenship and peasants do indeed listen to us; they also believe us, but they do as they please. That is they remain Epicureans!

#1944 Re: Positive Attitude Toward Death by Pagans

I have often wondered what caused the pagans to write such beautiful things about death, since death is so cruel and ugly. But then when I think about the world, I am not surprised at all. Among themselves, they have had to suffer so many mischiefs by their rulers, which hurt them and the only way they could be free of this is by way of death.

FB 1, 221 (4,13) If the pagans could consider death such a small matter, yea even honor and esteem it highly, how much more we Christians should do so! For the poor pagans know less than nothing about eternal life; but we do know, and yet we fear and are frightened so much when told about death. Indeed, this is because of our sins, and we must acknowledge that we live worse than pagans do; therefore, we are not unjustly treated . . . for the greater the sin, the more cruel death. This we can see in those, who have acted contrary to God's command. When they are about to die, or when one speaks to them about the Day of Judgement -- how they fear and carry on even though at the time they are well! That is the kind of little cabbages we are!

#1945 Re: The Devil and the World -- Monasteries and the State

While I was still in popery and first began to write, I could not imagine that the devil plagues people so much in the world. I would have thought that only we in the monastery had the devil. After all, however, this was possible, because the monks had taken in the world, so that the devil possessed the nobility and the peasants -- because of the magnitude of sinning in the state.

#1948 Re: God's Guidelines

God also has His guidelines and rules. They are called the Ten Commandments and are in our very flesh and blood. What you would have others do to you, that do to others [Matt. 7:12]. Then God also states: with the measure you measure out, it will be measured to you again [Matt. 7:12]. With His guideline and square, He has drawn the whole world; well unto them who abide therein! For God rewards them and such a reward a Turk or

#1948 Re: God's Guidelines . . . Continued

pagan can partake of in some measure like a Christian; but as to eternal life another rule pertains!

#1949 Re: Comparison to Sheep

How could our Lord Christ more simply instruct us than comparing us to a sheep? A sheep allows itself to be shorn; gives wool and milk, and finally its very life patiently. Pigs are also animals, but are far more impatient than sheep.

TABLE TALK RECORDED BY CONRAD CORDATUS

WA, TR, II, Part 5, pp. 275 ff. (Dated: June 16, 1531-November 23, 1532)

#2005 Re: God as Master-BUILDER

Looking at the heavens by night he said: He must be a good master-builder, who has built such a vault without supporting pillars!

#2010 Re: Squeezed Between Christ and the Pope

I have hung Christ and the pope side by side. Therefore, I am not worried further even though I am squeezed between them like a door and a hinge.

#2034 Re: Obedience of Women

If I were again to court a woman, I would have an obedient wife hewn for me out of stone; otherwise, I have despaired of the obedience of all women!

#2038 Re: The Impious and Judgement Day

Whether the impious will also be drawn forward upon the Last Day I do not know. With them it will be no different that a hog, which one throws upon the floor in a barn and soon thereafter is slaughtered. Here the words which Isaiah speaks are pertinent: fatten, fatten the victim, etc. [Is. 34:1ff]. (FWL. Note: Luther quotes quite freely sometimes).

#2050 Re: Fish/Thief/Devil

Fish belong in water, a thief unto the gallows, the devil in hell. Therefore, do not help any of these; afterall that is where they belong.

#2090 Re: Christ and Caesar

Someone in a gathering of dignitaries said: I am not much concerned about the faith, but I know of two lords who give hard reward: Christ and Caesar! This was a cunning secular and theological declaration.

#2164b Re: Why did God Create Humans?

FB 1, 189 (3,32) Some one put the question: "Since God knew man would not remain in his original state of innocence, why did God create him?" Dr. Martin answered: A great lord must also have jack-asses in his house, but he well knows who they are. There are many who imagine that when they have heard or read a sermon or two, that they then know it all, having swallowed the Holy Spirit, feathers and all; These persons are self-satisfied, miserable spirits. As if one could ever completely master by study, the high great, mystery of Divine majesty and could master the heavenly golden art of the counsels of God [2 Tim. 2,19-20]. Even in common worldly arts we are far off from perfection in our knowledge. How could one master completely the high divine Majesty's Counsel and heart, thoroughly grasp it, we who have so spoilt, miserable and weakened nature? But the servant who knows the Lord's will and does not do, will be beaten much more, than the one who doesn't know it [Luke 12:47].

Paul gave the following answer when he said: Nay, but O man, who art thou that thou repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? [Rom. 9:20]. Ah, indeed, Satan is in all his words and deeds against God, even as every godless person is, for such a one is surely possessed of the devil, if not in the body, then nevertheless in the spiritual heart.

#2173 A Re: Patience

I must have patience with the pope. I must have patience with the enthusiasts; I must have patience with bothersome, pretentious fellows in authority. I have to have patience with the family (also people and servants in the household); I must have patient with Kathy von Bora . . . so much patience, that it seems to me that my whole life is made up of patience!

#2173 B Re: Patience

I have to have patience with the pope, the enthusiasts, petty rulers, Kathy von Bora. There is so much patience needed that my whole life tends to become nothing else than patience with the family, etc. [Isa. 30:15].

#2194b: FB 4, 254 Re: How Dr. Martin Luther Visited and Comforted the Sick

Whenever Dr. Martin Luther encountered any sick person, whom he visited during his weakness of body, he spoke with him in a very friendly manner, drew near to him and asked firstly about his illness, what sickness he had; how long he had been weak, which physician he had engaged; and what kind of medicine had been prescribed for him? After wards, he began to ask whether in this bodily weakness he had waited patiently before God? When he had now learned how the sick man had resigned himself in his weakness, and what was his attitude toward God, if it was apparent that he resolved to endure his illness patiently, because it had been sent by the gracious and fatherly will of God, and that he acknowledged himself to have deserved this affliction because of his sins and was prepared willingly to die if it pleased God; there-after the Doctor began to praise highly such a Christian resolution and purpose as a work of the Holy Spirit. And he declared that it is a great kindness of God when one in this life acquires true recognition of God and believes in Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, and can submit his will to God's will. Then he encouraged the sick to continue steadfast in this faith by the help of the Holy Spirit and offered to pray fervently to God on his behalf. If the sick person began to thank the Doctor and say that he did not deserve to be visited by him, he usually replied: that it was his office and duty, and that there was no need to thank him for it. Then he counselled them to be of good cheer, to fear nothing, recalling for them that God was their gracious God and Father, in confirmation of which he had given them good signs and documents in his Word and Sacraments, in order that we poor sinners might be delivered from the devil and hell, so has the Son of God willingly given Himself to death for us and reconciled us to God.

#2210b, p. 366: FB 1, 141 (2,104) God's Works are Wonderful

Dr, Martin said, "It is a wonderful thing that such fruits grow on trees, which become flesh and blood. For what else are trees than wood? Whether you boil or roast it, it is wood; yet of such sweet and pleasant fruits grow, so that flesh and blood may be nourished. I have seen in Italy that on hard stony rocks the finest olive trees grow. Then I understood the words of the Psalmist: He split the rocks in the wilderness and gave them drink [Ps. 78:15] . . . We too, here in Wittenberg must also admit, that our soil is quite sandy and nothing but stones; for it is not a fat precious soil.

Therefore, Dr. Martin once said of Wittenberg:

"Little land, little land

You are just a little sand!

When I cultivate you, you are light;

When I harrow you

You are plain,

When I mow

I find no gain!"

#2210b, p. 366: FB 1, 141 (2,104) Re: God's Works are Wonderful . . . continued

Nevertheless, God gives us good wine and precious grain out of this stony ground. But since we daily experience this, we despise it. And Dr. Martin Luther said: "One cannot fully comprehend God's works with the mind, nor can we speak enough of them. We can only believe them. One can discover this even when one realizes that straw is good!"

#2258b Re: No Reply to Cochlaeus

I do not want to answer Cochlaeus' book against me, for then he will be much more angry than if I were to answer him. I will not do it alone for this reason, lest he receive the distinction he is looking for in giving a response to my writing. I am especially pleased that he has drawn me with seven heads, but it is a shame that the seven heads cannot bring about one neck, or be worth a neck! When the son of Marchiones saw the book he said: Aha, if Luther now has seven heads he will be invincible since they can not even conquer him with one head, etc.!

#2286 Re: No Wish to be a Monk Again

I did not gladly become a monk; but now the world looks upon me as if I would gladly become a monk again. This would really be running into the desert and getting out of the sight of the despicable world!

#2304 Re: God is God!

God is pointedly displeased when He is not considered to be God. Continually He says in the prophets: Am I not God? Is there another true God beside me? Have I no power that I can help?

#2316a Re: Future Persecutions

We know from Psalm 2, they must allow Christ to live. If we die, nevertheless, we are not dead; but if Christ die, then I die with Him. But I am comforted with this one thing. The Word of God remains unto all eternity. Thus it says: I live and you also shall live [Job 14:19]. I am baptized in His Name. Therefore, I know no other than that Christ.

FB 1, 353 (7,62) Christ and all who believe in Him must remain forever. Since the conversation turned to future persecution, D.M. said: The heathen rage against the Lord and His anointed [Ps. 2]. Well, then, they will have to let Christ remain, even though all the devils in hell do not like it. If we should die, were are really alive; but if Christ die, I die with Him. But I am comforted with one thing: God's Word remains forever! For God says: I live and you too shall live! [John 14:19]. Now I have been baptized in the Name of God who has thus spoken and promised. He will not lie, of this I am certain. Therefore, I know of no other God than Jesus Christ, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily, as St. Paul says in Col. 2[:9].

#2516a Re: Dealers and Merchants

The whole world is made up of nothing but merchants, nobles, dukes, princes, etc. Whosoever has 50 flurins invests it in business. How can the world continue long to go on in this way?

#2517a Re: Lawyers and Theologians

Lawyers will suffer the same fate as the theologians. They are antagonistic towards us because we tell the world the truth. If the lawyers dare to tell the truth to the nobility, they will have it as good as we have it. We are condemned by others, since they hear the truth from us. To sum up, they say: We theologians can do nothing; the lawyers too cannot do a thing. Cesar Pfflug says the same: There must be loose characters who occupy themselves with what is written and have nothing

#2517a Re: Lawyers and Theologians . . . continued
else to do; thus death without light and the cross. This was his business without God.

#2517b Re: Lawyers and Theologians

The same thing will happen to the jurists [lawyers] as to the theologians. They hate us because we tell them the truth. If you lawyers tell the truth to the nobility about their "virtue", things will go with you as with us. They will hate and despise you and us, since they had to know this from us [i.e. the truth about themselves and their virtues, FWL].

#2529b Re: The Ways of the Devil

The devil consorts with witches, as is explained in the Epistle which is read on the 14th Sunday after Trinity. It may well be that the devil consorts with the old whores only to satisfy lust; that he should have a child with them is impossible, because God alone is Creator and uses people in creation as means through whom He works -- but not the devil. But it is true that they [devil and witches] often change the children of women in their beds and put themselves in the place of the children. They are usually far worse than ten children with excreting, gorging themselves, crying, etc. About which I know of an example which took place in Halberstad. There the devil laid himself down in a child's place, which had laid there, and was quite similar in appearance to the child that had lain there previously. He soiled himself so much, yelled so much, that the parents could find no rest throughout the entire night. He also sucked the mother dry, so that she could no longer nurse him; thereafter, when the mother could give him no more, the father sent him another wet nurse, whom he also soon sucked dry, and so on until the fifth. Since the parents now did not know what to do with the child, they were advised to carry it towards Hopelstad, where there used to be a shrine, for it was still then under the papacy. The father took the child in a basket and proceed with it. When he was on the way and had to go over water, something cried out from out of the water: Hilero! The child in the basket answered: Ho! Ho! Then the thing in the water asked: Where are you off to? The child in the basket replied: I am to be weighed in Hopelstad, that I may grow better! The father was frightened and at once threw the child with its basket into the water. Then the two devils splashed about in the water, laughing and in addition scoffed at the man, etc.

#2563a Re: Smelly Church!

My wife said: The church was so full that it stank! I answered: there was many a heap of manure therein also, even though hidden, and the best thing about it is that they again carried it out!

#2595 Re: The Enthusiasts

The enthusiasts, when they attacked the dead sculptures and wooden images, they won! But when the living came over them, namely the Swiss, they were struck down . . . so also it happened to Muntzer.

#2596 Re: Proper Use of the Sacrament

When the Sacrament is administered in a different way than God has instituted, nothing good comes of it. In like manner when Gideon set up the ephod; it did not go well.

#2646 Re: Heaven and Hell

Fool Torgensis does not want to go to heaven, because it is cold up there, and snow and rain fall down. He wants rather to go to hell,

#2646 Re: Heaven and Hell . . . continued

because it is warm there and one can well roast apples and pears in the stove flues!

#2650a Re: The Franciscans are Lice

The Franciscans are the lice of our Lord God which the devil placed in Adam's fur coat; preaching monks are the fleas which are eternally biting one another like the sparrows and the swallows.

#2716a Re: Curse to the Brewers.

I have often cursed the first brewers. The whole of Germany could be fed with the barley out of which they brew the shameful liquid manure, which afterwards is pissed against the wall!

#2716b Re: Brewers

I have often cursed the first brewers. So much barley is spoilt with brewing, that one could support all of Germany. But we make such shameful liquid manure out of it that later we urinate against the wall! For a quarter of beer, three bushels are needed; and where one city brews good beer, there are a hundred that brew beer fit only to spit out of one's mouth!

TABLE TALK RECORDED BY CONRAD CORDATUS (May, 1532ff)

WA, TR, III, #'s 3186a ff

#3186a Re: Erasmus

Erasmus is a villian under the skin! This is seen in all of his books, especially in his colloquies where he does not speak in his own person, but in another. He laughs at true as well as at false religion. If only I had the time, I would dispute him; the Father and Son are laughable matters to this Erasmus . . .

#3186b God has permitted us to play with apples, pears, nuts, and to joke with our wives, but with the majesty of God, that is another matter. Thus in this Erasmus, that good-for-nothing rascal, laughs: The Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit are funny concepts. He also laughs at religion, whether it be true or false as you may see in his books, especially in his colloquies.

#3186c God has permitted us to play with apples, pears, nuts and to joke about all kinds of created things. But with His Majesty, we are not to do so [carry on in this same way]. Our one unique consolation is: I believe in Jesus Christ. In this we have often died for joy. Let us cling to Him alone. I am determined to remain with this Man alone, and permit myself to be buried in this trust. I have been baptized in Him, consequently I rest in this doctrine. I marvel that a human being can be abandoned for so long as that Epicurean Erasmus of Rotterdam. He is so certain that even certainty is no longer certain! . . . Certain that there is no eternal life, which I know is as certain as I have eyes. Luke is more secure.

#3187a Re: Marriage

God has placed a garland over marriage which is big enough to maintain it, even though the pope and the devil are hostile to it. In the state of marriage one is better nourished than outside of it.

#3187b God has placed a wreath over marriage and maintains it, even though the pope and the devil are hostile to it. Are there many who are better nourished outside of the state of marriage?

#3190a Re: Temptations at Different Ages

The young adolescent is tempted by beautiful virgins, the common man by other vices; men of 30 by gold; of 40 by glory. Only I am pious!

#3190b Young men are commonly tempted by maidens; other things tempt men of 30 years; in the 46th year it is honor, glory, etc. In the sixtieth year a man is pre-occupied by such thoughts as: "Oh, only I am pious!"

FB 3, 117 Re: The Temptations of Youth and Other Ages Young people are tempted by love and lust. The common man and the mob are plagued with other vices. A man of thirty and forty years, etc. strives for honor and property. When he reaches sixty, he also has his temptations and thinks: "Oh, only I am pious now!"

#3195 Re: The Peasants

If the piss-holes would govern, things would go badly: let them make cheese, milk cows, cook; that is their place!

#3203a Re: God Suffers More than Parents

When he had picked up an infant who defiled him, he said: "Ah, our Lord God must suffer much greater stink from people than father and mother endure from their children!"

#3203b When Martin Luther kissed a small infant and was soiled by it, he said: Oh, how our Lord God must suffer so great malodorousness [stink] and dirt from our complaining and blaspheming, much more than a mother of her child.

#3225 Re: The Signs of Moses

It is my opinion that if Moses had done the signs in Egypt two or three times, they would have become accustomed to them as to the sun, etc. The world is that ungrateful!

#3244 Re: The Pope

The pope is not content unless he may be evil and we be evil too. He wishes that we remain evil. A pious man is not a suitable person to be pope, but rather a villian and rascal. Whoever wants to take over this rule [or goverance], must be the greatest villian next to the devil!

#3245 Re: The Emperor

We have a pious emperor. He has a wedge in his heart like some one willed to have put it there. He is quiet and pious. I think he does not speak as much in a year as I do in a day!

#3268 Re: Christians like Fruit Trees

Fruit-bearing trees have to suffer and bear various attacks, like good Christians, tempests, lightning, hail, insects of which there are three kinds: butterflies, ants and spiders. Yet in spite of it all, the tree must bear fruit.

#3344 Re: Justification and Peace

If the justified have peace, then those who have no peace are not justified. It behoves one who has that opinion to realize that the life of the just Christian encounters [goes through] sorrows, tribulations, afflictions, mortalities; indeed they are sons of God who suffer such things: My children I shall not neglect [Hebrews 4]. Since therefore, they are sons of God, they are not neglected by God, though vexed by Satan to the utmost. By the will of God they attain to good works, so that even in the midst of trials or temptations they may be of good cheer and of a good conscience, out of faith through faith.

#3348 Re: Infants and Adults

How weak everything is that our Lord God makes can be seen in this infant [Paul Luther was then one-half year of age], and when adults we become so proud.

#3349 Re: Luther's Dog Toelpel

Look at that dog! There is no defect in his body; has bright eyes, strong legs, beautiful white teeth, a good stomach; great gifts of the body! Yet, our Lord God give these to a dog!

#3374 Re: Unrecognized Sins

May God let me fall into all sins, except those which I do not recognize to be sin. For nothing can displease God more than when one imagines not to have sinned; as Saul did. Now the sins which are not recognized are against the First Table of the law; others against the Second, which

#3374 Re: Unrecognized Sins . . . continued

lead to penitence as in the case of David; when they however say: "The drunk will go with the thirsty, to wit: [Deut. 29:19], now what sort of a spirit is his? [Numbers, 16:13]. God will not tolerate such.

#3381b Re: Belief Releases from Sin

To believe the Gospel releases from sin, works for the neighbour, faith for God. Those who judge others, condemn themselves. Doubt is sin and eternal death. -- A good work is that which does good to others. We acknowledge Christ first when He becomes teacher of each heart, and when He breaks the bread [Eucharist] for us. The Word of God ignites the hearts with faith!

#3382b Re: Saved by Grace

We are saved by Grace, if we trust therein. But God must change hearts. The law is nothing else than a mirror. -- A Pastor is like a manager of a hospital.

#3393a Re: Sinners Like Sparrows

Sparrows are the most worthless birds, yet they have the best of times throughout the whole year, and do the most damage. In winter they lie in the barns and grain-sheds; in spring they devour the best seed; in summer the best grain out of the ears; in fall, they are in the vineyards, worthy of all persecution. Human sinners are like that too. For when they come into the temple, they impede God in His Word [to get the best kind of treatment].

#3403a Re: Huss and Wyclif

Wyclif and Huss attacked the life-style of the pope; therefore, they were not able to succeed, because they themselves were also sinners like the papists. I truly, said Luther, attacked their doctrine; thereby I defeated them. For the question here is not about the manner of life, but about doctrine.

#3403b Dr. Martin Luther confronted the pope differently than John Huss and Wyclif. Huss and others attacked only the manner of the pope's living; therefore, they could not succeed, because they themselves were sinners like the papists. I truly, said Luther, attacked the doctrine; therewith I defeated them. John Huss removed the briars and tree trunks in the vineyard of the Lord; but I stepped into the plowed field at the right time to fight against the pope.

#3412 Re: Women Disobedient to Men

A citizen in Torgau beat his wife to such an extent, that often the neighbours gathered, blaming him; to whom he said: Let me exercise my kind of justice. For the trouble is caused by a nail. She wants to hang her veil on the very one on which I hang my hat! This actually is the cause of disagreements in marriage: women not obeying men!

#3412b When a citizen of Torgau beat his wife and shouted loudly night and day, to the gathered neighbours he responded. Go away and let me mete out my kind of justice in my house. It is a small matter. The trouble begins with a nail in the wall, where my wife wants to hang her veil, which is the place where my hat should be hung!

#3416 Re: The Psalms

One should never lay aside the Psalms, but always mirror oneself therein. For we can not grasp its glory unless we read it diligently.

#3416a Re: God's Help in Writing

To this end may God have the praise and thanks, for I have just about written myself half-dead, yet did not want to quit. My God restored my right hand which had been without feeling because I wrote immoderately. Glory to God. The End!

TABLE TALK RECORDED BY CORD. B. ZWICK AND WOLF (Various Dates)

WA, TR, III, #3417ff

#3417 The glory is not of my merit, but the flowing blood cleanses,
O Christ by Thee alone I am justified By faith
With merit of mine, all is lost
By Thy blood alone it is
Lord Jesus, I become clean
Justified by faith alone. I.F.B.

#3418 Re: The Castles of Princes is the Last Place Christ Occupies
You must not seek Christ at court
Instead blasphemy and cursing.
All prostitution meets approval,
At the head of all the devil sits,
Therefore, not all speak thereof
Let not him be angered to whom it is of no concern.

#3419 Re: Preaching

A saying of Luther: There is no art to holding long sermons, but
to preach rightly and well this is the task and this the labour.

#3420 Re: Melanchthon

The Lutheran pastors all learn to preach and scold from him, but
when to stop they do not learn from him, etc.

#3421 Re: How to Preach to the Simple

The most distinguished elector came to Wittenberg where Dr. Luther
held several illustrious speeches in a hall. After the heavy labours
he was asked by Master Major why he himself had proceeded to speak to
those of simple minds and disregarded the doctors, considering the common
man and teaching him.

One ought to bear one's breast in the pulpit and feed the people
with milk, for a new church grows up every day which is in need of the
first principles. Therefore one should serve the milk by diligently
teaching the catechism; high thoughts and subtleties should be reserved
for the clever in private. I don't want to be conscious of Doctors Pommer,
Jonas and Philip in my preaching; for they know the substance of my sermon
better than I. Accordingly I do not preach for them, but I observe my
little Hans and Elsie. It would have to be a foolish gardener, who in
a large garden would wish to attend only to the best flowers and neglect
all the rest. Therefore see to it that you teach purely and simply, taking
in account the lack of learning of the common man; do not concern yourselves
so much with the others [distinguished men who might be present].

#3422 Re: The Sign of a Popular Speaker

The sign or characteristic of a good speaker is that he stop when
people suppose the most important [or interesting] part is about to come.
In as much however, truly, when the hearers tire and look for the end;
that's a bad sign.

This is true of a preacher too. When one says: I would have liked
to listen longer; it is good. But when one says: he got "washing around" and
was unable to come to a stop, that is a bad sign!

#3423 Re: The Ordination of Bishops in the Papacy

Whenever one is made a bishop in the papacy, the devil soon enters into him, for he must promise the pope in Rome to fight and rage against Lutheran doctrine; serve the pope and be obedient to him. He takes an oath to serve the devil, and he enters into him at that hour.

#3427 Re: Other Prophecies of Luther

In the year, 1546, Luther said: when the pope or his commander will persecute the Gospel, as will not fail to happen after my death, the Emperor will set somewhat related princes at each other; not to destroy their alliance with him, but that he devour and destroy both sides! To further such disunity, the nobility will assist and not censure, until one side is betrayed, in order to gain the favour of the Emperor and keep their lands. But the Emperor will not spare them, but will also undertake to destroy them. What then is left over from the nobility will also perish, for every city and village will chase and drive out of the land its ruler and its noblemen. If I were to be alive then, I would not resist it!

#3428 Re: The Roman Mass

I was not long in Rome before celebrating many masses there and also saw many conducted, so that I shudder when I think of it. There I heard among others, the Carthusians at table laugh and boast about the coarse jokes some of them made speaking over the bread and wine: "Bread you are, and bread you shall remain"; thus they carried on. Now, I was a young and right pious monk, whom such things hurt. What was I to think? What could occur to me other than these kinds of thoughts: "Is this the way they talk openly at table here in Rome? What if all of them together, pope, cardinal, and the Carthusians celebrate mass in this way? How neatly I have been cheated who has heard so many masses from them! In addition, I was nauseated very much that they were able to conduct mass so elegantly and "rip, rap" easily as if they were putting on a funny play. For before I came to the Gospel, the priest beside me conducting the mass cried out to me: move! move! or get a move on!, etc.

#3429 Re: A Prophecy of Luther

I am certain by the protection of my dear God, that while I live, Germany will not suffer need nor war; but when I am dead, then pray! It will start then, for the world is too evil.

#3446 Re: Prayer that God Restrain the Turks

Dear friends, let us pray God, that He protect us from the Turk, or soon make an end of us, for if he comes the pope will blame us and say, if you were not so occupied with the teachings of Christ, all would be well. Such things the Gospel must suffer; and we must suffer the punishment which they have earned with them, for they deserved such things from God; and especially now when they ought to pray God most of all, they blame and shame Him most of all and call His Word the teaching of the devil, blaming the punishment on Him. Above all they should want to be reconciled to Him, instead they will anger Him most of all. So let us who are enlightened, pray by the grace of God, to ask all things of Him and receive everything through Him.

#3448 Re: Luther's Judgement of His Own Sickness

Dr. Martin Luther in his infirmity said: I know that my sickness is not like that of other people, but at all times made more acute by the devil, whom I have infuriated; that hurts him. But Lord God, heavenly

#3448 Re: Luther's Judgement of His Own Sickness . . . continued

Father, I thank thee that you have roused me to attack and anger the devil, the pope, the princes, and all the world. Continue to help me and do let me go under! Ah, Lord, I trust in Thee; Thou hast conquered the world.

#3450 Re: Love and Tell

Believe		Hear
Love		See
Tell	not all that you	Know
Do		Wish.

#3453 Re: Wittenberg

Wittenberg scratches, scrapes and drags everything to itself and sings: Peace, there is no distress in anything! But after my demise, it will suffer need. Those with long cut-up trousers [mercenaries wore stripped trousers, FWL] will increase, and it will serve Wittenberg right! But you must pray, etc.

#3460 Re: The Rule of Satan and the Pope (II Thess. 2)

In the name of all devils	
Here now the pope is revealed,	Dr. Martin said before
That he is the true anti-Christ	his passing.
As Proclaimed in Scriptures	

#3461 Re: Medicine

Medicine in January is not effective
Let your bowels be open, but keep your blood.
Eat hot food; do not bath a lot
Good wine and spices do not harm.

#3462 Re: Body and Soul

Help God, Thou Word eternal
The Body here, the soul there.

WA, TR III, #'s 3469ff

#3469 Re: Ungnad of Rosenberg

Mr. Hans Ungnad of Rosenberg spoke with me at Tongau for longer than an hour; he is a fine gentleman. Our doctrine is in his soul as if it had been spoken to him in a dream. Thus he responded to me: that he would be willing to be indebted 100 kroner, if he could talk with Luther alone for a whole day!

#3491 Re: Against the Devil's Whores

He vehemently attacked love philtres and the enchanters, devil's whores, and also the shepherd that carried off the four fat sheep from Dr. Bruck. It is my opinion that all the devils which Christ drove out of Jerusalem and Judea into the pigs, have come into these muddy places. This perhaps is the favorable moment that the Gospel ought to be preached here to expell them. For such stealing, robbing, sorcery show that the devil is here in person.

The Magistrate of Kemberg lamented loudly that the commander in two years had been unable to get milk because of witches. Dr. Martin Luther responded: The devil entered the house of Dr. Pomer and his wife and maids churned for butter until they were tired, without any success. Then Pomer began to sneer at the devil, by saying "shit into the churn!". Then Satan took off, for he is an arrogant spirit who does not wish to be despised. Then they said, to eat that butter was like eating dung. -- A woman seized a mouse; the next day a witch came with wounds on her hands and begged for oil. [To assuage her wounds, FWL].

#3541 Re: Asking for a Sponsor

Grace and peace in Christ, honorable, virtuous lady, dear friend. I ask you for God's sake: God has presented me with a poor young pagan from my dear Katty's body. Will you be so kind and help this poor pagan to receive Christianity [to become a Christian] and be her spiritual mother; so that by your service and help she also may get out of the birth of Adam to the new birth of Christ through Holy Baptism? I, on my part, how can I repay you? [Or, make myself of service to you?]. Herewith, I commend you to God, Amen . . . I did not dare go out in this air.

[Notes 1 and 2: Luther wrote the above to Anna Goertz, the daughter of the Leipzig counsellor Wolf Roth, the second wife of the Jurist Mag. Johann Goertz, who was expelled from Leipzig and returned to Wittenberg. The letter concerns the baptism of Luther's daughter Margaret and is dated December 17th, 1534 . . . It was also a very cold winter day].

#3580 Re: The Sickness of Dr. Martin

While at Communion, Dr. Martin became ill. When he came out of the church, while on the way, he said: Yesterday, I was fine; today it is the very opposite. This is due to the change of the atmosphere. People are the best natural mathematicians; they feel in their members the conjunctions and changes of the weather. Then the devil is that kind of fellow who is able to cause sickness, as Peter says in Acts [10:38] says: sicknesses are fetters of the devil. And though such great conditions do not arise out of themselves, we see in this matter what a great variety of medicines have discovered against any one sickness. However, when the medicine is used once or twice, with the wish that it would help, thereupon nothing works; the devil is that powerful. He can change all medicine and drugs

#3580 Re: The Sickness of Dr. Martin . . . continued

and put them into boxes. Therefore, let us pray for the true medicine, Christ! When our hour comes, there will be something that kills us. God gives us a happy end. Amen!

#3583 Re: The Power of Germany

If Germany were under one head and in one hand, it would be invincible and would also have the right ruler. Emperor Otto gained the greater part of it. If only someone could obtain the whole, it would be invincible, because it has royal residences, estates, revenues, woods, pasture lands, money, soldiers, etc.; it is able to maintain 50,000 men daily in good order.

#3584 Re: Lawyers

There are few jurists, but many administrators indeed; everything is according to the formula because of complaining. But you lawyers will also have to have a Luther like the theologians!

#3587 Re: Advice on How to Become Old

If only I had the strength to rise quickly like the phoenix, the old man said. Keep your collar warm, do not fill your gut too much; don't approach too near to the girls, and you will become grey slowly.

FB 1, 235 If you would become old, do so soon.
Keep your collar warm,
Do not eat too much,
Don't approach the girls too closely;
Thus you will grow grey slowly.

#3611 Re: Ruler Concerning Domestic Matters Written by Dr. Martin Luther:
The Master is Servant of the House

The master himself must be the servant,
If he would find things rightly managed in the house
The lady herself must be the maid,
If she would have the work in the house down right.
The servants will never more consider
What is good or bad for the household.
They do not care
Because they do not own it.
They are guests and strangers in the house;
Whoever owns it, let him not go out!

#3614 Re: Thanks for Different Ages of Man's Lifetime

He made mention of the ages of man, for which we owe thanks to God: for if a man lives to be forty years, there are, I suppose, 40,000 who died before that age in infancy, childhood, adolescence, and manhood. Therefore, each one of us should well thank God, who reaches years beyond so many others, and use them to the glory of God.

#3617 Re: Proverb About a Knife

A wife had a knife fall off the table to the ground. He said: there is a proverb -- one ought not stop a knife in its fall, but keep hands and feet clear; to do otherwise would be very harmful!

#3635 Re: Stories About Cooks

In the days of Burchard, he recalled many amusing stories about the cleanliness of cooks, such as one merry cook: who when he had nothing with which to baste the roast, befouled it; and also the hospitality

#3635 Re: Stories About Cooks . . . continued

of the little old lady who had received guests, broke the eggs on a fur; fragmented them with her jagged teeth and put them into the soup. He also told of the court cook, who when he was to cook a pike in its fat, put it into a pot, cooked it and added bacon to it as for a hen. Dr. Luther concluded: he is truly a tortured man whose wife and maid do not know how to manage a kitchen. This is the beginning of calamities and abuse in the household, out of which many evils follow!

#3638 Re: One Sows, Another Harvests

He spoke much to Dr. Justus Jonas about domestic matters; how the old must raise and build up the young, according to the proverb: One sows another harvests. To sum up: the use of things remains for others, and is not ours. We must save it for our children, and they want it as a right. -- Justus Jonas said: That is very true! When I asked my little daughter what she would pay me for board, she answered: she would not pay for anything except apples and pears. She was of the opinion soup, meat, bread, and wood were hers for free. So we wish to have all kinds of worth-while things free; we look upon them as of little account.

#3643 Re: Strength in Patience and Hope

In patience and hope, your strength shall be, etc. If you would learn to overcome the great and most horrible, harmful foes, who otherwise would well be able to devour and harm us in body and soul, for this purpose, one should have to buy all kinds of weapons and pay out all your money to learn the art! There is a sweet, pleasant little herb; its name is patience. But yes -- how can one obtain such medicine? I respond: take that faith as your own that no one can harm you without God's will. But if it does happen, it happens out of the friendly, gracious will of God, in this way, that the enemy causes himself a 100 times greater harm than you. Out of all this the love flows which speaks: I will render him good for evil, will gather fiery coals on his neck. These are the weapons whereby we win our enemies over, who seem to be as great as mountains, who can not be brought down with iron or steel.

#3644ba Re: Temptations of Luther

He said that he was greatly disturbed in spirit because of the sufferings of the Duchess, the most pious widow of the Margrave [Duke]. I find it impossible to understand God's will in this and so I murmur against Him. But, we do not know what will come of it; how God constructs His building. Accordingly, we despise the will of God. But in the future life we shall see and wonder at it and rejoice that we have to endure temptations so long. [FWL, The Duchess Elizabeth of Brandenburg, the widow of Joachim I, in the fall of 1537, lay sick in Luther's home for weeks. December, 1537, she was still there. Enders 11, 301ff].

#3645 Re: Nothing Free -- Not Even a Shadow (Shade)

A man once hired a donkey to ride. The owner of the donkey walked on foot alongside the rider. Since the rider found it too hot riding the donkey, he told his companion [the owner] to ride, while he walked in the shade. But the owner of the donkey would not agree, since he had hired the donkey to ride upon, not to walk in its shadow; accordingly he wanted extra remuneration. This is typical of the world which will do nothing for free, not even grant one a shadow!

#3646 Re: The Feast When an Emperor is Crowned

Whenever an Emperor is crowned at Trier, a whole ox is roasted, in the ox a hog, in the hog a goose, in the goose a hen, in the hen a bird.

#3647 Re: Opposing God

No one should Fight against God and the whole creation nor oppose it. He will win as little as in the case of a teacher fencing with his pupil. When the fight became serious, the fencing master said: I thought I was to fight with one opponent only; must I fight with two of you? When the young fellow looked around, the master struck off his head and said: I did not reach you everything. I kept something for myself. So God reserves unto Himself privileges over against his antagonists, etc.

#3648 Re: How the Evangelicals Fight the Papists

Spalatin said to Dr. Luther that the evangelicals fight poorly against the papists. For after they have inflicted deep wounds upon them from the pulpit, when they come to them, they do them all kindness and heal up their wounds. They, themselves, however, do the opposite: when we are absent from them, they scold us most severely. When we come to them, they persecute us to death, drown, burn, and decapitate us, spoiling it all. Dr. Martin Luther responded: Our victory consists in patience, for Peter also complained when Mary came to him; when she asked us to the whereabouts of her beloved son, he answered: I don't know where they have led him. I was with him in the garden and would have given my body and life in his behalf. I also manfully struck a blow into the crowd and cut off the ear of one of them; but He restored it to him. This was poor fighting, when He wanted to heal everyone whom I wounded. Let good fortune stand by Him!

#3664 Re: Proverb about Preachers and Women

Things will never go well with anyone who dishonours preachers and women. That is, preachers have the office of preaching; women the office from whence the state is created; who desposes these, despises God and mankind.

#3669: FB 3, 137 (26,54) Re: The Temptations of Satan

Satan tempts us where we are the weakest. Thus he attacked Eve in paradise, not Adam. Rain always falls where the ground is already wet. If you now should think: I indeed call upon God, but He does not want to hear me, that this is therefore a sign that He has turned His heart from me and is angry -- these are powerful thoughts, which we suffer, not produce. They are impressed upon us from the outside by force, not born in us. Against these you must arm yourself with God's Word, in which He has said that He wants to hear you. But it does no good that we want to determine the persons, time, places, when and through whom God wishes to hear our prayer. The place, time, person, are incidental; the promise is the very substance and essence itself -- namely that the prayer will be heard.

These are thoughts from God: I believe in the Son of God -- which thoughts I am unable to have except by the Holy Spirit. Next, I have been baptized and called to be a member of the church. Since now I have been baptized and believe in Christ, it follows that God will hear me. Now even if He hides His love from me, and it seems so to you also, that is His way; God customarily deals with us in this way. As He says in the Book of Moses, He wishes to dwell in darkness. To repeat, He dwells in the dark. Again, we may see only His back. We indeed become cast down, but we are not deserted.

Whoever does not experience these thoughts, will not experience, what Christ is and can do. Therefore one ought to say with Job [27:2ff], "Even though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him". The Lord Jesus Christ

#3669: FB 3, 137 (26,54) Re: The Temptations of Satan . . . continued
my Saviour, has won, conquered and retained the field; therefore, I shall prevail. This is my foundation and comfort in such temptations, and none other. Through the Holy Spirit, who is in our hearts we say: "I believe", otherwise we can not speak thus; The Holy Spirit must write them with His finger in our hearts, so that we can confess with the mouth and believe with the heart; these are signs that you belong in the association, brotherhood and communion of Christ.

