

# The Significance of the Reformation for Our Ministry Today

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We may not often realize the extent to which our ministry, the Lutheran ministry, was affected and is determined by the Reformation. The Reformation has a significance for our ministry also today in basic ways. That ministry would not be what it is had it not been for Luther and the Reformation. The Lutheran pastor became something quite different from the Roman priest. Rome had in many respects departed from the ministry as established by Christ for his New Testament church. It took a major reform to restore it.

It was, of course, not the Reformation as a movement that restored it, but the Holy Scriptures as they again became the ultimate authority for all matters of faith and life. The doctrine of both the church and the ministry received renewed biblical expression and application. And that became our heritage.

As we consider the significance of the Reformation, we shall see it as it is evident in the writings of Luther, in our Confessions and in the events that transpired. The extent to which each of these is drawn into the presentation will depend somewhat on the specific subject being considered.

The Reformation has taught us—

- I. To be firm in confessing Scripture truth;
- II. To recognize both the universal priesthood and the public ministry;
- III. To use Scripture properly;
- IV. To make important distinctions;
- V. To show evangelical pastoral concern.

## Lecture I

### The Reformation has Taught us to be Firm in Confessing Scripture Truth

At a time when we have again observed the anniversary of our Lutheran Book of Concord it is not news to say that our ministry as it has come down to us from the Reformation is one that is confessional. Christianity is confessional. This is true of all Christians. It will be true in a special way of Christians in the public ministry, especially in the public ministry within Lutheranism. It will and must be true of us in the public ministry of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS).

The ministry in Roman Catholicism is also confessional, however. The ministry of which Luther became a part through his ordination as a priest was confessional in the Roman Catholic sense. Yet this was not the same as the confessional ministry we have entered since the days of Luther in the church that bears his name. That is why we have given today's lecture not simply the title "A Ministry That Is Confessional" but rather "A Ministry That Is Firm in Confessing Scripture Truth." This takes cognizance of the unique feature that became a part of the public ministry in Lutheranism in contrast to Roman Catholicism. It again became confessional as it had been in apostolic times. It gave and gives full recognition to the *sola scriptura* principle.

How Luther came to understand the ministry in this way, how it developed, is part of Reformation history. We cannot explore this in detail. Certain highlights readily come to mind, however, and will be referred to as we proceed. We think of Luther at Worms, and of the Marburg Colloquy. We think of the development of confessions—the Augsburg Confession and the Apology, the Smalcald Articles and the Formula of Concord. Again, there will be quotations from Luther that will be pertinent to the topic in its various aspects. As we look at the points under this topic, we hope to gain a picture of what it means to be confessional in our ministry as members of the WELS clergy.

## Based on Scripture

Lutheran confessionalism is Scripture based. Rome was confessional primarily in this that it was necessary to confess oneself to the pope as supreme head of the church and to church traditions. Several years before his direct break with Luther, Erasmus made the observation that Luther had committed two sins. One of these was to attack the crown of the pope. At Augsburg Eck said he could refute the Lutheran confession not with Scripture but with the church fathers. To submit to papal supremacy and to abide by church tradition is the kind of confessionalism John Paul II is attempting to reestablish in Rome.

At Worms Luther came into direct conflict with this papal authority. Rome's planned method of dealing with Luther was to bring him to Worms for no other purpose than to recant. This was not stated in the invitation, or Luther would not have gone. But the two questions addressed to Luther at the Diet were an attempt to carry out this limited purpose: 1) Are these your books? 2) Will you recant? The demand to recant was simply the demand to submit to papal authority, which had already adjudged Luther a heretic. The crown of the pope was at stake. At Leipzig in 1518 Luther had disputed with Eck about the primacy of the pope and the infallibility of church councils. Luther's reply at Worms is based on convictions that Leipzig helped produce. His reply is well known but bears repeating:

Unless I am convinced by the testimonies of the Holy Scriptures or evident reason (for I believe neither in the Pope nor councils alone, since it has been established that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures adduced by me, and my conscience has been taken captive by the Word of God, and I am neither able nor willing to recant, since it is neither safe nor right to act against conscience. God help me. Amen!<sup>i</sup>

Not the pope, not church councils, not church tradition, but Scripture alone was the basis for Luther's confessionalism.

In the Smalcald Articles Luther, like Paul, would not grant even an angel the right to establish an article of faith but only the Word of God. In matters of religion you first ask who is speaking, not what is being said.<sup>ii</sup> When God speaks, we do not question the content. When man speaks, we need to question it because men err.

In Scripture it is God who speaks. Thus Luther could say: "We must see to it that everything in which we glory as an article of faith is certain, pure, and based on clear passages of Scripture."<sup>iii</sup> For Scripture Luther would also substitute simply "the Word of God." The two were identical for him.

If all articles of faith must be based on Scripture, it is likewise true that all that Scripture teaches must become a part of our confession. We cannot pick and choose. Luther put it this way to Count Albrecht of Mansfeld in 1523: "It does no good to say: I will gladly confess Christ and His Word in all articles except one or two which my tyrannical masters will not tolerate....But he who denies Christ in one article or word has in this one article denied the same Christ who would be denied in all articles; for there is but one Christ in all His words, collectively and individually."<sup>iv</sup>

This position on Scripture alone, which Luther upheld at Worms and in his writings, became the position of the emerging Lutheran church at Augsburg. The Preface, written by Saxon Chancellor Brueck, states that the Lutheran princes and cities were offering "the Confession of our preachers and ourselves, showing what manner of doctrine from the Holy Scriptures and the pure Word of God has been up to this time set forth in our lands."<sup>v</sup> In the Apology Melancthon shows that the adversaries "have condemned several articles contrary to the manifest Scriptures of the Holy Ghost; so far are they from overthrowing our propositions by means of the Scriptures."<sup>vi</sup> The scriptural basis for all articles of faith is simply and clearly reiterated in the introductory section, "The Comprehensive Summary, Foundation, Rule, and Standard," of the Formula of Concord. Scripture is called "the pure, clear fountain of Israel, which is the only true standard by which all teachers and doctrines are to be judged."<sup>vii</sup> As the various confessions are accepted in this document, this is done in each case "because it has been taken from God's Word and is founded firmly and well therein."<sup>viii</sup>

A church with this as its confessional position will expect of its public ministry that it be firm in confessing Scripture truth. We consider this to be self-evident within the WELS. At least lip-service to this principle is widespread in all of Lutheranism. What causes considerable variance in the result is the question of biblical hermeneutic, in fact the doctrine of Scripture itself, which is closely connected with one's views on biblical interpretation. This will be the subject of a separate lecture.

### **It provides certainty**

Where there is a sound basis, there is certainty. A ministry that is firm in confessing Scripture truth will know what to confess and will confess with conviction.

True, there were times when Luther had doubts about himself. Was he, he alone, right and so many, many others wrong? When any doubts arose, he gained certainty from the Word. The result is that the total impression we have of Luther is not that of a timid reformer, of one who feared to stand alone, of one who vacillated in the face of opposition. The title of Bainton's Luther biography *Here I Stand* expresses the confessional certainty Luther projected.

Some have considered this certainty of Luther to be pride. To some Luther may give the impression of being cocksure of himself. Without apology he can boast of what he knows. He even boasts of his stubbornness.

Yet Luther knew what humility was. "I know that the pious should be humble," he writes in the Galatians commentary.<sup>ix</sup> "Note that genuine humility is bound to follow where faith is real," he comments in a sermon.<sup>x</sup> In his table talk he spoke as follows: "The Holy Scriptures call for a humble reader, who is reverent and trembles at the words of God, one who is always saying: Teach me, teach me, teach me! The Spirit resists the proud...Pride hurled the angel out of heaven, it ruins many ministers. This is why humility spells success in the study of Holy Scriptures."<sup>xi</sup>

But there were circumstances under which Luther could not be humble. "One must differentiate between God's honor and man's honor. When God's honor is concerned, do not be humble."<sup>xii</sup> And God's honor was at stake in his opposition to the pope, in his defense of the doctrine of justification by faith. Again from the Galatians commentary: "In opposition to the pope I am willing and obliged to be proud with a holy pride... This pride of ours is extremely necessary in opposition to the pope. If we were not so firm and proud, and if, by the Holy Spirit, we did not utterly condemn him with his teaching as well as the devil, his father, we would never be able to defend the doctrine of the righteousness of faith... All we aim for is that the glory of God be preserved and that the righteousness of faith remain pure and sound... Accursed be any humility that yields or submits at this point!... With the help of God, therefore, I will be more hardheaded than anyone else. I want to be stubborn and to be known as someone who is stubborn. Here I bear the inscription 'I yield to no one.' And I am overjoyed if here I am called rebellious and unyielding."<sup>xiii</sup> Certainty based on God's Word may appear like pride. It makes one unyielding. But this holy pride is not in conflict with genuine Christian humility.

In fact, a pastor should be so certain of what he preaches, so certain that he is preaching God's pure Word, that he need not ask God's forgiveness for what he has said. Luther writes: "A preacher should neither pray the Lord's Prayer nor ask for forgiveness of sins when he has preached (if he is a true preacher), but should say and boast with Jeremiah, 'Lord, thou knowest that which came out of my lips is true and pleasing to thee' [Jer. 17:16]... Here it is unnecessary, even bad, to pray for forgiveness of sins, as if one had not taught truly, for it is God's word and not my word, and God ought not and cannot forgive it, but only confirm, praise, and crown it, saying, 'You have taught truly, for I have spoken through you and the word is mine.'"<sup>xiv</sup> So certain the preacher, the public servant of the Word, can and must be when he speaks in the church in Jesus' name. Basing what he says on God's Word, he can have that certainty.

### **Able to say *Damnamus***

Such certainty based on God's Word also enables the public servant to say *damnamus* at the proper time. He can distinguish between truth and error, and will condemn, must condemn error if he is faithful to the truth.

By his confession based on God's Word the Christian identifies himself with Christ and his gospel. By that same confession he must dissociate himself from error, from those who persist in error. To say with conviction, we believe, teach and confess, will result in also saying, we condemn. If the Christian pastor who identifies himself with Scripture knows where he stands, he also will know and need to say where he does not stand. The presence of error in the world forces the latter on him.

Luther sometimes gives the impression of delighting in polemics. One gains the impression that he cannot speak or write for long without speaking out, lashing out, some would say, against the pope or the sacramentarians. He speaks forcefully, unambiguously, quotes Scripture and uses closely reasoned logic in the process. Every polemical weapon was in Luther's arsenal. But if the impression is gained that this was Luther's delight, that he jumped at every opportunity to engage an opponent in verbal combat, this is a false impression.

One of Luther's greatest writings is also his least polemical. The treatise *The Freedom of the Christian* of 1520, in fact, is devoid of polemics. In the open letter to Leo X that accompanied this writing, Luther wrote: "From this book you may judge with what studies I prefer to be more profitably occupied, as I could be, provided your godless flatterers would permit me and had permitted me in the past."<sup>xv</sup> There was ever a sufficient supply of opponents to keep Luther more than busy refuting error. But it was always in the interest of the truth and of the gospel.

That Luther was at times more forceful than necessary, that the heat of battle aroused him to use strong language Luther himself acknowledged. At Worms, when he refused to recant, he referred to books he had written against some private and distinguished individuals and admitted, "I have been more violent than my religion or profession demands."<sup>xvi</sup> He realized he was no saint. Yet the substance of what he said he could not recant.

Even the gentle, mild-mannered Melancthon, though he was treading gently at Augsburg, in confessing the truth could not escape also saying: "And we condemn." The accusations that were expressed and implied in Eck's 404 propositions forced Melancthon to this. And in the Apology, where he speaks against the theologians and monks who had prepared the Confutation, Melancthon is more severe.

The Formula of Concord in its introduction speaks of Articles in Controversy. Preservation of the truth requires speaking out against error. The authors state: "For the preservation of pure doctrine and for thorough, permanent, godly unity in the Church it is necessary, not only that the pure, wholesome doctrine be rightly presented, but also that the opponents who teach otherwise be reprov'd, 1 Tim. 3 (2 Tim. 3,16); Titus 1,9, —for faithful shepherds, as Luther says, should do both, namely, feed or nourish the lambs and resist the wolves, so that the sheep may flee from strange voices, John 10,12, and may separate the precious from the vile. Jer. 15,19."<sup>xvii</sup>

The approach that is common today is one that calls for emphasizing the positive. Those who have been involved in the Lutheran/ Roman Catholic dialogues observe almost with surprise: There is so much more on which we agree than on which we disagree. Implied in that statement is the thought that we therefore ought to be able to be less concerned about the points of disagreement; we should withhold any *damnamus*. In fact, we ought to give each other the right hand of fellowship. It will be the *damnamus* included in a confession that draws clear lines, that divides truth from error. The *damnamus* makes the confession not only a means of uniting those who believe alike, but also brings about separation from the errorist. A confession that speaks only in the positive and possibly even limits itself to the positive on which there is agreement could serve to unite us not only with Roman Catholics, but also with Mormons. The Book of Mormon has many fine statements in it, statements about Christ, that we could accept. The *damnamus* must sharpen up a good confession.

To say that we agree on much more than on what we disagree may sound appealing. Why concern ourselves about a difference in the doctrine of the Antichrist if we are agreed on the doctrine of Christ? Why concern ourselves about a denial of the real presence in the sacrament if there is agreement that Jesus' blood was shed for sin? To speak a *damnamus* against a seemingly unimportant error is made out to be unconscionable.

Marburg can teach us something about this. At the conclusion of the colloquy on October 3, 1529, ten theologians subscribed to the articles Luther had been asked to draw up. There was agreement on 14 of the 15

articles. There was agreement on the doctrine of God, of original sin, of Christ by whom we are “saved from such sin (original sin) and all other sins as well as from eternal death.”<sup>xviii</sup> There was agreement concerning the External Word, Baptism, Good Works, Confession and more. And even in Article XV, “Concerning the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ,” there were points of agreement, on both kinds, and on the fact that the spiritual partaking of Christ’s body and blood is necessary for every Christian. The colloquists differed in one item: “We have not reached an agreement as to whether the true body and blood of Christ are bodily present in the bread and wine.” This one point of disagreement kept them apart. Although the article said, “Each side should show Christian love to the other side insofar as conscience will permit,” yet the denial of the real presence on the part of Zwingli and his followers was enough to cause the Lutherans to reject them as brothers in the faith.<sup>xix</sup> While there are those who say that the Lutherans went too far in their rejection of the Reformed on the basis of this “minor” difference and want to revisit Marburg and correct their mistake, these are the same people who are willing also to withhold a *damnamus* against Rome today.

While we rejoice in every expression of the truth of the gospel, we recognize that a confessional ministry must be able to distinguish between truth and error and be ready to say *damnamus* and follow through with action. The Reformation has taught us to be firm in confessing Scripture truth, yes, all of the truth of Scripture.

### **Not afraid of consequences**

The situations in which the reformers and their followers confessed were often dangerous. Luther could not know what the consequences of his confession at Worms might be. The imperial safe-conduct had not saved Huss from martyrdom at Constance a century earlier. The fact that Luther was spirited away to the Wartburg for his protection shows the very real danger which he faced in confessing.

Although the invitation to Augsburg in 1530 sounded conciliatory, the Lutherans could not know what to expect. After all, the second Diet of Speyer had taken action in 1529 against the Lutherans, action that evoked their strong protest. The existence of Lutheranism was being threatened. It was to be contained and choked out. And when the emperor came to Augsburg in June of 1530, he came from Italy, where the pope had finally crowned him emperor. What could they expect under such circumstances? Was the conciliatory invitation only a trap? John the Steadfast lived up to his name. Though he knew that his firm position, his unwavering confession, could cost him land and life, he more than anyone else was the solid confessor at Augsburg. He had much to lose, but held his Savior of greater worth than all his possessions and honors.

The results of Augsburg were not promising. The Lutherans were prohibited from publishing their confession. And they were ordered to submit by April 15 of the following year. They must have wondered and feared what would happen if they did not submit. Would it mean war? Would they be banned? Would the whole might of Charles V and of the Catholic princes be brought against them? The formation of the Smalcaldic League shows their apprehensions.

When April 15 came, the Lutherans published the Latin text of the prohibited confession together with a lengthy, hard-hitting defense of it. The consequences that looked forbidding did not deter them from firm confessional action.

With such examples of courage in the face of serious consequences, one is hesitant to point to any parallel in more recent history in our own synod. Today in our land one can confess whatever he wishes without fear of the power of the government. Was the life of anyone of us ever threatened in America because we confessed the truth of Scripture? Yet even lesser dangers loom big at times. In fact, our flesh can imagine dangers so that we intimidate ourselves. We may even hesitate testifying clearly to our congregations because we fear their reaction. Will we lose support if we hold firmly to an unpopular position? Sometimes we forget that our lay people are as concerned about the truth of God’s Word as we are and are looking to their pastors and synod to provide confessional leadership.

One of the critical periods in the history of our synod were the two decades leading up to 1961. Confessional positions had to be taken and the consequences often looked ominous. Can a confessional body

that takes unpopular positions survive? The demise of the Wisconsin Synod was sometimes predicted. Some felt the Wisconsin Synod needed its larger sister synod in order to survive. While thousands of our young men were fighting and dying for our country, our confessional position did not permit us to participate in the government's chaplaincy program. This was an unpopular position. While other Lutherans were distributing *pro deo et patria* awards, our synod saw the Boy Scout oath and law as a violation of Scripture and in conflict with our confession. The press wasn't very complimentary. With the Missouri Synod's growing interest in getting into the ecumenical stream, the fellowship question became critical. And it isn't popular to break off fellowship. What would a much smaller synod be able to do, no longer tied to her larger sister by many joint projects, projects which it would seemingly never be able to carry out alone? At the time when the joint Milwaukee Lutheran High School was split up, I remember a Missouri Synod member saying that the Wisconsin Synod churches would never get a high school built.

In the meantime pastors and congregations were leaving the synod, some to the right, others to the left. In 1961 there were anxious hearts wondering what the consequences would be of the synod's confessional position and of its firm confessional action. God in his grace gave our leaders and pastors and teachers and people the courage and wisdom so that our church confessed and acted as it had learned it must from Scripture. God demonstrated the truth of those who said that we need not fear the consequences as long as we confess his Word and act in accordance with it. The Reformation experienced this truth under the most trying circumstances, and we have seen it in the recent history of our own church. What would have happened if our synod had failed to act in 1961 no one can know. But we do know the blessings we have experienced in the two decades since that time of confession.

### **Preserved by God in the true confession**

But the Reformation shows that firmness in confessing Scripture truth is not a momentary action, spoken and completed in one day. Our ministry must be one in which Scripture truth is confessed today, tomorrow, the next day. It must be one in which we continue and abide in that confession. That is something that cannot be taken for granted. The Lord requires and gives this steadfastness.

The Lutherans made a good confession on June 25, 1530. Yet the following two months at Augsburg were a danger to that confession. Luther, far away in the Coburg castle, rejoiced when he heard what had happened on June 25, but was properly apprehensive when Melanchthon wrote on June 26: "Now it seems to me one has to decide, before our opponents may answer, what we are willing to concede to them in matters of both kinds, the marriage of priests, the private mass."<sup>xx</sup> Luther answered on the 29th: "I received your Apologia, and I wonder what it is you want when you ask what and how much is to be conceded to the papists. In connection with the Sovereign it is another question what he may concede, if danger threatens him. For me personally more than enough has been conceded in this Apologia. If the papists reject it, then I see nothing that I could still concede, unless I saw their reasoning, or clearer Scripture passages than I have seen till now. Day and night I am occupied with this matter, considering it, turning it around, debating it, and searching the whole Scripture; certainty grows continuously in me about this, our teaching, and I am sure and more sure that now (God willing) I shall not permit anything further to be taken away from me, come what may."<sup>xxi</sup>

After the Catholics had responded with their Confutation on August 3, the month of August was a time for negotiations. First a large committee of possibly 20 or more was established. This committee never got off the ground. About the middle of August a committee of 14, seven from each side, was formed to work out a compromise between the Augsburg Confession and the Confutation. Eck's flexibility and Melanchthon's willingness to make concessions permitted this committee to make progress in the first part of the Augsburg Confession. Difficulties arose in the second part on abuses, and the negotiations broke down in the matter of both kinds in the sacrament. Eck wanted this to be considered an adiaphoron, controlled by the papacy. This Melanchthon would not concede. Another committee was formed, the committee of six, but it too ended in a deadlock. Luther was disturbed by these negotiations. On August 6 he wrote Melanchthon: "I thoroughly dislike

the negotiations for agreement in doctrine, since agreement is completely impossible, unless the pope wants to give up the papacy. It was enough that we gave an account of our faith and sought peace.”<sup>xxii</sup>

Fortunately Melancthon’s spirit of compromise did not result in damage at Augsburg. But it did not end there. The Variata of 1540 and the Leipzig Interim of 1548 showed the compromiser at work again. The result was several decades of controversy; one could not know what was truly Lutheran. It ended only with another firm confession of Scripture truth to reaffirm and supplement what had been confessed at Augsburg. This drew the kind of confessional lines that brought together those truly united in the faith.

Time does not permit us to go into details. There is no single straight line of confessional faithfulness that runs consistently from the Reformation to our day. The history of Lutheranism in America and of the Wisconsin Synod likewise reveals that confessional faithfulness cannot be assumed to be a continuing blessing that remains, once it is achieved.

The question has been asked: What assurance do we have that the Wisconsin Synod will remain confessionally sound? What will preserve to us a ministry that is firm in confessing Scripture truth?

Perseverance in our confession does not come about by human effort or determination. *The Brief Statement*, its adoption and repeated adoption, did not prevent Missouri’s compromises. And *This We Believe* and whatever other statements we add to it will not of themselves assure the continuance of sound confessionalism among us. This is not to deprecate such efforts. But of itself that will not do it.

It is God who keeps us in the faith, guides us into all truth and gives the courage to confess his truth. But God works through means. Luther gained certainty as he day and night occupied himself with, studied, searched the whole of Scripture. As a result he could say: “Certainty grows continuously in me.” God worked it through his Word.

That Word also moved Luther and the confessional Lutherans to follow through with a fellowship practice that was confessional. Without it, a ministry that is united in its confession of the truth cannot continue in a church. It is not without purpose that God has spoken as he did in Romans 16:17,18; Titus 3; and 2 John 10,11. A church cannot ignore, its ministry cannot ignore God’s own Word as to how he will preserve it in the truth and expect to be preserved in it.

Our synod has enjoyed a wonderful confessional unity among its people and pastors and teachers and professors. This unity was strengthened when we took confessional action in 1961. May God through his Word enlighten us whenever doctrinal problems arise and give us courage to follow through with confessional action when that is called for. That is his way of preserving a ministry that is firm in confessing Scripture truth.

We close with words of Luther, his exposition and expansion of Jesus’ prayer for the preservation of his disciples (John 17:11, “Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name”):

Dear Father, be pleased to protect them against all false doctrine so that they remain loyal to Thy holy Word and to the pure, unadulterated Gospel—which sanctifies them, too—nor fall from it and come to adopt a false, sham holiness; for if Thou do not hold them, theirs is, after all, a lost cause.

Luther then expounds further:

The devil is too cunning and the deceit and offense of false doctrine are too great to enable us to overcome them by our own wisdom and powers. And, as Christ says (Matt 24:24), even the elect will barely escape being misled into error.

May we poor people, too, be preserved through this prayer. Otherwise no one on earth would be able to remain loyal in the face of the many shrewd, cunning, powerful spirits and sects that have existed from the beginning to this day.... Therefore we still have need, and shall forever need, to pray every moment, if possible, with Christ: O dear Father, help us and hold us loyal to the true, holy way in the Word.<sup>xxiii</sup>

## Lecture II

### The Reformation has Taught us to Recognize Both the Universal Priesthood and the Public Ministry

On April 4, 1507, Luther was ordained a priest in the Roman church. What happened on that day was quite different from what happens when we today ordain and install a candidate as pastor of a congregation. The difference is the result of the Reformation. Rome saw the priesthood as a spiritual estate, apart from the laity, with power and authority the laity did not possess, received from the bishop through the sacrament of ordination. As a priest Luther could now function at the sacrifice of the mass. Later Luther came to recognize that the New Testament priesthood includes all Christians, but also that God had established for his New Testament church a public ministry, the shepherd's office, a public service, determined and conferred by a call from God through the church.

Two items call for our special attention: 1) the priesthood to which God has called all Christians; 2) the public ministry to which certain people are called by God through the church. Both of these are important for us today as we consider the central function of the church, to preach the gospel.

Frequently Luther was driven by practical circumstances to recognize the errors of Rome and to search in Scripture for the truth. This is true of the first item referred to above: the priesthood to which God has called all Christians. By 1520 Luther had come to realize that the "Romanists have very cleverly built three walls around themselves," with the result that "no one has been able to reform them."<sup>xxiv</sup>

The first of these walls was the claim that the spiritual estate has power over the temporal estate. The Roman hierarchy had power over the laity. Any attempt on the part of the laity at reform in the church was futile because only the spiritual estate, the pope, bishops and priests, had power and authority in the church and they did not reform themselves, even though this had been talked about for several centuries.

From Scripture Luther came to realize that every Christian had the right and even the responsibility to call for and effect reform in the church. And so he addressed himself in his first reformatory writing of 1520 to the Christian nobility of the German nation concerning the reform of the Christian estate. He addressed the nobles, not simply because they were nobles, but because they were Christians, prominent Christians to be sure, but Christians who were the only priests the church had. He told them: "It is pure invention that pope, bishops, priests, and monks are called the spiritual estate while princes, lords, artisans, and farmers are called the temporal estate. This is indeed a piece of deceit and hypocrisy.... All Christians are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them except that of office."<sup>xxv</sup> "We all have one baptism, gospel, one faith, and are all Christians alike," he wrote to them, "for baptism, gospel, one faith alone make us spiritual and a Christian people." Referring to 1 Peter 2:9 and Revelation 5:9,10, he said, "We are all consecrated priests through baptism."<sup>xxvi</sup> As priests, the Christian nobles could take it on themselves to effect whatever reforms were needed in the Christian estate. Quite a revolutionary thought for Rome, revolutionary but scriptural.

Similarly, he points out in his second writing, "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church," that not ordination, but baptism makes us all priests.<sup>xxvii</sup> Even in his least polemical writing, "The Freedom of the Christian," he refers to 1 Peter 2:9 and concludes: "Hence all of us who believe in Christ are priests and kings in Christ,"<sup>xxviii</sup> and as priests "we are worthy to appear before God to pray for others and to teach one another divine things."<sup>xxix</sup>

Luther had occasion to express himself more precisely and completely about the priesthood of Christians and the rights they as priests had when he in 1523 wrote to the Senate and People of Prague in Bohemia. The Utraquists, followers of Huss who insisted on both kinds in the Sacrament, had a problem. Because they held a position not sanctioned by the pope, the pope refused them an archbishop in Prague. They believed that to become a priest one needed the proper episcopal ordination, but there was no bishop in Bohemia to give this ordination. So they resorted to subterfuge. Candidates who had been trained in Bohemia went to Italy to be ordained into the priesthood. To receive this proper episcopal ordination they had to promise to administer communion in only one kind. However, upon returning to Bohemia they would renounce this promise and distribute communion in both kinds. Such deception was hardly a satisfactory method of acquiring qualified priests. A Bohemian clergyman (Callus Cahera) induced Luther to write to Prague.



This situation called on Luther to speak of the priesthood. Priests are not made but born, he says. They are not made by papal ordination but are born into the priesthood, born of water and the Spirit in the washing of regeneration.

Luther lists no less than seven rights and privileges of the Christian or priest. He writes: “There is no other Word of God than that which is given all Christians to proclaim. There is no other baptism than the one which any Christian can bestow. There is no other remembrance of the Lord’s Supper than that which any Christian can observe and which Christ has instituted. There is no other kind of sin than that which any Christian can bind or loose. There is no other sacrifice than of the body of every Christian. No one but a Christian can pray. No one but a Christian may judge of doctrine. These make the priestly and royal office.”<sup>xxx</sup> There is really nothing that any pastor may do that Luther does not ascribe equally and completely to every Christian priest.