One reads about a certain nun, who when she was tempted and knew not otherwise how to defend herself against the devil, said: "I am a Christian; for the Word says it all". So you too must say, even though all else is lost, I believe nevertheless that Christ still lives; also that I am baptized. I am well pleased with the Gospel, not am I hostile to the Sacraments and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. I hold it to be true that He is my Saviour. Against this the devil is unable to attack.

When the devil now would suggest to you, God will not answer your prayers anyhow because He is hostile to you: Then answer: I did not invent the Word, but have heard it out of His mouth through His servants and have accepted that He wishes me to hear and made me blessed. Even though He now delays, this is His way. It is His will not to be comprehended. He dwells in obscurity and has set His throne in darkness.

What is there more to be said? The devil acts in his way: he goes about with nothing but lies and deceit, chatters about that which is incidental, visible to the eyes, on the surface of things, really nothing, in order to take from us that which really matters, the Lord Jesus Christ, in Whom we believe, by tearing Him out of our hearts. This is his masterpiece and trick, so we do well to see to it that we keep our heads. If we do so, not a little nail nor hair shall be lost to us; otherwise we swallow the bait!

#3677: FB 3, 142 (26,58) Re: How Luther Comforted a Sick and Tempted Woman

Dr. Martin Luther visited and comforted a woman, who had greatly yearned and desired him to come. She had a severe sickness and suffered horrible paroxysms, for which no physician was able to advise or help her. It was all the doing of the devil and an unnatural thing coming from fright and spooks, because the devil in the shape of a calf had jammed her so that she had fallen into a faint. For this reason she fell into great terror and trembling several days thereafter, and fell into paroxysms which lasted three or four hours at a time, so that she fell to the ground and became quite unconscious. She had to be restored, nourished and cooled, and as a result of this she became very sick, that she could hardly breathe. Therefore, she grasped her hands together, lifted her eyes to heaven and sighed. Her hands and her feet became so twisted with spasm, as if they were horns. They also became cold, her tongue arid and dry. Her body was also raised up and flung down by the sickness. Being very sick, she opened her eyes, even though they like she herself appeared drunk with sleep and said: "Oh, what weight I have to carry! Take the big stone off me!" And as she spoke thus, she saw Dr. Martin Luther standing beside her bed. Then she became very glad, raised herself up and received him and said: "I am so very dizzy with sleep."

Then Dr. Martin Luther said: "Devil, God command you to leave this divinely creature and work in peace." Then he turned to them who had accompanied him on this visit to the sick woman and said: She is being plagued in the body by the devil, but her soul is blessed and shall be kept intact; therefore, let us thank God and pray God for her. And he prayed the Lord's prayer aloud over her and finally closed with these words: "Lord God, heavenly Father, you who have commanded us to pray

#3677: FB 3, 142 (26,58) Re: How Luther Comforted a Sick and Tempted Woman . . . continued

for the sick, we pray Thee through Jesus Christ, Thy dear Son, that you free this Thy servant of her sickness and the fetters of the devil, in your Fatherly kindness. Spare her soul, dear God, which You together with her body have redeemed through the blood of your dear Son Jesus Christ and saved from sin, death, and the power of the devil!" Thereupon the sick woman said: "Amen" and said to Dr. Luther: "Ah dear father, pray God for me that I remain with the Lord Christ; Whom you have preached to me so faithfully. He is my only comfort and life! Even though I am beaten now, He does this to make me humble, not to save me anew thereby. But, oh dear Lord Christ, give me patience and the recognition of my sins!"

Then Dr. Martin Luther comforted her with God's Word and said: "She ought to recognize this as God's Fatherly will and commend herself to Him; for our Lord customarily disciplines His little children, in order that their spirit be blessed." Then the woman made a glorious confession of her faith and a beautiful act of thanksgiving and said: "I have been proud and arrogant; was more concerned about adornments than God's Word. The sermon went in one ear and out the other! But I am in the right school now in which God preaches to me. Therefore, dear God help me, for your Son's sake!" She spoke many more of such glorious words and said: whenever she was in a paroxysm, she could neither feel nor hear anything; but felt only as if she were in a deep sleep and as if she was weighted down with a heavy weight. Whenever she again became conscious, she was very tired in every member. In the night following the day, Dr. Luther had visited her, she had good peace, thereafter her weakness returned. But finally, she was graciously delivered:

#3678 Re: The Greatest Temptation

The temptation of faith is the gravest, for faith ought to conquer all other temptations and calamities. If faith succumbs to temptation, all the others, even the smallest, attack the human being. But where faith remains, it is possible to despise the sharpest calamities. For where faith is healthy, all other temptations must decrease. That is the thorn of Paul [II Cor. 12:7], the temptation against faith, a great spit and post that go through spirit and flesh. It is not a temptation of the carnal libido as the papists dream, who have felt no other temptation other than fleshly lust; they have not experienced such great sorrows of faith.

FB 3, 125 Re: Temptations of Faith The temptation of faith is the greatest and most onerous of all; for faith ought to overcome all others. If it is defeated, all others, even the smallest and least important, will attack people. Where faith remains, one can despise even the greatest temptations and dangers. For if faith be right and healthy, all other temptations must decrease and cease to be. This temptation of faith was the thorn in the flesh of St. Paul, a great frying spit and post, which pierced the spirit and flesh, body and soul. It was not a temptation nor plague of fleshly lust, as the Papists dream, as those who have never experienced anything else than lust of the flesh. They were not tempted by the great struggles nor attempted to fight against them. Therefore they speak and write about them as the blind about colour!"

#3681 Re: Our Flesh

Our flesh is the bastion of the devil to the one who assents to it. Hence the devil has a good advantage.

#3682 Re: The Error and Impious Articles of Campanus

Campanus writes: God, the Father and Son are nothing else than one God as Adam and Eve are one humanity. He thus postulates that there be either two Gods or else that the Son must not be truly and uniquely God. That is the sum of this First Article. With it he brings in many inappropriate speculations, such as, when he states the Son is eternal, but not from eternity, that the Father was previously there and conceived the Son afterwards. He thus postulates the Son to be eternal and imagines that God for a time was God and yet not the Father. And it is even yet more foolish when Campanus writes of the words which some are in the habit of speaking: The Son is being born eternally. Campanus says: If He be born eternally, He cannot yet be born nor can He yet be Son! Thus he imagines the previous time into the future in the Godhead, when the fathers when they spoke in this way, only wanted to indicate, that the birth did not happen in the ordinary human way. He also does an injustice to the fathers, for they say it is more convenient to speak thus; the Son is ever born for the Son is ever being born. These are the main points in this article, from which we can well assume that Campanus is misleading himself with his own speculations; for if he is willing to acknowledge, that the Son be true God, he must admit "ever-being" as he calls it. For Isaiah says: "I am the first and the last".

2) In the second article, Campanus contends that the Holy Spirit is not a person, this against the saying: In the name of the Father of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. He tears down this saying by teaching these are three names, but not three persons. Now these are the first two articles in which he presents open error concerning the deity.

3) In the third article he falsely distorts Luther's teaching concerning the Word. This is Luther's meaning: God Himself is with His Word and uses it as an instrument and tool. Luther does not mean that it is the understanding of the Word which one may grasp, but that God Himself is essential. For Luther well knows that there are two kinds of Word: the incarnate and the created Word. To sum up all this article contains is a battle of words.

4) In the fourth article he gives forth what he holds against Luther, the teaching of Oecolampadius concerning the Sacrament, when, fundamentally Oecolampadius is of my opinion. Thus he sophisticates and does not know himself what he is saying.

5) The fifth article is also nothing but a quarrel of words, for we also teach in baptism: In the Name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The purpose is to make us belong to God.

6) In the sixth article there is a clumsy and false calumny, tearing down the words of Christ: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my Name" saying the meaning is not that we should be heard for the sake of Christ, but that we should pray as God's children, since we now bear the name of Christ.

In the beginning of his book he writes 1) much greater lies in the introduction and distorts a right Christian saying of Luther, namely, that Luther says he is still learning the a-b-c's in the Gospel and faith, and whoever wishes to be a Christian, should not consider that he knows it all, but know that he too is still a student and continues to learn on and on. These words Campanus twists in a very hateful manner saying that the devil is speaking these words out of Luther, and that they hinder faith. From these and similar inept calumnies and lies one can well feel that Campanus is not acting out of a good heart.

2) In addition he has two wrong articles concerning death and hell. There Campanus speaks like an inexperienced person and brings childish calumnies, saying 3) when Adam died, he suffered enough for his sins. Christ would not have had to die! He scolds us very vehemently that

#3682 Re: The Error and Impious Articles of Campanus . . . continued
we teach that Adam suffered fears and pains for his sins since, after all, Christ has redeemed the saints, not that they do not suffer death, but are saved out of it.

4) Here he wrongly intermixes the law and Gospel.

5) In the fifth article, these words are invented: Justice and justification ought to be called glorification.

6) The sixth is a quarrel of words about the word repentance, that it means sorrow for sin only [contrition]. Everyone knows well that where [trusting] faith is added, one is taught what blessed contrition means.

7) Thereafter, he quarrels about a number of expositions which he attributes to Luther and others, distorting them frequently; again nothing but a quarrel of words. For this reason I did not wish to mention them, for by what has been shown, everyone is enabled to see that Campanus has written many calumnies and lies, and this out of a hostile heart. Therefore, it is not necessary that the princes grant him an audience, as he desires; but if he should publish his blasphemous writing, he will find people who will answer him.

TABLE TALK OUT OF ANTON LAUTERBACH'S DIARY (Year: 1538)

WA, TR, III, #3684ff

#3684 Re: Blasius Matthaeus

On the second of January he [Luther] with Dr. Justus Jonas, etc., were guests in the house of Blasius Matthaeus. He spoke of many excellent things about the Word of God, of the fury and insidious tactics of the Papists: Now just let them freely continue their practises and pray against us! If they do it well, we will enjoy it with them. Let us only stick to the Word, let the body end up where it will!

Then beer flavoured with vermouth was offered. He responded, Oh, no [thank you] enough of vermouth is sent me to my own house from France, Prussia, and Russia. Things are bitter enough for me!

A sumptuous tray was placed before him, with entreaties that he be pleased with the fare of the house. He replied: This is not house-fare! These are delicacies which I do not delight in. Do not presume to honor me with them. I do not esteem such things. I grant these to those who like to eat fancy little bites. I praise pure, good plain house-fare.

Then he spoke of a girl of marriagable age (my sponsor's Lauterbach's). It is perishable fruit. It does not lie around for long and is always picked up! I have three such in my own house, with which I could supply good fellows with, and I would pledge my Katty none of them would die thereof. Dear Lord, how the world has degenerated from the time of the promulgation of civil laws when a girl of 12 years and a young fellow of 14 years were considered to have reached puberty! Now they are far too weak at that age. The world and human strength is going down. Things are in decline.

#3688 Re: Temptations of the Spirit

Saint satan, pray for us! We did not after all sin against you gracious lord devil; nor have you created us and given us life. Why do you so severely accuse us before God, as if you were so holy and the chief judge over the true saints of God? Take your staff in hand and to go Rome to your servant, whose false god you are! -- Illusion of Satan.

#3749 Re: Judas's Bag

On February 17th, a painting was placed before him in which the pope with Judas was suspended from the [money] bag of Judas. He responded: This will hurt the pope, who has suppliantly been kissed by emperor and kings, and is now to show his keys. It will hurt the papists a lot for their consciences will be touched and the work itself will speak. Therefore, the bag is very well lined with the bishops' hats and islands of cardinal, for the avarice of the pope was so incomprehensible and unsearchable, not only did he grasp the so great annates, etc. from all regions to himself, but also sold sacraments, indulgences, the brotherhoods, the blood of Christ, marriage. For this reason the bag is full of robbery [or stolen goods] and deservedly is spoken against as it is in Revelation [18:6]: Reward her with a double penalty. He has had me banned, burnt and stuck up the devil's back-side; hence, I want to hang him on his own keys!

#3750 Re: The Infamy of Bishop Maguntino

On a certain day he took a meal with Pocher and several others who had come. Shocking things were said of Bishop Maguntino, who was in such extreme poverty and dishonour, that he was unable to borrow on his seal and letter, and had to pay 15 fl. on every 100 yearly. Jewels, paintings had all been pawned and were gone. Luther responded: . . . (Incomplete).

#3762 Re: Afflictions of the Saints

God imposes afflictions on believers because of the presence of the remaining sins of the flesh. This argument has no value: things ought to go well for the just; believers in this life are just, therefore things ought to be good for them. Responding to the first statement; the pious in this life are just by imputation, but because of remaining sins of the flesh they suffer afflictions. The latter is the sentiment of the law.

FB 3, 125 (26,42) Why God puts the holy cross on the blessed: God puts the holy cross on the believer for this reason to test his Christians through suffering, because of residual sins, which are in the flesh raging and carrying on in us all our life long, striving against God. Therefore, this argument is no good which is presented by reason and philosophy and original sin saying: "Things ought to go well for the pious and just. The believers are righteous in this life, for this reason it should be well with them." One may experience and see however how things go with them, who wish to be real Christians, etc. "Oh, no", said Dr. Martin, "that is not a truly Christian conclusion. For even though they are just be imputation, a gift of God, and this imputation of righteousness is to be their own, as if they themselves have earned it; yet because sin is still left over in the flesh, they are still disciplined and plagued, in order that it may be swept out day by day until the grave. That it is said, however, that for the pious, things ought to go well for them, is a sentiment of the law, for no human being can perfectly do enough, nor fulfill it."

#3812 Re: Avarice Reviled

Then a number of tyrants were mentioned, who robbed their own and lost the blessing of God: they mowed all ends of their fields to the uttermost. Likewise Ferdinand, Duke George, and Albert of Mansfeld did the same in mining, which they after all were incapable of developing themselves. Extreme avarice is a terrible thing, such as eating or drinking oneself to death! As it is said of Duke George, who when a large vault had been filled with silver and strong currency, yet is said to have commanded the collector of rents: "Come again soon; what we cannot put here, we will find another place for." Moses did not command unnecessarily that the grapevine not be picked clean [Lev. 19:9ff], nor the harvest mowed completely, but that something be left for the poor. But where avarice becomes insatiable, they do not cease to gather treasure and thus impede the blessing of God for themselves and others.

#3816 Re: Where do Temptations Come From?

When a certain person consulted him about his troubles, he answered thus: The life of no human being is all tranquility. Each one has his own temptation, even though he be upset. For no one is content with his lot. The married man wishes to be single; the single man to be married; the master to be servant, and servant master; the pauper rich, and the rich man desires ever more.

#3823 Re: Wild Dark Meats

Meats of wild game and of wild fowl were served at the table. He responded: I don't eat wood! I would just as soon eat the plates that have no moisture. The poor little wild things are faced with all perils and have many enemies, must seek to stay alive in flight, therefore, they have dark meat without juice. I want to speak as that Saxon spoke: What's there to a deer or hind? I prefer Mrs. pig and her child! For a pig has sausage, bacon, and meat with nourishes. All the leading prices

#3823 Re: Wild Dark Meats . . . continued
of Saxony consider pork to be above all delicacies!

#3840: FB 3, 48 (24,67) Re: How One Overcomes the Devil with Scorn in Faith, not in Presumption

Master Simon, superintendent at Bern in Switzerland, told Dr. Martin a story when he was with him in Wittenberg, which had taken place at Bern, with one of the citizens there, a learned man. The same fellow admonished a woman who was being vexed and plagued by the devil with rumbling noises and tumults in her house, to despise him and say: Leave me at peace! Further to tell him to come to him the citizen aforementioned. She did this, and then the devil came to the self-same citizen, plagued him for a whole year with various kinds of knocking and pounding. Dr. Martin then said: "The devil may be driven out and overcome with scorn, but this must happen in faith and reverence, not with presumption and stupid daring. One ought not, so to speak, invite him as a guest; for he is a strong, powerful, and cunning enemy, who sees and hears all that is in our favour, whatever we now say and do. And if God allows and permits him, he spoils all that is good. He would not like even a little blade of grass or a little leaf to grow. This is the power of the devil. Yet, he cannot look into our heart, conscience and faith. He has some similarity to divinity, but God has reserved true divinity to Himself, which is able to limit the devil. Therefore, Christ speaks: "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" [Jn. 16:35], that is the devil and his whole kingdom. For this reason we pray in the Lord's Prayer: 'Deliver us from the evil one' as is written in the Greek, or as we say, from evil, which is various, such as all kinds of ill-fortune, sickness, poverty, pestilence, death, sin, shame, offence, etc.

To sum it all up, there is no end to this evil. We pray daily and our prayers are answered daily, as we see when the scaly plots of the devil are hindered. For we believers are judges over the evil angels, as St. Paul says in I Cor. 6[7]. Yet he always sneaks in again, for he does not like to lose possession. He is a crazy spirit, always giving Christ reason to defend Himself. In tempting and plaguing poor, weak, Christians, he confirms the authority of the Lord Christ and His apostles; such as when they heal the sick, the devil ought to leave them in peace and let it happen. But his uttermost malignity and desire continues to drive him, so that he is put to shame.

Thereafter he [Dr. Martin] spoke of the excellent and great miracles of the apostles and their preaching, which was far more glorious than those of Christ Himself. For Peter converted three thousand people with one sermon, as is written in the history of the apostles [Acts 2:41]. Thus Christ speaking of Himself and John says [Matt. 11:11], "Notwithstanding, he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." Yet Christ is His weak kingdom did the most glorious miracles and wonderful works.

#3960 Re: Comforting Weller

On the day Dr. Weller was confirmed in the receipt of his call, he tormented himself with his anxious thoughts. This worked against his health, a perpetual flux burdening him [He was burdened with a constant running sore]. Luther answered: This I can easily believe that anxious thoughts cause flux. For in proportion that the spirit is occupied with worries, sleep and digestion of food is impeded. For as much as the spirit is not healthy, the body must pay. Thus Augustine has well said: The soul is healthier where it loves, the more it endows with life. For all excessive emotions and passions exhaust the body; the body without the spirit is dead, like a horse without the one who directs it. But a quiet [peaceful] spirit cares for the body. Therefore cogitatio [worried

#3860 Comforting Weller . . . continued

thoughts] are to be resisted as much as possible. Thus for me the gravest trouble is to battle with these intensive thoughts.

FB 3, 129 (26,44) How heavy thoughts tire the body . . . When D.J.W. complained about flux, D.M. Luther comforted him by saying: I well believe my dear doctor, that thoughts cause flux. When the soul struggles with thoughts and is worried, sleep and digestion are hindered. When now the soul is sad and discouraged the body must pay. Therefore, Augustine well said: "The more the soul is strengthened where it loves, the more it gives life." For all concerns, heavy thoughts, worries and sufferings where excessive, exhaust and weaken the body, which without a soul [spirit] is dead like a horse without someone who directs it. But when the heart is at peace, it cares for the body, gives it what is its due and cares for it. Therefore, one ought to resist ponderous thoughts as much as possible. My greatest battle is when I fight against the enemy with thoughts.

#3879 Re: Abuse of the Land of Erfurt

Erfurt was once very fertile and fruitful, but now it is driven under by abuse. It is more expensive there than at Wittenberg. This I saw and pondered over a year ago, for they had small black bread. Ah, no one cares for the common weal! All they do is gather money, and thus the blessing of God is lost to them. They have such a growth of grapes there, that one can buy a can of wine for three pennies. If they had only one half of that wine crop there they would richly provided for. But with an abundance of wine, they would not be able to store it all, and would give the wine for the barrels and wood."

#3905 Re: Bishop Maguntinus

Then Bishop Maguntinus was mentioned, a very astute and cunning Epicurean, who in his anger brought down all in his malice, certainly a most daringly evil person. That I have scolded him for being a liar can easily be proved. I am also willing to stand up to him wherever he will. I have also written against him with much unwillingness on my part, but by the authority of Sacred Scriptures, I am constrained to challenge the jurists. I have already written to him personally. Now I shall publically reveal him to the church, lest I participate in his evil. He has already been enough of a tyrant with Schantz whom he hanged because of money. Now on the same day that he was hanged, the bishop was in Halberstadt and said with a derisive smile: I am of the opinion they will not all laugh at Halberstadt today! Thereupon, he is said to have repeated: I have a mind to hang Schantz on the gallows all over again, etc. Are those not the words and manner of a tyrant? Such accounts about him are publically well known.

#3906 Re: The Sickness of Epilepsy

This sickness is found among very many children and it is the fault of the parents who in coitus do not observe the right time and their health. Father and mother should be fresh and healthy!

WA, TR IV

WA, TR IV, #3908ff

#3908 Re: Bishop Maguntinus

During the days when Luther was agitated to the limit by the great cunning of the Bishop, he said with a sigh: Dear Lord Jesus, permit me to live and grant me strength so that I can give that priest a real tonsure [really expose him!]. For his is not only bad but a most cunning mocker of all things. All other leaders in his opinion and judgement are simple rustics. He is the right one; boasts that not many of his schemes have turned out unsuccessful for him; as if he himself had dealings with Satan! He himself in a certain case influenced Hans Schantz, and drew unto himself the lawyers because no one wished to take up the case against him. The trembling people feared to confess their professions: none wished to imitate the example of Papinianus. (Note: Papinianus was a celebrated lawyer who was executed by the Roman Emperor Caracalla in 212 A.D. Luther suggests that this is the reason why the lawyers around Maguntinus feared to oppose him. FWL).

So it must be reported to the knight, for he may well have not heard about it, or failed to listen. While I write the sharpest letters, he [Maguntinus], continues to take possession of all things just like he did before my objections. So he derived poor cousin Elsa of her property, holding back about 80,000 fl., and allowed her an annual interest of 300 fl., as a favour and not by right. This evil of his he has made public. But that harlot, as in the example of the Gospel, comes cleaner according to the statement of Christ: "Harlots and publicans go into the kingdom of heaven before you." [Matt. 21:31]. [Note: "Kotzen" appears to mean "harlot" or "cousin" in the sense that some popes called their mistresses "cousins" and gave them property for a living. FWL].

#3933 Re: The Pains of Spiritual Temptations

During the night of August 2, 1536, Luther had pains in his arm from arthritis. Then he said: The Name of the Lord be praised! One can still say that, for it is more easily borne, than when one has to suffer loss of money, clothing and one's own skin; when however, spiritual temptations come so that one curses the day of one's birth, then it is truly difficult [Job 3:1ff]. Christ experienced such temptation in the garden when he said: "Father, take this cup from me!" [Matt. 26:39ff]. There "will" confronted "will", but He soon reconciled Himself to the Father's will and angels appeared and consoled him. To sum up, Christ tempted in our flesh is the best advocate before God in all temptations. He is the president, while we are merely respondents. Even though God's anger is manifested in our calamities, if we repent and believe, we will find the grace and goodness of God hidden under the anger; just as power [strength] is hidden under weakness, if only we continue in hope and do not be offended by such masks, and continue to pray.

#3936 Re: The Deceit of Friends

How is it that those we trust in the most, most readily deceive us? Philip responded: well, Xenophon writes, it is easiest to injure a friend. For a friend does not expect it; therefore, is soon cheated. This happened at Magdeburg: two noble friends in a most friendly way, in jest, tussled with each other. At last one tottering, wounded the other; and he defending himself, cut his throat with a sword.

#3940 Re: A Niggardly Miser

They reported the tenacity of a most sordid miser to Luther, who even denied the necessities of his own body. He replied: He does not know for whom he gathers treasure. Let us eat and drink, while we may, thanking God for His gifts. Others, in any case, will devour these things after us [Ps. 39:7].

#3957 Re: The Pest of Arrogant Enthusiasts

In the year of 1538, on August 14, an honest matron of Freyberg, Wolf Loser's wife, was present and complained to Luther of the temerity and arrogance of Jacob Schenk and how he held those in contempt those at Wittenberg. Luther responded: the art and way of these spirits is to be pleased with themselves alone and despise the authority of all others. -- Then he told of the audacity of others of their kind -- when Master Lorentz of Torgau; an anabaptist and goldsmith came here. What great insolence he exhibited! He would not allow himself to be examined by us, scoffing: "What time is it?", also; "Why would you, Master Luther, examine me? I knew all that on a wisp of a straw before you defected! I am baptized and holy. I don't have to baptize the children for they are born holy from me! Such portents Satan brings forth in secure and arrogant spirits. Therefore Solomon rightly says: [Prov. 28:14] "Happy is the man who always fears; but he who hardens his heart falls". Let us watch carefully and pray that we do not fall into temptation. The visitations are well organized so that such blasphemers can be controlled.

#3962 Re: The Great Diversity of Temptations

On the 16th of August [1538], Luther considering the misery and calamity of this life, what infinite sicknesses this mortal body must suffer, said: If the pains of the future life are to be greater and perpetual, then our bodies, such as they are now, would not be able to bear them. They are scarcely able to bear the momentary sufferings of this life, let alone, it seems to me, in another dimension of the future. -- Quickly added this correction: Let us drop this matter, they are my thought only! May God protect us from ever experiencing this! Let us here be of that number, of whom it is said: "Blessed are they that mourn", [Matt. 5:4.]. For here on earth, the temptations are diverse and unequal according to the diversity of persons. If another had to bear the temptations which I did, he would have been dead long ago. And so I could not bear the beffeting of the messenger of Satan, [II Cor. 12:7], just as Paul also could not have borne so great temptations of Christ. To sum up, present death is sad at the moment. But concerning this matter it is not for us to dispute, but to leave it to the judgement of God and consider those things that have been revealed.

#3992 Re: An Exhortation to be Patient

On the last day of August 1538, many and various temptations were mentioned by Doctor Jonas to Luther, by which God-fearing people were being plagued extra-ordinarily. He responded: one must have patience and pray, for if all things went according to our will, we would become lazy and brutish as happened to the Romans. Thus temptations are our best remedies, making us more resistive against many evils; like your calculus, Master Jonas, makes you energetic, and more forward than ten cuckoos! God knows best, how His own ought to be governed; it is for us each to be obedient in his own vocation.

FB 3, 131 (26,49) [adds the following to the above]

"Dear Lord God", D. Martin continued, "how a church has to be plagued from within and without! But persecution from the outside is better

#3992: FB 3, 131 (26,49) Re: An Exhortation to be Patient . . . continued
than from within. For it makes the God-fearing Christians wide-awake
[alert], so that they stick together in the fear of God and in prayer;
who would otherwise, except for temptation, become cold."

#4001 Re: Text I Peter 5:2, "The Ministry", September 10, 1538

Feed the sheep of Christ, watching over them, that is, see well
to it, not unwillingly, but gladly, not selfishly, but from up-right
hearts, not tyrannizing over the flock that is placed in your care.
It is the greatest text which puts the ministry in a clear light, and
nothing is so genuine as that which wells up spontaneously and proclaims
the glory of God.

#4027 Re: The Justice of God Receiving Children, September 30, 1538

On the last day of September, he saw his little children sitting
at table. He said: Christ says: "Unless you become as one of them,
it is not possible for you to enter the kingdom of heaven." [Matt. 18:3].
Ah, dear God, you over-do it! If only you would make it more obvious
and not raise those children, the little fools, so very high! Where
did you command that a wise man be placed after a silly child? How can
our Lord God with His judgement and justice prevail, which Paul glorifies:
The justice of God; the justice of God? Is this justice that rejects
the wise and receives the foolish? It is necessary here to insist:
I believe the Word of God. Let yourself be made captive: our Lord God
has purer thoughts than we have. He must refine us (as the enthusiasts
say). He must trim off quite coarse chips and branches from us, before
he makes such children and little fools of us. Look what fine clean
thoughts children have; how they look for heaven and death without all
doubts! They are as if in paradise, and in children which are to become
saintly, there are always miraculous gestures.

#4041 Re: The Devil, October 7, 1538

The devil is antagonistic toward me, not without reason, since I
have torn his kingdom into pieces. What no king or prince before was
able to do, God has done through me, poor beggar, a single monk, an egg-man.

#4073c Re: Another Admonition to Hans Metsch, October 17, 1538

Tell the provost: firstly, that Master Froschel's absolution is
invalid because he has not truly repented. Secondly, that he has received
the Sacrament in his sins without penitence, let him be responsible not
I. Thirdly, if he wants to be a Christian, let him first be reconciled
with us preachers, also with the council and the city as Christ says:
"Let him bring, etc., Matt. 5:23. Or, if he is unwilling to do this
humbly, I am satisfied as a pastor, that he look for salvation elsewhere.
[Note: "Another admonition of Luther to Hans Metsch, prefect before
the excommunication, words written in his own handwriting and sent to
him in charge of two deacons" . . . precedes the above in the text].

#4075 Re: Article Four, On Calling a Pastor and Communion in Both Kinds,
October 17, 1538

Thus I advise Hieronymous Schurf, doctor of laws, ordinary of Wittenberg.
The fourth article is easily defended among Christian people in this way,
namely: every Christian congregation has the privilege and permission,
according to holy, divine Scriptures to seek, choose and elect pastors
and preachers, who preach and proclaim to them the unadulterated pure
Godly Word and pure Gospel, and to feed and nourish the souls with the
divine Word. whereupon a soul lives, and consciences are comforted, and
which is not to be scoffed at in any place according to established right.

#4075 Re: Article Four, On Calling a Pastor and Communion in Both Kinds,
October 17, 1538 . . . continued

For even if it were done by an angel, it would be devilish and rebellious.

Now an honourable council put down as its choice two preachers of impeccable reputation and wholesome Christian teaching, who preach nothing else than Holy Scriptures, as written in both Old and New Testaments; that is, do not add nor detract anything from the pure unadulterated Word of God, even as God has commanded in Deuteronomy [4:2]. Accordingly, the honorable council has the assurance that its gracious lord, the archbishop as a spiritual prelate and prince will assist and protect it in this matter, even as the Imperial Law publically determines that one firmly adhere thereto, even to the spilling of blood which the prophets and holy apostles have entrusted to our care; that is, one ought to hold fast thereto, live according to it and for it willing to spill one's blood, suffer all misfortune, willingly to bear the holy cross, and finally experience bliss and joy because of it [suffering], as Christ teaches in the Gospel. If, however, it can be proven with the very least evidence, that one or other of our preachers has preached or taught something against the Holy Scriptures or Gospel, or is not firmly grounded therein, and if he will not publically recant, then we ourselves will chase and rive them out. But without this assurance, we will in no wise retain them.

Even in the case of the bishop asserting that several citizens had received the holy Sacrament in both kinds, contrary to the holy councils of the church fathers and the practise of the churches, such practise could easily be defend-d as follows: namely, Christ has instituted the rightly revered Sacrament of the altar, of His holy Body and Blood, as a certain sign and pouring out of the blood for all sinners believing in Christ, to know that he was killed for them, died, in order to reconcile the heavenly Father, and that the ineffable Sacrament is to be received by all Christians to partake of as a certain token of forgiveness of sins, as permitted and commanded. Since then Christ makes no distinction between ecclesiastics and civilians, loyally trusting His princely grace, will not hold them in displeasure. For since Christ's intention and institution is clearly established, neither councils nor the fathers can contradict it.

Since this concerns the salvation of souls and consciences, all human additions and commandments which concern the goverance of the body, external goods and customs, the punishment of evil and do not serve the consciences of men, these consciences are preserved by the pure unadulterated Word of God as is seen in the Gospel: "Not by bread alone, etc.", [Matt. 4:4.]. If an honourable council were to find it pleasing and acceptable, facing an investigation, it could well asert, over against the papistic sects and stubborn and unlearned priests and monks, this also, that not even with a single letter in the whole spiritual law can it be proven that communion in both kinds is forbidden the people, and that one can challenge them to find a text. This without a doubt is so because of the predetermined decision of the Almighty.

But the very opposite is expressed in spiritual law, namely that under the penalty of sacrilege it is commanded, that no one receive the Sacrament in one kind alone; and the text does not differentiate between priests and lay people. Thus in chapter --? concerning the consecration even though the devil has added a rubric against it, namely that this text is to be understood as priests only. This understanding is not only against the text, but also against the intention of the text. So I am of the opinion in this matter. One will not find a single holy ancient father against it, not in the writings of Cyprian, Cirillus ?, Helarius, Augustin, Hieronymous and others.

#4088 Re: The Enemy Kolhase, November 5, 1538

On November 5th, at night, the enemy Kolhase devastated the village of Marzahna, 1500 paces from Wittenberg, with his robbers-and stabbed the guide and hung him in the chimney; carried away the herd with much plundering in the village. Because of this, Luther, when he heard of it was greatly perturbed and had the suspicion that it must have been done with magic [evil herbs] and that the nobles and ~~princes~~ of Saxony had connived in the matter. If such a thing happened to the Landgrave Hesse, he said, it would not go unpunished. He is a noble prince, keeps his land and roads clean, and can stand alongside any prince or Emperor. For this is the most important duty of a prince. Since Kolhase has begun spilling blood, he will not get away with it for long. Let him drown in blood!

#4090 Re: Fur Coats, Ladies' Wear, November 6-9, 1538

Fur coats and jackets are the most beautiful, honest, true and necessary dress of women; just as in the case of men, the most necessary clothing is trousers and doublet. Now the shin bones of men are nothing else then the extension of the thigh, so that the breeches have been extended from the hips to the feet.

#4096 Re: Death of a Pious Man = Sign of God's Anger, November 11, 1538

The death of pious men is a sign of the anger of God. Luther: When I hear that a pious man has died, I am shocked and fear that God is angry at the world, taking away the pious in order to attack the devil. Do penitence, Germany in the time of Grace! The time has come! Even if I die, nothing much is lost, for I am under the bann of the pope; I am his devil. He hates and persecutes me.

#4146 Re: The Earth Cannot Bear It! November 25, 1538

Then he spoke of a despised Wittenbergian who up to the age of thirty had made no name for himself, being ignoble and like dung. Even if one had sown pious, honest people therein, nothing but coarse Saxons grew. Just as in the case of Eulenspiegel [a well-known jester and buffoon, FWL], who sowed pebbles on a market-place saying: I see nothing but rogues! Even if I should sow pious people, nothing but knaves would grow. The land cannot produce otherwise.

#4320 Re: Those Who are Always Late, January 12-15, 1539

At a banquet, he once spoke about Dr. Jonas who was always late. You ought not to wait for one, for the many guests should eat and forget the fool! [Note: Luther makes a rhyme of "essen" and "vergessen", FWL].

#4325 Re: Questions From Genesis, January 12-15, 1539

The Book of Genesis has many questions and puzzles: Why one nourishes oneself more with water than wine? Why water is older than wine; also, whether man is older than the beard? He answered: the beard, for the goat was created before Adam! Again, a virgin one hour old took a man; did she have a child before she was one year old? [Yes] Eve. Again: what is closest to March? The month! Also: Where was the rooster's cry heard in all the world? In Noah's ark! Which water is the widest? The dew and the hoar-frost, for the sea is not earthly water; but the earth swims in the centre of the waters. Wonderful is the working of God, Who placed the earth in the centre of the world in such a way in the waters and in fire, that it is most firm!

#4329 Re: The Devil is Most Active, January 12-15, 1539

The signs of man's security was spoken of in these last times. Martin Luther responded: Ah, one ought not to be so secure! We have enough great adversaries, such as the devils, the number of which is infinite, not mere beggardly devils, but landed and princely devils; who, for the longest time, 5000 years, have practised wonted deeds most cunningly. Consider if the devil, in the beginning of the world, had been just an ordinary creature, nevertheless by long practise and assaults upon Adam, Methuselah, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, David, Solomon, the prophets, Christ and all believers, he has been made most cunning. He is now too cunning for us in these last times!

#4381a Re: The Ban - Office of the Keys, February 23-March 3, 1539

The public exhortation of Martin Luther after he had called an assembly: It has come among you and many have been unduly harrassed thereby, that we are about to restore the ban. It is true that I have spoke of the ban, not that we establish a tyranny as the official ban [under the pope], but the ban of which Christ speaks in Matthew 18:[15]: That one admonish him privately, thereafter by two persons, etc. Such a ban we would gladly like to re-establish, not that a chaplain or peacher alone must exercise it, or should, or could: You all would yourselves have to help with it, as St. Paul says, [I Cor. 5:4], when you are gathered together and in my spirit, that is therefore with the whole assembly. You must act with us and we with you, that the Lord's Prayer be spoken against those, be spoken by the whole of Christianity. Again, if he repent that he be prayed for publically in the church and again received. This is not to be done by one person such as the pastor or chaplain.

How am I as a pastor to observe how the bakers bake and the butchers slaughter, or the tailors steal, etc.? That is the business of the magistrates. The Sacrament has been instituted for the comfort of sinners. If someone is a public sinner, whom neither the prince nor the council punish, as some people on the street go around accusing one another of being whores and live in public dissension, to such the Sacrament ought not to be given unless they have reconciled themselves with their neighbour. If they have not done so, then may the hateful devil give you the sacrament!

How dare I make myself guilty of the sins of others, since I have enough of my own; have liked an evil life in my youth and for 15 years

#4381a Re: The Ban - Office of the Keys, February 23-March 3, 1539 . . . continued
have angered God with my monkery and reading of the mass, and with my
"holy" works have scoffed at my Lord Jesus Christ, crowned and crucified
Him? Now, if I am knowingly so lax in permitting you to receive the
Sacrament, I take your sins upon myself; how should I have been damned
for your sake? It would have been much better for me if I were a swine-herder!

This I am not saying to you, wishing to rule over you and exercise
tyranny. I cannot and I will not do so. But ask your own heart, whether
you can rightly partake of the Sacrament while you publically live in
dissension and sin? Ask yourself whether you are not giving a reason
to have yourself banned? If you do so, you will have to confess it.
For how can I allow my little soul to be damned for your sake? We are
willing to risk body and life for you; goods, honor, wife, child, house,
and yard may be lost, as you can see how we are dying faithfully by you.
And this is rightly so. But that I should risk my little soul for your
sins and go to hell with you, what can you give me for that? This we
cannot do.