All of this leads up to a solution of the problem in Bohemia. In place of seeking priests from the pope, they should proceed in this way: “First beseech God with your prayers.... Then call and come together freely, as many as have been touched in heart by God to think and judge as you do. Proceed in the name of the Lord to elect one or more whom you desire, and who appear to be worthy and able. Then let those who are leaders among you lay hands upon them, and certify and commend them to the people and the church or community. In this way let them become your bishops, ministers, or pastors.”<sup>xxxi</sup> Thus the universal priesthood has the right of selecting and conferring the public ministry on an individual or on as many as they see the need for.

If Luther stressed the universal priesthood of all Christians, he did not thereby eliminate the public ministry as an institution of God, as an office distinct from the universal priesthood, yet closely related to it. Although he rejected the hierarchical priesthood of Rome, he restored to the church the divinely instituted public ministry. To avoid confusion Luther advises against using the name of priest for the church’s public ministers. He writes, “According to the New Testament Scriptures better names would be ministers, deacons, bishops, stewards, presbyters.”<sup>xxxii</sup> Such expressions and others used by Paul emphasize “that it is not the estate, or order, or any authority or dignity that he (Paul) wants to uphold, but only the office and the function.”<sup>xxxiii</sup> Thus over against Rome Luther stresses that this is not a status, an estate, a special authority, but an office of service. The priest of Rome, divested of his special priestly functions, “is nothing else but an office holder,”<sup>xxxiv</sup> as Luther puts it to the nobles.

In this connection he also rejects the *character indelebilis* of the Roman priest. “They hold the illusion,” he wrote, “that a priest can never be anything but a priest.”<sup>xxxv</sup> He sees the possibility of deposing a priest, that is, an officeholder, and when this happens, he is no longer a priest. He tells the people of Prague that someone is “to be permitted in the ministry as long as he is competent and has the favor of the church as a whole.”<sup>xxxvi</sup>

Stressing that the pastor is an office holder also points to the only difference between the pastor and the layman, both of whom are Christian priests. Luther says, “There is no true basic difference between laymen and priests, princes and bishops, between religious and secular, except for the sake of office and work, but not for the sake of status.”<sup>xxxvii</sup>

The difference between the pastor and the individual Christian priest receives clear enunciation on the part of Luther in a sermon in 1535 on Psalm 110:4. He has shown that Jesus Christ is the only High Priest between God and us all. He is the only one who has brought the sacrifice that avails before God for our salvation. Therefore he so strongly rejects the Roman priesthood that claims to mediate and sacrifice for the sinner. However, Jesus, our High Priest, he says, “has bestowed this name on us, too, so that we who believe in Him are also priests, just as we are called Christians after him.”<sup>xxxviii</sup> His concern in this sermon is, as he puts it, “to make distinction between the office or service of bishops, pastors, and preachers, and the general status of being a Christian.”<sup>xxxix</sup>

“Every baptized Christian is, and ought to be called a priest.... This is the priestly office, which is the common property of all Christians. However, we deal with a different matter when we speak of those who have an office in the Christian church, such as minister, preacher, pastor, or curate.... They became priests before they received their office.”<sup>xl</sup> Referring to Ephesians 4, he writes, “Out of the multitude of Christians some must

be selected who shall lead the others by virtue of the special gifts and aptitude which God gives them for the office.”<sup>xi</sup>

The way then to distinguish between the office of preaching, or the public ministry, and the general priesthood of all baptized Christians is that the preaching office is simply a public service which is conferred upon someone by the entire congregation, all the members of which are priests.<sup>xlii</sup>

How is the office received? What makes an individual Christian priest a pastor? He is selected out of the multitude of Christians; the office is conferred on him by the congregation, by the Christian priests. Very properly there is great emphasis on the call among us. If Rome stressed ordination, we stress the call. Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession enunciates this: “They teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments unless he be regularly called.”<sup>xliii</sup>

The call is necessary for the public ministry for several reasons. On the one hand, Luther writes in his treatise on “The Freedom of the Christian” about all Christians: “Who can comprehend the riches and the glory of the Christian life? It can do all things and has all things and lacks nothing. It is lord over sin, death, and hell, and yet at the same time it serves, ministers to, and benefits all men.”<sup>xliv</sup> On the other hand, Luther says in the same writing: “Although we are all equally priests, we cannot all publicly minister and teach. We ought not do so even if we could.”<sup>xlv</sup> Why not? In a letter in 1532 about “Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers,” the Anabaptists, Luther talks of the confusion they are causing. “But how can there be decency and order when one attacks another in a ministry not committed to him, and any layman whatsoever wants to get up in church and preach?”<sup>xlvi</sup> He makes much of 1 Corinthians 14 in this letter. Thus good order makes a call necessary.

Good order will result when the individual Christian priest does not presume to function publicly without a call. Whoever functions publicly is functioning in behalf of, in the name of, others by the authority and for the benefit of other universal priests. To avoid fears in the minds of the people of Prague that his emphasis on the universal priesthood might result in confusion, he tells them:

For since we have proved all of these things to be the common property of all Christians, no one individual can arise by his own authority and arrogate to himself alone what belongs to all....The community rights demand that one, or as many as the community chooses, shall be chosen or approved who, in the name of all with these rights, shall perform these functions publicly. Otherwise, there might be shameful confusion among the people of God, and a kind of Babylon in the church, where everything should be done in order, as the Apostle teaches....Publicly one may not exercise a right without consent of the whole body or of the church.<sup>xlvii</sup>

This was explained also to the nobles in 1520: “Because we are all priests of equal standing, no one must push himself forward and take it upon himself, without our consent and election, to do that for which we all have equal authority.”<sup>xlviii</sup> So one may not function publicly, that is in behalf of others, without their authorization, consent or call. To do so is presumptuous and results in confusion.

It is against the Anabaptists, or sectaries, or enthusiasts, that Luther stresses not only the necessity of the call but of the mediate call. Of the “clandestine preachers” Luther says that “if you ask about their call, who has commanded them to come hither stealthily and to preach secretly, they will be unable to answer or to produce their authorization.”<sup>xlix</sup>

In his Galatians commentary of 1535 Luther speaks of two ways in which God calls, “either by means or without means.” He then adds, “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.”<sup>1</sup> It must come from those in behalf of whom the pastor functions. It may surprise us that Luther makes mention in this connection of the prince or magistrate. We would say that a government as such cannot extend a call to preach the Word. We need to understand, however, that Luther is writing in a context where the prince was a Christian prince at the head of a Christian territory and thus in calling was not functioning simply as the head of the state. Sometimes Luther also sees a mediate call coming through a bishop, or, as in the case of Timothy, through an apostle. The chief point is that a mediate call must come through those who have the authority to speak for the church in calling. Luther had also

said that no one should function publicly “without the consent of the whole body or of the church.” This leads to the conclusion that a mediate call comes from the church through whoever has the authority to speak for the church.

What is more, this method “should not be changed; it should be exalted, on account of the sectarians, who despise it and lay claim to another calling, by which they say that the Spirit drives them to teach.” This mediated call that comes through man is so important that Luther says: “It is not lawful for me to forsake my assigned station as preacher, to go to another city where I have no call, and to preach there....I have no right to do this even if I hear that false doctrine is being taught and that souls are being seduced and condemned which I could rescue from error and condemnation by my sound doctrine.”<sup>li</sup>

A mediate call is, however, no less divine than one given directly by the Lord. “But when the prince or some other magistrate calls me, then, with firm confidence, I can boast against the devil and the enemies of the gospel that I have been called by the command of God through the voice of man: for the command of God comes through the mouth of the prince, and this is a genuine call. Therefore, we, too, have been called by divine authority—not by Christ immediately, as the apostles were, but ‘through man.’”<sup>lii</sup>

As Lutherans we will appreciate both the priesthood that belongs to all believers, which comes to them through baptism, as well as the public ministry, an office that comes from God through the call of the church. Both have the same rights, the same gospel, the same sacraments, the same concerns for sinners and their salvation. However, the exercise of these rights will be different to avoid presumption and to follow good order, indeed, because of God’s institution of the public ministry. Luther shows that in his comments to Psalm 110:4. He speaks in practical terms. We can draw some practical applications from them.

He describes the priesthood of all Christians and the way in which they will carry it out.

But after we have become Christians through this Priest and His priestly office, incorporated in Him by Baptism through faith, then each one, according to his calling and position, obtains the right and the power of teaching and confessing before others this Word which we have obtained from Him. Even though not everybody has the public office and calling, every Christian has the right and the duty to teach, instruct, admonish, comfort, and rebuke his neighbor with the Word of God at every opportunity and whenever necessary. For example, father and mother should do this for their children and household; a brother, neighbor, citizen, or peasant for the other. Certainly one Christian may instruct and admonish another ignorant or weak Christian concerning the Ten Commandments, the Creed, or the Lord’s Prayer. And he who receives such instruction is also under obligation to accept it as God’s Word and publicly to confess it.<sup>liii</sup>

Luther speaks not only of possessing certain rights, but of functioning on the basis of them. The Christian priest does this “according to his calling and position.” He functions where he is, whether in the home, at work, as a ruler, whether as father, mother, neighbor, etc. He does what he does as a part of his daily life.

In his commentary on Psalm 110, after considering the priestly works of every Christian, Luther speaks of the public ministry. He writes:

But above these activities is the communal office of public teaching. For this preachers and pastors are necessary. This office cannot be attended to by all the members of a congregation. Neither is it fitting that each household do its baptizing and celebrating of the Sacrament. Hence it is necessary to select and ordain those who can preach and teach, who study the Scriptures, and who are able to defend them. They deal with the Sacraments by the authority of the congregation, so that it is possible to know who is baptized and everything is done in an orderly fashion. If everyone were to preach to his neighbor or if they did things for one another without orderly procedure, it would take a long time indeed to establish a congregation. Such functions, however, do not pertain to the priesthood as such but belong to the public office which is performed in behalf of all those who are priests, that is, Christians.<sup>liv</sup>

The particular activities Luther here assigns to the communal office (*gemein Amt*) are public preaching, baptizing, celebrating the Sacrament. Particularly the administration of the sacraments Luther does not consider suited to the Christian priest in his own household. The reason he gives is good order. One could never really know who is baptized. Was the baptism performed properly? one might ask. And it would prevent congregations from forming, since they would not seem to be needed.

All of what we have heard is familiar to us. Our intent was to see how Luther came to such understanding, how he spoke about it. We appreciate what we have inherited from the Reformation: the proper understanding of the universal priesthood and the public ministry. We see in what the Reformation taught us the truth revealed in Scripture.

Our concern will be to give full recognition to both. Our concern is that both may be recognized not only in theory but as a practical factor in our church life. Our concern will be that both are used but not confused.

We all no doubt have heard and ourselves expressed complaints about our laity to the effect that they do not practice the priesthood they possess. They see their position as one of being served and not of serving. If this is true, the church, Christianity, is the poorer for it. I say, *if* this is true, because the answer will be relative and subjective. It may be true to a degree, and different with different people. Each one will subjectively judge the situation on the basis of his own observation and experiences. These will not be the same for all. Yet, there have been sufficient expressions to the effect that our laity is only theoretically seen as universal priests rather than as functioning priests to merit our attention.

Keeping in mind what Luther writes about the rights, duties, privileges of the Christian priest, we can say: What a blessing would come to the church if every Christian functioned as Luther describes. How much easier the work in the Christian day schools would be, not to speak of Sunday school and confirmation instructions, if all parents would exercise their priesthood in the home in teaching the Word to their children! We might not even need schools to the same degree. Or consider the matter of delinquents, of the backsliders in our congregations. Whoever would see someone becoming lax in church attendance would admonish him as a brother or sister in Christ, would show deep concern and act on it, privately, as neighbor to neighbor, friend to friend, and concerned relative, or acquaintance. Or consider evangelism. Each Christian would concern himself with the unbelievers, the unchurched in his circle of friends and relatives, and acquaintances in the area where he lives and works. Each Christian would be alert to opportunities to bring an unbelieving person into contact with the life-giving gospel, to bring that person to worship services, to a Bible information class. He would feel his personal responsibility toward mission work throughout the world. Our sick members in the hospital would be prayed for not only on Sunday morning in the church service, but in the private prayers of many fellow Christians. The aged and shut-ins would be visited each by his friends and acquaintances, and not merely for a social visit. Recognizing his priesthood would prevent a Christian from being only a Sunday Christian who lays aside his Christianity during the intervening six days. We have pointed to some things quite at random. More might be added. In stating these things the way we do, we do not mean to imply that none of this is being done. Perhaps more is being done than we know. But we are speaking from the viewpoint that more could be done, that in the area of sanctification we are always striving toward improvement.

This is where the public ministry fits into the picture. In recent years frequent reference has been made to Ephesians 4:12. It has been shown that the King James translation is subject to misunderstanding because of a misplaced comma. On the basis of the King James, we gain the impression that the ascended Lord gave pastors, teachers, etc., 1) for the perfecting of the saints, 2) for the work of the ministry, 3) for the edifying of the body of Christ. By removing the comma between the first two elements, the NIV translates "to prepare God's people for works of services." The Greek has *πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας*. The NASB is more literal: "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service." We sometimes receive the impression that this translation without the comma is fairly recent. Even the Revised Standard Version still has the comma. It is interesting that Luther translates: "*dasz die Heiligen zugerichtet werden zum Werk des Amts,*" without a comma. After 450 years the English translations have caught up with Luther.

This raises the question: How are the pastors, teachers, etc., to equip the saints for service? The call has placed on them the public administration of the Word and sacraments. We heard Luther say that in his commentary on Psalm 110. In a sermon of 1537 on Matthew 20:24–28, Luther rejects the idea that the ministry in which he labored consisted in any sort of lordship, “but in serving all of you,” he says, “so that you learn to know God, become baptized, have the true Word of God, and finally are saved.”<sup>lv</sup> What Luther described again and again as the responsibility and function of the public ministry is summed up in the words of Paul to the elders of Ephesus: “Feed the church of God which he has purchased with his own blood” (Ac 20:28).