Therefore, this is it: If we know that you are a public sinner,
that you whore around, are avoricious, live in dissension, as here the
bailiff, council, and congregation were not on good footing and partake
of the Sacrament, and nevertheless, maintained the quarrel, had I known
it, he would have had to stay away from it, unless he had reconciled
himself with them. Thus everyone who is unreconciled, should not partake,
for how could I condemn my soul in your behalf? Yes, this does not concern
me alone, but all of you, that we ought not to make ourselves partakers
of others' sins. A whole city ought well to be punished in such cases.
[Note: not only the preacher, FWL], I Cor. 11.

I do not know otherwise; adultery, murder, etc. are punished here.
If this were not so we would pray the Lord's Prayer with the whole church
against such, then all who love honesty would have to help with the banning.
For the ban belongs to the whole church, not only to the chaplain or
preacher. In this way I would like to institute the ban. In time, God
willing, this we will do. After I had admonished someone in the first
instance, I would send two persons to him, as if sending two chaplains.
After that, I would take him into the sacristy, in the presence of the
chaplain, two from the council, two of the trustees as well as two more
respected men of the congregation. If then he is unwilling to improve
himself, and continues to live in public sin with his stubbornness, then
I would announce it publically in the church: Dear friends, I make known
to you, that NN has been admonished first by myself, then by the chaplain,
thirdly by the council and trustees of the congregation. Yet he is not
willing to cease. Therefore, my friendly request to you is to kneel
down, to advise and help us to pray against him and turn him over to
the devil!

You can imagine then what would happen. People would not publically
live in shame, for this would be a more difficult ban than the pope's
money ban. But such a ban would be useful within the church. It should
be exercised where people will not repent and the council desires to
be diligent. If, however, he betters himself, one can again absolve
him. These are the keys of the church that one retains and loses sin.
I am not saying this in order that a tyranny be re-established.

In addition you know that here a citizen's son, son of old Schober,
fell into public murder; went to the Sacrament just the same, and led
a bride into the church. I do not like that! Now it is said that the
matter has been dealt with by friends and the council; I don't know if
it is so. Here the council and friends must produce a letter and seal
in this matter. As long as this does not happen, he is not to come to
me to be a sponsor at a Baptism, to join the choir, or to partake of.

#4381a Re: The Ban - Office of the Keys, February 23-March 3, 1539 . . . continued
the Sacrament, until he shows me the letter and seal from the council that the matter has been settled before the council. This is what we insist on. Since the deed has been done in public, the reconciliation must also take place in public, otherwise, it is no good. If he brings a message from the council and asks for the forgiveness of sins, he shall kneel down in public before the altar, and the pastor is to say, he is absolved. For the whole church has been insulted.

That is the ban which the whole church has, and not we alone. For one must not make a loud clamor, and bear with hatred and murder especially the murderer, this will in no wise do good. Moses has commanded where a dead body is found between two towns, that town closest to the place where the corpse was found must take care of it, wash it and protest to heaven and earth, that they be innocent of it. There should be no scolding here. Therefore, do not blame me to whom the governance of the church has been entrusted. If the guilt be public, the reconciliation must also be public.

This is what I would like to arrange, but not at this time. A council could well proceed us in this matter, that we would not need to do it. Unless there were public hatred and envy against one another, we would like to have the ban. But you must help us, Thus far for the assembly.

#4382a Re: Exhortation to Jurists, March 2-February 23, 1539

In the second place I have something to say to you lawyers. It has come to my attention, that you read the decrees of the pope in our school, and intend to continue to do so, even though we are supposed to have burnt the pope's donkey. For this reason, my friendly request and desire of you is that you stand on our side, as is publically done in the churches in dukedom and the territory of the landgrave and elsewhere, as those who have signed the confession [Augsburg] do. Do not judge contrary to it nor oppose it! Tell this to the rest, high and low, masters and scholars, great and small, for we will not suffer that you should destroy our churches. If this is what you wish to do, so so elsewhere. We do not wish to have the pope's donkey's shit and farts; you can eat it yourselves! If you, however, will not comply and put on your horns, just continue. I will also put on my horns and butt you that things will resound! Have I made you white? I can again also make you black, that you will look like the insufferable devil. And I will also tell you from whence you have received the Martin mantles, velvets and dollars. Rather, leave theology free of the "donkey", unbachanted; otherwise, I will make asses of you in return. So not bring the donkey dirt and farts, and the pope's dirt into the churches, especially not into this city. All of you together are incapable of explaining a single command of God. Do you imagine that it is unknown as to what a lawyer does? If I'm to be the preacher, then don't you do it for me; for if you would be preachers yourselves, then be such. I will be quite satisfied. But I will go elsewhere to be inspired!

The pope is our worse enemy. We have driven him out and taken our Lord Jesus Christ in; for the pope deceives the whole world with his donkey's farts. Let him eat them himself! You are not to teach nor read, nor set yourselves against us, but conform yourselves to us in this dukedom. Do you imagine that we do not understand what is afoot? If you don't know, I will well show you what kind of a patch-quilt work the practise of law is. If you should distill a lawyer to get the very essence, you will find that he is unable to expound a single command of God. If God grant me life and health, and you desire, I will lessen your confidence and teach you how far off law is from the Holy Scriptures. Don't sharpen the sword too long in the fire; you might burn your

#4382a Re: Exhortation to Jurists, March 2-February 23, 1539 . . . continued
hands! For you want to carry on with Scriptures as if they were law. No, now don't be so sure! For I have worked in it and helped to drive out the pope. Let the old dog sleep! This is what I ask of you, otherwise you will have your hands full. If something should happen to you, suffer it! I shall well protect the church against you lawyers. If you act in this way while I am still alive, what will you do after my death? Just keep it up! It will be your responsibility. I must stop now or else I could become too angry . . .

#4382b Re: A Warning to the Lawyers, February 13, 1543

A warning by Martin Luther to the lawyers before the assembly on 13, February, 1543: Here is yet one more thing, of which I must warn you. In my opinion, all the devils are here with all their power. Our young squires, the lawyers dare openly to read the canonical law, the papal dirt to the youth, which we with difficulty and labour have put out, rejected and condemned in our churches, and proved with sufficient reasons, that it is not to be tolerated in our churches; but they with pride and to anger us again bring such stinking dirt into our churches. I want to warn you earnestly: do not provoke me too much! If you feel too exuberant, I will rid you of your tickling. If you cannot tolerate that I have made you white, I will make you black again. Let the devil shame you! I will indeed tell you where your demack mantles and the dollars are; and if you desire, I offer you a challenge to battle with me [in this matter]. What do you suppose? I don't know what lawyers are able to do? I will tell you well. If this amuses you, I do not (praise be to God) fear any lawyer, no matter how skilled and learned he can act. Put on your horns if that pleases you. I will put mine on also and attack you that your back break. If you won't believe it, try it. I would have to be a poor theologian, if I were to fear a lawyer or have to learn from them. I know better what is contained in canon law, than all of you together will learn or experience. Nothing but donkey's farts! If you wish, I will give them to you to swallow. For this reason I advise you; let the old dog sleep! If you wake him, truly you will not so easily get him to lie down again. And let theology be theology, and do not bachant and assert yourselves too much: O, after all, what are theologians? Nothing but bachannalian orgies, nothing but fighters! I will in response make you bachic fellows and fighters. You will stink; this I will swear by all the saints. You are not to govern theologians nor to rule over us. The government and leadership is ours, even though you all should become madmen and foolish! If you would not grant it to us, you may well have to, and the devil also knows this, thanks to you! Remove the donkey shit from out of our churches! This I tell you! If you don't want to do, you will have to. For there is nothing in the accursed papal wrongs, that donkey's shit, from which one cannot even learn the least point as to what faith, love and Sacrament are, and you want to prove your ability by bringing the whole church to shame and dirty it up and neglect the poor youth and yourselves, also to defy us? Yes, I am determined to teach you a lesson! Is the devil really in you, that you do not know what you ought to do? I thought you had enough to read and study in the civil law of the Emperor? You must not neglect the young and hinder them with the donkey's shit. After all, is not the law of the Emperor an infinite study? You ought to thank God, that you have been of the donkey's farts, if you knew what you ought to do against your lusting. I am amazed, that the white-haired lawyers for the sake of money do such shame to the Scriptures. Well, then, if you lust thereafter, I will amend your lust; this I say in defiance of you! If this is what you want to do while I am alive, what will you do after I am dead? Well then,

#4382b Re: A Warning to the Lawyers, February 13, 1543 . . . continued
I have admonished you and asked you, in order that you know it. If you are too happy with the donkey's shit, devour it elsewhere and don't make such a stink in our churches!

#4432 Re: Signs of the Times, March 23-25, 1539

After it was reported that the pope had excommunicated the King of England and had commanded a jurisdiction over Britain, nearly like Caesar and the Gaul, [he responded]: the signs of it are everywhere. God grant us grace! For we do not ask for peace for our sake, for we old rogues could not sell ourselves in a better cause than for Christ. But for the church's successors, peace is to be desired.

#4447 Re: Martyr Week, March 25-29, 1539

In March they asked him, why Holy Week was called Martyr Week? He replied, it is called that for a three-fold reason, for during that time preachers and pastors inflicted martyrdom on themselves, the people and also Christ; so that it might be called a triple martyrdom.

#3439 Re: Ernest von Schonburg, April 28-29, 1539

Thus the tyrant Ernest von Schonburg passed away, and his letters to the Elector were nothing but false maneuvers to-reconcile himself with our Elector. Ah, one cannot deceive our Lord God in that way!

#4540 Re: Councillors of Duke George, April 28-29, 1539

But then the councillors of Duke George suppliantly appealed to Duke Henry for mercy; excused themselves by saying that they had had to do it. He responded: one can well see what they have done by force and what they have done willingly and gladly. They have looked out for their own advantage; they have their deserved reward.

#4563 Re: Epistle of James, May 4, 1539

On May the fourth, he lectured in public on the Epistle of James for the Lord. [He] then exhorted the people to prayer for the spread of the Word and for the peace of the nation which God had so wondrously conserved during the biennium and had thus intervened with protection, breaking the league of the papists. Before our very eyes, the evil person was removed, and now he is judged. We would not judge him nor rejoice in his bad luck. Therefore, let us give thanks to God for His benefits and not become too secure for Satan does not cease. He has drunk of our blood and desires to drink more of it.

#4667 Re: A Third Key, June 19 and 20, 1539

On the day that Dr. Martin Luther committed the office of overseer of the church's treasury to a pastor, they added a third key and gave it to the pastor, lest holding that office they be under suspicion. For caution sake, the pastor, senate and overseer have the authority over the treasury. No one of the two by himself should have authority at all. No one should be lord of it. For already some senators boast that they were lords of the common treasury, and the pastors are to be responsible for all waste. This ought not to be! For the public treasury's authority is of the church and the advice of the pastor, not of the authority of the senate alone. We pastors, would willingly resign from the treasury lest we be suspected of collaboration. Therefore, each of the three parties should have a key, and that no one single party bear the suspicion of theft. Even if two parties would keep silent, the third would speak, especially the pastor.



#4681 Re: Ruin of Wittenberg Predicted, June 25 and 26, 1539

He predicted the malediction and ruin of Wittenberg, for that city was beyond help. All of the Electors, Ernest, Frederick, John and the present one have contributed much for it, yet it does not develop into a real city; but again is humiliated, or of low esteem. The land and the people are not able to stand up to it [greatness].

#4682 Re: Sparrows, June 25 and 26, 1539

Mention was made of sparrows, which are most delicious birds. He answered: sparrows provide good eating, because they eat nothing impure, and since God did not forbid sparrows in the sacrifices in the temple, we may well eat them considering them to be clean.

#4683 Re: Gift of Speaking, June 25 and 26, 1539

He spoke of the remarkable and excellent gift of speaking, which is rare on earth he said, even though all men have the innate ability to talk. But to speak [well] is a rare gift. Dr. Pontanus can speak.

#4687 Re: Ingratitude of the World, June 26-July 1, 1539

He spoke of the astonishing ingratitude of the world, which always wants things different from that provided. No matter what is done, it gapes. This is the best proverb against the world: I would let you have it by mouth, since you will not hear, you can take it by mouth!

#4689 Re: The Lord's Protection, June 26-July 1, 1539

In the evening, he said a friend of his from Halle, brought a letter from an aristocrat but unnamed friend, that he take good care for his life, because a reward had been offered as to whom, Anton Schantz or he would be disembowelled [first]. He responded: the Lord is my protector. I am not afraid of that. He protects me in all things by His power. The bishop would gain little if I were killed.

#4690 Re: God's Provision, June 26-July 1, 1539

Then he [Luther] told how the Lord in a fatherly way had led him and his; he had been given all things without pay. The Printers had offered him 400 fl. annually, if he would make copies of his writings available to them. Yet he had been unwilling to do so, not wishing to sell his favours. God had led him wondrously against the gruesome worm the pope; even though he had suffered a few scratches, the pope did not get away unscathed either. He was injured to a considerable degree. I have had enough and am satisfied, he said: God be praised, Who has given me a wife and children the most beautiful blessing, and the elector who freely gives me 200 fl. yearly. In other respects concerning this matter and influence by my wife, I have ceased lecturing for money, since God for ahead of me through the elector. I have sold no copies of my writings nor lectured for money all my life. God willing, I wish to take this honor with me into the grave [I Tim. 6:8]. Having food and clothing, I am content.

#4714: FB 4, 547 (67,6) Re: A Disposition, July 16-23, 1539

When he, D.M., was present at a disposition, together with several distinguished learned men, he absolved three boys, and said: "This ceremony is used that you be humbled, do not become proud and audacious, nor become accustomed to evil. For such vices are curious, monstrous animals, which have horns ill-fitting [unbecoming] a student. Therefore, humble yourselves and learn to suffer and have patience, otherwise you will be humbled all your lives. In high offices someday, the citizens, peasants, nobility and your wives will humiliate and plague you well. When this happens

#4714: FB 4, 547 (67,6) Re: A Disposition, July 16-23, 1539 . . . continued
to you, do not lose courage, nor despair, nor become impatient, nor let these things overcome you; but be confident, suffer such crosses with patience, without murmuring. Remember you have been consecrated to suffer, and when it comes you can say: Well, then, I was first humiliated at Wittenberg. This will continue to influence me all my life. Thus our disposition is only a pattern and picture of human life, with all its misfortunes, sufferings and punishments.

#4737 Re: Complacency of the World and Necessity of Temptations, February 2, 1539

In the year 1539, on February 2, Martin Luther deplored the most pernicious security of the world, where even pious people felt safe, not seeing their sins and calamities. It is written neatly in ecclesiastical history, how a pious young boy living in great peace and tranquility, rejoiced in his tranquility. An old anchorite applauded this saying: it was a gift of God, but added that it was also necessary for him to be vexed with his sins; not to have this happen was a bad sign. Indeed, no one can be pious and reach a life of tranquility, who does not feel the temptations of the flesh. As Paul exclaimed: O wretched man that I am, etc. [Rom. 7:24]. Therefore, temptations are the best medicine against the security of the flesh from which Epicureanism is born.

FB 1, 254 (4,85) Re: The World's Security In the year 1539, on February 2, Dr. Martin spoke much of the harmful, shameful complacency of the world: "that also God-fearing people were complacent, not concerned about their sin, or the danger and calamities they were in. Therefore, it is written in one of the histories of a pious young boy, who boasted about how well things were with him; that he was completely free of temptations. Then an old anchorite said: It is a gift of God, but occasionally each person must be plagued by his sins and feel them, otherwise it is a bad sign. For everyone loves good days and no one is against them. But if one be God-fearing, he will also have his temptations of the flesh and feel them as St. Paul laments [Rom. 7:14ff].

#4741 Re: Planting a Tree, February 22, 1539

In the year 1539, on February 22, Dr. Martin planted trees in his garden. He said: the work of God is wondrous in his creatures. The whole trunk adjusts itself to its tiny branches and twigs. Where it would seem more reasonable, that the little branches, should adjust themselves to the trunk.

#4746 Re: The Avarice of the Peasants, March 2-April 18, 1539

Dr. Martin sharply railed against the avarice of the peasants, who had poured out the grain in the expectation of a high price. Praise be to God, three had already hanged themselves. Indeed, such robbers of the whole region are worthy of such punishment. This dearth is a wanton dearth. God has given enough, and things continue to grow every day; but the devil has possessed us wantonly to create dearth. Indeed Christ has said: "I was hungry and you did not feed me" [Matt. 25:42]. Don't imagine that you will escape punishment, those of you who sell the grain at a high price, for you are a cause of the death of the poor and their suffering. The devil will lead you away! Therefore, those who are pious and of faith, pray for daily bread and against those robbers that they will be confounded and come to their senses.

#4763 Re: Agricola and Osiander

He was astonished at the pride and vain-glory of those, who during their life-time hoped for great things for themselves, such as Osiander

#4763 Re: Agricola and Osiander . . . continued

with his harmony of the four Gospels and Agricola with his homilies. Ah, dear Lord God, if I could do so with a good conscience, how willingly I would keep silent and see what would be accomplished. I am sure they would not cause the papists much fear or harm. They wish to triumph without victory, not without scandal. At first in the matter of the flourishing papcy, all were silent. Then for more than three years I was quite deserted. No one gave me a helping hand. Now, all wish to triumph and pour forth the products of their brains. In this Ecclesiastes says well: "Of the writing of books there is no end", [Eccl. 12:12.]. After I have been laid in the sand you will be amazed what writing of books there will be. At my age, I ought to be reasonably at peace, but still there are those who wish to attack me, those who ought to support me. I would have enough buffeting from my adversaries, if my little brothers desisted. Who can stand up to them all? They are young; living in much leisure and I am old and worn out. Osiander's freedom to do what he pleases in his leisure, makes him proud. He has simply to preach two sermons a week and receives the large stipend of 400 fl.

#4771 Re: Writings by Opponents

Out of all the writings by my adversaries, I have never read a half page against which I would not have found and possessed enough telling words to contradict them. They are all so lacking in skill when they write and speak against God's Word which is not perceived until they open their mouths.

#4777 Re: Luther's Wish During Illness - The Thorn in the Flesh and Temptations

Luther's wish when he was exhausted by dysentery and other sicknesses: Ah, how gladly I would die now with a happy and peaceful heart, for I am weak and worn out. I know when I recover that I will again be distracted and assailed with various matters. Even St. Paul complained about the buffeting by the messenger of Satan when he could not thereof be relieved [II Cor. 12:7]. Not all of us will have peace without added temptations, for we must go through many trials to enter the kingdom of God [Acts 14:22]. If Paul lived now, how eagerly I would learn from him; what was the nature of his temptation, the thorn or buffeting of the messenger. It was not (to find pleasure) in the thorn in the flesh of Tecla as the papists imagine. Indeed, it was not a condition of the flesh nor sins of the conscience. I do not know what it was. It was something bigger than desperation because of sins, such as those temptations in Psalm 8[:5] "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels" and Psalm 22[:1] "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" That is to say, you are my enemy without reason, though there was no sin. So also Psalm 73[:21] "I was pricked in my reins, a danger pierces my kidneys."

The Book of Job is full of such temptations. His counsellors are wise men, just and upright, yet they are unable to hit the mark. For the whole point of the discussion in the Book of Job is: I am just and innocent, though God does not ask for human justice and innocence. But the friends contradict: Ah, it must be the devil! If you are just, then is God unjust? The whole quarrel is about this question. But I judge that the Book of Job is a history, afterwards brought into the form of a poem as someone experienced it, though not in the same words as produced here. Hieronymus and other sainted fathers did not suffer such temptations; felt only carnal and childish temptations and molestations. Augustine and Ambrose also suffered temptations, knew trembling and fear of the sword, but it was nothing compared to the buffeting of Satan, as if one were fastened to the gallows and stabbed. Then the childish trials of

#4777 Re: Luther's Wish During Illness - The Thorn in the Flesh and Temptations . . . continued

Hieronymus and others fade away.

If I should live a while longer, I would like to write a book about temptations, for without them no person is able to know Holy Scripture, nor faith, the fear and love of God; indeed he is not able to know what the Spirit is, having never been in temptations. Of that sort our John Agricola is, who is proud about so much, yet never was tempted. He will cause trouble after my death. Ah, dear God, the reading of Holy Scripture is not easily learned thoroughly. Let us remain scholars and learn the meaning of these three words well: to love, trust, and fear God. One cannot exhaust Virgil, Terence and Cicero; how can we presume to learn everything there is to know in Holy Scriptures! Shame on you!

FB 3, 129 (26,46) Dr. Martin Luther's wish in his sickness: "Ah, how gladly I would die now! For I am now tired and worn out, and have a happy and peaceful conscience and heart. I know that as soon as I am well again, I will have no peace nor rest. Worry, labour and temptation will not be absent! For since that great man Paul could not be spared, who complains about the messenger of Satan, who struck him with fits, so we too will not experience peace without temptations [II Cor. 12:7]. For we must go through tribulations into the kingdom of God [Acts 14:22].

Ah, if St. Paul lived now, how much I would like to learn from him; what kind of temptation he faced! It was not the thorn in the flesh of dear Tecla unto unchastity as the papists dream. Oh, no! It was not a sin that could have pricked him in conscience. I do not know what it was. It was something bigger than the desperation because of sins as those in Psalm 8[:6] "You will let him be foresaken of God for a little while"; and Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why have you foresaken me?", as if he wanted to say; you are antagonistic toward me without cause; there was no sin. Also Ps. 73 "I was pricked in my kidneys"; that is a spear pierces my kidneys.

The Book of Job is full of such temptations; even though [Job's] friends are understanding and wise, just and pious people, they do not bit the mark. For the whole point in this Book is this: "I am just and innocent, Job says, even though God does not ask about human piety and innocence. But they [his friends] contradict and say: "Ah, that must be of the devil, that you claim to be pious and just. For then God would have to be unjust." The whole question and argument concerns this point. In my opinion, the Book of Job is historical, which was later put into the form of poetry, a poem, which someone experienced, yet not in the words in which it is described.

Hieronymus and other fathers felt only carnal and childish temptations, which are grievous to a degree. In the same way, Augustine and Ambrose also had temptations and were afraid of the sword; but this is nothing compared to Satan's angel striking with his fists. The prick, the stake such as when one is fastened to a gallows is such that childish temptations such as those of Hieronymus and others suffered, would vanish in comparison.

If I should live a while longer, I would like to write a book about temptations, without which no one can either understand Holy Scriptures nor fear and love of God; yes, he cannot know what Spirit is. Like our Agricola, who presumes so much and esteems himself so highly, yet has never been tempted, has never experienced anything. He will cause a lot of trouble after my death!

Ah, dear Lord God, the Holy Scriptures are not so easily understood, even if one diligently reads them. Let us learn the three words well and remain students thereof forever, namely as to what it means to love, fear and trust in God! If one cannot exhaust Virgil, Cicero and Terence,

#4777: FB 3, 129 (26,46) Re: Luther's Wish During Illness - The Thorn in the Flesh and Temptations . . . continued

how can we presume to learn everything there is in Holy Scriptures? Shame on you!

#4787 Re: Words of Comfort to a Father on the Death of His Son, December 1, 1537

The consolation of Luther to Master Lucas Cranach on the occasion of the death of his son, who died in Italy: On the first day of December, 1537, he visited Lucas Cranach who was very stricken by the death of his most obedient son, who with the consent of his parents had gone to Italy and died at Bologna on the 9th day of October of a severe fever. It is said [he died] with a most Christian confession [of faith]. The parents were truly distressed because of natural affection, and also by qualms of conscience, as if they were also the cause of his death because they had sent him hence. Luther responded: If that were the case, I would be as much to blame as you are, since I have advised him and you so faithfully. But we did not do with the intention that he die. Your heart witnesses to you, that you would far rather have him alive, yes, would far rather die yourselves and far rather lose all your property. Therefore, lay aside these scruples of conscience, for your heart and will testify otherwise as to your feelings toward your son.

Then he said to the weeping father: Master Lucas consider this: God wishes to break you will. He likes to attack a person where it hurts the most, to humble us. Even though we do not suffer the greatest temptations, nevertheless, our own temptations that we feel, hurt the most. Remember dear Adam, what sorrow of heart he had when his first two children committed murder before his very eyes! Remember dear David, who wept for two years over his first-born son Ammon, whom Absalom stabbed; also when he found out about Absalom pierced in his sins on the tree, then there was lamentation, seeing his son damned forever. There was crying and terror [II Sam. 13:28ff; II Sam. 18:9ff, 19:1].

In the second place, you ought to take comfort in the fact that he was an upright and obedient son. The world is now so evil and quarrel-some, that even the best of young men fall into sin and shame, which could have happened to your son. You see how ill-behaved and wild the world is, that they sin freely and deny it afterwards, so that in manifest sins they dare to say impudently: My "no" is as good as your "yes" -- And he told of the profligacy of our students. Then he spoke of a certain master of Erfurt, who was a learned and good man until he became a priest. He then fell into adultery with a quarry man's wife, a woman ugly enough. But he could not leave her. And so it happened that after he had celebrated early morning mass at the sixth hour, soon after the mass was over, he was seized in adultery the same hour by the husband stabbed to death. I, too, have five children whom I love from the bottom of my heart. Yet when I think of the evil tendencies in the future, into which they too might become involved, when I am pre-occupied with these thoughts, then I wish they were all dead, for there is little hope for improvement in the world as it now appears.

Thirdly, even though you suffer heart-felt sorrow that you had a Godly, obedient son, even though one can more readily forget the evil and disobedient than the godly and faithful, let his obedience and Christian passing be a great joy to you. God has chosen him to have a blessed last hour. Ah, how blessed is he whose final hour is thus! It is my daily sigh and prayer that God grant me a blessed hour of death. For then I shall have been well here and freed of all misery and sorrow, to be happy with God.

Fourthly, Dear Master Lucas acknowledge to God the highest Father, that He has a higher claim to your son than you. For you are only his

#4787 Re: Words of Comfort to a Father on the Death of His Son,
December 1, 1537 . . . continued

physical father and have reared him only for a [short] time and nourished him. But God gave him body and soul, protected him until now, cared for him and taken him out of this life into the fatherland. He is far, far more a father than you are. He knows how to take care of him, better than you and all the world.

Fifthly: Set a limit to your sorrowing; forget it cleanly and submit to God's Will, which is better than ours. All is well with your son. Eat and drink. Do not wear yourself down too much, for you are yet to be of service to many people. For sorrow dries out the marrow of the bones.

#4801 Re: Proverbs of Luther, May, 1541

Writings of Luther by his own hand, near the stove:

Whoever is faithful in the least, is also faithful in much; whoever is unjust in the least is also unjust in much [Luke 16:10]. The reason: chewing a rag, dogs learn to devour leather. Also: whoever is diligent in the least is also diligent in the great.

Whoever does not esteem the penny will never be lord of the gulden.

Whoever wastes an hour, will also well waste a day.

Whoever despises little things will never attain to the large.

Whoever rejects the head will not possess the chicken.

Jesus Sirach: carelessness in small things leads little by little to ruin. [Sir. 19:1].

Problem 18: Whoever is lost in his own doings, is a brother of the one who condemns himself.

When I lay the foundation of thrift, it's too late to save when there is nothing left to save.

Thrift is great revenue. The penny saved is richer than the penny spent.

Whoever looks down on a letter [of the alphabet] will nevermore acquire great learning.

Whoever doesn't want to live off a 100 fl, will also not live off a thousand.

The hairy head afterwards is the opportunity for baldness.

#4810 Re: Reflections on Life's Stages, June, 1542

The son of Dr. Jonas coming from Halle, greeted Luther. Luther marvelled at his tall stature and said to us: These are the sons who will supplant us. Ah, if there were only many of them! We will leave them enough to do, when they bury us. They aspire to follow in our footsteps, we who are actually bishops by labour though we do not wear chasubles. We have to be bishops, whether we like it or not. God has placed and appointed us into it. What kind of people are those in the world, who neither think of the reign of Christ nor of the world? For whoever is under 20 years of age, can be little concerned about management or government; thus ecclesiastical affairs are beyond them too. On that account there is a step to each discovery: who at 20 is not handsome; at 30 not strong; at 40 not wise; in 50 years not rich, he is hopeless. Master Stiefel replied: I have experienced all of that!

#4811 Re: Fallacies of Bishop Maguntinus, June, 1542

He mentioned that Bishop Maguntinus was most prudent and ingenious; who understood all things and yet used them badly. He mocked all others. It is my opinion that when he dies no dead person will be mourned as much as he, because of the infinite debts and useless debentures with which he has cheated the whole world. He has a sharp knife to cut purses.

#4811 Re: Fallacies of Bishop Maguntinus, June, 1542 . . . continued
All his silver wooden pictures have been gilded over. He cannot fail to diminate the year by half a calendar, etc. If it be his good fortune that his ingenuity and industry grow, he will laugh at all the princes of Italy, France and Germany.

#4820 Re: Blessed is He That Shall not be Offended, etc. [Matt. 11:6], July, 1543

That is a strange offence, where the world is offended in Him who resurrects the dead; makes the blind to see; the deaf to hear. Whoever considers such a man to be a devil, what kind of a God has he? But this is it. He wants to give us heaven; but the worlds wants the kingdom on this earth. This is where they separate. They take offence for even the high sanctity of the hypocrites, essentially looks for worldly honor, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and human life, which must after all dissipate and end.

#4821 Re: Giving, July, 1543

It is much more useful for me and for you that I give that to God which you demand [of me]. God will repay it to me and to you many times over. [Mark 7:11].

#4822 Re: Life and the Commandments, July, 1543, [Matt. 19:17]

If you would enter into life, The Commandments must be obeyed, or no life is possible, nothing but death, for faith too is nothing, where love, that is, where fulfilling does not follow [I Cor. 13]. For Christ, God's Son, did not come nor die, that we be free of the Commandments and disobedient; but that we fulfill the Commandments by His help and presence with us. Therefore, as it is written: works without faith are nothing; and it is also written: faith without fruits is also nothing. Works without faith is idolatry; faith without works is a lie and no faith.

#4824 Re: The Kingdom, July, 1543

Fear not little flock [Luke 12:32]. For if He were not to give it [the Kingdom] to us, we would never be able to buy it from him nor earn it. It is given, given, given. Therefore, we ought joyfully to thank Him and not boast of our worthiness.

#4825 Re: Justification, July, 1543

Justified rather than that man, etc. [Luke 18:14]. That other man did not go justified, but damned. It is a Hebrewism expressed negatively, as in Ps. 118[:9]. It is good to trust in the Lord, rather than to trust in princes.

#4832 Re: Listen to the Word and Be Blessed, July, 1543

Blessed are they who hear the Word of God [Luke 11:28]. Look at all the misfortunes on earth, whether it be pestilence, war, hunger or whatever plague it might be. It is nothing compared to the misfortune and anger where God does not speak to us and so we cannot hear His Word. But it is even more unspeakably worse and the uttermost cry of anguish, when He speaks to us copiously, and lets His Word ring out. We hear it, yet are unthankful and despise it, that we tire of it like the Jews did of the bread from heaven [manna]. Than all is in vain. Therefore, it is written not only to hear, but also to keep it, remain with it and permit neither love nor suffering to force one to give it up. This is what it means to be blessed.

#4835 Re: Death as Sleep, July, 1543

He shall not taste death eternally: We must suffer death, but this is the wonder miracle, that whoever clings to God's Word will not feel death, but just go thence as in a sleep, John 8:[51]. He said: I die, but I must sleep. But whoever permits himself to be excluded from the Word, he must die in fear. Therefore, it is best not to argue but to say with all of one's heart: I believe in Jesus Christ, God's Son. More I do not know, nor wish to know. -

#4836 Re: Death and Resurrection, July, 1543

"I am the resurrection and the life." John 11[:25]. If this be true, a Christian should reasonably despise death, at least not fear it, just so that in this matter he does not despise God. However, he who does not fear death and also does not pay attention to God, the insensitive, for such a person God's Word is of no use.

#4837 Re: Walk in the Light, July, 1543

Walk while you have the light, John 12:[35]. Who still believes that the matter Jesus speaks of here is spoken with utter seriousness? How little light is esteemed and it is thought one can manage to get it whenever we wish to even though now we do not accept it. But Christ says: No, on the contrary, anyone who despises it will be seized by darkness. The hairy head afterwards is the opportunity for baldness!

#4838 Re: Fear Not, The Father's House has Many Rooms, July, 1543

In my Father's House are mansions, etc., John 14[:2]. Don't be frightened, your Father has arranged accommodation for you. If He had not done so, I Jesus would soon do so and come again to you, for I am in all things like the Father; the Father does not do anything that the Son does not do the same [John 14:1]. In this whole chapter and often in others, He makes Himself equal to the Father as in the beginning: "If you believe in God, believe also in me." Why, or of whom should you want to be afraid, since I am that God in Whom you believe. If you believe in God, could you miss God if you believe in me? Now I am true man, like you, of Whom you must not be afraid. I am your good Friend; so you must not be afraid of God either as good friends are not afraid of one another. Rather, comfort one another and expect nothing but good in every accident of Him for it is written: "And the Word was made flesh"; I am the way and the truth, etc. The devil on the contrary is the following: I am death and lies. If you doubt this then, compare the throne at Rome with God's Word: He [Christ] does not deceive you and is old enough to be believed.

#4839 Re: God's Word, July, 1543

John 14[:24], The Word I speak is not mine, etc. Who believes this? It is true. I hear the Word, but if I could believe that it is God Himself that says it to me and speaks to me. Ah, my dear friend, where could I hide because of great humility and pride? Because of humility, since I would be terrified that the Majestic One in heaven talks to such little worms, yes dust and ashes (as Abraham says), and because of pride that such high Majesty does not despise to look at me, poor refuse and dust, yes, is even willing to speak to me and speak so sweetly and with so much comfort.

#4840 Re: Prayer, July, 1543

Whatever you shall ask the Father [John 14:18], Dear friend, who believes that our prayer is so acceptable? But let us pray all the same, for a weak faith is nevertheless faith and therefore must be heard, because

#4840 Re: Prayer, July, 1543 . . . continued

the Father does what we ask of the Son, Whom we believe is co-equal with God. Even though He was crucified in His weak humanity, in order that He be named the man Christ Jesus, Who is all in all, and we with St. Paul know nothing, 1 Cor. 2[:2] except Christ the crucified.

#4841 Re: Christ as Mediator, July, 1543

In my Name, etc., [John 14:18.] As if He said: You cannot stand before God, my Father, with your purity and worthiness. Therefore, you need a mediator and high-priest. So flee to me and do not doubt that you are pleasing to God for my sake.

#4842 Re: The Truth, July, 1543

Your Word is truth, etc., [John 17:17.] No one is so dull and lacking in understanding, who would gladly and willingly be deceived especially in great and serious matters. In these things everyone wants to have the truth and will not suffer lies. On this premise and from it flows that those who despise the Word of God and blessed truth are not human beings, but insane and mad. For if they were seriously concerned to know the truth and not to suffer lies, they would look at God's Word differently and esteem it highly as the very truth of God.

#4849 Re: Word of Comfort, July, 1543

How beautiful are the feet, etc., Rom. 10[:15]. That is: Oh, how heartily we should give thanks, that we are worthy to hear and read what the lovely and comforting proclamation says; and write of the peace and comfort which is made known to us! Many kings have desired to see and hear it, but have not seen nor heard it. Luke 10[:24].

#4880 Re: The Peace of God, July, 1543

The peace of God which passes, etc., [Phil. 4:7]. That is: Faith in the heart knows and insists that one ought to obey God and expect help and comfort from Him. Therefore, it does not revenge itself, but patiently bears it all and does not foment riot or war.

#4851 Re: One Mediator, July, 1543

[1 Tim. 2:5], So we also certainly belong and redemption cannot fail us, but instead it will fail those who do not believe in it or accept it, either shamefully despising it or wickedly persecuting it. Here the fault lies not in the mercy of God, but in our incredulity.

#4852 Re: Psalter of Luther, July, 1543

These transcriptions are out of the Psalter of Luther, which he had for a manual: Dr. Martin Luther, unworthy that I am but:

Worthy { I was created by my Creator.
I was redeemed by the Son of God.
I was taught by the Son of God and the Holy Spirit.
I was entrusted by Him with the ministry of the Word.
I was called and suffered such great things for Him.
I was called upon to bear such great misfortunes.
I was taught beforehand to believe this.
I was called upon amidst the threat of eternal anger and curse,
in no way to doubt because of this.

Therefore, I remember your works and meditate on the works of your hands. [Ps. 77:2; Ps. 143:5]; Cast your care upon the Lord and He will sustain you. [Ps. 55:23]; Be strong and let your heart be comforted all you who hope in the Lord. [Ps. 31:25].

#4857c Re: Prayer of Luther (Date Unknown)

Oh Lord Jesus Christ, you understand the hearts on both sides. Save your honour and truth, so that the unbelieving must acknowledge that this teaching in our churches is your truth, and that you truly hear the prayers of our churches. Amen.

#4857d Re: Three Terrors (Date Unknown)

Three things in this world terrify me: 1) To meet a future need when no good provision is provided. 2) Inexperienced and indiscreet people are appointed to great offices and dealings. 3) In high places of government, loyalty and disloyalty are not rewarded.

Against these foregoing, they say: 1) One ought not to worry about tomorrow. 2) Let the office develop its officer-holders. 3) Who does not do right will find his judge.

In the meantime, the devil is not taking a holiday, in making us poorer in body and property. Thus the poor man is burdened and over-governed. And where the reascally worker is esteemed equal to the faithful, the godly heart is chilled.