But the question from Ephesians 4 was how to equip the saints for service, and we heard Luther quotations that tell us how the pastors are to serve the saints with the Word. Yet, is not that the answer to our question? As God’s people are served with the Word they are being equipped also for their service. Ephesians 4 speaks of the same things as Acts 20:28. To nourish and feed God’s people is to equip them for service. And that is the sum and substance of the public ministry.

This, however, is not to be understood in a limiting way. To equip the individual Christian to function as a priest Luther also prepared teaching aids. Each part of the Small Catechism has these words as a heading: “As the Head of the Family Should Teach It in a Simple Way to His Household.” In the short Preface to the Large Catechism he gives some instructions to the father of a family, telling him “to question and examine his children and servants at least once a week and to ascertain what they know of it, or are learning.”<sup>lvi</sup> Luther’s *Hauspostille* was written down and published by Veit Dietrich not only to help pastors, but also fathers of families. It equipped them to function as priests in their homes.

Whatever the church can do to equip Christians for the priestly role also by way of special instruction and materials should prove a blessing. Aids for home devotions like our *Meditations*, Bible histories for little children, prayer books, mission story books to inspire mission zeal, church periodicals, outlines for a gospel presentation to the unchurched, pamphlets that help Christians answer questions that an unbeliever may raise—these are but some of the means that can be used to equip the saints for their service. Whatever should prove helpful we will attempt to do. Yet because of the individuality of people and the varied situations that face them in their lives we will avoid imposing fixed services and methods and procedures on them. They are to be equipped not regimented. And the equipping must not get away from the feeding.

We also need to ask: For what ministry are we equipping them? Is it for their ministry as Christian priests or for an office of public service? The answer may appear self-evident because we are talking of equipping saints for their work of service and that is the priesthood all possess. In a congregation, however, we also draw laypeople into the public service of the congregation. The Sunday school teachers and the elders who visit delinquents are obvious examples. Whoever serves at the request of, by authority of, for the benefit of his fellow priests serves in a public office. The elder chosen to assist the pastor at communion, the layman who may be chosen to read the Scriptures in a service or to read a sermon in the pastor’s absence—all of this is sometimes referred to as the universal priesthood in action. But isn’t more involved? Doesn’t it rather demonstrate that the church may choose various people from the universal priesthood to serve in various public functions, some of a rather limited nature? It seems to me that some confusion has developed in the church in that much of this is seen as the universal priesthood in action. And the church is encouraged to do more of this to give the Christian priests an opportunity to be what they are. Certainly, where the church has need, lay people may and should be enlisted for public service. They then function in the public ministry, limited though it may be. There is nothing in Scripture that says that such a public office must be full-time or even permanent. Whoever is to function publicly should receive the training required to render the service the church asks of him. But this equipping is not identical with equipping Christian priests in general for their individual priestly service.

Training in evangelism may serve as an example. The congregation may have an evangelism committee and have certain individuals who are sent out by the congregation through its committee to visit prospects, to make evangelism calls in behalf of the congregation. They then are doing this as part of an office for which the church has chosen them even as it has placed the pastor into an office. The training for this is important. They

should be equipped, and are being equipped, not only as individual priests but as public servants. We do the same for those who teach Sunday school.

The congregation, however, wants all its members to carry out their individual priesthood by serving as evangelists, by speaking to, encouraging, inviting unbelievers, serving as examples for the unchurched whom they meet individually and personally. The church may also want to give training to each Christian priest, equip him for this—to function in proclaiming the gospel to every creature as an individual priest who possesses the gospel and is to show forth the praises of the Lord. That would be equipping the saints for their work of service as Christian priests according to Ephesians 4.

Since we have an increasing number of able laymen, well educated and with a variety of gifts who may be called on to assist the pastor in areas of the public ministry, the church fails if it does not draw on this source of God's gifts to his church as the needs in the congregation require. We need to recognize, however, what the church is doing in choosing them to serve in such a public office. Frequently literature that emphasizes such use of laymen does so simply on the basis of the universal priesthood and calls on the church to put all Christian priests to work in this manner. Much of the literature that comes out of Reformed circles fails to appreciate the distinction between the Christian priest and the public ministry which Luther learned and taught from Holy Scripture. And some Lutheran material tends in the same direction.

Through the Reformation, from Luther, the Lutheran church has learned, on the one hand, to appreciate the biblical truth that not just the clergy but that all Christians are God's priests with all the rights and responsibilities this involves. The Reformation has also taught us that God established the public ministry, not as an estate, but as an office of service to feed God's people and to equip them for service. The more both (the universal priesthood and the public ministry) are fully recognized in the life and work of the church, the more it can hope to prosper through the blessings of God.

### **Lecture III**

#### **The Reformation has Taught Us to Use Scripture Properly**

Sometimes the impression has been given that before Luther's Reformation the Bible was a closed, forgotten, totally neglected, if not intentionally hidden, book. I remember gaining the impression that the Bible was in chains in the library lest anyone open and read it and that Luther somehow gained access to this chained book and this resulted in the Reformation and the restoration of the Bible.

The fact is that Luther's call to the University of Wittenberg under the papacy was to lecture on the Bible. Erasmus published his Greek New Testament before Luther nailed the Ninety-five Theses to the Castle Church's door. Boehmer informs us that "it is probable that the first book that came into Luther's hands in the monastery was a red leather-bound copy of the Latin Bible, which he now read eagerly and learned devoutly and zealously, day after day, according to the prescription of the Rule."<sup>lvii</sup> To become a doctor of theology in the university of the late Middle Ages it was necessary to attend lectures on books of the Bible for two to four years. To become a bachelor required two years of Bible lectures. The Bible was used, and more than we sometimes realize. Smalley asserts that "the Bible was the most studied book of the Middle Ages."<sup>lviii</sup>

Yet it is true that the Bible was in many respects a closed book. The average parish priest was not a minister of the Word, but a priest who could officiate at the sacrifice of the mass. And those who did occupy themselves with Scripture still dealt with a Scripture that was bound. The second wall the Romanists had built around themselves, according to Luther's *To the Christian Nobility*, was the sole authority of Rome to interpret Scripture, claiming that the pope cannot err in matters of faith,<sup>lix</sup> that the interpretation of Scripture or the confirmation of its interpretation belongs to the pope alone.<sup>lx</sup>

Hand in hand with this claim, which made the Bible a closed book, was the method Rome used for the interpretation of Scripture. The fourfold meaning they found in Scripture is well-known: 1) the literal, which taught things that happened; 2) the allegorical or spiritual, which referred to what we are to believe; 3) the tropological or moral, referring to what we are to do; and 4) the anagogical, which refers to things awaited or eschatological. Thus the exodus in the literal sense spoke of what happened when Israel left Egypt, the

allegorical meaning referred to the redemption by Christ, the tropological to the soul's conversion and the analogical to the departure for heaven. The literal interpretation was considered the least important. The others could challenge the speculative powers of the interpreter. They made the Bible putty in the hands of the theologian. An example from the Confutation can illustrate this. Referring to the distinction between lay communion under one form and priestly communion under both forms the Confutation tells us that this

was beautifully predicted in the Old Testament concerning the descendants of Eli: "It shall come to pass," says God, 1 Kings 2 (1 Sam. 2:36), "that every one that is left in thine house shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and shall say, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices (Vulgate: Ad unam partem sacerdotalem), that I may eat a piece of bread." Here Holy Scripture clearly shows that the posterity of Eli, when removed from the office of the priesthood, will seek to be admitted to one sacerdotal part, to a piece of bread. So our laymen also ought, therefore, to be content with one sacerdotal part, the one form.<sup>lxi</sup>

One wonders whether this is a place where the Lutherans could not help laughing when they heard the Confutation.

In his early years Luther considered the allegorical method the superior one. He tells us that he disliked Lyra (about 200 years before Luther) above all other exegetes, because he tried to ascertain the literal meaning with such care.<sup>lxii</sup> Luther tells us that when he was young his attempts at allegory met with fair success.<sup>lxiii</sup> In fact, he says, "It was very difficult for me to break away from my habitual zeal for allegory."<sup>lxiv</sup> "There is something fascinating about this figurative language. It is difficult for the minds of men to extricate themselves from it."<sup>lxv</sup> "If my affair with the pope had not kept me with the simple text of the Bible, I would have become an idle prattler of allegories,"<sup>lxvi</sup> Luther tells us. He refers to allegorizing as "playing games with Scripture," which has the most injurious consequences if the text and its grammar are neglected. "From history we must learn well and much, but little from allegory."<sup>lxvii</sup> Once he recognized this, Luther says he "had a strong dislike for allegories and did not make use of them unless the text itself indicated them or the interpretations could be drawn from the New Testament."<sup>lxviii</sup> His judgment of Lyra changed: "Now, just because of this commendable quality (to ascertain the literal meaning), I prefer him to almost all other interpreters of Scripture."<sup>lxix</sup>

Luther began his ministry committed to the allegorical method. But he bequeathed to us a ministry that follows sound hermeneutical principles in the use and interpretation of Scripture. If Scripture is to serve as an objective authority for doctrine and practice, if the *sola scriptura* principle is to mean anything, Scripture must be interpreted literally. Scripture must not become clay in the theological potter's hands to mold according to his likes and dislikes. The Confessions are the result of such a proper interpretation of Scripture and exemplify it. Through the Reformation we have received a ministry that is intent on properly interpreting Scripture.

### Scripture is God's Word

One's methods of interpreting Scripture will be determined in many respects by one's views of Scripture. The doctrine of Scripture and its inspiration was not in direct dispute at the time of the Reformation. So we do not have an article in the Confessions on this doctrine. The Reformers' views of Scripture, however, are evident in the Confessions and in the writings of Luther. It was the *sola scriptura* that was the point at issue. Is Scripture the only authoritative source for faith and life? Rome added the traditions of the church, which included papal bulls, etc.; the enthusiasts added direct revelation. The Reformers saw the unique role of Scripture, and their hermeneutic was such that Scripture could carry out its unique role.

We already noted that for Luther Scripture was the Word of God. When Scripture speaks, God speaks. "Let the man who would hear *God* speak read Holy Scripture," Luther wrote in 1545.<sup>lxx</sup> That is so because "the Holy Spirit himself and God, the Creator of all things, is the Author of this book."<sup>lxxi</sup> Yes, he says, "The entire Scriptures are assigned to the Holy Ghost."<sup>lxxii</sup>

Our Lutheran Confessions make the same claim for Scripture. This is done in a way that shows this could be taken for granted. Without establishing this fact in a separate article, Melancthon can refer to the “many passages in the Scriptures that clearly attribute justification to faith,” and ask whether the opponents “suppose that these words fell from the Holy Spirit unawares.”<sup>lxxiii</sup> He refers to certain frequent prohibitions in “the divine Scripture,” and asks, “Is it possible that the Holy Spirit warned against them for nothing?”<sup>lxxiv</sup> Bohlmann in his *Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Lutheran Confessions*, after taking note of the various uses of the term “Word of God” in the Confessions, says, “But most frequently the term ‘God’s Word’ identifies Holy Scripture.”<sup>lxxv</sup>

This identification of Scripture with God’s Word makes every word important. Luther comments, “Not one letter in Scripture is purposeless (*vergeblich*)...for Scripture is God’s writing and God’s Word.”<sup>lxxvi</sup> Even what seems trivial to us has the Holy Spirit as author. “We see,” Luther writes, “with what great care Moses, or rather, the Holy Spirit, describes even the most trifling actions and passions of the patriarchs.”<sup>lxxvii</sup>

Thus Luther also speaks of Scripture as inerrant. “The Scriptures have never erred.”<sup>lxxviii</sup> In fact, “The Scriptures cannot err.”<sup>lxxix</sup> Other ways of saying this are, “The Scriptures do not lie,”<sup>lxxx</sup> and that “it is impossible that Scripture should contradict itself.”<sup>lxxxi</sup> Scripture is true, even if we cannot understand how what it says is possible. Luther says about creation: “If you cannot understand how it could have been done in six days, then accord the Holy Ghost the honor that He is more erudite than you. When you read the words of Holy Scripture, you must realize that God is speaking them.”<sup>lxxxii</sup>

There is no need to quote from the Confessions where they speak in almost identical words about the complete truthfulness and reliability, i.e., inerrancy, of Scripture, of God’s Word. Any thought that Scripture can possibly err is totally foreign to Luther and the Confessions.

As God’s Word, Scripture, according to Luther, also is clear. We need to thank the Reformation for again asserting this characteristic of Scripture and for passing its recognition on to us. Rome said the opposite. In the pope’s kingdom “nothing is more commonly stated or more generally accepted than the idea that the Scriptures are obscure and ambiguous, so that the spirit to interpret them must be sought from the Apostolic See in Rome.”<sup>lxxxiii</sup> Luther gets into the subject of the clarity of Scripture because Erasmus in his *Diatribes* raised serious questions about it. In *The Bondage of the Will* Luther comes to grips with the doubts and uncertainties that Erasmus claims remain because of Scripture’s unclarity.