To sum up:

Where now God and the welfare of the common man is not pre-eminent
And the situation in the land is such,
That the lords do not esteem the godly
And each is concerned with the advantage of his own house,
Permits the poor man to be plagued and burdened,
And gives him no protection,
Then things cannot go on for long in this way,
And destruction must follow
Of this we have many examples here,
Of which we will not speak in this place.

#4857e Re: Bishop Moguntino (Date Unknown)

Bishop Moguntino at a meeting with Philip Melanchthon said: Do you Lutherans expect to reform us from out of your shit corner? You will have to give that up!

#4857f Re: Anton Musa (Date Unknown)

Master Anton Musa at a certain time said: we old preachers do nothing else than anger the world, but they will lose their fury on you young ones. Therefore, you may well beware.

#4857k Re: Gold, God (Date Unknown)

I know a word that has an "I";
Whoever sees it quickly desires it.
But when the "I" is gone and removed,
There is nothing better in heaven nor earth.
If now you have a wise mind,
Tell me what the word is.

#4857n Re: Whores and Fat Students (Date Unknown)

The devil, through our avowed enemies, has sent several whores here to spoil our poor youth. Against this, I, as an old faithful preacher, come with my fatherly request to you dear children, that you certainly believe that the evil spirit has sent whores here, who are scabby, shabby, stinking, foul and french [infected with venereal disease]. I am sorry to say this is daily found to be so. Each fellow might warn the other! For such an infected whore can poison 10, 20, 30, etc. children of godly parents, and should be looked upon as a murderess and worse than a poisoner. Do help one another with faithful warnings against such poisonous pests,

#4857n Re: Whores and Fat Students (Date Unknown) . . . continued
even as you would like to be helped!

If, however, you choose to despise such fatherly admonition, praise God we have a prince in our country who is discreet and honorable, an enemy of all unchastity and vice, who also has a heavy hand armed with the sword, who will know well how to clean up his woods and the fishery, to the glory of the Word of God which his grace the elector has seriously taken into his care and has stood by it with great expense until now. Therefore, I advise you paunchy students that you take off while you have time, before the Elector finds out how you carry on with the whores. For his electoral grace would not stand for it in the camp at Wolfenbettel; how much less will he suffer it in his own woods, city and country. Be off, I advise you, the sooner the better! Whoever will not live without whores, let him go home or where-ever else he will. Here we have a Christian church and school, where God's Word is to be learned, discipline and virtue. Whoever wishes to be a whoremonger, can be so elsewhere. Our Elector did not found this university for Whoremongers and whore houses. There, you now know how to govern yourselves!

I am forced to speak foolishly. If I were a judge, I would have such poisonous French whores broken on the wheel and made to bleed, for it is beyond description what harm such dirty whores do to the young, who so pathetically are spoilt by them, even before they have really become persons [attained manhood]. The young fools imagine they won't have to suffer; as soon as they feel lust, a whore must be available! The old fathers called it impatience of the libido, secret suffering. After all one must not necessarily do everything one desires. It is written: Defend yourself: do not let your desires take you in tow. Eccl. 18[:30]. Even in the state of marriage you cannot do as you please. To sum up: beware of whores and pray to God, who has created you, that He will give you a godly wife; even then it will be difficult enough. I have spoken. Do as you please; the intention of God remains. I Cor. 10[:8]; Number 25[:9].

TABLE TALK RECORDED BY JOHN MATHESIUS, 1540

WA, TR IV, #4867ff

#4867 Re: Ordination, May 6-16, 1540

The doctor said: we, who preach the Gospel, have the authority to ordain. The pope and the bishops are able to ordain no one. You appear to me to be as if the Turk had sent a Pascha to Mainz and Rome. We will also not be able to do anything with the Turk, unless we defeat him in time together with the priests and utterly kill them.

#4868 Re: Staupitz, May 6-16, 1540

Justus Jonas asked, did he have good thoughts? The doctor: Yes he taught me a new art. He said he would never want to be perfect. He had lied to God too often, yet it did not help. This seemed amazing to me, and yet it is true. We do not become perfect, and that is that! Jonas submitted: he spoke well, but George comprehends things most carnally. The doctor said: Little Agricola does not understand this; it is meant for Christians.

#4870 Re: A Comparison of Jonas and a Baker, May 6-16, 1540

The doctor asked: Dr. Jonas, would you rather be a poet, a cook, or a baker? Jonas responded: God knows that I would not want to be a baker! -- The doctor replied: I would also not advise it! This truly is your proper portion: If they were eagerly to strive for a year, you could still talk them into a bag. Christ wanted Jonas to be a theologue!

#4876 Re: An Example of Humility

Martin the Small of Strasbourg, not only placed himself equal to, but greater than the apostles. Told of this by Jonas, the doctor responded. Oh no, the apostles were great and precious people. If God would only let me be his fire-man and stand behind the door . . . I am not even up to that!

#4886 Re: Marriage Ought not be Deferred, May 6-16, 1540

One ought not delay for long! I would do it right away; arrange all matters in one evening. The devil is too evil, not to cause trouble. Philip also delayed for a year and then important people wanted to make a whore of his girl. The man was so saddened that he wanted only to ride off, so that no one should know where he had gone. Therefore, I do not advise anyone to delay for more than eight days.

#4894 Re: The Peacock, May 6-16, 1540

The peacock has an angelic gown, a thievish walk, and a devilish song.

#4900 Re: Wildenauer, May 6-16, 1540

Wildenauer was a proud ass. When he said one ought not exalt Christ too highly, he learned that from Erasmus. But as soon as he came away from him, nothing he had formerly praised, pleased him.

#4909 Re: Philip Melanchthon, May 6-16, 1540

Philip has now also come to grief with the papists. For a while he was going to negotiate only with his concessions. Now he sees that nothing will do with those rogues.

#4915: FB 1, 312 (7,11) Re: The Incarnation, May 16, 1540

Other thoughts of D.M. Luther concerning the incarnation of the Son of God: "Whoever would be advised by reason, will nevermore know how to adjust to the articles of our faith (especially to those of the Holy Trinity and the incarnation of Christ), much less believe that they are true and certain. One ought never, nor can one force any one to believe. For even when people hear something out of Holy Scriptures or read it themselves and think about it, yet it may not persuade them. The majority are offended by it, or disregard it; with the exception of a few, whom the Holy Spirit touches and opens it up to them.

The Turk holds his subjects in obedience by force in his Mohammedan faith and religion (as the pope by his bann and human teachings did hitherto). He believes there is one God, Who has created all things. He lets Christ be a prophet; but that He is the only-begotten, true, natural, Son of God, that he considers to be the greatest blasphemy. For this reason he has for so long persecuted His Word and people, and intends to exterminate them.

But I have learned in my great temptations and battles against the devil, from Holy Scriptures and am certain, that Christ, true God by nature, became man also. Thus I do not only believe this, but have experienced it in various ways, that this article is true and certain. For in severe spiritual temptations, nothing has helped me more than this, that I could comfort myself and repulse the devil with the fact that Christ, the true eternal Son of God is of our flesh and bones (as Paul in Eph. 5 says: "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones: [Eph. 5:30]) and He sits at the right hand of God and represents us. When I pick up this shield of faith, I soon put the evil one and his fiery arrows to flight.

God has also upheld this article strongly and firmly against all heretics, the pope and the Turk, mightily protecting it, maintaining it from the beginning of Christianity and also confirming it afterwards with many miracles, so that all who have attacked it, were put to sin and shame.

God also permits that we call Mary's Son true God and worship Him. He also hears the prayer of all those who call upon Him in His Name. He has also in these last times, now since some twenty years ago (when the devil attacked us through the anti-Christ, the pope and his followers, with all power and cunning), kept us through nothing else than prayer, sighing and crying to God, our Father, in the Name of Christ, our high-priest.

Whoever says that I or others, let them be named as they will, have defended and maintained the pure teachings against the pope, tyrants, anabaptists, sacramentarians and other riotous spirits, is lying about us. God alone does so for the sake of Christ. He is to rule among His enemies and sit at the right hand of God, until all have been laid as a foot-stool under his feet, despite the devil and all of his scales. [i.e. "Scales fell off his eyes -- indicates what kind of 'scales' are meant here." FWL].

#4936 Re: Adversaries of Luther, May 16-21, 1540

They have made me learned. I cannot repay Eck for what he has taught me. The pope cannot punish him enough for he misguided the ship. If I were pope, I would give Ack the cardinal's hat and have him burned on the spot!

#4965 Re: Abraham, May 21-June 11, 1540

When Scipion and Severus were mentioned, he said: That is the kind of captain we should have against the Turks! The Doctor replied: If only we had Abraham! [Gen. 14]. He would be able to send 4000 angels

#4965 Re: Abraham, May 21-June 11, 1540 . . . continued

before him, just as he defeated four kings with his servants. Ah, that was a great man and a good friend of God. He indeed trusted in God, so God freely took his side, even though he owned no property and had to help himself with so many people, and depend on others such as the ox-drivers.

#4987 Re: Soldiers, May 21-June 11, 1540

Soldiers are found among people like bloaters among herring. A spoilt herring is considered to be bloater, and whoever is good for nothing else makes a soldier.

#5018 Re: Martin Cellarius, May 21 to June 11, 1540

He pretended to be very holy and wanted to make me greater than an apostle. Ah no! They were called individually and particularly and laid the foundation. It is my opinion he deceived me. They pretend too much spirit. I too have seen that holy one and also know him.

#5044 Re: The Wife of Pilate, May 21 to June 11, 1540

Master Doctor, what did the devil wish to accomplish for himself when he sought to prevent the crucifixion of Christ by means of the wife? [Matt. 27:19] -- The Doctor: These are his thoughts. It is easy to think of many: I have killed many prophets, and things became worse and worse. They are too steadfast and that one is also undismayed. I would rather see him remain alive. Perhaps I could kill Him with a temptation or lead Him astray; could I wish for more? And he had high thoughts. For the devil is learned. We battled today not only with Italian and Moguntinian wickedness, but against spiritual wickedness, [Eph. 6:12.] The Holy Spirit must rearrange adroitness and St. Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael must protect us against the tyrants, else all is lost.

#5045 Re: The Bigamy of Hesse, May 21 to June 11, 1540

The Doctor: Ah, dear God, what factions and scandals we must suffer! One thing after another. When one thing is settled, another comes, that's certain and in addition many more sects will come. For the spirit of lying and homicides does not rest. You could have foreseen the foolishness of Agricola. But God will maintain His Christendom.

Then Severus: Master Doctor, your confession pleases me well in the matter of the Lord's Supper, and this word which you added: as I have maintained this Article of the Sacrament, so I am confident to maintain all of them by Scripture with the help of God, which drives away and terrifies many. For there are many who wish to fight against the divinity of Christ -- Then the Doctor: I have noticed that! By means of which I have diligently wrestled with the article, particularly with the three symbols. There will be no problem.

Then I: It is stated in the symbol, Sir Doctor: the remission of sins and thereupon, the resurrection of the flesh. That looks like only those who have the forgiveness of sins will be raised from the dead.

Then the Doctor: There are clear places in John 5:[28ff] and Matt. 25:[31ff] and elsewhere. And in these matters I have found the best place, I Cor. [15:50.] Flesh and blood will not see the kingdom of God. Then I said: It is a different thing to say they will not see, than they will not rise [from the dead]. These are simply different predictions of the one subject. When the Elector heard of these discussions, he was very much delighted.

#5065 Re: The New Bible, June 11-19, 1540

When a scholar added "Kiriath" to Arba [Josh. 12:15], he said: we won't be able to do it better, even though we vigorously carry on against the rabbis, nevertheless, the work must go on.

#5066 Re: Satan, June 11-19, 1540

He is now quite foolish, opens his eyes, ears, mouth and nose. But he was so formerly too, furious for some twenty years, yet was not able to accomplish anything. In spite of all the pope must come down!

#5090 Re: Meeting of Papists and Lutherans, June 11-19, 1540

They have lost their case. They fight with power alone. With them power is united with folly, with us wisdom with weakness. But their cause will fall of itself. Where will they be able in the long run, to procure monks and priests? There are many students here, but I believe not one of them wishes to be anointed and open his mouth and permit the pope's dirt to be defecated therein, unless it be Mathesius or Master Plato.

#5091 Re: Conference of Luther and Philip [Melanchthon], June 11-19, 1540

When it was said of Philip that he used the greatest of moderation in negotiations about the Gospel, the Doctor said: The little man is pious and even when wrong means well; but he gets taken in. He has not accomplished much with his manner and his books are greatly depreciated. When I think about it, it seems to me my way is still the best: speak right out, scold them like knaves! For a hard knot, a hard wedge is necessary.

#5092 Re: Ignorance of the Papists, June 11-19, 1540

When someone said that the papists freely read the books of Luther against the peasants and sacramentarians, the Doctor said: They would not have been able to defend themselves in any way in these matters, just as they were unable to defend any article of faith. For they read the Bible but shine in the Master's [Peter Lombard's] opinions as he customarily developed them. But now all of this is negated, and must be proven clearly. They are unable to do so, and their whole difficulty is and has no other cause than what has been induced by habit. Holy water was put in the church, afterwards to be strengthened by imitation and then it remained in the church.

#5093 Re: The World, June 11-19, 1540

The world will shortly perish. The world can never exist long. With us there is the greatest of ingratitude and contempt of the Word, with the papists' blood and blasphemy. That will knock the bottom out of the barrel.

#5097 Re: The Devil's Knowledge, June 11-19, 1540

He had spoken of the sequence of this and what accompanied it; of temptation and the stimulus of the flesh, Dr. Severus asked: Sir Doctor, they say the biography of Veit Dietrich teaches that the devil does not know our thoughts. To this the Doctor replied: Ah, no, he will not have preached that! For Scriptures are clear in this that the devil sends evil thoughts into the heart of man, and holds captive his mind, [John 13:27]. As in the case of Judas: he entered into the heart of Iscariot. And he not only invented the thoughts of Cain, but drove him to murder his brother. As to the thoughts of the pious, he does not know them all until they break forth. For Christ is too strong for him. So as to what is in the heart of Christ, he knows nothing likewise where Christ dwells in the souls of the pious, his look cannot penetrate.

#5097 Re: The Devil's Knowledge, June 11-19, 1540 . . . continued

[John 14:30]. But he is a powerful spirit, for Christ Himself calls him the prince of the world; and he shoots hideous thoughts into the heart, hatred of God, blasphemy and despair. These are his fiery darts. [Eph. 6:16.]. St. Paul understood these to some extent when he felt the thorn in the flesh. These are the high temptations which no papist has understood. These inept asses know nothing except the temptations of the libido and thought-Paul to have burned with lust towards Thecla, if not to have fallen. For they and their saints have written of no other temptation. Benedict, tempted in thought by lust immersed himself, nude, in thorns, probably scratching up his ass. But the devil laughs at all such and thinks: while they battle with this thing, they do not remember the Word of God. Thereby they never learn what the Word of God is nor what it can do. They do not know their sins and thus do not know the remedy. Thus they occupy themselves. In that kind of temptation help is well available, for we still have young women and wives! But temptations to blasphemy, to question the judgement of God where we neither recognize sin nor invent remedies are like the nun Mechthilda, who, lest she fall, prayed in temptations of a sexual nature to God to impose on her some other temptation, no matter how severe. She was heard and tempted with blasphemy, that God would damn her. She could not bear this and again asked to return to the first temptation.

FB 3, 12 (24,7) The Devil's Knowledge When one remarked that Master N. had preached that the devil did not know what kind of thoughts people had, he said: "Ah, I do not believe he preached thus, for Scriptures clearly show, that the devil gives evil thoughts to people and blinds the mind of the godless. It is written of Judas, that the devil put into his heart to betray Jesus. [John 13:27]. And not only put it into the mind of Cain to think evil of his brother Abel and be his antagonist, but he also drove him into murdering him.

He doesn't know the thoughts of believers, until they issue forth, for Christ is too clever for him. Just as he had not been able to know what Christ thought in his heart, so also he could not know the thoughts of the blessed, in whose hearts Jesus dwells. [John 14:30.]. But he is powerful and cunning spirit, for Christ Himself calls him the "prince of the world" who goes about also shooting terrible thoughts, which are his fiery darts, into the hearts of the blessed too, such as dissatisfaction, anger, hatred towards God, despair, blasphemy, etc. St. Paul understood these to an extent and complains violently about them, when he says: II Cor. 12:[7], "There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me with fists", etc.

These are the spiritual temptations, which no papist has understood. These coarse, inept, untired people know of no other temptation than the evil desires of the flesh. Hence the word of Paul, "there was given to me a thorn in the flesh" was expounded by them to mean the improper love of Paul, with which they supposed he burned towards Thecla. Ah, but the devil attacked him so severely that he quite forgot lewdness! Of this temptation, namely unchastity, the teachers in the papacy who in part consider themselves to be holy, have written mostly and of the other little.

Of Benedict they write, that when he was once tempted by carnal lust, he threw himself naked into thorn bushes and scratched his body severely, in order to drive out the evil lusts, etc. With this and in other ways, whether with hair shirt, flagging and whipping the body, severe fasting, etc., of which they did so much in the papacy, in order to dampen carnal lust (wherewith some hurt their bodies to such an extent that they died before their time); nothing was accomplished. Yes, indeed,

#5097: FB 3, 12 (24,7) Re: The Devil's Knowledge, June 11-19, 1540 . . . continued
the devil had pleasure and joy therein, laughed at the poor people and scoffed at them, that they so tortured themselves and thought: over against these weapons and straw-armor I can well stand up; will not be deflected therewith by a long shot, nor caused to flee and be defeated.

Therefore, if one would withstand this despicable poisonous spirit, it should not be done without the Word and heart-felt prayer, as in the Papacy, where they have not learned nor experienced the power and use of the Word and prayer; but dared to fight against the lusts of the flesh by their own works, chosen according to human worship and choice. For as has been said, they complained most about this kind of temptation, which could well have been taken care of, if they had followed God's Word and ordinance, where He speaks: "It is not good that man should be alone", etc. But the devil has upset everything, forbidden marriage through his vice-roy, the anti-Christ at Rome, etc.

They write of nun Mechthilda, if I remember rightly, who was greatly tempted to be unchaste, asked God to rid her of this and place another on her, no matter how severe. When her prayer was granted, she was tempted with the thought that God would damn her. Then murmuring and blaspheming against God began in her heart. She was able to bear this temptation much less than the former. She, therefore, asked if she could be relieved of this one and she would gladly suffer the former.

Ah, the poor people lack the Word and right prayer. We have both, praise God, purely and abundantly. Few people, however, make use of this armor against the devil. Soon after this bright light a gruesome, terrible darkness will again come!"

#5128 Re: What are the Gates of Hell?, August 7-24, 1540

The Doctor: I would like to know what this is called in Hebrew? In my opinion, it is the word "Schula". But it is powerfully said that all the principalities of the air and powers of hell shall not be able to prevail against Christ. It must hurt that most arrogant spirit, that this strength can do nothing nor devise anything that will not be spoken ill of in public or in private, and be tarnished and traduced. It hurts Duke George. Nevertheless, he must be called a murderer and a liar.

#5168 Re: Luther's Writings, August 7-24, 1540

I have written enough. Let another one also write! Yet, if I could write a book that everyone would read, I would like to write another one. There is a lack of readers; they do not even wish to read the Holy Spirit's book. Let another write!

#5169 Re: The "Matthew" of Luther, August 7-24, 1540

When Cordatus praised him, the Doctor said: I have written them after eating. For a Christian can speak better when full, than a papist who is sober.

#5179 Re: Kingdom of Heaven and Civil Authority, August 7-24, 1540

The rights of the heavenly and civic authority. Firstly, I was moved by the matter of penalty and guilt. One must, however, separate the two kingdoms carefully and not intermix them. We, in the kingdom of heaven, deal privately with the conscience and do not encroach upon the civic forum and its jurisdiction. They also leave us in peace with our forum and with what we deal in private, and do not drag this into their forum. I have also given a lot of advice in private, because it is in secret, it turned out right well. If it got into the public forum however, I don't know how it would go. They are not to drag us into it! Such was the case of Pankatius Fischer of Leitz, where the church

#5179 Re: Kingdom of Heaven and Civil Authority, August 7-24, 1540 . . . continued
inflicted public punishment upon him. For this reason we have held unto the right of the church and have wanted to grant the civic forum no further advantage or right over him, because for so long he was held in dishonor under the papacy and were willing to punish him only when he had given satisfaction by a public confession and penitence to the church.

#5180b Re: A Story About Confession, August 7-24, 1540

A Venetian Story: There was a noble-woman in Venice, who had illicit intercourse with a young companion; and he died in her bed. When she noticed this she was terrified beyond measure; and did not know what to do. He was a rich merchant's son and in addition an only child of whom the father would inquire violently and with great seriousness. If what had happened with her would be discovered, things would not go well with her. Thereupon, as night approached, she hit upon the plan to hire a labourer, who was to carry the bag into which she had sewed the young companion to the water and throw it in wherever it was most convenient. In order that the labourer would not catch on and talk about it, revealing all, she in her great hurry and cunning, sewed the bag unto the labourer's coat. Sensing no danger when he threw the bag into the water also without further ado was dragged into the water and drowned.

Now after this had been kept quiet for some time, the woman was unable to find peace nor rest for her bad conscience, but suffered an eternal and constant gnawing, torturing and hurting her. Finally, she went to the church, complained about her situation and straits to a monk with the proviso that she would confess her sins to him, if he would not reveal it to anyone, and give her absolution, in which case she would present and give to him 300 crowns. So the monk spoke and gave her the promise. Thereupon she confessed to him and told him all about it freely. The monk then not only spoke words of absolution and took her 300 crowns, and in his own hand-writing gave her a receipt.

In the meantime, however, when the father missing his son and unable to find out anything about him, whether he be dead or alive, offered 100 fl. if anyone could show him that his son was still alive, and 500 fl. to anyone who could tell him where and how he lost his life. Now when the monk also heard and discovered this, the devil of avarice drove him and he intended to get the 500 fl. also. He went secretly to the rich merchant, reported the whole confessed affair to him and what happened with the noble-woman. He does not keep silent about this, in order not to get into trouble himself, reported it to the council. The council promptly sent for the noble-woman, who confessed the whole story in anguish that the young companion's death had hurt her so much, that in order to quiet her conscience, had confessed it to the monk and given him 300 crowns for the absolution, and that he would tell no one on earth about it as his receipt and hand-writing proved. Thereupon the council gave its decision: she was to be exiled forever, and the monk burned at stake, etc.

#5181 Re: Alms, August 7-24, 1540

Give and it shall be given to you. [Luke 6:38.] This is a certain text which makes the world rich and poor. Those who do not give and plan to leave much to their children, these retain nothing. Erosion destroys all, as happens to many rich and will soon happen again: Loeser and such as the Turks busily gather wealth wishing to make their children rich, but the proverb still remains true.

He who strives for his own advantage will not rejoice in a third heir. On the contrary, he who gives, to him will be given. This is what sustains my house. I do not wish to boast, but I know what I give

#5181 Re: Alms, August 7-24, 1540 . . . continued

à year in my house. Turning to Dr. Brueck, he said: if my lord would give a nobleman only 300 fl., it would not sustain his house!

But God gives me enough, and He blesses it and I also want to give! (Turning to Katharine), Dear Katy, when we no longer have money, the cups must go. One must give, if one wants to have something. [Note: this refers to the time Luther gave a silver cup as a baptismal present to one of his children, and Katy was quite upset about it. FWL].

#5182 Re: Pride, August 7-24, 1540

Pride brings want: Example, Schirlentz no longer wanted to count the dirt -- the pennies -- so he weighed them; now he is poorer. Thus also, a matron of Zwickau who had peasants, is now reduced to having to depend on offerings. Thus money does not make one rich, nor does it maintain riches, but rather, give and it will be given you. [Luke 6:38].

#5185 Re: Public and Private Communion, and Consecration, August 7-24, 1540

Under the papcy there was an astonishing debate about private and secret consecration, as to which debaters had the best arguments.

Now since the devil in this is a skillful contriver, they often forgot whether they had spoken the words of consecration. This was a perpetual cross! -- At length the schoolmen sought to solve the problem by the counsel that the first intention sufficed. There were a lot of such masses under the papcy, as also Muntzer admitted when he said: (May God forgive me that I repeated these blasphemous words!), at Halle he had devoured some 200 unconsecrated elements. Lord God, this is one of the best reasons, with which we have attacked private masses. Today public consecration is approved by me. The whole church and the clergy agree and repeat the words. I gladly join them and thank God that I have been rid of the private mass.

#5186 Re: The Poor, August 7-24, 1540

The poor ought not to be despised. When blind Bernard was mentioned, a certain person said: his wife ought to live, but he die. The Doctor responded: Ah, but we must have poor people! Who knows whose bounty we often enjoy? I, too, have a lot of useless vagabonds in my house. But God's thoughts are different than ours. Who knows what good will come out of this for us? Lazarus also lay before the rich man's door; perhaps the whole land has benefited by him. God wants to have the poor among us. Therefore, we must support them, and I must see to it as to how we support him [Bernard]. For he is a pious man despite all. He likes to pray diligently and raises his children well.

WA, TR V

TABLE TALK RECORDED BY JOHN MATHESIUS, 1540

WA, TR V, #5193ff

#5193 Re: The Orthodox and the Bible, September 2-17, 1540

When some one said, Master Doctor, neophytes now read orthodox statements and inveigh repeatedly in the church, making many distinctions, the Doctor answered: let them read! They will see what they will find, but it won't matter. The Bible is the right book, that never needs to be made clearer and one can find something new in it every day. I have now been a doctor for 28 years in which I have read and preached out of it. Yet, I have not exhausted it and I still find something new in it. One must make distinctions in the church, but within limits.

#5195 Re: Those Insulted, September 2-17, 1540

Whether the insulted one ought to ask forgiveness of the one who insulted him? No, the Doctor answered. For Christ neither expected nor did so, even when asked by Pilate. It is enough to forgive in one's heart and freely forgive the sin and pray for him. For I, too, wished to ask several who had insulted me, Agricola and Hieronymous. But it happened that neither was at home; for which I thank God that it was not done.

Is there anyone so good, who when insulted -- then I say -- that when suffering insults will not lose patience and hate the one who insulted him? -- The Doctor replied: yes, indeed! If anyone does wrong, he must also confess it. Ought I not remember what is public knowledge, what Carlstad, Muntzer, and Grickell have done? Who can deny me this? I have done them no evil, but only good.

#5200 Re: The Way to Preach, September 2-17, 1540

It is most important not to make the sermons long but to speak simply, child-like, for one ought to preach only to little Hans, Martin, and the young. If one wants to preach for the doctors and Philip, it is wrong even though I know well those who are of the opinion that when I am preaching, they too would learn. Oh no! It is done for the sake of children. In the schools one may be learned. [Note: Hans and Martin were two of Luther's children].

#5213 Re: The Kindly Prefect of Erfurt, September 2-17, 1540

Narratives in the presence of the Doctor concerning the prefect of Erfurt. This chief drew the citizens to himself with kindness, not by force. The Doctor answered: whoever would manage Erfurt must not do so in tricky ways alone. Friendliness and good-will beget friendship. If the leader were to act like William [Duke William of Saxony in Weimar, 1425 - 1482], who occasionally made visits, inviting the leading men, held knightly contests, and if the nobility would then become well-disposed towards him, something would be done. Erfurt would grace the house of Saxony in spite of a duke who would try to harm us if it belonged to us! A duke and his wife and children, once sought refuge there for protection from the Turks. One could accomplish something at this time for the common man, and this is not anti-Saxon. I even sensed good-will on the part of the burgomaster. This is to our advantage. The preachers too are on our side. The attitude of preachers in a city is of great importance. The priests have a hard time of it, and must ever seek the good-will of the common people with money and gifts. For these reasons my gracious Lord should now act. Who knows if He ever again will have such a good opportunity.

#5214 Re: Erfurtians, September 2-17, 1540

In their seal they have these words inscribed: Erfurtians are obedient children of the bishopric of Moguntino. But the bishops often make light of this, for this reason they wanted their own bishop of yore, and gained two points in favour of this in Rome. Then the bishop had their Dr. Steenpruk poisoned in secret. This only angered those of Erfurt very much and they again sided with the house of Saxony, even though recently they had helped the bishop war against Saxony. In the days of Duke Frederick, the bishop wanted to place him under a new oath and managed this under Maximilian. But, Duke Frederick abrogated against it.

#5215 Re: Building Strongholds, September 2-17, 1540

When mention was made of the Fortress of Grimmenstein, the Doctor said: It is finished, even though it is a large building. But it is one thing to build fortresses but to hold them, requires much labor. My lord can hardly protect it with 200 men in times of peace.

#5222 Re: Contradictions in the Prayers of Christ, September 2-17, 1540

Christ prays; Christ does not pray for us. [John 17:9; 16:26]. The Doctor said: Both are true, for Christ must pray for us, else our praying would count for nothing. Because of His prayers, God answers our prayer too. We must also pray. And Christ must not pray alone, therefore, He does not pray here [at all times]. For He says: the Father loves you. Now, you pray also! I have taught you to pray and have made your prayer acceptable.

#5223 Re: The Devil, September 2-17, 1540

When questioned whether the devil also knew Christ incarnate, the Doctor said: Yes, he knows the Scriptures well and he hears what we sing. But taking such a humble stance, he does not pay attention to Him! For the devil looks above things and looks for important people, cleaving to them; what is lowly and under him, he doesn't see. But God does the very opposite. He looks only at what is lowly, and what is high He disregards. [Ps. 113:6]. Therefore, whoever wishes to be high and mighty, let him beware of the devil!

#5226 Re: Weakness of the Saints, September 2-17, 1540

Ziba Mehiboseth. The saints also suffer weakness. Ziba merited the gray coat and lied to his master; and David, who was in great sorrow of heart because of the Jewish Kingdom, too easily believed. [II Sam. 16:10]. Yet after all, no one is to trust a single witness. But that is how things are. When we are upset, we often say things which we would not otherwise say, just as my Wolf does when he hits a bad moment. In like manner, do you suppose Lot would have said: take my daughters, if he could have thought the matter over except for his perturbation? [Gen. 19:8]. Who would have done a thing like that? But this is a weakness of the saints.

#5237 Re: Final Judgement, September 2-17, 1540

The Doctor said: Oh dear God, so come at last! I ever await the day. Early there shall be a bright break of day at about the vernal equinox -- but the Doctor added: these are my imaginings. Am I to preach these? Oh no! All of these things are most beautiful. Suddenly out of the shining break of day, dark and threatening clouds will come, and two or three flashes of lightning will be seen. Thereupon a blow and in an instant everything will lie in a heap, both heaven and earth. But God be praised, Who has taught us that we sigh and yearn for all this! All the world is afraid of the papacy, and they have hymns in accordance

#5237 Re: Final Judgement, September 2-17, 1540 . . . continued
with this; I have an additional sequel which I must set up against it.

#5238 Re: School Masters, September 2-17, 1540

When Misenius was mentioned, the Doctor said: school masters do not fit into poor positions. They must be superintendents and have rule over others, since they are used to positions of authority. Indeed, school teachers have succeeded best in the Church. If I could, I would not wish for the money of the Joachimsthal and Annoberg, also not the money of the Turk, but that those who will succeed us, have taught in the churches and schools. Some are in bloom. May God sustain and give me many of them!

#5240 Re: Language of St. Paul, September 2-17, 1540

The Doctor said: Paul does not use as elegant words as Demosthenes, but he speaks to the point and uses meaningful words. He is correct in not using involved and high technical [words]. Otherwise, all would strive to emulate him.

#5250 Re: Commentary on St. Peter, September 2-17, 1540

"Cast all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you" [I Peter 5:7]. Ah, whoever could learn this casting well, would experience that it is truly so. Whosoever is unable to learn such casting, must remain a cast away; cast upon; cast under; cast off; and cast over person.

#5251 Re: Prayer, September 2-17, 1540

John 14:[13] - "Whatsoever you shall ask in my Name, that will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son". Dear [God], who can believe that our prayer can be so acceptable? Nevertheless, let us pray, for a weak faith is also true faith and must be heard; because the Father does what we pray the Son for, Whom we believe co-equal with God, even though He was crucified in the weak state of humanity, as it is written: The man Jesus Christ is all in all, and though we with St. Paul I Cor. 2:[2] know nothing other than Christ alone and Him crucified. Martin Luther.

#5252 Re: School Masters, September 2-17, 1540

When mention was again made of Andreas Misenus, the Doctor said: We must now have many ordinary stones and also corner stones. [Note: ordinary preachers and gifted ones. FWL]. He [Andreas Misenus] must be a corner stone. For school masters have become accustomed to speak and are keener and also learn from their verses in school, how one may skillfully deal with the Holy Scriptures and expound them. I would wish that no one be named a preacher except that he had taught school previously. Now the young fellows want to become preachers at once and flee school work. But if one has taught school about ten years, he can with a good conscience leave teaching for the work connected with it is great and it is held a bit low in esteem. But as much depends upon a school master in a city as depends upon a parish pastor. We can manage to do without Burgomasters, princes and nobility. We cannot do without schools, for after all they must govern the world. We see today that there is no potentate, but that he has to be advised by a lawyer or a theologian. They know nothing of themselves and are ashamed to learn, therefore the schools must continue to produce. If I were not a preacher, I know of no position in the world which I would prefer more. But one must not look upon how the world rewards, but upon how God considers it and will esteem it on the Day of Judgement.

#5275 Re: Lord's Supper, September 2-17, 1540

Comments of the Doctor in a sermon on the nature of Christ in the Eucharist: The Doctor said to Pomeranus; I have indeed striven zealously with Christ's teaching, and have not made a better book. Indeed I did not make it but Creutziger. The Sermon on the Mount is also good, but this is the best. How it affected me when Christ called the devil the prince of the world. Are you shameful spirit indeed called prince of the world by such a Lord? How terrible! -- Then Pomeranus said: But He made of Himself an exception, when He said, but he has nothing on me and in his own. Then the Doctor said: Oh, but only few are found, at most four! Then Pomeranus: these four are better than one hundred thousand before!

#5276 Re: Psalm 4, September 23-October 3, 1540

Out of the fourth Psalm: "Irasu" means to shake violently. Significant is the shining light of Thy countenance, O Lord! How the words "signato" and "lumine" have been disputed! That is the way it is when the languages have not been mastered. It is written: Lift up Thy countenance! But be gracious unto us. This is done for a reason, and that is to show us favour and benevolence. The outward sign is to affect the interior of the heart.

#5277 Re: Solomon, September 23-October 3, 1540

The equilibrium of kings [I Kings 2:13ff]. The Doctor was asked why Solomon had been so cruel in the beginning of his reign? He answered: The Jewish people have always been pertinacious and most rebellious, because they are God's people. This makes them proud and so they show their dissatisfaction towards authority: i.e. Lord king, that you may suffer epileptic attacks, presuming to rule over us who are God's people! For when Adonias, while his father was alive, intrigued to reign, and with the death of his father even though he did not press his case, Solomon knew his mind. For he was the oldest. Had he been able to get the queen to do his will, since Joab and Abiathar were on his side, David's command would have counted for nothing, because he had the law on his side.

#5278 Re: Punishment of the People by God, September 23-October 3, 1540

Out of the last chapter of II Samuel, the Doctor was asked why God had punished the people when David had sinned? He replied: The text indicates that Israel also was unclean. When God wishes to punish a country of people, He withdraws His [protecting] hand and the king falls. Punishment then follows mainly because of the disobedience of the people.

#5289 Re: Duke George - When Dejected, October 3-19, 1540

He wished, when shaken in spirit [dejected] in his many difficulties to have it appear that he despised them all as due to fate. But in his greatness of spirit, he suppressed sadness. It would have been better for him to permit himself sadness, etc., for suppressed injury and sadness drains the body of strength and vitality. Out with it -- this is how I deal with it at times!

#5291 Re: Simplicity of Scriptures, October 3-19, 1540

A citation of John: [I John 2:19] "They went out from us, but were not of us." The Doctor: This spoken so simply and humbly, yet has so much meaning that one cannot sufficiently exhaust its meaning. Scriptures are right in speaking so simply and humbly; thus even children can understand. Otherwise, if Christ and the apostles had spoken as lofty as Persius and Jevenal, one would find it impossible to teach a child.

#5294 Re: The Spoken Word, October 3-19, 1540

Some one asked Master Doctor, are St. Peter's words and Christ's Words, denoting substance or potentiality? The Doctor responded: Ah! This is our greatest honour that we have this ministry and God is so close to us. For whoever hears Christ, hears God Himself; whoever hears St. Peter or a preacher, hears Christ and God talking to us. As He says: he that heareth you heareth me [Luke 10:16]. And Paul to the Galatians: You accepted my word as the Word of God; in truth, that it is!

#5311 Re: Agricola, October 19 to November 5, 1540

When in this matter he firmly refused all stipulations, the tears of his wife, the letters of the Elector, to which he did not answer, he said: It is impossible to receive him in this way if he revokes all this. I confess that I have played the fool and done wrong in Wittenberg, for they teach rightly and I have wrongly criticized them. I am sorry for this and rue it from the heart, and pray for God's sake, that I be forgiven. -- Otherwise, he said, we will not accept any revocation which he could suggest. It is necessary to speak plainly! If he is unwilling, I am determined to let things stand [as they are].

#5321 Re: The Life of the Fathers, October 19 to November 5, 1540

The Doctor said: There is not much good in it. It has nothing but praise for the monasteries and contrariness to the article on justification. Occasionally, a good story is found therein.

#5322 Re: Oecolampadius, October 19 to November 5, 1540

When the Doctor had read the book of Oecolampadius against Pirkhaimerus, he spoke thus: Truly his cruse has become true for him! For he has written thus: If I act with an evil mind, then may Jesus Christ strike me! Ah, God, how audacious these people have been! And disregard the terrible news of the other night, that Zwingli has been killed. Truly it is not a good thing to joke with Christ!