An interesting introductory point Luther makes is to distinguish between God and his Word: They “are two things, no less than the Creator and the creature are two things.”<sup>lxxxiv</sup> “That in God there are many things hidden, of which we are ignorant, no one doubts.” Examples are the time of the world’s end, who the elect are, etc. Luther then continues: “But that in Scripture there are some things abstruse, and everything is not plain—this is an idea put about by the ungodly Sophists.”<sup>lxxxv</sup> Satan has used their phantasmagoria to frighten “men away from reading the sacred writings and has made Holy Scripture contemptible.”<sup>lxxxvi</sup>

In asserting the clarity of Scripture, Luther admits “that there are many texts in the Scriptures that are obscure and abstruse.” This is the case, however, “not because of the majesty of their subject matter, but because of our ignorance of their vocabulary and grammar, yet these texts in no way hinder a knowledge of all the subject matter of Scripture.”<sup>lxxxvii</sup> If for many people much remains abstruse, “this is not due to the obscurity of Scripture, but to the blindness or indolence of those who will not take the trouble to look at the very clearest truth.”<sup>lxxxviii</sup>

In that connection Luther also distinguishes between “two kinds of clarity in Scripture.”<sup>lxxxix</sup> “If you speak of the internal clarity,” Luther writes, “no man perceives one iota of what is in Scripture unless he has the Spirit of God...even if they can recite everything in Scripture, and know how to quote it, yet they apprehend and truly understand nothing of it.”<sup>xc</sup> “If, on the other hand, you speak of the external clarity, nothing at all is left obscure or ambiguous, but everything there is in the Scriptures has been brought out of the Word into the most definite light, and published to all the world.”<sup>xc</sup> This external clarity enables us to “judge the spirits and dogmas of all men.”<sup>xcii</sup> Luther marshals a host of passages to do battle for this assertion of the Scripture’s clarity, both from the Old and New Testaments.<sup>xciii</sup>



Thus Luther's point is that Scripture has external clarity. Any obscurity lies in man, either in that he does not understand the language and words or is not willing in his darkened heart to accept what it says, and then he begins to philosophize and raise questions and makes new interpretations and calls the Word itself unclear.

Making mention of the manner in which the apostles referred to the Scripture as the very clearest witness, Luther asks:

What right have we, then, to make them obscure? I ask you, are these words of Scripture obscure or ambiguous: "God created heaven and earth"; "the Word became flesh"; and all those affirmations which the whole world has taken as articles of faith? And where have they been taken from? Isn't it from the Scriptures?<sup>xciiv</sup>

But the world continues to make obscure what God speaks clearly, also those articles of faith Luther refers to.

This sounds a warning for us today. We might ask: Hasn't God spoken clearly when he said in creating Eve: "I will make a helper suitable for him"? Hasn't our church and for a long time haven't most churches understood what God was revealing about the role of man and woman as established in creation and verified in passages from the New Testament? To use the word of Luther: "What right have we, then, to make them obscure?" We will need to guard carefully lest in our study and restudy, the external clarity of Scripture also on this subject is lost because of the internal obscurity that is so widespread in a world that likes to think of itself as enlightened and ridicules what opposes it as a part of the dark ages of the past. From the Reformation, from Luther, we have learned and with him we assert that Scripture is clear, and we will remember that in our use of it.

To say that Scripture is God's Word does not mean that God spoke to man in a language unique to heaven, and thus mysterious. It does not mean that God did not make use of human writers who used human language. Luther can refer very simply to what Moses or David or Jeremiah or John or Paul wrote. He even notes that there are times when the language doesn't observe "very exactly grammatical rules and rhetorical precepts."<sup>xcv</sup> But somehow he always comes back to this that the speech of St. John is "rather [that] of the Holy Ghost."<sup>xcvi</sup> He says, "We think it is the word of Isaiah, Paul, or some other mere man," but it is "our confounded unbelief and miserable flesh" which "keep us from seeing and noting that God is speaking with us in Scripture."<sup>xcvii</sup> Again he says very simply: "Peter's words are God's words."<sup>xcviii</sup>

Both factors are important for Luther in interpreting Scripture. God speaks to us *in human language*, so we must understand it in its simple meaning the way we do human language. Yet *it is God speaking* to us, so that we cannot examine it critically the way we need to examine what a mere man writes. Both factors we will note are involved in establishing proper methods of interpreting and using Scripture. To think that God speaks another language than ours makes of God's Word a magical incantation, a word with hidden meanings that are not proclaimed to us in the simple human words before us. The allegorizing of Rome did that. That leads to eisegesis rather than exegesis. But to fail to recognize what the men of God wrote as God's true Word leads, of course, to a critical approach that will not take God at his word. This is the direction in which Scripture interpretation has been going.

We shall look more closely now at the principles of hermeneutics that have become a part of our ministry, following the Reformation. Practical application to our day will be in order as we do so.

A basic hermeneutical principle Luther gave stress to was that Scripture should be understood in its native, literal sense. This, of course, opposed the allegorizing with which he had grown up under Rome and the spiritualizing so common among the Anabaptists. It was in opposing both of them that Luther repeatedly called for a literal interpretation of Scripture.

But the question may be asked: What does this mean? How do I go about arriving at the literal meaning?

Luther points to a problem that arises when you quote Scripture against Rome. Rome simply says: The church has decided what this passage means; so you should not look at the words themselves, but at what the

church says. Against such violence in dealing with Scripture he says: “As far as possible we should retain them (the words) in their simplest meaning and take them in their grammatical and literal sense.”<sup>xcix</sup> Opposing Erasmus, Luther writes in 1525: “We must everywhere adhere to the simple, pure, and natural meaning of the words. This accords with the rules of grammar and the usage of speech, which God has given to men.”<sup>c</sup> In his treatise *Against the Heavenly Prophets* Luther refers to the spiritual interpretations of Carlstadt as pure jugglery and then insists that “the natural meaning of the words is queen, transcending all subtle, acute sophisticated fancy.”<sup>ci</sup> In 1523 Luther began a series of sermons on Genesis and says: “I have often said that whoever would study Holy Scripture should be sure to see to it that he stays with the simple words as long as he can and by no means depart from them unless an article of faith compels him to understand them differently. For of this we must be certain: no simpler speech has been heard on earth than what God has spoken.”<sup>cii</sup> He then applies this to creation: “When Moses wrote that God created heaven and earth and whatever is in them in six days, then let this remain six days.”<sup>ciii</sup>

These quotations should suffice to recognize what Luther comes back to repeatedly in speaking of a literal interpretation: “natural meaning,” “simple words,” “according to rules of grammar and usage of speech.” All of this is based on this that God has spoken very simply and clearly to man in language he gave men to use. So don’t look for secret, hidden messages. Keep it simple. Let the rules of grammar and the usage of speech be applied in understanding God’s Word.

So Luther calls on the councilmen of Germany to establish and maintain schools. The devil did not want language study to be revived. “For the devil smelled a rat, and perceived that if the languages were revived a hole would be knocked in his kingdom which he could not easily stop again.”<sup>civ</sup> Luther thus admonishes the councilmen: “In proportion as we value the gospel, let us zealously hold to the languages.”<sup>cv</sup> And this referred particularly to the Hebrew and Greek in which God saw fit to give his Word. Careful language study would lead to a simple understanding of the meaning, according to the grammar and usage.

It was significant that Carlstadt, Muenzer and the Anabaptists, who stressed the “spiritual” meaning of Scripture, were ready to close schools. There was no need to study languages when the Holy Spirit gives you the “spiritual” meaning, which often had little resemblance to the literal.

Thus to understand the simple, natural meaning, according to good grammar and usage, it is important to study the languages. Luther prophesied to the councilmen:

Let us be sure of this: we will not long preserve the gospel without the languages. The languages are the sheath in which this sword of the Spirit is contained; they are the casket in which the jewel is enshrined; they are the vessel in which this wine is held; they are the larder in which this food is stored; and, as the gospel itself points out, they are the baskets in which are kept these loaves and fishes and fragments. If through our neglect we let the languages go (which God forbid!), we shall not only lose the gospel, but the time will come when we shall be unable either to speak or write a correct Latin or German.<sup>cvi</sup>

And we can add English to that. Whoever is tempted to downgrade language study in our schools should read Luther’s *To the Councilmen of All Cities of Germany*.

But does the literal, simple understanding of Scripture rule out symbolism and allegory? Not at all. “Scripture is crammed with figurative language,”<sup>cvii</sup> Luther writes to Latomus from the Wartburg. But repeatedly in his writings he warns that we should start with the simple meaning and only proceed to symbolical interpretation when Scripture itself leads us to it. “Neither a conclusion nor a figure of speech should be admitted in any place of Scripture unless evident contextual circumstances or the absurdity of anything obviously militating against the article of faith require it... We must avoid as the most deadly poison all figurative language which Scripture itself does not force us to find in a passage.”<sup>cviii</sup>

That is why Luther so firmly rejected the symbolical interpretation of the words of institution, writing to the Bohemians and Waldensians about the Sacrament: “Hold to the word which Christ speaks: Take, this is My body, this is My blood. We must not commit sacrilege against God’s Word and without the warrant of any

express, clear passage of Scripture give a word a meaning that differs from its natural one, as do those who outrageously, without any basis in Scripture, twist the Word 'is' into meaning 'signifies'."<sup>cxix</sup>

Closely related to this was his rejection of Zwingli's figure of speech called *alloeosis*, which led to a rejection of the communication of attributes. Zwingli claimed that when something is said of the divinity of Christ which really belongs to the humanity, or vice versa, you have a figure of speech, an *alloeosis*.<sup>cx</sup>

The reason Luther is so concerned about the simple, literal understanding and the faithful use of language and grammar is that "otherwise not a letter in Scripture would be safe against the spiritual jugglers,"<sup>cxii</sup> meaning the "heavenly prophets." Luther does not want to give his Roman adversaries "occasion to make a mockery of all Scripture."<sup>cxiii</sup> He is concerned that "all should be clear and certain, and everything should have a firm, secure, and good foundation on which one may confidently rely."<sup>cxiii</sup>

Hand in hand with the hermeneutical principle that stresses the literal meaning is the principle that you must examine the context in which a word, a statement appears. Luther calls on those who read Scripture to "weigh the words carefully, comparing that which preceded with that which follows, and be intent on capturing the real meaning of any passage and not on fabricating their own dreams and mutilating the vocables or tearing away words."<sup>cxiv</sup> He asks about Rome's interpretation of the word "bind" in Matthew 16 and 18, "Tell me, my friend, is it right and well done to tear a word out of a statement of Christ and give it an interpretation and a meaning that pleases our own fancy, entirely aside from its agreement with the text and statement? Should one not accord Christ and His Word so much honor as to take the entire statement of Christ, word for word...comparing the words with one another in order to determine whether the statement will allow me to understand a word in this or that sense, as I am inclined to do?"<sup>cxv</sup>

By looking at what preceded and follows one can better arrive at "the intent or purpose of the writer."<sup>cxvi</sup> This is important because Scripture does not have several intended meanings, but one. "The Holy Spirit," Luther wrote in reply to Emser, "is the plainest Writer and Speaker in heaven and on earth. Therefore His words can have no more than one, and that the most obvious sense. This we call the literal or natural sense." And "although the things described in Scripture have a significance beyond the literal meaning, Scripture does not on that account have a twofold sense but retains only the one which the words express."<sup>cxvii</sup> The context helps us arrive at that one intended sense. Thus we must deal honestly with Christ and the Holy Spirit, not imposing our meaning and preconceived ideas on his Word, but listen, study, examine the language and context to hear from him what it is he wants to say to us, the one meaning he wants to convey. From what Luther has said one generally does not go astray in concluding that the more complicated and involved someone's interpretation is, the greater is the possibility of its being contrived and not simply listening to God speaking.

Another hermeneutical principle so familiar to us, stressed by Luther, is to let Scripture interpret Scripture. We might consider this looking at a passage in its broader biblical context. "You must not look at Scripture in piecemeal fashion but in its entirety."<sup>cxviii</sup> Luther writes in his commentary on Deuteronomy: Scripture "wants to be interpreted by a comparison of passages from everywhere, and understood under its own direction." The safest way to discern the meaning of Scripture is "by drawing together and scrutinizing passages."<sup>cxix</sup> In doing this, however, we must be sure that the passages speak of the same thing. "No mistake is more easily and commonly made in dealing with Scripture than bringing together Scripture passages that are different as if they were the same."<sup>cxx</sup> In reading the fathers we should watch "whether they quote clear texts and explain Scripture by other and clearer Scripture."<sup>cxxi</sup>

In speaking of dark and clear passages Luther complains that heretics "understand the dark passages according to their own mind, and contend with them against the clear passages."<sup>cxxii</sup> This reverses the process. Rather, "if you come upon a dark passage in Scripture, do not doubt that Scripture surely contains the same truth that is clearly expressed at other places." Thus the clear throws light on the dark.

Another point that Luther considers important in the use of Scripture is to recognize the centrality of Christ in it. Law and gospel are the Bible's two principal thoughts.<sup>cxxiii</sup> From the Scriptures "you learn that you are a sinner by nature and how you are to get rid of your sins and receive life eternal, namely, through faith in Christ."<sup>cxxiv</sup> This is important to remember in studying the Bible. "Men are to study and search in it and learn that He, *He*, Mary's Son, is the One who is able to give eternal life to all who come to Him and believe on

Him.”<sup>cxxv</sup> If this is not done, “if I do not so study and understand Moses and the prophets as to find that Christ came from heaven for the sake of my salvation...then my reading in Scripture is of no help whatsoever to my salvation.” This is not to say that one will not learn something, but it will still lead to bitter death.

Those who advocate gospel reductionism point to what Luther says about the centrality of Christ in Scripture and are ready to reduce the inspiration and reliability of Scripture to the gospel, to *was Christum treibt*. Similarly we hear it said that Scripture is not a book of history, geography or science; hence, in these areas we can approach it differently than when it speaks the gospel.

We already heard Luther quotations that recognized every statement, even seemingly insignificant references in Scripture, as divine and therefore true and reliable. The Bible is inerrant in all it says, and to recognize that its central message is Christ does not change that fact.

In fact, we cannot really speak of the centrality of Christ as a hermeneutical principle. It rather is a fact that we will discover to our joy as we faithfully apply the principles already discussed.

Bohlmann has a chapter on this in his book, treating this same matter from the viewpoint of the Confessions. He takes issue with the idea that we have here the “most important hermeneutical principle for a Lutheran understanding of Scripture.”<sup>cxxvi</sup> “The doctrine of justification by grace and the distinction between Law and Gospel are vital presuppositions for the proper interpretation of Scripture.”<sup>cxxvii</sup> They are presuppositions derived from Scripture itself. “But they are not general hermeneutical principles for deriving the meaning from the text of Scripture; they are rather the central message of Holy Scripture.”<sup>cxxviii</sup> This message leads the interpreter to expect “to have his understanding of God’s saving grace in Christ deepened and strengthened.”<sup>cxxix</sup>

As we consider all that Luther says about using and interpreting Scripture, if we are to apply the hermeneutical principles, as we do, then it is important to use our reason and intellect in the process. God speaks to us in language that involves rational processes. So Luther praises reason and the proper use of it. In matters such as grammar, logic, rhetoric he says: “Be wise in these subjects; controvert, search, and ask what is right and wrong.”<sup>cxxx</sup>

The proper use and the limits of human reason Luther shows in a sermon on John 6: “This has been recorded for our warning, so that he who would deal with doctrines of the Christian faith might not pry, speculate, and ask how it may agree with reason, but, instead, merely determine whether Christ said it. If Christ did say it, then he should cling to it, whether it harmonizes with reason or not.”<sup>cxxxi</sup> Thus reason is used to determine whether God says something or not, to determine what God is saying. But reason dare not stand in judgment of what appears impossible to it. Reason is servant, not master.

Reason used in the latter manner, *i.e.* as master, in the study of Scripture, Luther calls “the devil’s prostitute.” When God speaks, we should “believe His words, even though they are incomprehensible to any human reason or wisdom.” “We dare not consult reason here, but we must honor the Holy Spirit by believing His words and accepting them as the divine truth. To this end, the eyes of reason must be blinded, yes, gouged out, as it were.”<sup>cxxxii</sup>

Apparent contradictions may cause a problem for our reason. Then we should remember: “Scripture will not contradict itself or any one article of faith, even though to your mind a contradiction and an irreconcilability exist.”<sup>cxxxiii</sup> If there is a discrepancy that we cannot solve, “just dismiss it from your mind,”<sup>cxxxiv</sup> is Luther’s advice.

To want to stand in judgment of Scripture is the greatest problem that confronts rational man. The historical-critical method would exercise critique on God’s Word on the basis of sources outside Scripture. The evolutionist wants God’s Word to be made to harmonize with assumed scientific wisdom. Those who find it impossible to believe in miracles want to demythologize Scripture. What is involved in every case is an attack on the veracity and integrity of the Word of God. Luther calls such use of reason prostitution.

All of this shows that to understand Scripture, more is required than a knowledge of grammar and language. One must also understand what Scripture is talking about. Luther puts it this way: “And so, if the matter is not understood, it is impossible for the words to be correctly understood either. Although a knowledge

of the words comes first, nevertheless a knowledge of the matter (*Sachkenntnis*) is of greater importance.”<sup>cxxxv</sup>  
 The unbeliever may also understand the grammar and vocabulary, but only faith will understand the matter.

Spalatin asked Luther’s advice about the best way to read Scripture. Luther’s answer in 1518 is still good advice today:

Your first task is to begin with prayer. You must ask that the Lord in his great mercy grant you a true understanding of his words, should it please him to accomplish anything through you for his glory and not for your glory or that of any other man. For there is no one who can teach the divine words except he who is their author, as he says, “They shall all be taught of God.” You must therefore completely despair of your own diligence and intelligence and rely solely on the infusion of the Spirit.<sup>cxxxvi</sup>

## **Lecture IV**

### **The Reformation has Taught Us to Make Important Distinctions**

It has been said that a good theologian is one who knows how to make proper distinctions. It was Rome’s confusion of law and gospel, of justification and sanctification, that made its theology so bad. Other areas where they failed to make necessary distinctions can be cited and will be examined. Reformation theology, Luther, our Confessions, have led the way to recognizing important distinctions, not because one is led to them by reason via logic, but rather by Scripture when it is correctly understood and applied by the proper use of reason. To make distinctions is indeed a mental process. But the mind must not lord it over Scripture. Those kinds of distinctions Rome was adept at making. But the reasoning power of man must be applied to what God says in Scripture to apprehend the truth. It must also be applied in making true distinctions, so that we do not confuse what God keeps distinct, so that we do not join what God keeps apart. Luther’s careful study of the Scriptures made him an able theologian who also made the necessary distinctions. Still today we profit from his labors as a fruit of the Reformation for our ministry.

We shall consider five significant areas.

#### **A. The distinction between Scripture and tradition**

Rome’s confusion in this area is well known. Perhaps we shouldn’t even call it a confusion, but rather a clear doctrinal error in considering tradition another source of authority alongside, in practice sometimes over against, Scripture. Yet we can also call it confusion because Rome is not clear on the point for itself. Only one thing is clear, that somehow an oral tradition is recognized in addition to, alongside, or in some way related to the Scriptures.

For the time of the Reformation the Council of Trent can serve as a convenient reference. Regarding saving truth and moral discipline Trent says: “The council is aware that this saving truth and teaching are contained in written books and in the unwritten traditions.” This wording was a compromise. The first draft said that the revelation is contained “partly in written books and partly in unwritten traditions.” A minority had objected to this wording with the resulting compromise. Important theologians like Melchior Cano, Peter Canisius and Robert Bellarmine retained it, however.

A second view held that “divine revelation is contained entirely in tradition and entirely in the Scriptures.” They saw doctrinal truth being at least “implicit in or based upon Scripture.” They acknowledged, however, that “many disciplinary matters and customs in vogue in the Church cannot be traced to Scripture.”

A later development, according to the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, is the intermediate view. This view “regards it essential that Scripture and tradition be harmonized and unified without mutual detriment. According to this theory Scripture and tradition link, as it were, into concentric circles, tradition encompassing all that Scripture holds substantially. Tradition interprets Scripture and is likewise a more complete expression of the life and teaching of the Church.”

Vatican II labored hard and long on the relationship of Scripture and tradition and seems to be close to the intermediate view. One of the last additions to the Vatican II text on the subject, made at the insistence of the pope, shows Rome's unwillingness to let Scripture emerge as the prime authority. This is the statement: "Consequently it is not from Sacred Scripture alone that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed."<sup>cxvii</sup> The "consequently" refers back to the fact that sacred tradition hands on to the successors of the apostles God's Word in its full purity. Rome hasn't changed in this since Trent.

Over against this we can be grateful for Luther's clear recognition that everything human—the fathers, councils, popes—is subject to error. Only Scripture is true and inerrant. This was a distinction that was vital to make.

We can be grateful that our Confessions were drawn up with this distinction clearly in mind. They did not attempt to regulate church policy and liturgy. These were in the area of Christian liberty, and to fix them confessionally would have failed to recognize that they were of human origin. In Article VII of the Augsburg Confession this distinction is clearly made when to the true unity of the church it is considered enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, but it is not considered necessary to agree on human traditions, rites or ceremonies instituted by men. Doctrine has its origin with God in Scripture. Traditions are of human origin. Agreement on the one is essential, on the other not. Unfortunately, most Lutherans obliterate this clear distinction by making another that is not made in our Confessions, namely, between the doctrine of the gospel in the narrow sense (the message of forgiveness in Christ), and in a wider sense (including all doctrines, also those of lesser consequence). This injects confusion where our Confession makes a clear and necessary distinction.

Rome by way of response in the Confutation made another, again a false, distinction between special and universal rites. They made the latter mandatory as though commanded by God.

Yet there were confessional considerations that dared not be ignored in the use of rites that were adiaphora. Article X of the Formula of Concord asserted that "in time of persecution, when a plain confession is required of us, we should not yield to enemies in regard to such adiaphora."<sup>cxviii</sup> In such a case the truth of the gospel concerning Christian liberty was at stake and thus involved God's revelation.

This does not change the basic distinction made in Article VII of the Augsburg Confession. The Formula of Concord, too, says in Article X: "No church should condemn another because one has less or more external ceremonies not commanded by God than the other, if otherwise there is agreement among them in doctrine and all its articles."<sup>cxix</sup>

Luther goes even a step further, saying that we need to distinguish in Scripture whether God is speaking to us or to some one else. Consider the law of Moses. Luther says in his treatise on *How Moses Should Be Read*: "It is no longer binding on us because it was given only to the people of Israel."<sup>cx</sup> Regarding the Ten Commandments as given by Moses, Luther says: "The text makes it clear that even the Ten Commandments do not pertain to us."<sup>cxli</sup> That does not mean that we cannot learn something from Moses. Luther writes: "We will regard Moses as a teacher, but we will not regard him as our lawgiver—unless he agrees with both the New Testament and the natural law."<sup>cxlii</sup> On the other hand, when Moses speaks the "promises and pledges of God about Christ," this "is the most important thing in Moses which pertains to us."<sup>cxliii</sup> A key statement in this writing is this: "It is not enough simply to look and seek whether this is God's Word...we must look and see to whom it has been spoken, whether it fits us."<sup>cxliv</sup> If someone wants to place me under an Old Testament law that God does not apply to me, then I am involved with a doctrine of man. Today, for example, insistence on obeying the Old Testament sabbath is a doctrine of men.

So the distinction goes in two directions: distinguish between Scripture and human traditions, on the one hand, and on the other distinguish in Scripture between what is spoken to you and what is not. Failure to distinguish in either case results in becoming a servant of man, in a loss of the liberty for which Christ has set us free. And here, too, the price of liberty is eternal vigilance, vigilance that is guided by the revelation of God, by Scripture.

## B. The distinction between law and gospel

In our Confessions we assert that “all Scripture ought to be distributed into two principal topics, the law and the promises.”<sup>cxlv</sup> In some places Scripture teaches the law, in other places the gospel.<sup>cxlvi</sup>

What is more, our Confessions assert “that the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is to be maintained in the Church with great diligence as an especially brilliant light, by which, according to the admonition of Paul, the Word of God is rightly divided.”<sup>cxlvii</sup> Luther similarly says that “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.”<sup>cxlviii</sup>

This is where Rome failed. Its failure was the cause of Luther’s personal inner conflict and conscience struggles. He personally experienced the damaging effects of Rome’s confusion. Rome did not understand “what the remission of sins nor what faith, nor what grace, nor what righteousness is,”<sup>cxlix</sup> as Melancthon tells us in the Apology. The reason is that “they seek the remission of sins and justification by the Law.”<sup>cl</sup> This was a soul-destroying confusion of law and gospel, expecting the law to do what only the gospel can do and making of gospel nothing else than law. Speaking of the effect of the letter or law and of the Spirit or gospel, Luther says that “the pope and human precepts have hidden it from us and have fastened an iron curtain before it.”<sup>cli</sup> This was an even more ominous and damaging iron curtain than the one Russia has set up.

There were some signs of improvement. When Melancthon writes in article XX of the Augsburg Confession about good works, he says that the adversaries “begin to mention faith, of which there was heretofore marvelous silence.”<sup>clii</sup> Now they at least mention both faith and works. This Melancthon considered more tolerable. But the confusion of faith and works, of law and gospel, continued.

We can thank Luther and our Confessions for restoring a clear distinction between these two basic doctrines of Scripture. In some respects the distinction is a very simple one. Luther says that “so far as words are concerned, they are easily distinguished.”<sup>cliii</sup> It is quite simple to say with the Formula of Concord that “the Law is properly a divine doctrine, in which the righteous, immutable will of God is revealed...and it threatens its transgressors with God’s wrath and temporal and eternal punishments.”<sup>cliv</sup> Thus “everything that reproves sin is, and belongs to the preaching of the Law.”<sup>clv</sup> On the other hand, the “Gospel is properly a doctrine which teaches what man is to *believe*, that he may obtain forgiveness of sins with God, namely, that the Son of God, our Lord Christ,...has expiated and paid for all our sins, through whom alone we...are delivered from death and all the punishments of sin, and eternally saved.”<sup>clvi</sup> Thus “everything that comforts, that offers the favor and grace of God to transgressors of the Law, is, and is properly called, the Gospel.”<sup>clvii</sup> These words are clear. They are easy to understand. The distinction is simple and uncomplicated. And similar simple, clear statements can be found again and again in Luther and the Confessions.

If the distinction is easy in words, it is not so easy “in life and experience.” Luther says: “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 Holy Scripture.” In the application more is needed than a keen intellect and a good understanding of the simple distinction in words. “Without the Holy Spirit the attainment of this differentiating is impossible.”<sup>clviii</sup>

Walther sums this up in the third thesis of his famous volume on the proper distinction between Law and Gospel. “Rightly distinguishing the Law and the Gospel is the most difficult and the highest art of Christians in general and of theologians in particular. It is taught only by the Holy Spirit in the school of experience.”<sup>clix</sup>

Walther devoted 39 lectures to this subject and notes 21 ways in which law and gospel are not rightly divided. It should not be necessary to commend this book highly to an audience such as this. It is impossible for us now even to attempt to review in summary the major points he makes. We shall content ourselves with a few additional quotations from Luther and a few comments by way of application.

Luther points to the difficulty of keeping a proper balance in preaching both law and gospel and shows the importance of not preaching one to the neglect of the other. In expounding John 15:10–12 Luther writes:

Wherever faith is not preached and is not given primary importance, wherever we do not begin by learning how we are united with Christ and become branches in Him, all the world concentrates only on its works. On the other hand, wherever faith alone is taught, this leads to false Christians, who boast of their faith, are baptized, and are counted among the Christians but give no evidence of fruit and strength. This makes it difficult to preach to people. No matter how one preaches, things go wrong; the people always hedge. If one does not preach on faith, nothing but hypocritical works result. But if one confines one's preaching to faith, no works ensue. In brief, the outcome is either works without faith or faith without works.<sup>clx</sup>

Thus his advice is that the sermon must address itself to those who accept and apprehend both faith and works. So "we preach to the little flock who know, and reflect on, their eternal destiny, whose chief concern is to remain in this Vine, who find all their consolation in Him, and who then also give practical proof of this in their conduct."<sup>clxi</sup> There is the proper balance.