#5326 Re: Punishment of the World, November 5, 1540

The Doctor: Dear God the world is evil! It can no longer continue to exist, except the Scriptures be wrong, yet they have always proven true. I believe they will be true now too. It is my opinion that the Lord will grant us the farewell drink of good wine this summer, even though the world begrudges this to us; and we are compelled to drink a mixture, old and new wine intermingled, but expensive enough. Ah, that my God would take me and thee and my children hence in a blessed hour! I would gladly give Him my house and all of my books, for He will nevertheless remain alive after our death. Following summer, we will have a new plague or some other great calamity.

#5327 Re: Translation and the Hebrew Language, November 5, 1540

If we did not have the Greek and Latin Bibles, we would today not be able to understand the words, not even a single word of Hebrew; for the perception of words is lost among the Jews, thus also mastering phrases and figures of speech is also lost. Therefore, no one understands anything, just as if a Greek would come upon a saying in a German passage after some years: "He is able to hang his coat according to the wind". He would be able to understand the word "wind"; and "coat"; with the continuation of these sounds [words], he would not be able to grasp. He would have to guess. This is how it is with the Hebrew language such as in Hauod [Psalm 5:9] and Chan [Psalm 5:10] and other passages. For one must diligently set the words next to each other and thus find their proper meaning [innermost intention]. [Note: Hauod refers to

#5327 Re: Translation and the Hebrew Language, November 5, 1540 . . . continued
"Lord lead me in your righteousness, because of my enemies"; and Chan
"for in their mouth there is nothing positive; their innermost being
is an open grave". Apparently Luther found these passages difficult
to translate, FWL].

#5330 Re: A Woman Lacking Discretion, November 5, 1540

[Prov. 11:22] A woman who allows everything to go to pot in the
house, an untidy, non-domestic woman, is called a slattern: uncaring
is a new word; lazy a good old word; slovenly, and irresponsible, these
also hit the mark. I have not mastered my own mother-tongue yet. It
is such an excellent thing when one can speak it so that all may readily
understand.

#5333 Re: The Incarnation of Christ, November 5-7, 1540

Much higher is the work: the Incarnation of Christ. No one can
comprehend this, or grasp it with the mind. I believe that the angels
have more than enough to do than to study it. And the devil is utterly
discouraged because of this article, and thus his fall came about.

#5334 Re: German Proverbs, November 5-7, 1540

German proverbs are excellent; they have strong lessons and it
would be a good thing if some one were to collect them as was done by
Episcopus. Master Agricola collected only jests and curses, in order
to produce laughter. One ought to collect only those jests that are
respectable. The devil is an enemy of proverbs. Therefore, he has
smeared his gremlins onto many verses of the Scriptures in order to make
them appear questionable and make people reject them. But we must remove
the devil's dirt and thereby save the proverbs. Inasmuch as the philosophers
admonish: honor ought to be given the aged; there he has smeared his
dirt. The devil says: throw out an old goat! [text unclear].

#5336 Re: Comfort for a Sick Woman, November 5-7, 1540

Consolation for Felicitas von Selbitz. Thus he consoled her when
she was sick: we have been delayed far too long, if not until now.
When we are in extreme straits, we should learn to acknowledge Christ.
He has come to us in Baptism and has been with us right along and has
built a fine bridge for us; so that we can pass on it out of this life
through death into the life beyond. This you must certainly believe!

#5337 Re: Angels, November 5-7, 1540

This is my opinion. I am certain that the angels even now are
putting on their armour and girding themselves with their weapons, for
the Day of Judgement is already breaking. The angels are preparing
for battle, desiring to defeat the Turk together with the pope, striking
them down to the bottom of hell.

#5338 Re: Eisleben, November 5-7, 1540

Eisleben is proceeding in strange ways, yet neither he nor the
Margrave write us. They are negotiating with intermediaries. Agricola
is of the opinion that by devious ways he can get the advantage of us
in order to be able to boast that he did not ask anything of us and
then he is in the right. Or else, he wants to accuse us of being unmerciful
and we are not supposed to understand that trick! But let him come along,
we are willing to face him!

#5339 Re: Hecyra, November 5-7, 1540

This is a fine comedy, Terences' best. But because it lacks motion,

#5339 Re: Hecyra, November 5-7, 1540 . . . continued

it does not please the ordinary student. It has weighty thoughts useful for the public good, such as: all mothers-in-law hate their daughters-in-law. That is always a great calamity, but one can do nothing about it. I saw many such cases, even in Eisenach, where a mother-in-law imposed upon her daughter-in-law. But the daughter-in-law and her friends were virtuous and spoke this: what can one do? After all she is the mother! With patience, they suffered injuries from their parents.

#5340 Re: Luther's Riches, November 5-7, 1540

God is a rich man and gives the evil Turks and pope so many fine gifts, land and people, and the best fruits in the world, and much victory and good fortune; what will He not sometime give his children? Even now, here on earth He has given me so much that I would not even want to have the property of the Turk. Even though I might not be able to fathom fully a verse of the Psalter, yet I would not give away my ability which I have in understanding [dealing] with the Scriptures. On the other hand, one does find persons like Breitenbach and others who would not give me one penny for the whole Bible!

#5341 Re: The Devil, November 5-7, 1540

The devil is a villian and where he is not able to subdue God's Word with force, he dares to make a mockey of it. Thus he has fouled up many a good passage in the Scriptures with mockery like: They have placed a stumbling block right in my way. [Ps. 140:5, 147:18]. He causes his wind to blow and waters to flow. This was funny for the priests, canons, and also choristers who had nothing else to do, occupied themselves in the churches.

The following words are of my lord master Melanchthon, my dearest teacher and thus we finish: "Thanks be to Christ, and do not forget patience, nor the proverb: courage makes confident. But God has made all things well, and will continue to do so. This is certainly true.

The Sunday before St. Martin's Day in the year of our Lord, 1540

M.I. Mathesius

Doctor Severus, teacher of boys during the reign of Ferdinand.

Supplement to Section Ten

TABLE TALK FROM THE YEAR 1540, Probably Not Transcribed by Mathesius

#5342b Re: Worms, Summer, 1540

This he said while at dinner: First Emperor Charles commanded me to attend the Diet and sent a herald to accompany me. He attended me till we arrived at Worms. When we arrived at Weimar, I received expense money from Duke John. The rumour was heard that Dr. Martin had already been condemned at Worms together with his books; and this was so. In addition, messengers from the Emperor appeared before me, who were to put up a mandate in all of the towns, that Dr. Martin had been condemned by the Emperor. Now the herald asked me, Sir Doctor, do you want to proceed? I then answered: yes, even though I have been placed under a bann and this has been published in all the cities. I am determined to continue to accept the Imperial safe passage. This was the first trick that the bishop of Mainz used, intending to hinder me from going to the Diet, hoping then to institute proceedings against me for having despised the Emperor's grant of safe passage, being then guilty of insolence.

As I now approached Oppenheim, and there were only three more days of safe conduct left, the Bishop of Mainz had managed to exert so much pressure, that Bucer came to me with the purpose of persuading me to travel to Franz of Sickingen on Ebernburg, for there Lauius, the father confessor of the Emperor, wished to discuss certain matters with me. But I suspected that this was not the intention of the bishop of Mainz, but it was his purpose to lead me about, so that the time of the safe passage would come to an end, before I could arrive at Worms. But I said to Bucer: I shall go on. If the Emperor's father confessor has anything to say to me, he can well do so at Worms. And so I continued on my way. This was the second stratagem in which the Bishop of Mainz failed. I have since discovered that he was behind it all.

As I now neared Worms, Spalatin, who was with Duke Frederick, privately sent me a warning, that I should not come and put myself into so much danger. But I, on my part, answered him, that if there were as many devils in Worms as tiles on its roofs, I was determined to enter. For I was not cowed, nor was I afraid. God can indeed make one so foolhardy. I don't know if I would be that foolhardy now.

So now I drove into Worms on a small open carriage, wearing my monk's habit. All the people in the streets came wanting to see the monk Martin Luther. So I drove on until I arrived at the domicile of Duke Frederick. Duke Frederick also had been quite worried at my coming to Worms. After my opponents had discovered this, they had in part discussed whether to rescind, for the sake of the faith, the promise of my safe passage. But the Duke of the Palatinate on the Rhine and the Elector had opposed [this counsel]. The promise of safe passage was to be kept strictly and nothing else! He also have become so heated up over this matter with the Elector of Brandenburg the Margrave Joachim the elder, that both reached for their knives. The Bishop of Mainz had expected something different than that I should arrive in Worms, and if I had been as cowardly as he, I would not have come. -- After a few days, I was commanded to appear before the Imperial council in front of all the nobility at six o'clock in the evening. The Dr. Eck, the chancellor of the Bishop of Trier, on behalf of the Empire spoke to me saying: Martin, do you acknowledge that these books are yours? Now all of my books were lying on a bench in order, where they had gained possession of them, I did not know. Then I would almost have said "yes", but Dr. Hieronymous Schurf shouted out loudly at the council:-- read the titles of the books! Then they

#5342b Re: Worms, Summer, 1540 . . . continued

read the books; they were all mine. Then I said: most gracious Emperor and gracious dukes and lords, the matter at hand is important and great. I cannot at this time deal [adequately] with these books. I pray that time be granted for me to think things over.. This was granted, and thus the Imperial Council ended.

In the meantime, many of the nobility came to my domicile and said: Doctor, how are things going? They say you are to be burned, but this must not happen. Sooner or later all of them will have to go down with you! This indeed would have to happen.

When I was again commanded to appear before the Imperial Council, there was a great crowd in the hall, for everyone wanted to hear my answer. There were many burning torches up, for it was night. I was not used to such noise and carrying on. But when I was told to speak, I began and said: most gracious Emperor, gracious Electors, dukes and lords, the books that have been placed before me, are mine. Some of them are books of doctrine which explain the Holy Scriptures. I acknowledge they are mine and there is nothing evil in them. The others are books of polemic, in which I have quarreled with my opponents. If there is any evil in them, I could well alter that. The third kind are those in which I dispute about doctrine; they are debates. With these I remain; let come whatever God wills. While I was speaking in this way, they wanted me to repeat what I had said in Latin, but I was perspiring so much, also bothered by the noise, that I found myself standing among the dukes. Then Frederick of Thun said to me, if you can't do it, it is enough Sir Doctor! But I repeated all I had said in Latin; this pleased Duke Frederick, the Elector, very much. When I had finished speaking I was permitted to leave, two persons being assigned to lead and accompany me. Then there was a great commotion. Is he being led away a prisoner? the nobles shouted. But I said: I am only being attended. Thus I again came to my domicile and [did] not [appear] again before the Imperial Council.

Then I was commanded to appear before two special committees. In the one, the Bishop of Trier, the Margrave Joachim, Duke George, and several others were present. But Dr. Uhe, the chancellor of Baden spoke a long time with me, seeking to persuade me to place the whole matter before the Emperor and the deputies of the Empire. He cited thirteen reasons why I should do so, and he spoke much of the authority of the church and other offenses. Now there were several present who wanted to teach me what to answer, but Frederick Thun said: this is unnecessary. He will well be able to speak. I repeated these points to him on one finger, even though I was not used to speaking in law or in the manner of the court, yet I contradicted them all for him and I said I could put up with anything, pope, dukes, also the authority of the church. I would do everything required of me, but I could not depart from Holy Scriptures. I could give up nothing of that, for it was not mine but the Lord God's. Then the Margrave said: Sir Doctor, if I understand you rightly, you cannot depart from the Scriptures? Then I said: yes, this is my stand! Then they let me go again, and also [themselves] dispersed.

After several days, they again sent Dr. Uhe and Dr. Peutingen to me and continued to negotiate with me. But Duke Frederick did not wish that I negotiate alone with them so he sent his advisors Dr. Philip and Frederick of Thun; they were present during the negotiations. These two, Dr. Uhe and Peutingen, had a well-thought out speech. They tried to do what they could to influence me. I was advised to turn my books and things over to the Emperor and the dukes. But I said, I would gladly submit to the Emperor's authority, but I could not forsake the Scriptures. Since they continued to pressure me, I said: in a few words, this is

#5342b Re: Worms, Summer, 1540 . . . continued

my opinion: Before I turn my cause over to the Emperor, I would rather renounce my safe conduct. Then Frederick Af Thun said: This is enough and too much! He became angry at the pair, did not want to listen to them any longer and left. But Dr. Philip remained. Then they assailed me again to do it. I put it up to you. If the Emperor were to be judge in my cause, what would happen to me? How could I defend myself and proceed or how could I defend my cause if I were to let the Holy Scriptures out of my hands? The Emperor is too much under the influence of the bishops who have already condemned me.

Not longer after this the Bishop of Trier again approached me, spoke privately to me and said: Dear Sir Doctor, my doctors tell me you are prepared to be satisfied with whatever the Emperor will say about these matters? He supposed he could catch me in this way. But I said: most gracious sir, I can suffer anything, but I cannot surrender the Holy Scriptures. Then the bishop said: the doctors reported quite differently to me in this matter. Oh, how bad my position would have been if I had gone to the Emperor and had reported all this to him!

What in your opinion, Sir Doctor, ought we do in this matter? Then I had no other advice than that of Gamaliel in Acts [5:38ff]: One ought to permit the cause to develop. If it be of men, it would not long prevail. But if it were of God, they would be unable to suppress the teaching.

This procedure and especially the frivolous way the priests conducted themselves, disappointed Duke Frederick very much, being a wise and prudent prince. After I had spent fourteen days in Worms, I left and was taken captive.

That is the way things went, without any connivance on my part. The fault is not mine, but theirs. They wished to have their own way and were of the opinion they could not fail. The devil intended to protest the pope's government well and defend it, but Christ breached it. The devil knows well that Christ checks on him and he now has experienced it.

Caracciolus pressed hard at Worms to have my burnt [at stake], but the Duke of Palatinate and the Duke of the Rhine were against breaking the promise of safe conduct. In addition there would have been riots.

Cocleus came to me, wishing to talk me into giving up the safe conduct on my part, but Volrat von Watzdorf would soon have given him a lashing that his blood would have flowed over his head, if he had not been stopped [from doing so].

The Landgrave of Hesse, when he first came to me at Worms, was not as yet on my side. He came riding into the yard, and came to my room. He was still very young, and said: dear Sir Doctor, how are things going? Then I said: most gracious lord, I hope things will go well. Then he said: I hear that you teach if one no longer is able to get along with a woman, that he may take another? And he laughed. The court counsellors had put him up to it. But I laughed too and said: oh, no, you must not talk like that gracious lord! But he soon left me, giving me his hand and saying: if you are in the right, Sir, Doctor, then God help you!

I was very much surprised at the Bishop of Mainz, that God had so severely attacked him. Yet, he did not want to become pious. For after all, he was suffered all manner of sickness, St. Vitus dance, kidney stone, plague, fever, the French sickness [venereal disease] and finally consumption [or sterility]. Oh what poor creatures we are! We earn our bread with sin! If we live until the seventh year, we have done nothing but eat, drink, play, sleep. From eight years on we go to school, three or four hours a day, then until we are twenty-one,

#5342b Re: Worms, Summer, 1540 . . . continued

we do mischief, etc., and work ten years in all our life-time. Do we want to be proud about all our good deeds? What have I done today? I have chopped for two hours; three I have eaten; and for four hours have done nothing. Ah, Lord do not enter into judgement with your servant [Ps. 143:2].

#5352 Re: Young Hesse, Summer, 1540

When Hesse first came to me at Worms, he was young and put this question to me: Sir, Doctor, he said, I hear that you teach, when one no longer is able to perform sexually, then the wife may take another. Is this what is taught at court? I laughingly responded in a few words: Ah no! You ought not talk like that, gracious lord! Leaving me he said: If you are right, may God help you!

#5356a Re: Christ's Descent into Hell, Summer, 1540

I Peter 3:[19] St. Peter spoke very obscurely and abruptly dropped the subject. Now the text clearly states, that Christ having been killed in the flesh, that is when he died, went and preached to the spirits who did not believe in Him, that is in the days of Noah, when the ark was being built. Now, we must allow the text to stand as it is. When Christ died, His soul did not fall asleep; His body also did not decompose as when we die, where the body rests in the earth and the soul goes into its little room and sleeps. But His soul preached, the text states. In our confession of faith we also confess: He descended into hell. We believe as the Gospel and symbol assert. But how He descended into hell; what kind and how many steps He took, and how He redeemed the fathers, we cannot know. We must grant Christ the privilege that His death was different than our death. His soul had its task in death also, went and preached to the spirits in prison. We must grant the Apostle Peter and the others the advantage, that, even though we are not really able to understand these texts, they were more highly illuminated and were endowed with more powerful intellects than we. We must allow St. Paul the advantage, that he glories about the third heaven and says that he has heard words which no man can repeat. We know of one heaven only, and do not at all know what the third heaven is. It is to be wondered at, that Peter here speaks, that He did not preach to those who lived before the flood, or to those who came after, but to those only who disbelieved in the ~~says~~ of Noah, during the more than a hundred years, while the ark was in preparation. How this preaching took place is not for us to know. It is my opinion that it took place through spiritual diffusion. For the preacher had no tongue nor did the listeners have bodily ears. To sum up, in this one cannot say anything with certainty. We simply have to believe and let St. Peter know that which we cannot understand.

It is a comfort to know that Christ is with His own also after death. Thus we have the assurance, that whether we live or die we are the Lord's [Rom. 14:8]; whether we are in this life or come into death or even into hell. Now when we die, the body rests in the grave; the soul in its little chamber, that is in God's hand with Christ its Lord until we on the last day, are awakened in body and soul and are glorified. In the meantime, we are not separated because of temporal death from Christ, but our Lord, Who as the true God and man, well knows the way into and out of hell leading into heaven, is with us and His office and rule does not cease in respect to ourselves. Here in this life we must hold on to all of this in faith, until we are raised from the dead and come to the full knowledge of Christ and see His wonderful works and have eternal life. To this may our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ help us. Amen.

#5358b Re: Doings of the Devil, Summer, 1540

Concerning Poltergeists [noisy spirits]. Osiander gives the opinion that there is nothing to Poltergeists. Thereupon the Doctor said: I hold there is something to it. Osiander always has to be different. I have experienced at close hand, once when I was tired praying my canonical hours, a loud noise came from back of the stove so that I was greatly frightened. Since I became aware that it was the devil's doing, I went to bed and prayed God saying: "Thou hast put all things under His feet, [Ps. 8:7], by reason of Thy Son." If the devil is able to harm me, let him do so! And thus I fell asleep. On another occasion, I was once in Rebetal, and there was such a clatter of pots, that I thought that heaven and earth would collapse. But I soon caught on it was the doings of the devil. So I lay down and slept. In a third instance, I once came from mass and looked out of my cell into the garden. There I saw a large black sow running about the garden, where no sow after all was able to enter; and she soon vanished. That, too, was the devil. Fourthly, when I was at Wartburg, near Eisenach, I was shot at out of the blue with nuts, which too, was the work of the devil. Thereupon, I went to bed. These I have myself experienced. This is the truth. Also, once I found a dog lying in my bed. I took him and threw him out of the window. Since he did not cry out, I asked whether there were any dogs in the castle. The chaptain said: No! Then it must have been the devil, I said.

#5359 Re: Knowledge of Natural Science, Summer, 1540

Adam required no text-book, because he had the book of nature and all the patriarchs. Christ and the apostles cited many things out of this book, such as pain in child-birth [John 16:21], and the connection between the members of the body and the law of nature [I Cor. 12:12]. What seems to me indeed to be most pleasant is in Paul: there is a variety of members, but one body, of which [the members] none is able to do without the other. If the eyes do not see, whither shall the feet go? How they would injure themselves! If the hands don't grasp, how is one to eat? If the feet wouldn't walk, from whence could the hands take [things]? The lazy stomach alone lies in the middle of the body, and allows itself to be fattened like a sow. If the hands would not offer it anything, they soon would not be able to preach for anything. This parable teaches the law of mutual love among people like those pictures of the Greeks of the lame and the blind who helped each other:

What either lacked, he took hold of the other:

By the blind man's foot, the lame one walked.

And the lame man became the eyes of the blind.

But this depicts even finer, the forgiveness of sins: one foot often steps on the other; the tooth bites the tongue often; many a one jabs his eye with his own finger and it hurts; but there is ample forgiveness of sins and there is compassion for one another. Otherwise, one could not remain in one piece.

[Note: FB 1, 98 (1.20) concludes this passage " . . . In the same way, there ought to be reconciliation, forgiveness, unity, love and friendly goodwill among people, etc."].

#5369 Re: Ambushes, Summer, 1540

He caught up with me several times on the way and sought an excerpt of the college and conference. I led him into my steam bath. Then he said to me: Sir, Doctor, how can you be so daring and offer your hand to everyone? How easily one could have a gun up his sleeve and shoot you. The Doctor replied: How could anyone hope to escape? He would have to risk his life! He answered: And if I were to lose my life

#5369 Re: Ambushes, Summer, 1540 . . . continued

in that cause, the pope would declare as a saint and give you over to the devil!

#5372 Re: Luther's Preaching, Summer, 1540

On the Day of Pentecost, Luther said: I am now an old preacher. I have preached for 28 years, usually three times a day on the Sundays during Lent, and once when Duke Frederick was present, four times! -- And, he added laughing: after all we young preachers are learned! But God has given me strength; I was not able to keep up with the other great labours. Yet I have always continued to read [or study].

#5375 Re: Bishop Lorentz of Wirtzburg, Summer, 1540

Bishop Lorentz of Wirtzburg of the von Biberas, a very pious bishop, who would also have become a Lutheran if he had lived longer, once wrote to Duke Frederick: Dear Sir Uncle, you might well keep an eye on the monk Martin.. He is a righteous man and if your love no longer is able to retain him, send him to me. He would be a dear guest of mine.

#5375c Re: Duke Frederick's Protection, Summer, 1540

After the Augustinian meeting, Carolus of Miltitz was sent to the Elector, to have him send Dr. Martin to Rome. But Duke Frederick asked him to have [Luther] examined at Worms. In the meantime as the papists raged and lobbied the Emperor that Dr. Martin be burned at stake, and the Elector, not wishing to risk the ill-will of the whole Empire by protecting the monk, wrote to Dr. Martin Luther to leave shortly from Wittenberg and go to another secret place; for he was not certain he could protect his life, not being able to defend him at Wittenberg. Then the Doctor was afraid and hurt, not knowing which way to turn, he said: Father and mother forsake me, but the Lord takes me up [Ps. 27:10]. He invited all his good friends into the monastery to be his guests, saying farewell to them and saying he would leave the same night and go wherever God would lead him. As he with his guests were in a convivial mood, a hurried message came from the Elector which Spalatin had written: If the Doctor was still there, he was on no account to leave, for the Elector had something of great importance to discuss with him. And so the Doctor remained in Wittenberg.

It was a wise consideration on the part of Duke Frederick, that as often as he was asked why, he suffered him to remain in his country, he replied: I do not know of anything bad about him. I have nothing to do with him. If he should do anything wrong, then dispute and discuss it with him at Wittenberg -- that is where I have a university. Let him defend himself before you. I have so many learned men at Wittenberg that if he did wrong, they would not stand for it.

Again, when he was required to send Dr. Martin to Rome, he met with all his counsellors and asked them what he ought to do? Then Sir Fabian of Feulitz told the fable about when the wolves wanted to make peace with the sheep and requested that the sheep give the sheep dogs to them as surety, that they might have them as hostages. When the sheep, silly animals, turned over the dogs, which were their weapon and defense against the wolves, robbed of their armour the wolves attacked them and tore them to pieces. In the same way he said -- it would be with us if we allowed this man to leave the country. Even though they now pretend to be our best friends, they would attack us as heretics and we would be unable to defend ourselves. Therefore, it is my advice we keep the man here, so that he may defend us with his writings and they leave as well enough alone.

#5375d Episodes in the Life of Luther, Summer, 1540

Dr. Martin Luther, while still a prisoner at Erfurt, rode to a monastery with an attendant. As he dismounted a monk who saw him, recognized him and said to the other monks: that's Dr. Martin! When his attendant heard this, he said: Sir, you know that we have promised a nobleman to be with him today: Dear Sir, mount again while we still have time! And he secretly whispered into his ear what the monk had said. The Doctor then mounted and rode off. Thus his attendant again led him away [from danger]. Otherwise, he would have been murdered that night in the monastery. Thereafter he came to an Inn in Erfurt, there a provost was staying. He was observing his canonical hours and fingering the beads of his rosary for the Lord's Prayer. Then the Doctor went to him and said: Sir, have you nothing else to do than to rattle with those beads? The provost became angry and said: I suspect you are also one of those Lutheran villians who despises all good Christian order!

#5375e Re: Other Tricks of the Devil, Summer, 1540

A historical narrative: In the year 39 it happened that a man was possessed of the devil at Ehlenburg, though not completely for he still retained his reason. He had a wife who had a step-daughter. When he got tired of his wife, he killed her and took the step-daughter in place of a whore and soon departed from the village to another with the whore and became a shepherd. When he drove the sheep out [to the pasture], the woman went with him. When she went home, a man came to her, who said: kill that man when you get home, or else he will kill you! She became most sorrowful and did not know what to do. In the evening, he came home cursed and scoffed, then drew his little hatch out of his belt, turned it in his hand and said: where are you whore? Come here, I want to kill you! And he chased her about for a long time. At last, when a bit mollified, he said: come here and rid me of my lice. I won't hurt you! This the woman did, scratching his head until he fell asleep. Then the poor rag-a-muffin thought: what am I to do? He will kill me yet; ah, it is better that I kill him than he me! Such thoughts the devil gave her. While he slept she crushed his head with the hatchet as if he were an ox; chopped his head off, buried it in the manure pile, and the rest of the body in the other end. In the morning she went to a farmer's wife and told her to take care of her cows as her man had run away, therefore she could no longer do so. And she left, managing to get away, yet not altogether. For on the Saturday before the feast of Peter and Paul, 1539, she was executed. For it happened that the dogs of the village, running after a bitch, on the manure, smelled that some offal was lying there; dug up the head and carried to the village fighting over it. The people saw that it was the head of the shepherd. Thereafter the dogs also dug up the body, and everyone could see what had happened to the shepherd. And thus the shepherd went to the devil. Who knows how things turned out for the poor rag-a-muffin! This story ought well to admonish us that we be constantly on watch for the devil goes about us like a roaring lion seeking whom he might devour [I Peter 5:8]. For he resides in forests, waters and all places in our flesh, in the house, where we stand and go to play such games. Dr. Martin Luther.

#5375f Re: Inheritance from Christ, Summer, 1540

Psalm 2: I shall give you the inheritance, etc. Christ received the inheritance from His Father; this [inheritance] we then receive from Christ, just think [about it]! Because of His obedience, He shall have earned eternal life for us, and that inheritance shall afterwards

#5375f Re: Inheritance from Christ, Summer, 1540 . . . continued
be declared to be ours. God gave us His Son as an heir and says: Go, die, and I will give you the whole world. And the Heir then bestows gifts on us and says: you are the Lord's with me. And so we dress and decorate ourselves in His glory, righteousness and holiness, as if these were our own, step before God thus, and if He asks, whether we are His children, we say: Yes, indeed! He will know us by our clothing, which is that of His Son, just as Jacob put on the goat's hide and made his neck and hands rough, claiming himself to be his brother who was rough [hairy] and in this way he cheated his father. Dr. Martin Luther.

#5375h: Re: Characteristics of False Prophets, Summer, 1540 [Matt. 7:15]

1. Come on their own; 2. In sheep's clothing; 3. Rapacious wolves; This is what the false prophets are like. 1. They insinuate themselves; 2. Pretend holiness; 3. Are greedy; this is the way of a thorny bush: 1. One neither plants nor grafts it, nevertheless it grows. Before we are aware of; it even though one destroys the bush, yet it comes again where otherwise one is hardly able to grow good trees with much trouble and work. 2. Thereafter it injures before it produces leaves; 3. Then in fall it has nothing but wild sour fruit which contract the teeth. It has nothing but thorns and it pricks anyone who would pick the wild fruit.

#5375k Re: The Papists, 1545

Dr. Martin Luther spoke in front of Duke George of Anhalt and several other learned men, saying these words in the year 1546 [Note: the year may be 1545, since Duke George was not in Wittenberg, 1546]. The papists are wild and irrational against us and wish to fight for their lies with long spears and force, since they are unable to do anything with pen and truth. But I have prayed God in all seriousness, and still pray daily, that He frustrate their intentions [councils] and allow no war to break out in Germany during my life-time. I am certain, that God truly hears such prayers of mine and I know that while I live, there shall be no war in Germany. When I am no longer here, then you also pray. No one can name Jesus Lord, that is trust in Him from his whole heart as God and pray to Him, unless he have the Holy Spirit. I Cor. 12:3. But He is not given to gluttons, drunkards, fornicators and Epicureans, blasphemers of God, usurers, the greedy, crooks, thieves, those who use false weights and measures; despisers of God's Word and self-righteous persons, for such and all who think as they do and live as if there were no life after this life, such remain forever in the kingdom of the devil.

So this is the point, and here alone is salvation: that everyone obey God's Word; recognize his sins and be terror-stricken before the great anger of God and promptly depart from his evil ways and desire the forgiveness of sins. In the same moment he has received the first-fruits of the Holy Spirit, he will ask for the alleviation of temporal punishment which indeed always follows sin, yes, even conversion. But it is greatly alleviated by grace alone after the heart-felt repentance, prayer, obedience, humility towards God, following sincere love of God and the neighbour, as the Scriptures give witness.

#5375o Re: Predestination, Summer, 1540

Carstadt's Impious Dictum: If I knew that God had pre-ordained me to eternal demnation, that I should be damned, I would want to trot into hell all the more and not just walk. That is a very unholy dictum; for it means, you believe, but let me do as I please. I can manage. God does not want us to be our own god, taking care of ourselves, how and where it should come about that we are blessed. We are to believe

#5375o Re: Predestination, Summer, 1540 . . . continued
[in Him].

#5375r Re: Eating and Drinking, Summer, 1540

Drunk and eat; do not forget God.
Guard your honor; you will have no more
Of your property, than a shroud for your grave.

#5375t Re: Communing in Both Kinds, Summer, 1540

A Story: The present Elector at the Diet of Worms, while the old Elector Duke John was still alive, asked Doctor Eck: Dear Sir Doctor, why do you forbid the lay people from receiving the other form [wine] in the Sacrament, since you priests use both? For, after all, it is written: "Drink ye all of it"? [Matt. 26:27]. What is meant by the word "all"? Then Dr. Eck replied: most gracious lord, it means the priests. Then the Elector said: my dear fellow, does "all" mean the priests? I did not know that. For does it not say in another place: "You are clean, but not all [of you]"? [John 13:10]. Therefore, all of you priests will be found to be rogues and knaves.

#5375u Re: Monastery Properties, Summer, 1540

It is rightly said: the properties belonging to priests do not prosper. For this experience teaches that those who have drawn spiritual properties to themselves, in the end become quite poor and ruined. As the counsellor of the Elector used to say: we of nobility have ceased the monastery properties and divided them among our knights. Now the monastery properties have devoured the properties of the knights, so that neither the monasteries' nor the knights' properties are left. In this regard, Dr. Martin told a pretty fable: when an eagle had nothing to give its young, he saw that at a certain place sacrifices were made. So he flew there and quickly took a roast from the altar and brought it to the young in the nest. Then flew off again to get more. But a glowing coal stuck to the roast fell into the nest and ignited it. Since the young were not able to fly, they burnt with the nest, etc. This is the way it is with those who wrongfully acquire spiritual properties and seize them for themselves. They gorge themselves thereon, which were given after all, for the glory of God. Therefore, they lost their children and the nest, that is, all of their properties and in addition probably also harm their bodies and souls. Dr. Martin Luther.

Likewise, like the eagles' feathers consume all those with them, so it is with spiritual properties. George Maier.

#5375v Re: Greed of the Nobility, Summer, 1540

If a poor man owns a field, soon those of the nobility begrudge him this and seek to acquire it. This is what the advisors to King Abimelech in Gerar did when they saw that Isaac harvested a hundred-fold of the land which the King had rented him. [Gen. 26:12ff]. They soon corrupted the king and got the piece of land, saying: that land produces well. It must be ours. It is good land. We have more claim to it than he. Why did we rent it to him? Let us seize it again! We would rather have it ourselves! And so they intended to be rich soon. Just like that peasant who had a hen which laid a golden egg each day, though: Ah, there must be a great treasure in that hen! She must have a golden ovary! Thinking to get rich in a hurry, he killed the hen, took out the ovary, but found nothing. Likewise our princes will set in motion nothing else than to bring upon themselves the curses of God. As the others evicted Isaac out of the land, they did not know that the blessing of God was with him and that they were cursed. Dr. Martin Luther.

#5378 Re: Medical Advice to Luther, Summer, 1540

On June 25th, in the year 1540, Martin Luther being sick was advised by his doctors against taking a bath. To which he said: I am content, and it pleases me that the medics are addicted to their own methods. But people ought not to be prisoners of their rules. Avicenna, Galen in another land, in another age with other people prescribed their rules, which I shall not judge. To sum up, the medical men wish to make me into a fixed star, when I would be an irregular planet. I intend to sing Duke George's little song: what I enjoy and doesn't harm anyone, that you should well allow me to have.

Part II

Kaspar Heydenreichs Supplementary Writings, Years, 1542-1543

#5380 Re: Melancholy, April, 1542

Nothing is more harmful than melancholy. It eats the marrow in the legs as it is written: melancholy dries out the bones. [Prov. 17:22]. Therefore, let a young man be happy. That's why I write on my table: melancholy has killed many, etc. [Eccl. 30:25].

#5382 Re: Duke Henry, the Invisible, April, 1542

Once there was a poor little duke who had only one leg. When he was to dance, they had to carry him on a saddle beside the bridge. When his wife was asked what she thought of him, she said: he is leather and feather. For he liked wearing feathers. Once two fellows came to him, who said they had precious stones. They persuaded him these [stones] had the power to make him invisible. Persuaded the duke bought [them]. He then went into the hall naked and exposed himself for all to see. Then his wife ran up and covered him!

#5383 Re: Witzel, April, 1542

Witzel did well to keep quiet, for he had almost lost favour on both sides when he dared to teach a two-sided doctrine. They could not stand for that. Nevertheless, he managed to have an income of fifteen hundred florine a year; well and good! Eck also had as much from the bishopric of Würzburg. This is really dividing our Lord's robe!

#5384 Re: Harmonizing of Doctrine, April, 1542

Christ and Belial cannot be brought into harmony, and because of human nature they cannot give in on this point. For if they were to admit they are wrong in the matter of indulgences, the common man would think: once wrong, must always be presumed to be wrong. If indulgences fall, the mass falls; if the mass falls the monasteries and bishoprics fall and so on. Whoever first invented the indulgences must have been a cunning genius, for they have raised an immeasurable amount of money. No emperor or lord could have supported so many foundations and monasteries as the indulgences have.

#5387 Re: Lawyers, Justice and God's Justice, April, 1542

When mention was made of the Chamber of Justice, how unjust in these times judgements were: there are two kinds of justice [or law], the law of the lawyers and the law of the world [natural law]? If I allow myself, with my book against the Duke of Brunswick, to challenge the lawyers, then I have already lost. For my case rests on:

In the writings of two or three,

All testimony is established.

#5387 Re: Lawyers, Justice and God's Justice, April, 1542 . . . continued

But they say: Duke Henry is an important person, therefore more witnesses are appropriate. But to whom does God reckon as an important person? For it is said: He acts without respecter of persons. Thus it would also go in respect to the present little book concerning the consecration of a bishop, if one were to do justice to it. But what does our God ask about their laws and good causes?

#5391 Re: Law and Grace, April 11 to June 14, 1542

That the law works wrath, one can well see in the case of George Planck. For when he had come -- he played everything better by his own volition, than what he had to play to please others -- which is out of the law. I also know that Master Holstein would rather read the whole of Cicero than deliver one lecture. Why? The first thing he does out of his own will, without being forced. Therefore, it is a pleasure for him; this is grace. The latter, however, is unpleasant for him because it is the law; he has to do it. And so, where the law is; there is displeasure; where grace, pleasure.

#5392 Re: Prayer Serves the Church, April 11-June 14, 1542

Prayer has until now supported the church. Therefore, it must still be exercised. For this reason Christ says: ask, seek, knock! [Matt. 7:7]. First, we ought to ask. When we begin to ask, He hides somewhere and does not want to hear and does not want to be found. So, one must seek for Him, that is continue in prayer. When one then seeks Him in prayer, He locks Himself up in a little chamber. If one wants to go into Him, one must knock. When one has knocked once or twice, He purposely will not hear. Finally, when our knocking gets to be too much, He opens and says: what do you want? Lord, I would like this or that! Then He says, well, take it then! This is the way one must wake Him. In my opinion, there are many pious people here who pray very diligently; although there are also many bad rascals too. Therefore, the passage: ask, etc., desires nothing else than: ask, call, cry aloud, seek, knock, clamor! And this we must continue to do, on and on, without ceasing.

#5394 Re: The Government, April 11-June 14, 1542

If one would get rid of libidinous desires, give him something to do! This you women can see in the verse: "In fear, you shall bring forth children" [Gen. 3:16]. Now that is a thing in itself! But you also experience what a plague the maids of the household are for you! But to the man, God spoke: "The each is to bring forth thorns and thistles" [Gen. 3:18]. I mean it is a curse, that we must devour thorns and thistles; that is have troubles and fears in government. Therefore, let a young fellow have some joys. When he gets into the government, the libidinous desires will leave him. This he said, when the fact was mentioned that Erasmus Eber, the consul of Noricus, in his youth had been joyously entertaining.