Again and again Luther reminds us that we must carefully note to whom we are speaking and determine whether law or gospel is needed. This, too, is easy to put into words, but in practice becomes an art. Luther writes:

Before receiving the comfort of forgiveness, sin must be recognized and the fear of God's wrath must be experienced through the preaching or apprehension of the Law, that man may be driven to sigh for grace and may be prepared to receive the comfort of the Gospel. Therefore one should by all means most severely admonish and drive to repentance with threats and intimidation those who as yet are without any fear of God's wrath, are secure, hard, and unbroken. That is, no Gospel, but only the Law and Moses should be preached to them.<sup>clxii</sup>

That's the one side of it. He continues:

On the other hand, where there are hearts in which the Law has performed its office, so that they are frightened by the knowledge of their sin, are timid and fugitive, no Law should be preached and proclaimed any more, but pure Gospel and comfort. For this is the proper office of Christ, which he came to perform and commanded the Gospel to be preached to all poor sinners and enjoined on them to believe it, that He might abolish and remove all charges, frightenings, and threatenings of the Law and might give the purest comfort instead.<sup>clxiii</sup>

One difficulty in practice is that we cannot look into anyone's heart and see whether he is penitent or secure, whether he is crushed by sin or is self-righteous. We need to judge by what we can see and hear. Sometimes we are suspicious of what we see or hear. Sometimes we see and hear what we want to see and hear. Or if we aren't certain that someone is sufficiently crushed by the law, even though he says he is sorry for his sin, we are inclined to hold back at least to a degree with the gospel or are inclined to make it conditional. At other times when we see no sign of contrition, we may feel guilty if we do not somehow speak the gospel though he may not be ready for it. On a visit to a delinquent, how much should we preach the law? Only the law? Or, at what point is the man ready for the gospel? Should the gospel be preached even though he has not confessed his guilt? On an evangelism visit, at what point is the person to whom we are speaking prepared for the gospel? Should we ever leave anyone with a stern rebuke of the law without including a gospel message? How to answer these questions in each given case is not simple. Left to our own wisdom we will feel quite helpless. We rely on the Lord to help us.

In preaching to a congregation, there is the added problem that I need to preach both law and gospel to a variety of people who have different needs. It is a true art to preach the law in such a way that each person applies it to himself according to his need: that the self-righteous sinner is struck down, but the sorrowing, penitent sinner is not driven to despair, and that the believing Christian finds instruction in Christian living. It is



an art to speak the gospel so that the despairing sinner is comforted and healed, while at the same time not dulling the force of the law for the man who still prides himself in his own works. We are grateful that not all depends on us. We have the confidence that as we faithfully proclaim both law and gospel the Holy Spirit will work in the hearts of our hearers according to the needs they have. But this does not permit us to become careless in the way we speak and about our concern rightly to proclaim the law and gospel according to their proper distinction. We are thankful that we can learn much from the Reformation about this.

### C. The distinction between justification and sanctification

Closely related to the distinction between law and gospel is the distinction between justification and sanctification. Here, too, Rome's teaching confused the two. This confusion was confessionally stated at Trent in these words: "This disposition, or preparation, is followed by Justification itself, which is not remission of sins merely, but also the sanctification and renewal of the inward man, through the voluntary reception of the grace, and of the gifts, whereby an unjust man becomes just."<sup>clxiv</sup> By confusing justification and sanctification in this manner, Trent can also speak of an increase in justification: "They, through the observance of the commandments of God and of the Church, faith cooperating with good works, increase in that justice which they have received through the grace of Christ, and are further justified."<sup>clxv</sup> Again and again our Confessions make the point that Rome is injecting works into the article of justification and is thereby confusing it with sanctification.

An interesting example is found in the Augsburg Confession, Article XXVII, Of Monastic Vows. The chief objection to these vows was the claim that the monastic life of poverty, chastity and obedience merits justification. "It is evident," Article XXVII states, "that monks have taught that services of man's making satisfy for sins and merit grace and justification."<sup>clxvi</sup> About this Melancthon says: "It is no light offense in the Church to set forth to people a service devised by men, without the Commandment of God, and to teach that such service justifies men."<sup>clxvii</sup> Here there are two factors. Not only do they say that man's works justify—works done according to the will of God—but an added factor is that the works to which they ascribe merit are works not commanded by God, but by men.

What is more, these works based on man's commandments were even held up as having special value, above simply keeping God's commandments. "They persuaded men," Melancthon writes, "that services of man's making were a state of Christian perfection."<sup>clxviii</sup> What all of this resulted in was a completely false view of sanctification. People did not see "that God ought to be served in those commandments which He Himself has given, and not in commandments devised by men."<sup>clxix</sup> This led to troubled consciences. "They hear celibacy praised above measure; therefore they lead their married life with offense in their consciences. They hear that only beggars are perfect; therefore they keep their possessions and do business with offense to their consciences."<sup>clxx</sup> What damaging confusion and errors in the doctrines of justification and of sanctification the Reformers faced! What a failure to distinguish the two!

How wonderfully and clearly our Confessions speak on both justification and sanctification, distinguishing the two very carefully, but also showing the relationship the two have to one another.

How simply and clearly the Augsburg Confession confesses "that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith."<sup>clxxi</sup> The exclusion of works in any form receives firm emphasis again in the Formula of Concord when it says that "all our own works, merit, worthiness, glory, and confidence in all our works are entirely excluded in the article of justification."<sup>clxxii</sup> That's the negative. Here's the positive: by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith—these three outline how we are justified before God, a presentation that is simple, clear, to the point. How much is said in those few words! We can appreciate the brevity of the Augsburg Confession but also the thoroughness of the Apology with its long treatise on justification.

Good works—where do they fit in? Are good works necessary for salvation? That statement would again lead to confusion. That statement would mingle works into the article of justification. The Formula of

Concord rejects this and similar propositions because “they conflict with the words by which St. Paul had entirely excluded our works and merits from the article of justification and salvation.”<sup>clxxiii</sup>

But to distinguish justification from sanctification in this way without equivocation does not mean that we forbid good works, as the Lutherans were falsely accused of doing. Without hesitation our Confessions say: “Good works are necessary.” They must be done, not for merit, but as fruit, fruits of faith, of justification. The Christian, who is a saint, holy, through the imputed righteousness of Christ, is to become ever more sanctified in his life. This must happen, not because of the coercion of the law, but, as Luther is quoted in the Formula of Concord from his Preface to Romans, because “it is a living, busy, active, powerful thing that we have in faith, so that it is impossible for it not to do good without ceasing.”<sup>clxxiv</sup> Yes, though justification and sanctification need to be distinguished very carefully, the two also are closely linked to one another, like a tree and fruit.

Our Confessions also are concerned to reject Rome’s confused view of the perfect life. Good works are works commanded by God. Believers know this. But they also have an Old Adam who may confuse them as to God’s holy will, and therefore “the doctrine of the Law is needful for believers, in order that they may not hit upon a holiness and devotion of their own, and under the pretext of the Spirit of God, set up a self-chosen worship, without God’s Word and command.”<sup>clxxv</sup> That’s what Rome had done. That’s what confused and troubled consciences. This is where we need to get back to the careful distinction between Scripture and tradition, between what is God’s revelation and what is of human origin. The third use of the law helps avoid setting up human traditions mistakenly as divine precepts.

We are grateful for what the Reformation has taught us in this important distinction.

#### **D. The distinction between doctrine and life**

Deeds, not creeds. You hear people say this, and they become quite bored with any doctrinal discussion or sermon. They did not learn this from Luther and the Reformation. To turn it around and say—creeds, not deeds—no Lutheran can do that, not if he understands Luther. Creeds, then deeds—that perhaps comes closest to what we learn from Luther about the relationship between doctrine and life.

Deeds, not creeds; also in Luther’s day people said this. In a sermon of the mid-twenties Luther says: “The mass of people always thinks more of life than of doctrine; they all say: After all, what good does it do to teach at length of faith? We must rise to higher ground than that.”<sup>clxxvi</sup> Luther finds that the young preachers who have reached the top preach “only about the strict life and put before us the great examples of saints who have great, marvelous deeds...and bring the people to the point where they pay no attention to doctrine.”<sup>clxxvii</sup> A lively story about a martyr’s death found more receptive hearers than a doctrinal presentation.

When it comes to God, however, Luther has this to say: “God is not so much concerned about life as He is about doctrine.” As basis for this statement Luther makes the observation that “God often permits His own to stumble” in their lives, but “when doctrine is concerned, He has not allowed them to budge a hairbreadth.” Evil doctrine is more serious than an evil life because the latter “harms no one more than the one who leads it,” but evil doctrine “misleads an entire country.”<sup>clxxviii</sup> So “patience may be exercised with one’s life.”<sup>clxxix</sup> In the area of life Luther was willing to extend this consideration even to the pope: “That the pope leads an evil life with prostitutes, etc., we could, I suppose, wink at; we could throw a cloak and cap over the shame and help to cover it up.” It is another matter with doctrine. “That he floods the entire world with evil doctrine and seduces everybody, that is death and is in no wise to be borne.”<sup>clxxx</sup> Luther held that doctrine can become pure, but not our life. He wishes that his own life were better but nothing comes of it. Here on earth our life will never reach the height of our doctrine.

What we have heard might give the impression that Luther was not much concerned about life. That would be a false impression. His concern is to distinguish between doctrine and life. His concern for doctrine is also in the interest of life. After all, the Word with its doctrine is the guide for our entire life and all our actions. But “once the Word has been lost, no action can be properly directed, no life properly ordered.” It is not that Luther is not concerned about life, but rather that he sees the proper relationship of the two and places greater

importance on doctrine. Works, although important, will never be perfect. Here love suffers all, bears all. “But the Word must be perfectly pure, and doctrine must always be sound in its entirety.”<sup>clxxxix</sup>

Deeds, not creeds—that isn’t the Lutheran way. But neither is creeds, not deeds. It is not an either/or. It is both/and. But for Luther the doctrine has preeminence.

### **E. The distinction between the power of the church and the power of the sword**

Early in 1530 Charles V was crowned emperor of the German empire by Pope Clement VII at Bologna. For centuries emperors had sought the papal coronation. This demonstrates the confusion between the power of the church and the power of the sword that had caused tumults and wars over the centuries. One merely needs to mention Canossa, the *Unam Sanctam*, the investiture controversies by way of examples. In some respects the representation of a religious confession before the imperial diet at Augsburg was demonstrative of this confusion. In view of all of this one must marvel at the clarity of Article XXVIII of the Augsburg Confession on this subject, and at the simple clarity of Luther’s statements. While Germany did not apply to itself the distinction which the Augsburg Confession expressed, we are grateful of the way it has found application in America.

In Article XXVIII the Augsburg Confession distinguishes between the church and the state in two ways. While both are institutions of God and should be revered as such, they differ in their assignments from God and in the means God has given each to carry out its assignment.

The church has been assigned spiritual power, to reign over the soul, “seeing to it that it comes to baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar,”<sup>clxxxii</sup> as Luther expresses it. These are eternal things, to preach the gospel, according to the Augsburg Confession.

For this assignment the church has received the power of the Word, the gospel. This is the only means by which to carry out what it is to do. Souls are ruled by the Word.

The government has been assigned the external rule; it concerns itself with bodily things and temporal affairs. “Civil rulers defend not minds, but bodies and bodily things against manifest injuries,” according to Article XXVIII.

For its assignment the government was given the sword; it can inflict bodily punishment to preserve civil justice and peace.

Confusion results when the church tries to enter into the realm of the state’s responsibilities and vice versa. Confusion results when the church resorts to the sword entrusted to the state or when the state presumes to use God’s Word. To each its own, must be the rule.

In a sermon on John 2, Luther calls on each to use its own “sword.”

Let the preacher keep his hands off the secular government, lest he create disorder and confusion! It is our duty to direct the church with the Word, the oral sword. The secular government, on the other hand, wields a different sword, a fisted sword, and a rod of wood to inflict physical punishment. The preacher’s rod smites only the consciences, which feel the impact of the Word. Therefore these two rods and swords must be kept apart and separate, so that the one does not infringe on the province of the other.<sup>clxxxiii</sup>

Yet Luther saw confusion in both directions. On the one hand, the Anabaptist, Muenzer, the pope and all the bishops reach for the sword, the fisted sword. “They aspire to rule and to reign, but not in keeping with their vocation.”<sup>clxxxiv</sup> On the other hand,

the civil governments—the princes, kings, the nobility in the country, and also the judges in the villages—take it upon themselves to wield the oral sword and to tell the pastors what and how to preach and how to administer their congregations. But you say to them: “You fool and stupid dunce, attend to your calling. Don’t try to preach, but leave that to your pastor!” On the other

hand, the schismatic spirits will not content themselves with the oral sword but will reach rebelliously for the secular sword and will insist on reigning in the city hall.<sup>clxxxv</sup>

So Luther finds that “either the pope insists on ruling with both swords; or the princes, noblemen, burghers, and peasants want to lord it over their pastors, and also aspire to both swords.”<sup>clxxxvi</sup>

From the church’s point of view this has disastrous consequences. The two must remain distinct, he says, if the pure gospel and the true faith are to be preserved.<sup>clxxxvii</sup> Doesn’t experience bear that out? The churches that believe they must tell the government what to do soon preach a social gospel devoid of the saving gospel.

To distinguish between the two swords, however, does not always mean total separation. When we as pastors perform marriages we serve as pastors in the church with the Word and as officials of the state in carrying out its laws. Though there is no separation (we have only one ceremony), this practice causes no confusion so far as I know. The area of education is a broad one in which both church and state have legitimate interests which sometimes call for a working together. We need to watch carefully lest confusion results. While we will be concerned to preserve the distinction between the two, total separation may not be possible.

The Reformation has passed on to us a sound theology, and part of it lies in the ability of the Reformers to make necessary, important distinctions where confusion had reigned. This deserves our continued careful concern for the sake of the gospel.

## Lecture V

### The Reformation has taught us to Show Evangelical Pastoral Concern

In our previous lectures we saw the considerable emphasis which Luther and the Reformation placed on soundness of doctrine. Nothing taught in Scripture is expendable. Doctrine can be and must remain pure. Scripture is clear so that true doctrine can be recognized and known. This really is inherent in the *sola scriptura* principle. *Sola scriptura* means we hold to everything in Scripture and only to what is in Scripture. All error has its source outside Scripture and so violates that principle.

There are those who see this kind of emphasis leading to a ministry that will sit in the study, find delight in precise and correct doctrinal formulations, similar to the scholastics of the pre-Reformation period. The Lutheran dogmaticians have then been considered Lutheran scholastics who found no greater joy than in making precise doctrinal statements and systems that had no real value beyond the theoretical. The implication is that they were quite devoid of concern for people. Two theologians might argue a fine doctrinal point *ad nauseam* while immortal souls were perishing for lack of the gospel.