#5399 Re: Court Life, April 11-June 14, 1542

Mr. Paul Knoch told me once, when he was still a boy in the chancery, he asked an old priest at court, how come there was so much pride at court. The sacrificing priest answered: Why do you ask such a foolish question? There is no noble who does not begrudge the peasant, the citizen, or even the prince. Yes, they even begrudge one another possessing anything good. This is true. For there are three kinds of devils: house-hold devils; court devils, and church devils. The latter are the worst when it comes to this that no priest is willing to grant something

#5399 Re: Court Life, April 11-June 14, 1542 . . . continued
to another, and that the one always thinks himself to be more learned than the other. Agricola is of the opinion, that he is more learned than I; Jeckel thinks he is more learned than Philip. That's the way it goes!

#5400 Re: The Leaders and Heads of Germany, April 11-June 14, 1542

The leaders are infatuated, for look at the lords one after another. Ferdinand, the Bishop of Mainz, of Bavaria, the King of France, infatuated they are, and not able to govern, which is a bad sign. Therefore, let us pray! The Bishop of Mainz does not even think about what is good for Germany. These are portents that terrify me. Occasionally, I have a desire to pray, but the portents drive me back. In the third chapter of Isaiah [1:3ff], it is written: For behold, the Lord will take away from Jerusalem and from Judah all supplies of bread and water, the strong and the warriors, judges, prophets, the prudent and the elders, the captains of 50, honorable men and the skilled artificer, the clever orators, and will give them youths to be their leaders and the childish shall rule over them. If our Lord God does not give us strong people, the devil will do with us what he will. Strong men must cope with it, who have the gift of God, in whom God works through the Word. But our leaders don't see this. Ferdinand thinks in this way: I shall build such a strong wall around the city, that the Turk cannot take anything from me. No, my dear fellow, not by far! If the cows cannot go out of the village, also the sheep, calves, etc., all is lost. Just think about it! Do not suppose that the walls around the city will suffice alone! In time, hunger teaches of what importance the farmers are; therefore, one must also care about them.

#5420 Re: Usury, April 11-June 14, 1542

A usurer is a seven-fold thief: I wonder what their thoughts are when they see a poor sinner led away, who hasn't stolen a tenth or even a hundredth part as much [as they have]. If they do not think: how much more just it would be if I went in his place!

#5422 Re: The Benevolent God, April 11-June 14, 1542

God could enrich Himself in many ways, if He so wished. If He made me a collector of rentals, I would get Him money enough. I would collect one fl. a year from a woman to free her of fleas; or one fl. from a person so that he could sleep. If He sent out angels to take money for all kinds of sickness, what money He would receive! But He does not do so; rather, gives everything freely.

#5423 Re: Prophecies of Martin Luther About the Word of God, April 11-June 14, 1542

The doctrine of Christ will never be destroyed. Even if I, Philip and Pomeranus die, there will still be people who will care for the doctrine and defend it.

#5424 Re: Who are Fortunate? April 11-June 14, 1542

Who are to be esteemed so fortunate? Those who saw Christ in person; Paul in preaching; Solomon in his glory; Rome in flower. The Jews saw all of these yet do not esteem them.

#5425 Re: Bad and Good Parents, April 11-June 14, 1542

Bad [evil] parents sometimes procreate good children. It happens occasionally that pious parents have bad children as the proverb states: distinguished persons, noxious children; evil parents, good children.

#5425 Re: Bad and Good Parents, April 11-June 14, 1542 . . . continued
Korah was an evil villian, but his descendents were of the best. Eli was also of this kind, so also Gideon. David was pious, but he had an evil son. [Note: Korah was the father of the children of Korah, writers of some of the Psalms . . . Gideon was the father of Ubimelech, who murdered his own brother. FWL].

#5426 Re: Town Secretaries, April 11-June 14, 1542

A great deal depends upon a good town-secretary, if things are to be done. It is my opinion that if Lazarus Spengler had worked in Nuernberg, the Gospel would not have been given up. The town-secretaries do that which in former times the prophets did for the kings.

#5428 Re: Weather, War, Canonical Hours, and Koran, etc., April 11-June 14, 1542

A discussion between Dr. Martin Luther and Master Philip Melancthon in the house of Dr. Cruciger. Philip said: ah, Sir Doctor, the weather we now have is bad and the air polluted. -- Luther replied: yes, for in the first place, winter and summer now are parting. -- Philip: This will also not be good weather for the poor mercenary soldiers, who are now in the field. -- Luther said: What can be done about it? Why do our leaders start such games? -- Philip: it is said Duke Moritz has gathered a lot of people together. Luther said: It does not depend on having a large number of men together, also not on costly weapons of war. It depends upon who has a good cause, and a good battle when they meet.

Beit Oertel of Winsheim: That's true, Sir Doctor. The one from Brunswick in the Lunenberg Heath had three men while his opponent had hardly one; nevertheless, he was defeated. -- Luther said: yes, I think he was thoroughly beaten. Ah, it is a devilish thing this war-mongering nature, excepting Dr. Cruciger who has so long planned for war!

Philip: Our Elector is well aware of the matter. They wish to put down our leader and elevate their leader dividing the opponents, so that we be destroyed completely. That is what they are after. -- Luther said: The prayer of the righteous avails such, [James 5:16]. And what does David say? But I shall call upon God. [Ps. 109:4.]. So let us pray. That party will not be crushed by weapons and councils of war, but by much prayer.

Philip: Sir Doctor, they will have their hands full when they get at each other; for I have heard wondrous things being said. And Dr. Hieronymus told me how Carlowitz and Pistorius are such intriguers, lovers of irony that it is to be wondered at. Luther said: well, will let the fluent and the eloquent bet at each other. They will make quite a go of it; they have started the affair without us. Dr. Bruck often said: those of Duke Maurice's party were never well disposed towards those on our side, so that it was to be feared that they would start something some time. Philip: But it's a great thing they have brought about. Dr. Luther: That's true, but what can we do about them? We can do nothing now. Philip: By now they will already know about it in Rome. The pope will write the Emperor and congratulate him. The King of England will know about it. They will talk about it in Paris at the court of the King of France, saying that the house of Saxony is collapsing into itself and that they are destroying each other among themselves. -- Luther said: That's true. Do you suppose the devil rests? He will have informed Rome long ago. The papists will have a big laugh. -- Philip: Yes, that's true, Sir Doctor, they will say, that's the evangelicals for you! That's the fruit of their teaching! -- Luther said: yes, they will talk that way about it in Rome, continuing to say: they will fight one another and exterminate their doctrine

#5428 Re: Weather, War, Canonical Hours, and Koran, etc., April 11-
June 14, 1542 . . . continued

themselves. That much we will hear. May God prevent it! Do pray diligently. God will change things. Philip, you pray, and the rest of you too. I prayed Duke George to death; we want to pray Carlewitz and Pistorius to death within a year. May God grant that the instigators meet the same fate that Judas and Achichophel met. -- Philip: Duke Maurice is a young man, hardly twenty-one years old. And when we have had great trouble and labour in the church to maintain the doctrine over against the pope and the whole world, so that no one could stand up against us, then to have such a young scamp come along and cause such a game among us, that we don't know where to turn! From now on, no one during his life will trust another. There will always be ill-will and grudges of heart. Luther said: It is true. Even though they set up an agreement, one will avoid the other, because their hearts are divided. -- Philip: This will not take place without a great repercussion to the church. -- Luther said: There will be a concussion and shaking up in the church! But God will well uphold His church. Duke Maurice is a young leader and does not as yet understand the matter. He imagines his counsellors are faithful and are very well disposed towards him. But he will learn. to understand, with great harm to himself, and then he will no longer believe them. -- Philip: Duke Maurice is just like a whistle; whatever the counsellors blow unto him, he whistles [back].

Thereafter Philip said: a man has come from Hungary, and was to have been ordained at Breslau; then, they in Breslau sent him to us here. -- Luther said: do they then in Hungary consider ordination to be such a great thing? -- Philip: yes, Sir Doctor, they consider it to be a **great** and glorious thing, even greater than when one is baptized. -- Luther said: it is true. In the papacy no one was permitted to administer the Sacrament, unless he has been consecrated. But ordination is not such a great thing. Baptism is much greater than ordination, etc. Baptism remits sins; ordination does not justify nor remit sins. I have baptized, administered the Sacraments, preached the forgiveness of sins. These are splendid, official acts of the church. Oh, baptism is the greatest thing!

And Dr. Luther said: In the same way, they held the canonical hours in such great esteem! Oh, if a person missed them, he would have been thought to have committed a great sin. Then Philip told this story: Sir Doctor, I knew a man, by the name of Peter. I stayed with him for several days in Heidelberg. He always prayed his canonical hours the whole day without understanding. He was also not able to read correctly. Then I said to him: Dear Master Peter, if you knew that your praying is as tiresome to our Lord God as it is to me, you would well cease your praying. David also would not greatly thank you that you so torture his book! Then he said: Yes, but it is my duty; I must pray! Then I said: but you don't understand it. This he admitted to me that he was unable to read, let alone understand it. Then I said to him: the canonical hours were not instituted to be prayed by one who does not understand them, but that they be sung in church. -- Then Dr. Luther interrupted the narrative and said: Their prayer was just like a murmuring. The same words were words of meaning.

-- But Philip returned to the story: then he said to me: Is it really so? Then I said: Yes, you are now a man of sixty years of age. You ought to plague yourself with praying! Then he said: yes, but I would be sinning if I omitted them! Then I said: no, I will take the sin unto myself. Take my example, and have a good night's rest. Then when you wake up, have a look into a chapter of Paul's such as taking the Epistle of Timothy for your edification. And then I will

#5428 Re: Weather, War, Canonical Hours, and Koran, etc., April 11-
June 14, 1542 . . . continued

tell you what is in it. And so I persuaded him, that he did what I told him. And I explained the Epistle to him during the days I was with him. Then he said: I would not have thought that there were such good things to be found in Paul! Thus I got him away from the canonical hours, but what he did later I do not know.

Then the doctor said: I also used to hold myself so strictly to the canonical hours. -- Then Philip remarked: Sir Doctor, your lack of leisure kept you from the canonical hours. -- Then the Doctor said: yes, I used to save up fourteen days or two weeks of the canonical hours when I had much to do and filled up a whole store-house. Thereafter, I took off a whole week for myself or one day, or three and locked myself up in a room, neither drank nor ate, until I had well prayed the store-house empty. And soon I had another pile gathered, and prayed so long that I became deathly sick because of it. And finally I saved up a quarter of a year's supply; then it got too much for me and I dropped it. -- Then Philip said: Dr. Kirchberg was a famous man. When he died he left a master 30 fl. who was to pray the canonical hours for him while he was lying sick in bed, so that he could make up the time which he had lost while he lay sick. What did the doctor at Erfurt do in my monastery? He was away for a quarter of a year, and when he returned and the canonical hours had added up very much, so that he could not again catch up on them himself, he took two to himself. He gave them several gulden to help him pray, so that he could be finished sooner with them. -- Then Philip said: that would be a precious stratagem for our lazy bishops! When they have saved up their hours, they could take one or twenty persons and set them up one after another in a row and let them pray off the hours. Thus they would be finished with them all the sooner! -- The Doctor then said: My prior here did it too. Even when he had sung the hours in the choir, it occurred to him that he might have left something out. So when he came into his cell, he began to pray the hours again. And this was a most unpleasant labour, a real prison and purgatory, which we had to suffer because of him. You don't know anything about that. Finally, I learned to do it differently, which was a better way, in this manner: when I had a Psalm in one hand, I counted the words in the other, which had a common place. What a plague that was! -- Said Philip: Sir Doctor, when I was in Heidelberg, I was with a doctor who also prayed his canonical hours and could often spend a whole hour praying over the "Glory be to the Father, and the Son, etc., repeating it so often, finally he asked me: Philip, where am I at? If I then knew, I said: Master Doctor, you are in this or that Psalm! But at times, I also did not know where he was with his praying. -- Then the respected Doctor said: they had a triple intention: material, formal and spiritual. If one had the formal, so that he could murmur the words, it was enough. And in the decrees of canon [law], it is found that if one with prior attention wanted to consecrate a thing and started with the proper words, and something else occurred to him, so that he forgot the following words, nevertheless, the things were consecrated by virtue of the primary intention.

Thereafter, Master Froeschel had something new to say. Then the Doctor said: you always know something new! You are a vehicle of the new. -- Then Philip said: the fuss with Duke Maurice will hardly go by without the spilling of blood. I have dared to face the issue, come what may over it all, as God wills; whether I be beaten or stabbed to death, I must commit myself to God. -- And this he said with all seriousness. Then the Doctor said: Ah, my Philip, it won't come to that, only pray! -- Then Philip said: no one can persuade me of that! Even if I die! --

#5428 Re: Weather, War, Canonical Hours, and Koran, etc., April 11-
June 14, 1542 . . . continued

Then the Doctor angrily said: do not speak like that, Philip; that is an evil utterance! -- Philip said: more important men than I have been killed: Was not Judas Maccabeus a wonderful man, who had done much good in Israel? Yet he came to such a pathetic end. [I Macc. 9]. The same also with Josiah, was he not a very fine man? Yet he had to die such a shameful death, quite pathetic. -- [II Kings 33:29]. Said Dr. Martin: yes, that was not a public but a private death. It was a foolish death. Philip: Sir Doctor, that is true. Oh, how often I have thought about it! -- Doctor: Ah, we must get used to it. Great people owe our God some folly; this they must pay for dearly. No great man is guilty of a small folly, but he carries on so foolishly that he puts wisdom and prudence into the shade. What did David do? He had enough wives! Yet he took another man's wife and became an adulterer and murderer. That was really acting foolishly. [II Sam. 11:27ff]. -- Philip: Yes, Sir Doctor, he had to make amends for it dearly enough in that he was a widower for some ten years afterwards.

After this the gentlemen discussed their ages. Then the Doctor said: I am now sixty years old. -- Philip said: No, Sir Doctor, you are only fifty-eight years old; your mother told me that. -- The Doctor said: You must not make me too young! I am certainly sixty years old. -- But Philip did not want to concede it. Winzheim said: I was born the first year of the current century (August 1, 1501) as my mother says. Master Erasmus Reinhold has confirmed the day of my birth.

Thereafter Philip asked who had built the monastery of Dobrilugh? Winzheim said: Sir Professor, it was the Dukes of Meissen who were the first founders; they donated villages and towns for this purpose. Afterwards Ferdinand also gave something. He now has debauched ten villages; there are eighteen left. It was built in the year when St. Bernard died. -- Martin said: St. Bernard lived under the Emperors Henry IV and V, and it was then in its first bloom. -- Philip: Yes, he lived under Luther. -- Martin said: during his life-time, he built one hundred abbeys and was a pious monk. -- Winzheim said: Sir Doctor, I think that Dobrilugh is a place of fate, for every year a person dies a violent death there. An accident almost struck me there too. When I was a guest there with my young Duke Otto Ernest of Lueneburg, my students wanted to fight one another. After that a nobleman wanted to kill my driver, and I saw nothing but specters in the transept. It was a glorious cloister! In the choir there were more than a hundred chairs, and these were made in such a way that one could support oneself in them as if he were lying down. -- Philip said: I have always advised that if the plague should start here, that the university should be moved there. -- Said the Doctor: not on your life, Philip! Brother Rausch is abbot there! They all might kill each other. -- Philip: we have sent them and Liebwerda? a preacher recently by the command of my gracious lord. But they are said to be little thought of.

Then the Doctor began to speak of the Koran and said, there are great lies in it, saying: they have written a book about Mohammed which contains twelve thousand words. When the Saracens then ask: is everything in it true?, they answer: no, a third part therein is untrue; the fourth part true. And it is a strange thing that the people believe the lies. They condemn themselves of their own free will. Mohammed and the devil are excused before God and men, for they say: the fourth part is hardly true; the other part lies. Just as if one were to say: the fourth part of my sermon is true, a third part lies, and if I were the lord and would want to devour the sermon, would I not be rightly condemning myself? That is the case here too. It's the fault of the people, not of Mohammed

#5428 Re: Weather, War, Canonical Hours, and Koran, etc., April 11-June 14, 1542 . . . continued

and the devil. They are excused. If one were to put a glass of wine on the table and say: a fourth part of the wine is malmsey but a third part is poison, I would like to see whether you would drink it! But the world is blind and wants to be damned and deceived. -- Philip: the world is also very ungrateful! -- and he cited the Greek verse: he strove unsparingly to please, but the world was made all [the more] ungrateful. They know nothing of canonical hours. We have borne the burden and the pain, the torture of the consciences.

#5434 Re: Mothers, Butterflies, Flying Insects and the Enthusiasts, Summer and Fall, 1542

The moth is born in this way. First it is a caterpillar, cleaves to a wall, produces a little house, thereafter in Spring when the sun shines warmer, the house breaks and the moth flies out. When it is about to die, it sits itself on a tree or leaf, presses a long string of eggs out of itself, and these all turn into caterpillars. In this way the generation is repeated. First it is a caterpillar and then it again becomes a moth. But I have found various generations of caterpillars in my garden. I believe the devil led them to me. Firstly, they have horn-like projections in their noses, etc. But they are really like the enthusiasts. For the caterpillars have pretty silver and golden stripes, appear attractive; but inside they are full of poison. And when they die, they leave many eggs, so that out of one, many develop, etc. That's [just] like the enthusiasts!

#5454 Re: David's Suffering, Summer and Fall, 1542

David had to suffer much. [II Sam. 16:22]. None of us could have borne such [suffering], not only were his concubines brought to shame, but also all his wives, and what is more, in a sacred place. It is an astounding thing that such should happen to so holy a man! Certainly nothing on this earth hurt him so much as that. If God had plagued anyone as much as that, His Son excepted, I should wonder. Josephat and Ezechiah had more good fortune and glorious victory than David, who in such great dangers and difficulties fought his wars.

#5460 Re: The Pope, Summer and Fall, 1542

The pope made everything into money: God; sanctity, grace; etc. It was a great thing to make such a sale of it. The Hungarians brought a wax candle to Ottingen which cost them 300 fl.

#5461 Re: Bucer, Summer and Fall, 1542

That scamp has lost all the confidence I had for him. I will never trust him [again]. He has cheated me too often. He acted badly on that day in Regensburg. He wished to be mediator between me and the pope, saying: Ah, it is a poor thing that so many souls should perish on account of one or two articles of faith! They look upon the matter as a political affair, where it is possible to change, and restore according to the temper of the times.

#5466 Re: Flee the Devil, Summer and Fall, 1542

One ought not to flee from the devil. When a certain person said that the pastor at Dresden wished to leave, he said: he will not do so, for I have written him. One must not flee from the devil; for if one flees from him, he will be chased by him! One must face him; like a person said to those who were fleeing from the battle.

#5467 Re: A Pagan Man and a Pagan Woman, Summer and Fall, 1542

It is no wonder the Jews killed Christ. It would not be surprising that they killed Him on account of two pagan persons, whose faith he praised, the woman's and the captain's. [Matt. 15:28 and Matt. 8:10].

#5482 Re: Robbers, Summer and Fall, 1542

One ought not keep faith with robbers: this I would have liked to write long ago. For, if I had there would have been murder committed because of me. For if they had discovered what I had written, they would have said: no, you must not keep faith with me! And then stabbed the people to death. Again some one would also claim he had to defend himself, even though he did not have to. For this reason, [what I say in this matter], belongs to counsel, to private advice. Then if one should find himself in a situation that a murderer comes upon him and tries to force him, saying: swear to me by all the saints, etc., that you will act thus and thus, etc. If he be so daring, that he can do it, let him allow himself to be stabbed to death, before he take such an oath. And they who die thus, die well if they are Christians, dying in the cause of justice; or let him try to stab the robber. That would not be a sin. He may take the Sacrament the next day, because his hand and sword becomes the sword of the government. And the government is the hand of God, because robbers are damned by Divine right as well as by right of the office of the magistrate. No refuge shall be open to them. If one swear, it is not right; but because of this he is not duty bound to remain silent. For this reason someone used this trick, after he had sworn not to tell another human being: when he came into a room full of people, he embraced the stove and said; this and this happened to me; I was captured there! But one must not do so. Let him only say: well I have sworn. I am sorry I did so; may our Lord forgive me -- but I don't want to keep the oath! If one does not keep the oath to our Lord God, which we have sworn in baptism, should one have to keep one's oath to such a loose character? They do not even honor their oaths and duty to the Duke. becoming perjured villians, and they would force a poor man to keep faith with them and become perjured toward his head of government? They are not only willing to be perjured themselves, but would also force other people to perjure themselves! They themselves are nothing but crooks and want people to keep [faith] with them.

#5490a Re: Epitaph to Magdalene by Luther, Summer and Fall, 1542

The sorrow, behaviour and words of Dr. Martin Luther at the death and funeral of his daughter, Magdalene, who died 1542 at the age of 14 years. The epitaph written by her father in agony:

Here I, Magdalene, Luther's daughter
With saints do sleep,
And, on this my bed, securely rest.
A daughter of death I was,
Born of sinful seed,
But by Thy blood, O Christ,
Redeemed, I live.

(Another version) Here I, Magdalene, Doctor Luther's daughter, sleep.
And in my little bed do rest with all the saints.
I was born in sin and had to die
But now, O Jesus, by Thy blood I live, redeemed.

*#5507 Re: Concord of Preachers, Winter, 1542-1543

If only we preachers could ourselves sit together united, as had happened under the papacy, things would be less difficult. But this

#5507 Re: Concord of Preachers, Winter, 1542-1543 . . . continued
is the worst thing; they are not of one mind among themselves. Yet, it would not be well and things must be as they are, or perhaps it would become again as it was under the papacy, that priests again would rule. That is the way it has been since the world began; that the preachers are divided among themselves. Ah, dear gentlemen! We are heading for bad times; you will see it! Perhaps in the matter of doctrine things will not be so bad 50 years hence, since the young people have now been raised therein; but look out for what will follow! Therefore, no one should fear the plague now, but rather willingly die. Ah, why should we fear death? Since Jesus Christ had to die, and that was really a dying! Our dying is only dirt compared to that. So then we also know that it cannot harm us. Paul says: Christ died for all, therefore, we live. [II Cor. 5:14ff].

#5535 Re: Study of Hebrew, Winter of 1542 and 1543

What should be done in the study of the Hebrew language? Whosoever would study Hebrew, that one, before everything else is advised to have [a knowledge of] the New Testament and let him hold faithfully to Christ as sun, light, and guide. If one fails in this and is concerned only with philology, like Munster and Pagninus are, it's all in vain.

Then someone [said]: Erasmus often refers to the Hebrew language in his Greek New Testament. -- The Doctor: Erasmus is quite a fellow! If he can only cavil with a single letter, he'll do it. Yes, he does not even spare the evangelists themselves. When Matthew cites a text from the prophets, "Tell ye the daughter of Zion, behold your King, etc." [Matt. 21:; Zech. 9:9], then Matthew is made to appear to do violence to the text, as if the Evangelist is ignorant of the text, when in this case he wished to be brief, so that we will run to the prophets to see. He knows well what is written there: Rejoice, etc., just as I also cite a condensed text, as I often do in the Jewish book. Whoever is diligent will look it up for himself. Erasmus is truly an Italian Epicurean. When in Rome, he socialized with the Cardinal, ate and drank with him; and then did nothing else but scoff at religion. On the other hand, Munster and Pagninus are hard working, but they are too dependent upon the rabbis. The Jews imagine we must study the Bible from them. Are we to learn the Bible from them, who are the Bible's greatest enemies? I can well see what our Hebrews are up to. They would like to see that we lose our New Testament and have it no more. Therefore, let everyone look diligently into this matter. This will help him to learn to understand the old. When Moses speaks of Christ, I accept him; otherwise, I let him be nothing to me. Thus Christ says: It is written of me in Moses and the prophets. [Luke 14:27 and 44].

#5536 Re: Gospel to the Turks, Winter, 1542-1543

I would like to see the Gospel proclaimed among the Turks, which might well happen. But I will hardly live to see it; you may, but you will have your hands full with them [Turks]. The personal things which are told of Mohammed do not excite me. The teachings of the Turks we must attack. One must examine dogma. Even though this person [Mohammed] were such as is described in their writings or such as they say he was breathed upon by the divine spirit [inspired], yet I am not concerned by such personal attributes. It is a matter of doctrine. It is easier to contend with them than with the Jews, because they concede many things in the Gospel and Testament: that Christ was born of Mary without sin, undefiled of the world, etc. The Nestorians and Jews certainly have helped to make the Koran. The Nestorians became Arians, who feel that Christ is not God, but some great Lord. The Jews say that the Messiah,

#5536 Re: Gospel to the Turks, Winter, 1542-1543 . . . continued
when he comes will not die, because it is written: the Messiah will remain into eternity. The Turks say that Christ was truly ascended into heaven. By this they are already defeated. Their Mohammed died, but Christ is alive taken up into heaven. Therefore, Christ is greater than their Mohammed. God may well be able to perform a miracle that they will have to hear the Gospel; whereas the devil has great power, he does not have the knowledge. If a Pascha were to accept the Gospel, one could well see what a division would be made among the Turkish people. If he has many sons, it could easily come about that one of them would come to accept the Gospel.

Then someone said: Sir Doctor, if they were only not so barbarian! -- The Doctor submitted: If God wills, no lack of culture can hinder Him. We were the coarsest asses of Rome when she began to preach the Gospel! That they now know something they can thank us. For they draw the scholars such as Bembo, Sadvleto unto themselves; and the bones of Cerberus to them in order to silence them. Otherwise, it is the height of barbarity. But I fear, it will cost much blood. The Turks would kill many more Christians, than the pope has. Well, now who knows what God will do. He is well able -- his predestination is too high for us to understand. He is an unfathomable God. We can say nothing about it, for it is written: my countenance you may not see. [Ex. 33:23]. What I intend to do, you may not know. You shall see my back when I have done it; only then shall you see it and not before. Who could have imagined that such a contempt of the pope would come about in Germany? If one had said this to someone a few years ago, it would not have been believed. Philip, on the other hand, said something to me about the Turks which I wish were true. For he [Turk] is reported to have said, I hear the Christians despise my Mohammed and scoff at him. Therefore; I shall defend him even at the risk of my life! If this were so, he would certainly battle to no avail; for when the Jews said: we will not have this man to rule over us, they went down. So also the Romans, so also the papists fell. Therefore, if he has spoken thus, it will also befall him. I would be surprised if he really made that statement.

#5539 Re: In Praise of Living Creatures, Winter, 1542-1543

When newly hatched chicks were brought to him, he said: Dear Lord God! How highly our Lord God has honoured flesh and blood, and yet it is not appreciated! He has multiplied and blest it. Pythagoras said that the motion of the stars effects a most pleasing harmony, but people too accustomed to it, too satiated, stubbornly ignore it. That's the way it is. We have such beautiful creatures; but we do not appreciate them, because they are so common. Philip once asked me to give him a sign out of the Bible, one that he would never get tired of. But one is unable to give a person anything that he can perpetually love, something that he will not be satiated with, unless the devil so wills. Whores and whore-mongers occasionally remain united and unseparated, and married folk are divorced. People can fornicate and steal continually, but to continue to love that which is good, is not possible. The devil destroys the works of God and Christ destroys the works of the devil. These are two contrary things, the seed [of the woman] and the serpent.

#5548 Re: The Blessing of God, Winter, 1542-1543

He said to those with him at table, how many people do you suppose work that we have food? In my opinion a farmer spends little time with growing bread, for besides he works his wood-lot, prunes branches, also only about a third part of the field produces grain. Yet all are provided for. My father once said to me, he doubted whether as many sheaves

#5548 Re: The Blessing of God, Winter, 1542-1543 . . . continued
grew on earth as there were people. Yet I believe more sheaves are grown, but I do not believe that as many stooks [15 sheaves each] of grain are grown as there are people. But a stook will hardly yield one bushel. This is not enough for a person to live on for a year, and yet all are fed, yes, there is some left over when the year is over. This is a wondrous thing; it ought to make us sense the grace and blessing of God.

#5564 Re: The Book of Job, New Year, 1543

When some one asked him about the Book of Job, it being an obscure book, he answered: Yes, it's true that it is obscure, but whoever studies it thoroughly, I will say, will not find it so obscure.

Job, a man, drawn into himself by extreme affliction, thought thus: how does it happen that I suffer ~~so~~ much and other evil villians are great lords and are fortunate on earth? On this [point] his associates came alone and said: God is not unjust; you have done something! They suggest everything they can as to what he might have done, wanting to put it this way: God does not punish anyone; if He does, then that person has merited it. But Job complains too much. Yet God says: Job has spoken rightly. The companions cite the syllogism: everyone who suffers is unjust; therefore, you suffer. The syllogism is wrong, because Job is being tested by God. But this means beating the backside with switches when our Lord God flogs his children so." But one must be careful when God beats His children! But they want to get at him [Job], claiming he had sinned; but he says no! Afterwards, when it seems to him God is over-doing it, he says: if only we both had someone to judge over us! This is said in temptation and he sins when he says he has no one to judge him. Afterwards, God issues the judgement and says: my servant is right over against you. That he has murmured against Me I am willing to make up with him. The companions of Job do not take into account original sin which dissolves all their argument. I believe that God has had this book written against the pride of the Jews who argue thus: Happy the people whose God is the Lord, etc. . . . when things go well! [Ps. 33:12; 144:15]. In like manner, the pope: I have the rule of the world; therefore, I am holy. But when God begins to come over such holy ones with his rods, He lets them have it without mercy, and there is no stopping Him.

Job lost ten children and his cattle in one blow; is punished in body and property, etc. Yet this was nothing compared to what David had to suffer. David's suffering was much more. [II Sam. 7:13]. He had the infallible promise: you shall be king, etc. But God salted his kingdom well. But David was no miserable man. -- The plays of the Greeks are nothing [compared to the story of Job].

#5567 Re: The Jews, New Year, 1543

When mention was made of the Jews, he said: the Jews have their sorcery [as well as anyone else]. This is the way they think: if we succeed, then we are in good standing; if not then a Christian can have it! For they look upon a Christian as a dog. But Duke Albrecht [of Saxony] did right, when a Jew gave him a button inscribed with strange signs on it, which was to protect from the sword, he said: This I will try out on you first, Jew! He led the Jew out of doors, hung the button on his neck, drew the sword and pierced him through: Thus, he said, things would have gone with me, had I trusted in you! It is as impossible for the magpie to leave off hopping, or the snake its slithering, etc. as it is for the Jews to leave off contriving the death of Christians. Yet, they are held by us in great honour. If I were in the place of

#5567 Re: The Jews, New Year, 1543 . . . continued

the lords in Frankfurt, I would call all the Jews together and ask them why they call Jesus the child of a whore, his mother a whore, yes indeed a "hariam" that is a privy [literally "shit-house"]. If they could prove this, I would give them 1000 fls., but if they could not do so, I would have their tongues torn out of their throats. To sum up: one should not tolerate the Jews to be among us. One should neither eat nor drink with them.

Then some one said: Sir Doctor, it is Scripture that the Jews before the day of Judgement are to be converted. -- Then he: where is it so written? I do not know of a certain Scripture [that so teaches]. Out of Romans 9, a verse is cited, but they cannot prove anything with that. [Rom. 11:25,26].

Then the Doctor's wife: it is written; there shall be one shepherd and one sheep-fold, [Job 10:10]. The Doctor: Yes, dear Katy, this happened already when the Gentiles accepted the Gospel. At that time, someone said, many were killed and wounded. The Doctor: this should not be done chiefly because they have been granted safe conduct. The Jews are a hard people, and this the prophet Isaiah well knew: "You have iron veins, an iron forehead" [Is. 48:4]. Also, they insist on arguing: they cannot be torn from it: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, that blood and lineage. But what does God ask about nobility and blood on earth? It is true enough, that there must be difference of person, and one must not have a man be a woman, a woman, a man; but to boast, he cannot depend upon it. And it is no wonder they are so obstinate, for they raise their children to be so from youth. For as soon as a child has hardly learnt to speak, they stand there and say: son, that is an accursed people! What you impress upon children in their youth, they do not easily forget. Then the devil assists too. he has large claws and whoever is caught in them, he holds on to, as has been sufficiently experienced in the papacy. Therefore, we should always pray and revere God.

#5582 Re: Pope Sergius the Third

No Christian ought to be surprised, that the pope carries on with Christians as he does; hangs them; chokes and burns them, etc. For it has happened that one pope has done so to another, playing the same game. For Pope Sergius had Pope Formosus disinterred; his cadaver degraded, his consecration annulled; his head chopped off and finally thrown into the Tiber at Rome. In my opinion, this was acting in a hellish, devilish and tyrannical manner. What no dog would do to another, this one pope had to do to the other, playing such a game, etc.

#5587 Re: Temptations of Faith

Of the woman's temptations of faith: When a certain person spoke of a woman who was troubled in his thoughts, because she did not believe, the Doctor said: But does she not believe that which is preached, how Christ has done enough for our sins? Then the other: when she is asked, she says: oh, yes, dear sir! And yet she continues to be troubled so much; is in great fear and worry, that she would like to commit suicide if it were not for her children. -- The Doctor responded: oh, that does not matter! Just tell her that she bear the fear and to be patient. If, on account of this, she hang or drown herself, it cannot harm her. It is as if she dreamt that her neck fell off. For this is the devil's doing! He hangs on to and attacks the believing folk. Where-ever he knows of a pious heart or a sick person, that's where he proves his power, that devilish spirit! But he will be well rewarded for this. It is only that temptations work love and hope toward God, otherwise one is tempted to think God is cruel, etc. But no one can understand this,

#5587 Re: Temptations of Faith . . . continued

no one except the Son of God. He was tempted unto the sweating of blood. We used to call them temptations of blasphemy and they were rightly so named, for they were actually spitting into the face of God. May God protect us from that!

#5590 Re: The Pope and the Church, New Year, 1543

The pope is the cuckoo, the church the lark. Wherever the lark is, there the cuckoo also likes to be; for he thinks he can sing a thousand times better than the lark. Thus the pope places himself in the church; and there one has to listen to his song; as he cries down the church. But just as the cuckoo is good for something to be sure, to announce summer, so also the pope [is good for something] to announce to us the Day of Judgement.

#5599 Re: Faith Alone Justifies, New Year, 1543

Romans 3: Faith alone justifies in heaven, that is in the church. The citizen alone endures in the state, that is in the world. A married man alone serves in the household, as follows:

The master himself must be servant,
If he would find all things in order in the house.
The mistress herself must be maid,
If she would find ways and means within the thouse.
The household servants nevermore concerned
What advantages the house or damage brings.
It does not matter to them,
Because they do not own the same.

#5602 Re: Morons Saved?, New Year, 1543

Whether morons may be saved? Certainly none other than Claus Fool would readily ask such a question. To reason otherwise is simply satanic. They are not harmed as far as their souls are concerned, because they are baptized. But, just like the devil attacks a clever person, so he also attacks them. How does he treat the innocent little children, whom he attacks, who have done no wrong during all their days? Our Lord God permits these to be troubled, with terror. Does he not indeed ride many a fine, holy prophet? Was not David a great prophet? Did not the devil ride him nevertheless? The same with Saul, Bileam.

#5604 Re: England (Date Unknown)

The King of England had retained nine tons of gold annually, which are given to the pope. But the pope has well earned nothing else from him. He held up the king's petitioners at Rome for four years in matters of his marriage with his two wives, one the Emperor Charles' sister, whom he rejected taking the other. It was not brought to a conclusion because of the Emperor. The anti-pope gave him a decretal against Leo to the effect that he might take the other woman after repudiating the Emperor's sister: papal bull against papal bull. After this the King sent his petitioners to Rome and requested a decision and judgement as to which bull he should keep; thus the pope delayed the petitioners. Finally, he sent them home again with Cardinal Compeggio with them, to hear the case between the King and the Queen. There he was received with honour and set a day. Then the King and Queen came before the altar and knelt before the cardinal. Now rush letters arrived from the pope, commanding him on no account, to close the matter. Then the Cardinal did not know what to do, and made the excuse that he had not considered that the day was a feast day, and so one may not conduct an examination. He post-poned the matter at hand and secretly left

#5604 Re: England (Date Unknown) . . . continued

the country. Then the King and the nobility took action with the whole nation, and returned the trickery of the pope; erased his name from all letters and books, and retained the nine tons of gold.

#5605 Re: Luther's Kidney-Stone (April 4, 1540)

Dr. Martin Luther on the Sunday of Quasimodogeniti, 1540: Even if I had had a Turk who would have been willing to cut me to pieces, I would have been willing to give him 20 fl. to be received after my death. -- These words Martin said to me and my wife at Wittenberg, after he at Schmalcald had been unable to pass a drop of water for 13 days because of [kidney]-stone, and had now to return home.

#5614 Re: Young Lad's Behaviour (Date Unknown)

How a young lad ought to behave under all circumstances:

Be faithful and silent,

Beware of lies,

Do not let your hands be sticky [don't steal],

Avoid evil company,

Be willing and diligent,

Quiet, well-behaved and peaceful,

Do not gossip as to what goes on in your home,

Carry messages quickly and well,

Let patience be at home with you,

Thereby you will gain great favour,

Be careful about all things,

Increase education and consider moderation,

Do not rue having to be watchful,

Have joy in being willing,

If you do this, you will be pleasing

To the rich, the poor and all.

#5615 Re: Schneeberg [Mine], Year 1540

The year 1450, when Schneeberg was to begin, for a whole year a comet stood in the heavens, its tail stretched toward Schneeberg. Then the leaders of Saxony asked astronomers what it portended? The astronomers, according to their opinion answered: it neither foretold plague nor war, but instead a great treasure which would be found that year. Thus the Schneeberg [mine] was founded that year.

#5618 Re: Life and Death

Song in Isaiah Chapter 16:

Death and life in a word: God, Come.

To the reprobate it shall be said: Go! to the upright: Come!

There is no more gentle and pleasant thing on earth than a sweet sleep. Therefore, nothing sweeter than the death of a true Christian. He sleeps, to rise joyfully and with jubilation. All created things are obedient to God the Lord. The sun illumines and shines willingly, the moon, the stars, both by day and night. The earth brings forth leaves and grass, fruits and all manner of growth. Each acts no further than it has command from its Creator. Bread strengthens but not more than its Creator has commanded. So too wine, muscatel, etc. in sum: all growing things.

#5620 Re: Right Love of God

A right love of God is so minded in the heart and also says so with the mouth: Oh, Lord God, heavenly Father, I am your creature, do as you please with me. It is all the same to me, for I am ever yours,

#5620 Re: Right Love of God . . . continued

that I know. And if it should be your will that I should die this hour or suffer any great misfortune, I am willing to do so gladly and from the heart. . . I am determined never to consider my life, honour and property higher and greater than your will. It shall always be well pleasing to me all my days.

#5621 Re: The Sun

Note the sun well. You should know that when the sun loses its light, that it certainly is a bad sign. Some misfortune will follow. In the same way, when a comet, the tailed star- appears. In this experience, Christ teaches, Luke 21[:21], that when such signs in the sun, moon and stars shall appear, it will mean the last misfortunes of the world.

#5630 Re: Prayer

Dear God, one must pray. It is my opinion that if only we pray earnestly, the Turk will now not harm our people such. If one should ask a king for something or beseech him, he thinks of himself with pride and is well pleased. Why are we not pleased, that our Dear Lord Christ says: my dear fellow, kneel down before me. Lift up your hands; ask what you will; I shall give it to you; only do not doubt.

#5633b Re: Prophecies of Martin Luther, February 12, 1546

A prophecy of Martin Luther which he made at Eisleben, the 12th day of February, in the year 1546, hence six days before his death, while at table. Thus: Halle, you worthy city, may the gracious God protect you that you do not sink! You have always loved the Word of God. Therefore, He will preserve you.

Concerning Leipzick: Oh Leipzick, you are an evil worm. A great misfortune will befall you. But I will not live to see it, but the scholars on the street will experience it. In the year '47 a misfortune will come over it; in the year '52 she will suffer death, in '54 will have been a city.

#5635c Re: Luther's Prediction, Tumult of German Nobility

A prediction of Dr. Martin Luther, of the uprising tumult of the German nobility, Monday after Cantate, in the year 1544. When Master Philip Melanchthon returned from attending the annual Easter fair at Leipzig, he reported that Duke August had taken over the bishopric of Merseburg. When Dr. Martin heard this, he was astounded and said these words: The rulers start slowly, but indeed arrive in the end. They cease the ecclesiastical properties afresh. I am innocent of this blood. I have never consented to making the ecclesiastical properties into the worldly. The robbers will be punished because of that, even though it is better that these properties be retained in Germany than they be despoiled by the pope, church robbers, and courtesans. In the meantime, the believing churches will have to suffer hunger when the bishoprics and canonical properties are taken away. About these things the nobility looks with displeasure, for the large devour the small. Thereby the nobility and the rabble will be aroused. The Emperor will expect to have an advantage until the vultures comes flying to him, with whom he will form a false friendship. Thereafter the tumult of the nobles and princes of Germany will arise. This is not the fault of the theologians, but of the leaders. For the nobility has forged a chain and started a noise. Then Germany will be robbed of all powers and finally come under the Spanish yoke.

This is the scheme of the devil, who desires to destroy the Word of God and destroy Germany. I am afraid that we have all been betrayed

#5635c Re: Luther's Prediction, Tumult of German Nobility : . . . continued
and sold. For if the Emperor and the nobility attempt this, the Emperor will devour the nobility along with the rest. For the freedom of Germany is hated by all those who want to lord it over all. The princes of Germany now feel themselves to be secure and good fellows, and are supporting many traitors in their courts. For the Bishop of Mainz boasts that he has representatives at all the courts of the princes. He is such a tricky head that he can carry on an affair with two kinds of hands. Just as he deceived me by strangers in a private matter, thus poor Germany is in great danger. Therefore, one ought to be on guard and pray.

The uprising of the peasants was only a prelude and the "a-b-c's". But the nobles' rebellion will destroy everything, unless God in an unusual way prevents it. The bishops and nobles are the scorpions, gad-flies, and hornets of Germany, which will easily fall for the stratagems of the Spanish. This the lawyers may well confirm. Everything belongs to the Emperor. We say no to this. We concede that the Emperor is lord over the citizens, but not over the church and the kingdom of Israel. This concerns us all. For when the nobility will seek to weaken the princes, it will weaken itself.

Such predictions Master Antonuis heard and wrote down three years ago.

#5638 Re: Luther's Prophecy About the Pope, 1544

A prophecy of Dr. Martin Luther, in the year '44. At the time when the pope or his commanders will persecute the Gospel, which will not fail to happen after my death, the Emperor will set closely related princes at each other; not in order to spare those who are of his religious persuasion, but that he may devour both sides and destroy them. To such disunity, the nobility above all will contribute and not rest, until it has betrayed one side, in the hope to win favour with the Emperor and be permitted to retain its properties. But the Emperor will spare them no less, but eradicate them. And when all this has been accomplished and no one is left over of the nobility also, every city will drive out of the land their chief [magistrate] and each village its nobleman. And if I were still living then, I would not seek to prevent it. . .
[Last part of text unclear].

#5651 Re: Why the Wells Run Dry

Spalatin asked why and in what way it happens that now the deepest and largest wells run dry, like the well at Bauritz near Aldenburg, which ran dry. The Sir Doctor responded: don't you know that when God wanted the flood to come over the world and destroy it, then the wells broke open and increased everywhere. That's what is happening now, only now God wants to destroy the world with fire. So all the wells decrease and the earth will become dry; just like one lets a bundle of branches get dry and then throws it into the stove to be readily burnt up. This is the way God wishes to conduct the last times, and you can already see the beginning.

#5654 Re: Women and Conscience

Whosoever has many women about him deployed,
His conscience soon will be destroyed.

#5655 Re: What Sets the World on Fire?

The lawyers' book of laws
The Jew's desire
And what the maid has under her apron,
These three set the whole world on fire.

#5657 Re: Luther's Illness

Once when Sir Doctor was sick, he said to Dr. Justus Jonas, Should I not be sick? My head and my pen once were full. Now I have poured it all out and made it empty. Ought I not also be weak since my head has become so empty?

#5669 Re: All Under Sin, 1544

God has concluded all are under sin. [Rom. 3:9, Gal. 3:22.] It should be said of God, He shall have spoken not created. You must not understand, because he shall have created, he shall have created sin. Rather, he included it; this is according to Scripture. When he said in paradise; whatever day you sin you shall die. This was not death on the spot. [Gen. 2:17.] But afterwards, after the fall had taken place and had been forgotten, then the fact itself was the revelation. Just like a medical man, who says: you have the plague; you have fever! He concludes it under the sickness; that he might heal it.

#5670 Re: Annotation of Erasmus in the New Testament, 1544

I like to believe they would be ineffective because of the Epicureanism and venialities that have been inserted. He has caused many to lose body life and soul. He is a cause of the Sacramentarians. As much as he has promoted philology, he has harmed the Gospel. He has been a shameful person. Zwingli was led astray by him; Egranus, he also converted to believe as he does. He also died without the cross and light. If I were young, I would study the Greek language to perfection, so that I could make other annotations therein.

#5672 Re: Future Life, 1544

When I was still at my mother's breast, what did I then know about eating thereafter, or drinking, or living? Thus we understand even less as to what our life in the beyond will be like. Which I bore in my belly and formed in my womb, as he says in the prophet. [Is. 46:3]. Then it is also written, you are not yet what you shall be; you are still in the womb. All the golden chains, great kingdoms and dukedoms, to our Lord God are as yet in the womb. But it is not proudly spoken by our God that such great men as Dr. Martin, Jeckel, etc., are still in the womb of our Lord God. [Are still being formed]. If our Lord God asked for my advice and Dr. Jeckel's, we would advise Him differently.

The Turk is unable to imagine a future life, different from this poor miserable life. He says there will be beautiful gardens, and naked women will serve us at table, etc. If the thing is not truly pleasurable, it is non-existent. That is his opinion; it is no joy. That is also the opinion of a sow, the Epicurean: nothing is pleasurable if it is not perceived by the senses. But after this life, the perception is destroyed and therefore also the pleasure. Yes, one should say to him: you knew a lot, didn't you, when you were in your mother's body and childishly sucked her teats. And did you thereby sense what you are or would become? How could you know anything about that? I am exasperated beyond measure. They are all stupid asses. Cicero described them nicely: he descalimed that argument of the end loudly.

John in a short verse simply states: "No one has seen God". [John 1:18]. Thereby he transcends all the arguments and opinions of the prophets. There is nothing to it. And this Cicero saw, when he said: I do not question what God might not be; but what God may be, that's what I ask about. The Son, who is in the lap of the Father, etc., the Christ, Son of Mary; He is the light of the world. Whoever does not have Him, all the arguments of the prophets will not help. The essence of things you will not recognize in this life. Afterwards, they may well be able

#5672 Re: Future Life, 1544 . . . continued

to put things together to some extent, out of things created, so many works out of the human mind, but no more.

#5673 Re: Reproving, 1545

Over against those who claim human faults ought not to be reproved in particular. One should reprove in general and not scold people so, they say, He responded: Ah, yes, I know that assertion well! This has come before me before. One is to say: adultery will be punished by our Lord God, but He will do nothing to the adulterers. [Matt. 12:34]. One should speak thus. Christ therefore said: You brood of vipers! You are damned! [Matt. 10:15]. The devil will come for you. And you scribes, pharisees, etc. What may one preach to them? But they will catch on. Jesus says: Amen; Amen, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in that day. Now it will do no good, for they war against the parish priests and preachers who go into their wives and daughters. They are well taken care of formerly. School-masters, and assistant school-masters, and all of them slept with wives of the citizens, etc. So they invited the women into their homes and gave them the top places at table, and were of good cheer, so that they themselves coined the proverb:

Whoever would keep his house clean,
He'd better keep the priests and monks out.

But those who live a chaste life, whose teaching is pure, they cannot stand. Nevertheless, the Gospel has brought great purity: about 2000 people have married, who would not have otherwise. It is not a scolding! They fear the word themselves. They are afraid a day may come that they will be adulterers and fornicators; they are afraid of that. We have a difficult office, we preachers. We are to give account for the souls and yield to their desires. If we do so, we make ourselves partners of sin. If we do not go along and reprove, then it is called defamation and slander. Well, then, etc.

#5718 Re: The Devil

Some other stories of Dr. Martin Luther: When a certain pious priest prayed in his domicile, swinish sounds contrived by the devil came: zu, zu, zu, ha, ho, ha! He responded: Oh, how justly things have turned out with you! Since you did not wish to be an angel, continue to be a devil! Such contempt that haughty spirit cannot bear. One must have the courage not to be afraid of the devil, but he ought always to be held in contempt.

#5720 Re: God's Dealings

"I have born you in my womb, etc." [Is. 46:3]. How wondrously odd our God deals with us! How gloriously and proudly He speaks of Himself! We let Dr. Martin Luther and Master Philip be nothing. But He speaks such glorious words of Himself; and does not wish to regard our teaching skill. As much as a cow knows about her life, so much we [know] of ours. What can we know of eternal life; how will it be there? The princes and great potentates are not in our Lord God's womb.

#5793 Re: Poem by Luther About the Word of God, Wholesome Doctrine

This little book is a precious treasure,
Teaching great art and wisdom,
Blessed he who lives according to it.
God will bless all of his affairs,
And give us the Kingdom of heaven.

#5793 Re: Poem by Luther About the Word of God, Wholesome Doctrine . . .
continued

For after all we must leave this world,
But then the Word will hold firm with us
Strengthening us in death's last hour
Rescuing us from out of eternal death.

#5795b Re: Luther's Poem About Christian Insight

What makes life blessed here on earth
Are the following things, 'worthy Christians:
To fear the eternal God our Lord',
To love His commandments and them obey,
To earn our living by the work of our hands,
Thus you live blessedly, need not be punished.
Your wife will gladden your home with children,
Like a fruitful vine with luscious grapes.
Your children round your table will thrive,
Like young branches on a fat olive tree.
Thus God blesses the man who in Him believes,
Who reverently keeps righteousness before his eyes,
His blessings will ever gladden you,
The Lord will prosper you with His goodness,
Fill you with good things all the way.
Children's children will see by the Work of His hand,
His peace ever over his own people,
Let every Christian say: Amen, let it be so.

#5798 Re: A Rhyme by Luther

I live and well know how long.
I die and well know when.
I proceed and know well whither
I marvel that I'm not happy always!

#5836 Re: Isaiah

Martin Luther's comments on Isaiah: "And I will carry away its fence, and it will be pillaged; I will forbid the clouds, etc." [Is. 5:5ff].
O Lord God, we miserable people are torn asunder too much, and trodden down too much. Oh Lord Christ laid waste too much, deserted in these last days of anger. Our shepherds are wolves; our watchmen scoffers; our protextors are hostile; our saviours murderers, and our teachers seducers. When, when, when will your fierce anger cease?

#5837 Re: More of the Same by Luther

Behold He is set for the fall and raising up again of many in Israel. [Luke 2:34]. Just as a target is set for the marksmen, towards which all bows, guns, and stones are directed, Christ is like that. Though His detractors are very much disunited among themselves; yet in this, nevertheless, they are all of one mind to contradict Christ. This has been proven when Pilate and Herod were deathly antagonistic toward each other, over against Christ they were united. So also the Pharisees and the Sadducees. As Psalm 2:[2] says, and the people join into one against the Lord and His annointed. So all the orders and foundations, even they are against each other among themselves, yet all are against Christ. As Asaph the prophet writes in Ps. 82:[6], "All the nations gathered themselves against Israël, Edom, Ismael, Moab, Hagar, Begal, Aman, etc., even though none agrees with the other. Evil and lies disagree with each other, but against the truth and righteousness they have to unite so that all contradiction for the nonce cease. To sum up, whenever

#5837 Re: More of the Same by Luther . . . continued

Christ and His faith is present, there must be contradiction, or else it isn't Christ at all. If people do not openly oppose Him, then the devils must do so secretly. They can cause enough contraction of conscience. Are you a Christian? For Christ is not even a sign for many in Babylon or Assyrian but for many in Israel: and that is a great sign that the pope's government is not from Christ, but from the devil. But we have the comfort of Matt. 10:[40; Lk. 10:16]. "He that despises you, despises Him who sent me."

#5835 Re: Before the Fall

What might have been done by man before the fall? If Eve had not sinned, we would have eaten, drunk, slept all the same, etc., but all this without sin or disorder. This would have continued as long as it pleased God, as for about two or three thousand years. After that we would have been changed not through death, but in a moment in the perfect and eternal life, without sorrow (since we hope that also to be our future). Because through the devil and the consent of man, sin has insinuated itself. The judgement has been given from the beginning and it continues in this life without ceasing: whatever day you eat thereof, you will die. [Gen. 2:17]. This is where it comes that one must die.

#5839 Re: Simeon and Hannah

Allegories of the history of Simeon and Hannah: Luke does not name Mary and Joseph by name, but says: His father and mother were amazed, in order that we might be reminded of the statement of Christ: "Whoever does the will of my Father Who is in heaven, he is my father, mother, and all this because He wishes to remind us of the spiritual meaning. [Luke 2:25ff, 8:21]. The temple signifies the place in which Sacred Scriptures are taught. The prophet Simeon brings forward the testimony concerning the Messiah in sacred words in the temple. Afterward, he testified to Mary: Your soul shall be pierced, and Joseph will die before the passion. But of Mary, that is of the church, prophecy shall never end. Mary holds a three-fold position that is she is virgin; a married woman; and finally a mother, surrounded by the greatest calamities of her Son.

#5842 Re: Luther's Advice

Be God-fearing and pray; trust in God,
And you will find help in every need.

#5843 Re: Baptism of the Jews

First: one ought to give him a name, or let him choose his own. Secondly, Do you know the Ten Commandments? Thirdly, Do you believe also that you are a sinner, born in sin and in need of the Saviour the Messiah, to save you from sin, death, and the power of the devil? Fourthly, Do you believe, truly, that our Lord Jesus Christ is the self-same Messiah, promised in the Law and prophets, of the seed of Abraham and of the line of David, born of the Virgin Mary, true man and God, given to us by the Father? That He suffered and died for our sins and rose from the dead, in order that we be delivered from sin and made alive eternally through the Holy Spirit, which He [Christ] without any merit on our part has earned and given to us? At this point let him recite the confession of faith. Fifthly: because such faith causes one to pray and call upon God as children their father, as Joel says: All who call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved. Let him repeat the Lord's Prayer. Conclude with the exhortation: so you must no more doubt that your

#5843 Re: Baptism of the Jews . . . continued

sins are forgiven you, and you will be called a child of God and be one through Christ Jesus, the eternal Son of God, in Whom you now believe. The grace of God be with you. -- Then, he said, baptize. Amen.

#5845 Re: Spiritual Sins - In Luther's Old Age

I have many sins of the spirit, which I am not aware of, also the sins of the body have to a large extent left me. Avarice does not trouble me, for I have enough money. Unchastity also does not tempt me, for I have enough things to occupy myself. But anger does not want to leave me! I am often so angry over a trifle, not worth speaking about, that whoever crosses my path then, must suffer; for him, I haven't a good word! Isn't this a shameful thing? I am well in control of the other sins, luxury, comfort and others, but that trifle can excite me so!

#5850 Re: The Saxon Princes

Those of Saxony will suffer great disasters, become poor and miserable. Nevertheless, the One on high will not forget them. German fidelity and faith will be changed into a lack of faithfulness, because they have become disloyal to their dear Lord.

#5851 Re: The Whole of Germany

Woe unto you, Germany, destroying yourself! You who were once free, you will be brought into slavery yet in spite of all, not to remain therein for the black eagles will fling themselves from a very high mountain and die. Then the House of Saxony will decorate itself with the feathers of dead eagles and Gog and Magog will be weakened. Then a golden age will come into being for the elect. But for the godless, gnashing of teeth and eternal hellish pain.

#5858 Re: The Bible

Dr. Martin Luther: I have now in my illness studied the Psalter, and I cannot marvel enough! Oh, what a man David was! How worried he is that he be cast away of God! Oh, what a noble book the Bible is! It is a sin and a shame that we do not esteem the book more. How the prophets honoured Moses alone! I think they have written far more noble books because of him, but they have disappeared. Oh, oh, we should not esteem the Bible so little! One occupies himself with law, the other medicine, the third reads the poets, but few wish to tackle theology.

#5876 Re: A Poem by Dr. Martin Luther

If the devil should die tomorrow,
And a wolf change into a sheep,
Then Luther and the pope will agree,
Of these three things surely none will happen
Yet, many desire to strive thereto,
A waste of time and money.
If Christ's Word continues to be honoured,
Then the pope must go to ruin.
There is nothing to be done in this matter here,
What use then of all our labour?

[Note: the above lines were written during the Diet of Worms, to the intent that the pope and Luther could not be reconciled. FB 1, 407 (7,142)].

#5879 Re: Christ Said

I am the light, though none see me,
I am the Way, though none take it.

#5879 Re: Christ Said . . . continued

Almighty I am, yet none fear me.
Merciful, yet none trust me.
I am truthful, yet they do not believe me.

#5890 Re: Verse by Luther

All would be well in this world
If everyone would tend to his own affairs,
And diligently wait upon his vocation,
Then could he stand before God.

#5891 Re: Rhyme by Luther

Good works devoid of favour,
Is a certain kind of Judas' labour.

#5899 Re: Luther's Exhortation to His Successors

Luther, shortly before his death: And even if I should live a hundred years and would overcome not only the needs of the present sectarian gangs and storms by the grace of God, and could also overcome all the future ones as well, I am well aware that thereby our successors would still not have peace, because the devil lives and governs. For this reason I pray for a gracious hour of death and have no more desire [for the troublous affairs of the world].- You, our successors, pray too, and study God's Word diligently. Maintain the poor little group of believers. Be warned that you can expect the devil to knock out a window, door, or tear open the roof and blow out the light, for he will not die until the Day of Judgement. You and I must die. And when we are dead; he remains what he has always been, not able to desist from attacking, etc.

#5903 Re: Preaching

Whatever preacher is concerned about preaching to the learned, he will never preach a good sermon in all his days. Philip told me to make the best speeches in Doburg [?]; to them I preached as simply [child-like] as I am able. To teach children is the greatest art. One can well see that in Christ. He taught parables of the simplest kind, nothing but child-like stories. But when the learned persons came, he could be as sharp as they, as in the case of the tribute money, where they thought they had him. He could indeed be sharp if he so wished. But one must break the bread for children, lay it before them in pieces, not in a chunk, as ought to be done in school. There one can give full measure, as John Pomeranus does. He is an excellent lecturer and makes learned scholars, etc. Martin Luther.

#5937 Re: Feed the Flock of Christ, I Peter 5[:2]

Feed the flock of Christ which has been entrusted to you, and do it not under compulsion, but willingly; that is, not regretfully and vexed or without joy as those who look upon the job as a matter of duty alone, not allowing themselves to be moved for the well-being of souls, not for shameful profit, but from the bottom of the heart. That is willingly and gladly from the heart, even in poverty and need, being joyful, teaching without reward, to the praise of God and the welfare of souls, etc.

#5938 Re: Stories by Luther

I want to open my mouth and speak of sayings and old stories, which we have heard and know, having inherited them from our forefathers, and so not deprive our children of them, who will come after us, and thus proclaim the glory of God. God has commanded the fathers to tell

#5938 Re: Stories by Luther . . . continued

these great deeds to their sons and their sons' descendants. It is certainly the earnest will of God, that we learn of His gracious revelations and witnesses, and thus rightly learn to recognize, believe in Him, fear Him, and call upon Him; and be obedient and according to the former examples, expect help and salvation. It is necessary to know the order of the times and years, as hereafter mentioned in the preface. Therefore, one should mark the information as to the dates; the memorials and books, contained in the histories and the way of life of the times, and faithfully protect, maintain, and read them. This is certainly the will of God, for this reason He has had such histories of His written and composed, etc.

#5939 Re: Leipsic Like Sodom and Gomorrah

Another time, he said in the house of Dr. Jonas at Halle: Leipsic is like Sodom and Gomorrah, overflowing with immorality and usury. Therefore, things cannot go well with them. It serves them right; they would not have it otherwise. I was there and do not wish to return there again.

#5940 Re: Christ and the Devil

Christ says: I am the truth and the life; the devil, I am death and lies. If you doubt this then compare the chair at Rome over against the Word of God. For the Scripture does not lie and is old enough to be believed, etc.

#5941 Re: Luther's Prophecy About His Death

The worthy gentlemen, Dr. Martin, undertook the affair of the Dukes of Mansfeld so seriously, that he travelled there because of this matter, in response to the request and demand of the Dukes, to overcome the divisions and disunity among them. But that was in vain, and in addition, the precious man of God died because of the affair. And as he was engaged in the negotiations before his death, he said these words of his part in the negotiations: I came to end this affair; and I also will come to an end. An example: when Christ with God His heavenly Father agreed to bring peace between God and people, He also received the reward of such [peace-making], etc.

TABLE TALKS RECORDED BY GEORGE ROERER (Various Dates)

#5950 Re: The Temptation of Sin: First and Second Table of the Law

If the devil accuse you: you have sinned! Say: right, but God is greater than sin. Do not add more to my sin, namely by denying Christ. How he [the devil] struck David because of one harlot! In that case, God did not place before him the fifth or sixth commandment, but the first. [II Sam. 12:9; II Kings 21:6; II Chron. 33:13]. Manasseh, a murderer said: I have sinned. The Lord said: he humbled himself before me; he shall be released. Otherwise, he would have been taken away.

FB 2, 24 (9,28) Against the Temptations of Sin: If you are tempted because of your sins; and you are a sinner and have angered God, then say: yes, it all too true. But God is much greater than my sin. I do not wish to commit a great sin and deny my Lord Christ, the Saviour and Fount of grace. As happened to David on account of the harlot. There God did not take him to account on the basis of the fifth and sixth commandment, that he had become a murderer and adulterer. But because of him, God's Name was being blasphemed among the heathen, etc. This is one of the greatest sins, which especially angers God, so that He must punish it, when one will not amend himself.

But the world does not regard it, nor consider it to be a sin what is done against the First Table of the Ten Commandments. Indeed, it dares to look upon it as a virtue. Therefore, God must punish it and intercede with force to prevent it. Since it is neither recognized nor confessed, He cannot, nor does He wish to forgive it. The sins done against the other Table are much more readily recognized and no one can excuse himself, as was the case with Manasseh, who had spilt so much blood in Jerusalem, that it rose to the top, as the Scripture says. When he recognized himself and said: I have sinned, God forgave him by grace. Of Ahab, God says: "He has humbled himself before me, and bowed down", therefore, he was spared being punished during his life-time. [I Kings 21:29]. He was an evil villain, and if the prophet Elias had not fled, he would have killed him also. These are striking examples of the mercy of God.

#5968 Re: Light Reflected: Similar to Christ

A light will not light up in the darkness unless it be reflected. This can be seen if one holds a light in front of a door, and lets it shine [into the room] through the key-hole. It will give no light until it strikes the wall. So in the middle region of the air, where the devils are; it is dark. The sun does not shine there. But on earth where the rays are reflected, there it shines. And this is [similar to] the incarnation of the Son of God. He is the beam of light from the Father. He does not shine anywhere, unless he comes down into the world and strikes it.

#5970 Re: Eli - [I Samuel 4:18ff]

I am of the opinion that he was saved. It was with him as Paul says: when we are judged by God, we are seized so that we do not perish with the world. [I Cor. 11:32]. He was pious even though negligent. God is not unmerciful, as one sees by Christ in the Gospel. He is friendly to everyone and does not antagonize anyone unless it be the persecutors. He is able to be good to his disciples, even though they were often very difficult. But the Son is the image of the Father. One should well observe Him in the Gospel.

#5974 Re: The Epistle of James

Of the Epistle of James, at Wittenberg, we would like to put it totally out of the Bible, for it says nothing of Christ, not even one syllable except for the beginning and prelude; he is seen to contradict Paul, neither speaking rightly of the Gospel nor of the law. In my opinion he [James] was a Jew who had seen the Christians say too much about faith. So he wrote the Epistle against this. Ah, it must not be anything but faith; works too much count for something! This is the Epistle of the papists. They do not take to any other as violently as to this one. They, indeed, let Paul stand alone!

#5977 Re: The Low Estate of Mary

Reflecting on the low-estate of His hand-maiden, [Luke 1:48], how would you put that into German? I know no better way of saying it in German than to say: the poor little maid. For she was only a quite poor virgin. The royal line had been up-rooted by Herod, so that there was no one left except two; then this good little maid took a poor apprentice carpenter. Therefore, she says: Ah, poor maid that I am, how am I come to the honour that I shall be the mother of our Lord God? And in the prophet it is written the root of Jesse, not a green root, but one spoiled and rotten, out of this a green branch is to grow! [Is. 11:1].

#5981 Re: The Present State of Germany

It now looks as if there are nothing but betrayers. King Francis names himself brother to the Turk. Ferdinand has caused many of our people to be killed; lost the best and finest guns of Maximilian; that is a pity. They are betrayers. This I know for certain, that the Emperor and Ferdinand are not able to bring, or maintain liberty for Germany. They wish that all the princes of Germany be driven out, and it [Germany] be brought back to servitude, like all the rest of the nations. They have already proven this with those people. Our leaders refuse to understand this, and if we write or tell them, they say we do not understand. Go too, then, in the name of God! Henry accepts money, likewise Mainz, and it looks as if they want to bring the Turks over our necks.

#5982 Re: Herman - [German Hero]

If I were a poet I would like to celebrate him. I love him from the heart. He was called Duke Herman and was lord over the Hartz region. The Cheruskans are really Hartzians. His own father-in-law Segustus is Duke Hengist. Philip betrayed him. If I now had a Herman and he Dr. Martin, we would go looking for the Turk!

#5986 [The Trials of] Duke George

He is plagued horribly. Two of his sons died miserably. The other he killed by giving him a wife, etc. The children were all morons. The wife of the landgrave one time played in the women's quarter with her young maids. They jumped over the benches, etc. Then she said, look at me! I am supposed to be the smartest among my sisters, then you can imagine what the others are like! He wanted to root out Christ, but he had to go down himself. Saul had to be destroyed root and all, and so even pious Jonathan had to be included.

#5989e Re: The Anabaptists

The answer that Dr. Martin Luther gave to the landgrave's request to write something against the Anabaptists:

#5989e Re: The Anabaptists . . . continued

1. They are out of

the Scriptures
print
Word
books
Epistles

and hence-forth they
will never re-enter.

2. Their hatred and envy is too great, hot and bitter. They no longer listen, but in their hearts day and night they desire only to defend themselves.

3. I have never been able to convert one of them who was not a Christian, nor Paul, nor Christ, nor any teacher.

4. St. Paul speaks thus: one who after one or two admonitions is still a heretic, reject. This is true. [Titus 3:10ff, II Tim. 2:14].

5. The apostle teaches that contraversies weaken and serve to subvert those who listen [to them].

Therefore, to sum up: It is out and made public that it [Anabaptists] has come under the judgement of God. Leave it with that and act freely and openly in this matter. Whoever falls, let him fall. Who is lying down, let him lie. Who stands, let him stand.

When the battle has commenced, it's too late to negotiate. It is necessary to strike. Advice may be sought after the battle. Where the Lord is not, let everyone go, act, and do, as he wills. Have all the less to do with them, otherwise, you gain nothing but ill-will and it is all labour in vain.

#6084 Re: Good Harvest Weather

When the weather for the harvest was of the best, he said: Our Dear God has done everything this year according to our wish. Miraculously, he has preserved peace, by allaying the fires of war. He brought the blessing of fruits to help overcome hunger itself. He has acted toward us as the saying of the [Psalm 145:19]. The desire of them that fear Him, the Lord fulfills. But what do we do? Openly despise God and curse, misusing His gifts. Thereupon calamities will follow, when He withdraws His helping hand.

#6085 Re: A Violent Storm, 1546

In the year of our Lord, 1546, after the birth of Christ, a savage storm raged at night, with thunder, flashes of lightning, and wrecked many towers and buildings, particularly churches, also wrecked gardens. At that time a rustic near Torgau, rushed out of his house and saw two men in the sky. He continued to shout to the villagers alternately: O Thou poor Germany! O poor Dukedome, O poor Christianity! and Repent ye: repent ye!

#6094 Re: Power of the Devil and Sorcerers

God gives power over people to the devils and sorcerers in two ways: first, over the godless as a punishment because of their sins; secondly, over the pious, when He would test them, as to whether or not they want to remain constant in their faith. For without the permission of God and our consent, the devil cannot harm us, for He says: who touches you, touches the apple of my eye: [Zech. 2:8]; and Christ speaks: without the Will of my heavenly Father, not a little hair can fall from your head. [Luke 21:18].

#6134 Re: A Prognostication by Luther

A prognostication of Martin Luther discovered in a small book of his and translated into German by Justus Jonas. Ah God, eternal in the high heavens; what a horrible conjunction! Woe unto you, beloved

#6134 Re: A Prognostication by Luther . . . continued

Wittenberg, famous in all the world and loved for the reason that God has permitted His holy Word to appear again in you, for the comfort of so many people through me, unworthy that I am. Woe unto you, dear city, buildings and people, to whom I have in so many ways taught the eternal God and have daily admonished you according to His Word and commandment to repent. But you, in no way, see your way to repent, but continue in your unsurpassed great sins, pride, infidelity, gluttony, harlotry, lewdness, adultery, usury, contempt of the poor under the pretext of Christian freedom, without fear of Divine punishment, on and on! Woe unto you, how soon and unexpectedly you will be attacked by a nation lacking in virtue, full of all kinds of shame and vice, yes satiated and inebriated thereby. You, and all those dwelling in and around you, will be persecuted in a most gruesome manner, and you will have to weep and complain openly to suffer through that, where formerly you suffered secretly with joy and laughter. In addition, you will lose your life and property with shame, disgrace and unutterable contempt. Oh, God help us; what do we see coming? Ph woe, noble house of Saxony! Oh, John Frederick, noble elector, how did you get to be among these gruesome animals? Flee the path set before you, before the raging lion sees you and catches you in his angry claws. Oh, my dear Elector, your weapon is down, you return it into the scabbard, so you must suffer. Oh, how they deal with you! The reason is that you carry your sword in hand in vain and do not punish any vice found, to some extent, in all of your lands, castles and cities, markets and villages, yes even in your own house there is little reverence of God, discipline, honour and virtue. No one fears you enough to avoid evil. For this reason God and His Word are regarded little or not at all. And now you along [with the rest] will be taken prisoner, put in the power of the lion; robbed of your land and people, property and honour, wife and children, and all possessions, deserted by all; turned over half-dead, led away in the custody of loose characters, who frivolously scoff at you in innumerable ways. Oh, woe unto you, German nation, that no one sees the way clear to come to your help in your need! You will have to bear suffering and be completely shattered, without the help of God and of men, suddenly as lightning flashes in the sky. Ah, dear God if you were not to be torn and swallowed by the lion, you would have been by the other animals, bears, wolves, and dragons long ago. Oh, Almighty God, how does it happen that the dragon's tail acquires three fiery heads, each more blasphemous than the other? There is much blasphemous horror behind it. You dear Elector, whom I love as myself, if God by His grace will not strengthen and protect you in an extra-ordinary way, you will have to obey the lion, highly regard his favour, experience much confusion, cause much evil and experience the same, and make many who are far less than you, weak and powerless, many high and honoured. But Jesus Christ, without a doubt will easily maintain His own, even though many weak in faith because of such gruesome errors, waver, and soon fall as the godless arise in order to utterly being down the elect. Oh Lord God; heavenly Father, help your children out of the depths through your Divine Grace and Mercy! O child of man, think about it, take to heart, consider it well, ask, call, faithfully cry out, weep, tremble and shake with heart and mouth before the well decorated beautiful pot which the dragon carries in his mouth, to disarm people. In which an immeasurable gruesome horror of idolatry is hidden to pour over the German nation. It is not good to translate the content of this pot. The government be God's forever, as indeed it is! Amen.

#6211 Re: Spirits, Revelations and Dreams

A maid was brought here from Halle, claiming to be troubled with a malignant spirit. When the captain seriously addressed her in my presence and said she was a spy, a denier and blasphemer of the Gospel; and that she ought to be escorted by the public executioner out of town. She took off herself out of the city!

Also a certain man named Gutwald wanted to persuade me with humble words to give approval to his opinion and that of his group, saying: My lord do not despise me for being poor and simple, for through such God does the greatest things. Indeed, I have prayed night and day with fasting and tears; then I opened the book and found it right there, first thing. Then God revealed the truth to me; this is my conviction.

So then, as I was saying, such who seek revealing dreams are in contempt of God, not satisfied with His Word. In spiritual matters, I neither expect revelations nor dreams. Paul admonishes, that we cling to His Word even though an angel from heaven teaches otherwise. [Gal. 1:8]. In political and external matters, I can admit prophets speaking of future events and the anger of God. But in the spiritual, I stay with the cradle alone; I believe in Jesus Christ born and suffered. Away from that let no one permit himself to be directed. If we stand upon this article, we will be able to check all spirits, and happily dispute with them on the basis of the other articles, etc.

#6287 Re: The Catechism or Christian Doctrine

The Catechism was made public in Luther's home and these statements are his:

The Decalogue: As the faith, so the blessing:

God does not remain unconcerned, though often He delays,

Despair makes monks and nuns.

God provides, but we must work.

God desires the heart alone.

Idolatry belongs to the darkness of the heart.

God uses creatures to convey His gifts.

The world should always have God's Word before its eyes.

God's Word is our sacred treasure and sanctifies all things.

Works of obedience should always be highly regarded.

All those who govern are called fathers..

Treasures of the soul are worthy of all honor.

Authorities have no place in the fifth Commandment.

Anger is forbidden to all, except those in authority.

All causes of murder are forbidden.

Marriage is for all in every position of life.

Marriage is necessary and commanded.

Marriage contrary to God's Word is forbidden and despised.

Marriage is a blessed estate and pleasing to God.

To steal means to take something to which we have no right.

Disloyalty is also stealing.

Stealing is the most common occupation in the world.

The big thieves escape punishment, like the pope and his own.

Faithlessness and avarice do not prosper.

To bear false witness is to talk oneself into the judgement of God.

Ill-will and speaking evil should be turned over to the magistrates.

One should judge and condemn no one behind his back.

One should put the best construction on all things.

There are no good works outside the Ten Commandments.

To fear God and trust in Him fulfills all the Commandments.

The First Commandment is the mainspring of all the rest.

The Symbol: The confession of faith teaches us to recognize God,

#6287 Re: The Catechism or Christian Doctrine . . . continued

and teaches us what kind of God we have.

We must practise the faith in all situations.

God gave Himself to us with all His creatures.

The article on Jesus Christ should always be proclaimed.

The Holy Spirit brings Christ home to us; He must reveal Him to us. Where the Holy Spirit does not preach, there is no church.

The Holy Spirit is always at work.

The Lord's Prayer: To pray means to call upon God in our need, which is made precious by the command of God. Need causes us to be serious and reverent. These are our weapons against the devil. The world and the flesh are contrary towards the will of God. The devil hinders daily bread and all gifts of God. God provides daily for our body also.

No one can manage to live in this world without sin.

No one can offer God self-engendered righteousness.

We must also forgive, even as God forgives. To forgive our neighbour makes us sure and certain that God has forgiven us.

Our temptations are threefold: of the world, of Satan, of the flesh.

Temptation is not overcome through one's own power.

The devil seeks to stop everything for which we pray.

The devil intends to bring us into all manner of trouble.

Baptism: Faith is attached to baptism.

Faith is in need of something tangible.

Faith makes a person worthy.

Baptism is not our, but God's work.

Eternal life for body and soul, through Baptism.

God confirmed child-Baptism through His own Word.

Baptism is correct, even if someone should not believe it.

No one ought to build upon his own faith.

The lack of faith does not weaken God's Word.

Baptism is a dily garment of the Christian.

The Lord's Supper: The Sacrament is an ordinance of God.

The Word makes the Sacrament.

Without the Word, it is nothing but bread and wine.

The Sacrament, food for the soul.

Forgiveness of sins is received through the Word alone.

Faith accepts the forgiveness of sin.

Those who disdain the Sacrament are not Christians.

The Sacrament's validity is not determined by our worthiness.

Faith and nature are antagonistic toward each other.

Faith clings to the Word.

As a person regards Christ; so He possesses Him.

Faith is the wealth of the Christians. The Gospel is of the excellence of God.

Good works have no name.

Christian works are useful and advantageous to the neighbour.

Faith and charity destroy sins; Scripture neither demands nor prohibits good works.

Christ is the common good.

Christians pray for and desire the Day of Judgement.

God confirms His Word in many ways.

The Church belongs to no one but Christ alone.

Christ was of humble position and small reputation.

One ought to be manly in sorrow.

Our whole life ought to be courageous, fearing and trusting God.

Faith makes us an inheritance of Christ.

To consider Christ in the flesh is very comforting.

#6287 Re: The Catechism or Christian Doctrine . . . continued

We are saved if we trust in [His mercy], but God must change the hearts.

The law is nothing else but a mirror.

A pastor is like the head of a hospital.

Christ carries us on His back for the Father.

Love is not concerned with ingratitude.

#6288 Re: The Catechism

The Catechism is the Bible of the layman, in which whole content of Christian doctrine necessary to be known for salvation by each Christian, is included. As the Song of Solomon is called the Song of Songs, as song above all sons, so also the Decalogue is the doctrine of doctrines, a teaching above all teachings, out of which God's Will is recognized; what God demands of us and what we lack.

The Symbol, the confession of our Holy Christian faith, is the history of histories, the highest history of all, in which the immeasurable wonderful works of Divine majesty from the beginning unto eternity are depicted; how we and all creatures were brought into being; how we are saved by the Incarnation, suffering, death and resurrection of the Son of God; how we renewed by the Holy Spirit, sanctified and made a new creation, and all together gathered to be a people of God; have forgiveness of sins and will be blessed forever.

The Lord's Prayer is the prayer of prayers, a prayer above all prayers, the highest prayer of all, which the highest master taught us, including therein all spiritual and physical needs and the most excellent comfort in all temptations, sorrows, and in the hour of death.

The Sacraments are the ceremonies of ceremonies, the highest ceremonies which God has instituted and ordained, in which He assures us of His Grace.

For this reason, we ought to love and cherish the Catechism, and diligently teach it to our youth. In it the right, true, old, pure, divine teaching is assembled and what is against it, we are to hold as false erring teachings, no matter how long they have lasted; that we be aware of them.

#6297 Re: Summary of the New Testament.

Laurentius Kastner in his Latin text notes the New Testament by the hand of Dr. Luther: John 14.

I am the way, the truth, and the life, etc.

That's it,

Whoever does not believe this, must err.

He must lie down,

He must die.

For apart from Christ, there is

nothing but error,

nothing but lies,

nothing but death.

No matter what

The priests

Councils or people know

The pope or teach

Christ [says]:

I am life and truth.

The devil [says]:

I am death and lies; if you doubt this, compare the chair at Rome with the Word of God, for Scriptures do not deceive, and it is sufficient that we believe it.

#6287 Re: The Catechism or Christian Doctrine . . . continued

We ought to see heavenly honour and not regard the contempt of men.
Christ is ours as a gift.
The Gospel is pure joy.
Grace condemns all self-righteousness.
Blessedness has completely been given and won for us.
Baptism gives us blessedness completely.
Faith is the renewal of the spirit.
Rebirth is the work of the Holy Spirit.
By nature we cannot comprehend the gifts of God.
Works are a sign [seal] and test of faith, for as literary works have a seal, so also the works of faith.
Faith depends upon the Word and not the preacher.
The speaker and the Word are two [persons].
Natural life is a part of eternal life.
Self-darkness [or] conceit scatters all things.
The Gospel is of God, shows Christ, and brings forth faith.
The light of the Gospel illumines men, making sons of God.
False preachers are worse than the ravishers of virgins.
A prince would like to hunt game in heaven.
It is more important that a person be good, than the works.
We must not be discouraged, but believe and pray.
No rank can claim to be holy in the sight of God.
Faith will not suffer traditions of men in conscience.
The saints, as humans, have often erred.
Offices shall be separated from the office-holders.
Punishment is hated, but sin loved.
God maintains the saints even in the midst of error.
No great saint ever lived devoid of error.
A Christian life is made up of three things; faith, love the cross.
One does not command Christians, but admonishes them.
We must break our sense and will.
Love does not curse, but faith; for faith makes children of God, therefore, it punishes and becomes angry. For this reason all revenge is done away with among Christians. They are to grow and increase in the fruits of the Spirit, of which love is the greatest for it deals with people. [I Cor. 13].
The forgiveness of sins is the fruit of the Sacrament.
Reason does not grasp that Christ is our brother.
Christ has been given to me with all of His Works.
Christ comes to us through preaching; is therefore in our midst.
Without bearing the cross, one cannot attain to Glory.
The Gospel cannot be preached without causing a row.
The Spirit does not make a person perfect on the spot; but he must grow.
One cannot lose anything by accepting the Gospel; therefore, one ought to risk everything for it.
To believe in the Gospel releases from sin.
Works belong to our neighbour, faith to God.
Those who judge others, condemn themselves.
Doubt is sinful and [leads to] eternal death.
A good work is that which benefits others.
We first know Christ when He teaches each heart and breaks bread for us.
The Word of God ignites the heart with faith.
To believe means to trust and build on mercy with certainty.
Christ does not demand outward piety and pretence, but piety of the heart.

#6317 Re: Temptations in Our Flesh

Ah, dear Lord God, what confusion and infirmity there is in our flesh! Before marriage we are in heat; after the wedding are felt distaste. Beyond these temptations there are more violent ones. Hieronymus wrote about the temptations of the flesh. Ah, it is a thing! The little wife can help this sickness. Eustachia would have been able to help Hieronymus. May God protect us against the temptations against the First Table [of the law], which are of eternal importance, in which one does not know, whether God be devil or the devil, God. These temptations are not temporal.

FB 4, 61 (43,43) Nature spoiled by fleshly lust: "Ah, dear God, what great confusion and weakness there is in our flesh and blood! Before marriage we are in heat and are in danger of losing our senses in our desire for a woman. After the wedding we tire of her and are fed up! And over and above such temptations, there are many much more violent and onerous. S. Hieronymus has written much about the temptations. Ah, they are a [relatively] small matter. The little wife at home can easily be of help in this sickness. Eustachia would have been able to help and advise Hieronymus. May God protect us from the greater temptations relating to the First Table [of the law], which are of eternal importance, where one does not know, whether God be devil or the devil, God. These temptations are not temporal."

#6348 Re: The Devil and Sorcerers

God says power to the devil and sorcerers over people in a two-fold way: firstly over the godless, when He wants to punish them for their sins; secondly, over the pious, when He wants to test them, to see whether they wish to remain constant in the faith. Without the consent of God and our own, the devil cannot harm us, for He speaks thus: Without the will of my Father in heaven not even a little hair can fall from your head. [Ezech 9:8 and Luke 21:18].

#6349 Re: A Tale of Sorcery

During the season of Christmas, among other sorceries, this is found: One seats himself down at a cross-roads after the sun has set, and in the dark takes a 30 fl. dollar, or some other coin and makes a circle around himself, but does not look about, not wanting the devil to break his neck. [He] counts them until the bells ring for the midnight Christmas Mass; noting how the number [of strokes] follow each other in natural order, then backwards -- 30, 29, etc. If he gets mixed up, it will cost him his neck. For then the devil will come and show him headless, unspeakable, gruesome corpses hanged on the gallows in front of the bake-oven, and a wagon apparatus with a wheel. But let him not be concerned about it. Finally, a money spinner will give him another kind of nest-egg, and so he continues to spin another each night . . .

#6369 Re: Forgiveness of Sins

Many boast that they have exhausted the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins. And I am unable to comfort myself, miserable man, with the passion, resurrection, and the forgiveness of sins. I am well able to eat the bread and drink the beer my Lord God provides. But it does not follow that I am able to think about the greatest treasure, forgiveness of sins, except to accept it by grace.

#6445 Re: Comfort for a Gravely Ill Woman, Probably 1537

When Dr. Martin Luther visited a most honored matron, who was lying gravely ill, he comforted her in this way: Aunt Lehna [Magdalene von Bora,

#6445 Re: Comfort for a Gravely Ill Woman, Probably 1537 . . . continued
the aunt of Katharine], do you recognize and hear me? And when she
had understood him, he said: your faith is based on the Lord Christ
completely! Then he added: "He is the resurrection and the life."
Nothing will harm you. You shall not die, but fall asleep as in a cradle,
and when the red glow of dawn breaks, you will rise again and live eternally.
She responded: O yes! -- Then he: are you not tempted? -- No -- Do
you have any pains around the heart? The Lord will soon free you from
all evil. You will not die. -- And turning, he said to us: it is well
with her, because she is not dead but asleep. -- Then he went to the
window and prayed. He left her at twelve p.m., at seven she fell asleep.

WA, TR VI

TABLE TALK RECORDED BY JOHN AURIFABER (From Various Years)

WA, TR VI, #'s 6508ff

#6508: FB 1, 23 (1,22) Re: The Persecutors of the Christian and of the Word of God, Have Very Little Success

"The Emperor's Diocletian persecution", said Dr. Luther in Eisleben, "was very severe, because it was his intention to kill and exterminate all Christians. He had at one time killed twelve thousand Christians! And when the executioners and their helpers got tired of all the killing, he, the emperor, ordered new guillotines and more Christians were beheaded. With his tyranny, he thought he could scare the Christians into giving up the Word of God. As that did not have any great effect, he stormed and raged against women whom he abused and disgraced. He would bend two opposite trees down and tie on each tree an arm and a foot of a woman and then let the trees spring back so that the woman was torn. Or he had them hung naked in a tree on one arm or leg and let them hang until they died. If they wanted to cover their shame they could do so with the other hand.

Finally, when all of this was in vain and the Christian matrons and women would not desert the Word of God and their Lord Jesus, then he [the emperor] poured hot lead into the women and killed them in that way. For lack of people the Roman Empire now became empty and like a desert. There were no farmers, shoe-makers, tailors, because the emperor had killed countless people. Then the emperor was told that his tyranny had no effect. He had to either let the teaching of the Gospel be free if he wanted to have any subjects left in his kingdom. Or, if he killed all the Christians there would be the danger that the Roman Empire would become desolate. When Diocletian, the emperor realized that all the killing didn't have any effect and that perhaps the Lord would punish him, he abdicated and became a (Horticulturist?), and planted vegetables and grafted trees. The tyrant lost his kingdom and had to leave the Christians alone. The same thing will happen to Emperor Carol if he starts something against the Gospel. He will lose the Netherlands. Dr. John Pömmmer told me at one time that in Lübeck in the town-hall in an old Chronicle a prophecy was found, that there would be a big riot in Germany because of religion and that the emperor would interfere and consequently lose everything.

But I don't believe that the emperor, because of the Pope would start a war, because wars cost a lot of money. If it could be done without money then, I believe the emperor would have started something on his own. But to spend money for the pope, there the emperor is not charitable.

Postscript to Aurifaber

In the year, 1546, July 13th, unfortunately, one five months after the death of Luther, Emperor Charles started a war against the league of the Augsburg Confession. H. John Friedrich, Elector was imprisoned at Muhlberg and also the Count of Hessen. Soon after the war a change was made in the religion which brought such unrest to Germany. After this Smalcald War Emperor Charles had no success either in the cities of Costnitz, Magdeburg, nor Metz which he wanted to regain for Germany because they belonged to France. Finally Emperor Charles gave his region over to his brother King Fernando. Charles went to Spain and died in a villa near a monastery. The saying goes that his majesty had insignia made on about twenty canvasses. They were hung in the corridor of the

#6508: FB 1, 23 (1,22) Re: The Persecutors of the Christians and of the Word of God, Have Very Little Success. Postscript to Aurifaber . . . continued

monastery. He often let himself be carried there and he would reminisce about former battles. Whenever he came to the painting of the Smalcald War and the imprisonment of John Friedrichs of Muhlberg, he would sigh and say: If only I had let him be who he was, then I would have remained who I was. It is true after the imprisonment, His Majesty had little luck and no victories against his enemies."

#6510: FB 1, 37 (1,33) Re: The Gospel Reveals the Hidden Malice of Man

Dr. Luther said he never thought that the world could be so malicious about the Gospel. "Yes", he said: "I thought everybody would jump for joy when they heard that they were free of the atrocities of the pope, the distress and oppression of their own conscience and the unbearable oppression and be free through Christ out of Gace, and have the heavenly promise whereafter they had sought with so much trouble, pain, and expense, which was all in vain. Especially, I thought the bishops and the higher schools would accept it will all their heart.

But what happens? Because of our sermons, they step on us. Our worse enemies are the clergy and the higher schools and those who are the education people in our worldly government. Well! We have to learn that the devil and his cohort the world are enemies of God and that the world is God's adversary where it appears the best, pious and holy. I wouldn't have believed it, and wouldn't have looked for it in anybody's heart, that there is so much contempt for God and His Word. Now the Gospel comes, opens their hearts and shows that they despise the Word of God; and the preachers and servants persecute them. Out of the beautiful angels they make black devils! Now I see that the pope, bishops, princes, noblemen, citizens and farmers are full of the devil because they do not want to accept the teaching of God's Word. Not only that, they despise and persecute it.

This devilish malice I did not notice before but thought they were full of the Holy Ghost. But the Word of God is a revelation of the thoughts in the hearts of men. As Simeon prophesied in Luke 2:35 that one becomes aware what is in the heart of man, namely poisonous rage against the Gospel and its servants.

Such revelation is for our instruction and consolation. For our instruction, that we should not be frightened when we see such fine, wise, respectable, pious people turn into such devils that we are astonished and must say: such a fine prince, such a pious citizen; such a respectable man; how did he get so blind and malicious that he can't stand the Word of God and is so antagonistic? Does he turn and stretch the Word according to his own opinion? The Gospel teaches us the reason: previously, the thoughts in his heart were hidden, but then the Revealer of hearts comes and uncovers their thoughts. Before we said he was a gentle, friendly man, and now he is a raging devil.

Such revelation is also for our consolation. Because the world cannot tolerate the Word of God even though it makes a holy pretence, we should not be shocked, but realize that all their holy appearance, wisdom and righteousness is hypocritical and is a damnation before God. Because the world is this way, it remains that way and we have to get to know that the world is full of God's enemies, robbers, murderers, full of the devil! If you see or hear of something good, then ask is it of Christ? If He is not there then it is of the devil.

#6512: FB 1, 42 (1,36) Re: God is Found in His Word About Christ

One searches and finds God in His Word about Christ. If you want to be sure, without endangering your conscience and salvation, then refrain from speculating, searching, and brooding with human reasoning about what God is like or what is His Divine Will. Outside of His Word and His Son Jesus Christ, God cannot be found. You should learn to know God by the way Holy Scripture describes Him, as St. Paul says: "For since in the wisdom of God, etc. [I Cor. 1:21-23].

So start the way Jesus started. Conceived of the Holy Ghost; born of Mary in Bethlehem. He came from heaven to be man and lived among us, preached and performed miracles; was crucified; suffered, died and rose again. That is the way He showed Himself to us, so that all our mind and thought is focused on Him; so that we shouldn't dare try to know the Godly Majesty [alone]. He offers knowledge to us through His Word and we should accept it in faith and let it rest there, no longer speculating about God. If you want to know God without Christ and dare to come to Him with your own words, fasting, sins, etc., to stand before His Judgement throne, that would be impossible and you would fall like Lucifer and be in utter despair!

#6514: FB 1, 53 (1,49) Re: For Whom the Word of God is Useful

Someone asked Dr. Luther at the table, how come the Gospel about forgiveness of sin through faith, found so little acceptance with so many people? They hear it at mass, but pay little attention, more out of habit and then they think that is enough. Dr. Luther answered: "For a sick one, the doctor is useful and pleasing. The healthy ones do not need the doctor. As one can see with the Canaanite woman. She felt her daughter's distress, that is why she followed Jesus, and would not be dismissed nor scared away. [Matt. 15:22]. The same with Moses, he had to learn to feel sin; then grace was sweet.

It is a lost cause, no matter how friendly and favorable Christ is portrayed, if man is not humbled through self-knowledge, and has a longing for Christ, as it says in the Magnificate: 'He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away'. (Luke 1:53). All of this is written for the consolation of us poor, needy, sinful men; to teach us where we can find help and consolation.

But we must only cling to God's Word and believe what God said is the truth, even though He pretends (at times) to be indifferent, as we see with the Canaanite woman. But His Word is true and does not fail: 'Heaven and earth will pass away, but my Word will not pass away'. [Matt. 24:35]. But, oh, how difficult it is for our human nature and common sense to be naked and leave everything we feel and only believe His Word. May God help us in all distress and dying to have such courage and faith!"

#6517: FB 1, 60 (1,60) Re: God's Word is the Body in Which God's Children are Conceived and Born

"The same way a child is born into the world and home, and becomes an heir, so faith alone makes you a child of God through the Word of God which is the mother through which we are conceived born, and raised. [Is. 46:3]. Only through such a birth that God affects without our doing anything to it, do we become children of God and heirs. Then we are free of sin, death, and the devil and are heirs of eternal life and righteousness."

#6519: FB 1, 63 (1,65) Re: A Rhyme of Luther's About Psalm 112:1

This Word is really true

And not one hair will be missing

#6519: FB 1, 63 (1,65) Re: A Rhyme of Luther's About Psalm 112:1 . . .
continued

Until it is all fulfilled
Even if hell's hordes
Delay it a few years
The time will come
When it will be revealed
And everything will become clear
And everybody can freely talk about it
And witness that God keeps His Word and teaching!

#6521: FB 1, 65 (1,68) Re: Word Not Judged by Lives of Listeners

One shall not judge God's Word according to the fruits and the life of the listener. "The Enthusiasts", says Luther, "are nonsensical fools who err, and who will be shamefully deceived if they judge the Word of God by the fruits of the hearers. Because they say: In Wittenberg, the people do not become more religious after a sermon on the Gospel. And because they do not become more religious, then the teaching must not be right. Then they say: to hear the Gospel is not enough, but one has to do something more, namely leave wife and child, wear a hat and gray coat, and choose your own righteousness. That, they say, is honest justification! That's the way one becomes pious and just before God. They despise the Word of God because it doesn't show fruits!"

#6536: FB 1, 112 (2,47) Re: We are Totally Dependent Upon God

If God doesn't keep us, we are lost. "We are nothing with all our gifts no matter how great, if God does not keep us. If He leaves us then our wisdom, skill, intellect, etc., are nothing. If He doesn't always support and sustain us then our highest knowledge and the best theology are nothing. When the hour of temptation comes, it happens in an inkling and the devil, through his cunning takes it all away, yes even the verses that are to console us. He only holds before our eye the threatening verses in large numbers.

Therefore, let us take note and learn, if God withdraws His hand then we are lost. It happened to St. Peter at the first Council in Antioch, when St. Paul chastised him publically about his hypocrisy with the heathens. [Gal. 2:11].

Therefore, no one can boast or make a show of his righteousness, piety, wisdom or other gifts that he has. But humble himself and pray with the apostles: 'Increase our faith!' [Luke 17:5].

#6561: FB 1, 164 (2,162) Re: God's Secret Ways

About God's inscrutable majesty, from Luther's writing to M. Caspar Aquilam, pastor at Salfeld. "The discussion of your guest, the poet, about God's secret and concealed works, is a temptation, also called blasphemy, through which many are lost. I was troubled with it nearly to death! Why is it that we poor miserable creatures brood and worry about it? Especially since we cannot comprehend the radiant promises, nor have an inkling of God's Commandments or His Works, which He manifests in His Word and miracles. And yet, we weak and impure people are tempted to try to understand the inscrutable majesty, the inscrutable light and wonder of God.

Don't you know that He dwells in unapproachable light and yet we dare to come near. [Tim. 6:16]. We know the depth of His riches and wisdom and knowledge of God. Rom. 11[:33]. And yet, we try to understand it. We do this before we have grasped the Promises or even have a vague notion about His Commandments; before we have learned the

#6561: FB 1, 164 (2,162) Re: God's Secret Ways . . . continued

ABC's. We look with blind eyes like a mole, at the majesty of light that is indescribable. Is it a wonder that we are overcome by the magnificent splendor while trying to probe it? In wanton, mischievous ways, we want to see the utmost, greatest light of the heavenly sun. We should as St. Peter says, first let the morning star rise in our hearts. [II Peter 1:19]. Only then will we understand.

Of course, we should try to learn about the unfathomable and unconceivable will of God. But to dare to understand is dangerous, like breaking your neck. I try to restrain myself and be content with the words of Jesus that He said to Peter: 'If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is it to you?' [John 21:22], because Peter argued and worried about what would become of John. And He answered Phillip when he asked: 'Show us the Father, etc.' [Jn. 14:8-10]. Phillip also would have liked to see the majesty of the Father. Solomon, the wise king, said: 'Do not ask about things that are too high for you'.

Even if we knew the secret judgements of God, what benefit would it bring us concerning God's Commandments and Promises?

Therefore, tell everyone if they want peace in their hearts and not be in danger of blasphemy and despair, to abstain from such thoughts because we know they are unfathomable. Why should one let himself be plagued by the devil about something that is impossible?

The main thing is to strengthen one's belief in God's Promises, Works, and Command. If one has done that, then he may see if he should endeavour to trouble himself with impossible things. If he can't accept that then he should repent and get rid of such thoughts, even though it is hard. Because the explorer and villian [the devil] wants him to search. That is why we must wrestle no less against disdain as against unbelief, despair, heresy and other temptations.

The majority is deceived because they do not believe that such thoughts with which they are deceived and troubled, are from the devil. That is why he doesn't despise such thoughts, and if he does, he does not fight in all earnestness 'against the flaming dart of the evil one' [Eph. 6:16], who lives in the darkness of this world, together with the evil spirits through whom Satan was dispelled from heaven because he wanted to be like God and know everything, and disdained to know what was good for him.

That is why we should beware not to try to be smarter than is seemly, but be humble. Whoever does not do that will die, because one cannot think of Christ as long as such thoughts are in our mind. The same way Satan betrayed Adam through the snake, when he told him he would be wise like God.

In summary, this is the chief and highest temptation and altogether devilish, with which a human can be tempted. We have enough to do not to think such devilish thoughts nor give them room in our hearts, because we cannot bear it, or it will break our neck.

To the other question answer thus: That he attend to the task God gave him, and not bother about what was not commanded him. As Jesus said to Peter: 'Follow me', not your questions and thoughts!" [John 21:22].

#6598: FB 1, 320 (7,18) Re: The Comfort Found in Christ

It is a great and marvellous comfort that each pious Christian should not suffer want, other than honour or possessions of this world, that is, he knows and believes that Christ, our High Priest, sits at the right hand of God to represent and plead for us without ceasing. He is our souls' true Shepherd and Bishop, and the devil cannot tear us out of his hands.

But we should know that the devil is a cunning, mighty spirit,

#6598: FB 1, 320 (7,18) Re: The Comfort Found in Christ . . . continued
and that he can frighten pious, God-fearing hearts with his fiery darts, so that they lose this marvellous comfort, and have absurd thoughts about Christ; that He is not their High Priest, but that He accuses them before God; that He is not their souls' bishop but a severe judge.

That is why the Apostles Peter and Paul warned us: 'Be sober and watchful, etc.' [1 Peter 5:8], and 'Therefore, take the whole armour of God' to resist the devil and remain steadfast in faith. [Eph. 6:13].

#6601: FB 1, 334 (7,32) Re: The Resurrection of Christ

About the resurrection of Christ that reason and common sense cannot understand: "The history of the resurrection teaches that common sense in itself cannot believe Christ rose from the dead, by means of word of mouth, even though that of the angel from heaven. [Matt. 28:1]. So he brought this news to the weaker vessel [woman] and those who were in sorrow and anxiety.

They were fools both for God and the world. For God that they looked for the living among the dead [Luke 24:5]. For the world that they had forgotten about the stone before the tomb, and had brought spices to embalm the body, which was all for nothing. [Mark 16:1].

Spiritually, however, it is understood to mean that the big stone, [namely the law and rules of men that bind our conscience] is not removed from our hearts. We cannot find Christ nor believe that He is risen and that we are free from the power of sin and death. [Rom. 8:2] . . . 'For the law of the spirit, etc.' The pope who kills Christ in the hearts of men, gives his own enough money that they say: 'Christ has not risen' in order that they praise good works.

#6602: FB 1, 334 (7,33) Re: The Value of Christ's Resurrection

About Christ's resurrection and its value; "Since Christ has risen, He has drawn everything with Him. All mankind must rise, even the godless. But while we are still living in this world, it is like a houseowner, who takes a trip, and says to his child or servants: 'Here are the gold coins, use them for food and other necessities till I come back.'

Also all creation is a figure or picture of future resurrection. It comes alive when summer comes; it grows and becomes green, which nobody would have believed in the winter, if one had not seen and experienced it before.

The same with Christ's going to heaven, He took everything with Him and sits at the right of God the Father. [Eph. 5:30]. And because we are members of His body, we are with Him in heaven, where we will be rulers of everything like Christ; except that He remains the First Born among his brethren.

Therefore, a Christian who believes, looks at the sun and everything that we have in this world, as if it was not there, but thinks all the time about future life in which he is ready to receive, even though it doesn't seem that way. [Rom. 8:9]. 'For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God'".

#6618: FB 1, 376 (7,106) Re: The Greatest Miracle on Earth Plus Depression and Fear

The greatest miracle that happened on earth: The Son of God died an ignominious death on the cross. We wonder that the Father would say to His Only Son, Who is in essence true God; 'Go and let them nail you to the cross'. Now we must not separate Divinity from humanity. I think, however, that it could be. Then the love of God towards His only Son is enormously greater, than Abraham's love for Isaac, because He is the only beloved Son, as the Father Himself stated: 'This is my

#6699: FB 2, 99 (12,13) Re: Temptation and the Law . . . continued
there never was a law or sin, but that from all eternity, there was only Christ and nothing but Grace and Redemption.

Or, even if you feel the terror of the law, you can say: Madam Law, I do not hear you, because you have a heavy unfriendly language. Besides that the appointed time is fulfilled, as St. Paul says: I am free and no longer under your power. [Gal. 4:4].

But if one wants to say and so so, in temptation he will find out how very hard it is to distinguish between Law and Gospel. What a Godly and heavenly gift it is that one can believe in hope, when there is nothing to hope for. And how very true the saying of Paul is when he says: 'Yet who knows that a man is not justified by works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ?' [Gal. 2:16].

#6703: FB 2, 102 (12,18) Re: The Law and Temptation

The law is the most serious [deliberate] temptation by the devil.

"With the law the devil plagues the conscience the most, and paints Christ as a stern, severe Judge and says: 'God is hostile toward the sinner because He is righteous -- you are a sinner - that is why God is hostile. Then the conscience is caught and depressed. If we could separate or distinguish and say: 'No, dear devil, God is not hostile to all sinners, but only those who are Godless and impenitent, and who are persecutors of His Word. But for the poor weak sinners who recognize and confess their sin, Christ came to redeem them. As there are two kinds of sin, there are also two kinds of justice (?)'."

#6716: FB 2, 132 (2,68) Re: Law-Gospel and Experience

To distinguish Gospel from Law, especially in a struggle is an art.

"This art, to distinguish Law and Gospel, really to separate them from each other is easily learned as far as words are concerned. But when it comes to experience in life and heart, then it becomes very hard and difficult to understand.

That is why a pious Christian should earnestly study, so that he can distinguish Law and Gospel in his heart, and so that he knows how to use each one, not only in words as the pope and the enthusiasts do. As far as the words go they distinguish it all right. But really in fact they mix all kinds of things with it and make a cake out of it. Because they do not admit that faith without works can make one blessed, otherwise Christ is of no use to us!"

#6730: FB 2, 180 (13,43) Re: Perfection - Not in This Life

"When we finally shall stop lying, deceiving, stealing, murdering, robbing, committing adultery, then we shall become pious, that is to say, when they bury us underground with shovels! As St. Paul says: 'He that is dead is free from sin!'" [Rom. 6:7].

#6824: FB 3, 75 (24,102) Re: The Devil's Temptation

"Except for Grace", says D.M.L., "according to the law, we are all evil. This temptation the devil always throws at us, to plague us, especially near death, when we are in danger of our life."

#6825: FB 3, 78 (24,108) Re: Comfort Against the Devil

Comfort against the devil's raging: "Dear brethern", said Martin Luther, "Hate the devil straightaway! Because He Who was nailed to the cross by him, has crucified him [the devil]. The ruler of Israel has made a spectacle of him and has given him to us to laugh and scoff at, and rebel against if we believe the crucified Christ, the devil's crucifier."

#6618: FB 1, 376 (7,106) Re: The Greatest Miracle on Earth Plus Depression and Fear . . . continued

beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.' [Matt. 3:17]. And then so pitifully treated like a worm and not a man, for the people to mock and despise him. (Ps. 22:6).

Blind reason recoils at that and thinks if He is the eternal Father's only Son, why does He treat Him so mercilessly. He is friendlier to Caiphas, Herod, Pilate, and the worse villain on earth than to His own Son. On this sermon, St. Paul says: 'A stumbling block to the Jews' [I Cor. 1:23], that is the hypocrite and the Greeks -- that is the philosopher -- a folly to the Gentiles.

But for us Christians it is the greatest comfort because we realize and believe, and do not doubt. 'God so loved the world, etc.' [John 3:16]. But to those who are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God [Rom. 8:32; I Cor. 1:24]. This example is especially for those who are troubled with severe temptation (not everyone can stand it, such as sadness, depression of the spirit, fright and fear of God's anger and judgement and everlasting death and such weapons of Satan) Eph. 6:6, should always keep this in mind, that even though they have to endure suffering, God has not abandoned them, yes even loves them more than the others, because He makes them into an image of His Son. They should not doubt because they suffer with the Son, and will likewise with Him be redeemed. [II Tim. 3:12]. Indeed, all who desire to live a Godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, some more than others, according to the strength or weakness of one's faith. God is faithful and will not let you be tempted beyond your strength. [I Cor. 10:13].

#6629: FB 1, 396 (7,130) Re: Difficulties in Temptation

To know Christ in temptation is difficult: "That Christ our Saviour died for our sin, we can easily say, because the words are easy. But when it comes to the crunch, when the devil in temptation hides Christ from our eyes, and tears the Words of Grace out of our hearts, then we realize that we really haven't learned much. But when one thoroughly knows Christ, not as a severe judge, but as the most friendly and lovable Saviour and High Priest, then one has over-come many calamities and unpleasantness and would be ready for heaven. But there is nothing harder on earth than to be able to do that in the midst of temptation.

I have experienced what I am talking about. Because I know the devil's cunning and insidious ways very well. He not only reminds us of the law, to frighten us and make beams out of small splinters, something that is probably no sin or very small ones, and makes a real hell out of them (Matt. 7:3). He is a real magician; he can make sin really big and serious, even when there is no sin at all, just to torture our conscience. He even pretends to be the person of Christ, our Mediator, to frighten us. He takes a verse out of the Holy Scripture or a threatening speech of Christ and before we know it, we think it is Christ Himself who gives us these thoughts; and all the time it is the disagreeable devil. With this kind of an image, he can frighten us a long time, so that our conscience could sweat to it that it is Christ Himself quoting Scripture!"

#6699: FB 2, 99 (12,13) Re: Temptation and the Law

It is difficult to dismiss the burden and curse of the law in times of temptation: "It is very hard, yes, even humanly impossible to think that it isn't God, even though it is easily said when in temptation, the conscience created by God should take it this way: namely when the law frightens and accuses you, and shows you your sin, threatening you with the wrath of God and death, then you must take courage and think

#6825: FB 3, 78 (24,108) Re: Comfort Against the Devil . . . continued
Even though he crucifies us, we will crucify him and the same way [he crucifies us]. We will crucify him on that day or before, and make a spectacle of him!"

#6826: FB 3, 83 (24,118) Re: God and the Devil

God makes alive; the devil kills. "everything God makes is created for life. As Jeremiah says: He creates that it might be, and calls what is not, that it might be. It says: "He has pleasure in life, but death came into the world because of the devil's jealousy and malice." [Wisdom 1:13-14]. That is why he is called the author of death. Because what else does he do but mislead the people from true religion, stirs up rebellion, war, pestilence, and all misfortunes? [John 8:44].

#6827: FB 3, 84 (24,120) Re: How the Devil Dealt with D.M. Luther

"Today", said D.M.L., "as I awoke, the devil came to argue with me; objected and accused me that I was a sinner. I said: 'Tell me something new, devil!' I knew that before that I had committed some real sins. It has to be a real sin, not an imagined or speculated sin, that God will pardon for the sake of His Beloved Son, who took our sin upon Himself. So that my sin, that I committed is no longer mine, but Christ's. Such kindness and grace I will not deny, but rather confess. I hope you have enough, devil, you can wipe your mouth and bite on it!"

"Then he accused me and said: 'Where in the world have you put the monasteries?' Then I answered: 'What next? You may see where your divine service and your blaspheming ends!'"

I believe the devil often wakes me when I am asleep only to vex and plague me. Right now I am deep in the Article about forgiveness of sin. It occupies me day and night. All my thoughts are from Jesus Christ, my only Saviour, who has done enough and paid for my sins. I admit nothing to the law nor to all the devils. Whoever can believe in the forgiveness of sins is a redeemed person."

#6828: FB 3, 86 (24,122) Re: Temptation

"When we have hardly come through the temptation and with much trouble and labor finally want to pray, that is when the struggle really begins! Then our conscience reminds us of our sins; and the devil helps from all sides; that we can hardly believe that God will hear us; and we think we are unworthy. And the misfortune is that the longer we pray the worse it gets!"

#6838: FB 3, 144 (26,19) Re: Christians Must Suffer

We, who are baptized, must endure and suffer both actively and passively from God Who affects our senses and works, as a potter fashions the clay, and the devil and the world who continually plague and harrass us. So that a Christian suffers all the time and is a martyr.

#6839: FB 3, 163 (26,79) Re: Christ's Distress (Temptation)

"Christ came to Jerusalem on the tenth day, and on the fourteenth day he was killed. His thoughts and temptations were about sin, the wrath of God and of death; of which kings and mighty men are also afraid and are terrible. But since He was young, He wept. [Luke 19:41]. The other distress and grief was that His Work would account for nothing. That is why He wept bitterly because they wouldn't recognize the time of their visitation. They lived without care until they were overcome by misfortune and were destroyed.

We lament and weep about the plagues we experience, even though we deserve them. But we keep quiet about the cause, namely our sins.

#6839: FB 3, 163 (26,79) Re: Christ's Distress (Temptation) . . . continued

If we would say as we should: 'I no longer want to live against the Commandments of my Lord, because my Redemption has cost Him much. It is terrible that such punishment should befall His city, His people, where His Church, His priests and His government are. What is Babylon, Ninevah, Assyria, Sodom and Gomorrah in comparison? What is Jerusalem now and Antioch where the first school was and where so many martyrs are buried? How many stones are there still in the walls? What is Rome? What happened to it? And what do you think is going to happen to Germany?'

#6982: FB 4, 294 (50,3) Re: Everlasting Torture and Agony in Hell

On August 16th, 1438, D.M.L. thought about the miserable and lamentable state of this life. That the mortal body is subjected to many diseases and misfortune, and he said: "If the pains in the other life are going to be so severe and forever, then our body will not be able to endure it. We can hardly endure the suffering in this short time of our life. I think we will have different bodies." But soon afterwards he said: "Let us be content and unconcerned. These are only my thoughts. God forbid that we should experience it. Let us see to it that we are in the numbers of which it is said: 'Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.' "[Matt. 5:4].

Also in this life there are many and unequal temptations, just as there are many different people. If someone had suffered the temptation that I had suffered, he would long be dead! In like manner, I would not have been able to endure what St. Paul endured: "A messenger of Satan, to harass me (the thorn in the flesh) [1 Cor. 12:7]. And St. Paul would not have been able to endure the severe temptation of Christ. The greatest sorrow [grief] is if one dies suddenly. About that we are not supposed to dispute, but leave it to God's judgement; but rather be concerned about what is evident in His Word."

#7075: FB 4, 721 (Appendix 19) Re: How to Overcome Evil Lust

Dr. Martin Luther said once, that in the lives of the Fathers, this story was found. A young hermit was full of evil lust and desires and didn't know what to do about it. So he went to an old man to ask for advice. He told him you can't prevent the bird from flying back and forth in the air. But you can prevent them from building a nest in your hair! Therefore, one cannot prevent having evil thoughts, but one should not be pre-occupied with them, so that they do not take deep roots!"

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GENERAL INDEX: NAMES AND SUBJECTS

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