The Wisconsin Synod has sometimes been accused of this kind of attitude. If this is true, and I am not conceding that it is, that is not something learned from the Reformation. If it is true, and I am not conceding that it is, then that must be called un-Lutheran. Luther and the Reformation have taught us to show evangelical pastoral concern, and that has to do with people. The Reformation does not teach us concern for true doctrine apart from concern for people, but rather concern for true doctrine because of concern for people.

Rome was strongly oriented toward concern for the church as an institution, which for it was the divinely established Roman church, and for the papacy as the divinely established head of the church. Its legalistic system served the papacy much better than the people.

Calvinism’s chief concern was the sovereignty of God. This was served even by the “horrible doctrine” of election to damnation. The Calvinists ignored what that doctrine could do to people since it served to demonstrate the complete sovereignty of God.

The Reformation stressed God’s grace, as the *favor Dei*, which reaches out to man, and effected redemption for man as only God in grace could effect it. God loved the world, showed the deepest concern for man, yes, for sinful man, and gave his Son into death for man as the price of the sinner’s redemption. All of this, originating with God and his grace, is oriented toward man. Not that it does not serve the glory of God and the welfare of his church, but it involves man, is aimed at man.

This does not mean that in practice Rome always was concerned only about the church and papacy, that Calvinism always was concerned only about the sovereignty and glory of God, and that neither of them ever showed concern for people. We also do not say that Lutheranism shows concern only for people and has no regard for the glory of God and his church, of which Christ is the Head. What we are saying is that an evangelical pastoral concern for sinful man is in certain important respects uniquely Lutheran and is something we can learn from Luther and the Reformation.

We already see this when we consider how Luther came to the Reformation. Generally the posting of the Ninety-five Theses on October 31, 1517, is seen as the beginning of the Reformation. Luther was led to write the theses not so much through a feeling of outrage that the pope was enriching himself with the “bingo of the sixteenth century,” as Bainton calls the indulgence traffic.<sup>clxxxviii</sup> Boehmer says: “As early as 1515 Luther was troubled more by the evil effects of indulgence preaching and the indulgence traffic upon the religious and moral life of the indulgence purchaser than by the base motives for granting them.”<sup>clxxxix</sup> Luther saw firsthand the evil effects on the purchaser. He saw the abuses, the false claims that were made for indulgences when his own parishioners went to Jueterbog or Zerbst, where Tetzl was the successful salesman. They displayed their indulgence letters to Luther when he reproved them for their sinful lives and called for repentance. Thus it was not a scholarly analysis of the doctrine underlying indulgences that resulted in the Ninety-five Theses. It was not simply the desire to engage in a verbal battle, simply to prepare theses that could serve as the basis for disputation, which was a common procedure at the university. A letter he sent to Albert of Mainz, the man responsible for Tetzl, together with a copy of the theses on October 31, 1517, shows Luther’s real concern. He wrote:

I bewail the gross misunderstanding among the people which comes from these preachers and which they spread everywhere among common men. Evidently the poor souls believe that when they have bought indulgence letters they are then assured of their salvation.... They assume that the grace obtained through these indulgences is so completely effective that there is no sin of such magnitude that it cannot be forgiven—even if (as they say) someone should rape the Mother of God, were this possible. Finally they also believe that man is freed from every penalty and guilt by indulgences.<sup>cx</sup>

We can hear Luther’s deep concern for his parishioners, for people, for sinners who need Christ and not indulgences as he writes to Albert: “O great God! The souls committed to your care, excellent Father, are thus directed to death. For all these souls you have the heaviest and constantly increasing responsibility. Therefore I can no longer be silent on this subject.”<sup>cxci</sup> These are the words of a man deeply concerned about people and the eternal blessedness of their souls. Zwingli was led to reform more as a result of his humanistic studies. Luther was led to reform by his own experiences in Rome and by a concern for people who were being “directed to death.”

The loving concern each Christian, and so also each pastor, will have for people is vividly discussed by Luther in his *Freedom of the Christian*. Luther discusses two propositions: “A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none.” “A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.” In his discussion of the second proposition he has some pertinent things to say about the Christian’s concern for and service of people.

After showing that the Christian is free in Christ and needs no good works for himself, Luther in the second part, among other things, shows that such a free Christian can devote himself totally to the service of others. Referring to Philippians 2:1–4, Luther writes: “Here we see clearly that the Apostle has prescribed this rule for the life of Christians, namely, that we should devote all our works to the welfare of others, since each has such abundant riches in his faith that all his other works and his whole life are a surplus with which he can by voluntary benevolence serve and do good to his neighbor.”<sup>cxcii</sup>

Christ is both the motivation for this service of others and a pattern. This is carried out in an unusual way when Luther writes: “Although the Christian is thus free from all works, he ought in this 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 neighbor 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.”<sup>cxci</sup>

The Christian serves others with no thought of reward. He serves “willingly and takes no account of gratitude or ingratitude, of praise or blame, of gain or loss. For man does not serve that he may put men under obligations. He does not distinguish between friends and enemies, or anticipate their thankfulness or unthankfulness, but he most freely and most willingly spends himself and all that he has, whether he wastes all on the thankless or whether he gains a reward.”<sup>cxci</sup> When we see the hospitality that Luther later practiced, when we see his prolific correspondence by which he served many people, and his total unselfish giving of himself to the task of serving people with the gospel, we can say these were not just empty words on the part of Luther.

Another unusual way of speaking about this service to and concern for others appears in these words of Luther: “I will therefore give myself as a Christ to my neighbor, 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 neighbor, since through faith I have an abundance of all good things in Christ.”<sup>cxci</sup>

One cannot but marvel at the richness of thought and description as Luther speaks on this subject, particularly in using scriptural pictures as he lets Christ be both motivation and example to us. He says: “Everyone should ‘put on’ his neighbor and so conduct himself toward him as if he himself were in the other’s place.” Christ did that, “‘put on’ us and acted for us as if he had been what we are.”<sup>cxci</sup> Then follows this statement that will at first startle us and must be properly understood: “I should lay before God my faith and my righteousness that they may cover and intercede for the sins of my neighbor which I take upon myself and so labor and serve in them as if they were my very own. That is what Christ did for us.”<sup>cxci</sup> It is self-evident that Luther was not thinking of our covering our neighbor’s sins in any propitiatory sense, but he calls for our intercessory prayers with an urgency that is rooted in the proper motivation. What a concern and love for his fellow man Luther demonstrates and would incite in all Christians, including all pastors!

Luther’s love and concern for his fellow sinners, his understanding of how to effect reform so that they would follow sound doctrine and practice, his opposition to the legalism of Karlstadt is seen in the sermons he preached in March of 1522 when he returned from the Wartburg.

During Luther’s absence from Wittenberg while he was at the Wartburg, the leadership of Melancthon, a young man of 25, was not adequate to stem the influence and action of radical reformers under the leadership of Karlstadt. Not all of the reforms Karlstadt sought to effect were bad in themselves. Luther had taught that communion should be distributed in both kinds. He said that the private mass should be abolished. Priests should have the right to marry. But the legalistic introduction of reform left no room for concern for people. And the results were damaging, even in those matters that were scripturally based.

The eight sermons Luther preached in the city church of Wittenberg between March 9 and 16, 1522, are a prime example of Luther’s evangelical pastoral concern in contrast to Karlstadt’s legalism. Already Luther’s coming to Wittenberg without the promise of safe conduct on the part of his elector shows that his thoughts were not on himself and his safety, but on the spiritual good of the Wittenbergers. Karlstadt’s legalism caused havoc. Luther’s evangelical pastoral concern restored peace.

The reforms of Karlstadt involved two areas. The one area had to do with reforms in what is a “must,” the other with what is “free.” Karlstadt had erred in both. The abolition of the private mass was a must. Yet Luther said, “All those have erred who have helped and consented to abolish the mass; not that it was not a good thing.” Luther even says that “if the mass were not so evil a thing, I would introduce it again.”<sup>cxci</sup>

Concerning both kinds in the Sacrament, Luther said: “I hold that it is necessary that the sacrament should be received in both kinds, according to the institution of the Lord...I was glad to know when someone wrote me that some people here had begun to receive the sacrament in both kinds.”<sup>cxci</sup> However, he continues, “You should have allowed it to remain thus and not forced it into a law.”<sup>cc</sup>

The refrain that runs through the sermons is that Karlstadt and his followers had faith but failed in love. They knew what was right, but in introducing reforms failed to practice love toward the people, that is, toward

the weak who still needed to learn. They had a lot to say about faith and love, but failed to practice it. Luther asked: “And here, dear friends, have you not grievously failed? I see no signs of love among you.”<sup>ccci</sup>

But how will love show itself? Luther compares it with faith and shows the difference. “Faith must always remain pure and immovable in our hearts, never wavering; but love bends and turns so that our neighbor may grasp and follow it.”<sup>ccii</sup> The bending Luther speaks of is clearly not a bending of faith or doctrine. That, he said, must not waver. The bending involves patience with those who are weak, to give them time to grow. Love will not force on the weak that for which they are not ready. Luther asks, “What does a mother do to her child? First she gives it milk, then gruel, then eggs and soft food, whereas if she turned about and gave it solid food, the child would never thrive.”<sup>cciii</sup> The stronger in faith, too, started by being nursed until they grew stronger and were ready for solid food. He calls on them: “Dear brother, if you have suckled long enough, do not at once cut off the breast, but let your brother be suckled as you were suckled. I would not have gone as far as you have done, if I had been here. The cause is good, but there has been too much haste.”<sup>cciv</sup> His advice is: “Let us feed others also with milk which we received, until they, too, become strong in faith.”<sup>ccv</sup>

There must be time for instruction, for the Word to do its work of convincing. For someone to follow a certain course of action without understanding, because it has been forced on him as law, can result in a bad conscience, or leads to hypocrisy. The one weak in faith is destroyed. Some quotes from Luther: “No new practice should be introduced, unless the gospel has first been thoroughly preached and understood.”<sup>ccvi</sup> “The word must first capture the hearts of men and enlighten them.”<sup>ccvii</sup> “It is not enough to say: this man or that man did it, I followed the crowd... You must rest upon a strong and clear text of Scripture.”<sup>ccviii</sup> About the abolition of the private mass, Luther says:

Now if I should rush in and abolish it by force, there are many who would be compelled to consent to it and yet not know where they stand, whether it is right or wrong, and they would say: I do not know if it is right or wrong, I do not know where I stand, I was compelled by force to submit to the majority. And this forcing and commanding results in a mere mockery, an external show, a fool’s play, man-made ordinances, sham-saints, and hypocrites.<sup>ccix</sup>

The other area of reform concerned itself with what was free, but which Karlstadt made a must. He made a law of what God had not made a law. Just a few examples. Luther speaks of the things which are left to our free choice such as whether a person should marry or not, or whether monks and nuns should leave the cloisters. Luther writes that all monks and nuns might leave the cloisters. But they have no understanding, so they hear that others, who do understand, are leaving and they want to follow their example, but have not yet fortified their consciences.<sup>ccx</sup> The point is that when someone does even what is right or what he is free to do without understanding from the Word of God, he is in danger of violating his conscience. Under the papacy there were strict laws about touching the elements in the Sacrament. Luther had preached that “a layman does not commit sin if he touches the cup or the body of Christ with his hands.”<sup>ccxi</sup> They should have thanked God for this understanding. Now, however, they on their part forced the people to take the bread into their hands and many, not understanding this, did so with terrified consciences.

In this way Luther showed the evil that resulted from the legalistic practices of Karlstadt.

Legalism is concerned about law and immediate results and shows little concern for people and their consciences. It often has a show of right, like some of the reforms of Karlstadt. From the experiences at Wittenberg and Luther’s response to Karlstadt in his Wittenberg sermons we can recognize some of the ingredients, the chief ingredients, of legalism. It fails to use the Word of God for the purpose for which it was given. This applies to both the law and the gospel. The law mistakenly is used to motivate, to effect God-pleasing results. This is not to say that it is legalism to use the law for its true God-appointed purposes. That sometimes seems to be the conclusion. To expose sin for what it is by the stern preaching of the law is not legalism. For this purpose God gave the law. For the law to curb man’s sinful flesh is in place. But this should not be considered Christian motivation. It is simply the civil use of the law and concerns particularly government. The third use of the law, as rule or guide, can serve the Christian, but not as motivation. To make it

that is legalism. On the other hand, the gospel is to motivate; it works faith and the resulting good works. Legalism, however, converts the gospel into law, demanding, for example, that all must receive both kinds in the Sacrament before the Word works understanding and conviction, that is, faith.

One other aspect of legalism was clearly evident in Karlstadt. It makes a must out of what is free. That means it elevates human ordinances into divine precepts. Thus it binds consciences where they should be free. Images were free, foods were free, marriage was free. Mandatory injunctions about them, whether by the papacy or by Karlstadt in the interest of reform, were equally wrong and enslaved man. What is free must remain so.

A word is in place about the importance of love in avoiding legalism. Luther stresses this. So do religious liberals and moderates today. But there the similarity between the two ends.

The love Luther speaks of is rooted in the gospel and shows compassion for those still weak in the faith. It is patient so that they may be instructed and led to a fuller understanding of the truth, strengthened in their faith, and then practice what is right with a good conscience, informed by the Word of God. This love does not denigrate or water down the full truth of God, but rather serves people by patiently leading them to it.

The love liberals and moderates call for construes firmness in doctrine as lovelessness and legalism. It is ready to bend doctrine, to change what appears harsh or hard to believe. Such love does not build up the weak. Rather, it wants to make them comfortable in their weakness. This is its claim to being evangelical.

If you want to see Luther, the pastor, concerned for his flock, if you want a lesson in evangelical practice versus legalism, if you want to hear about godly love and patience in serving people, then read Luther's eight sermons of March 1522. They are a course in evangelical pastoral practice that shows the blending of sound doctrine with love in applying it. We are led to conclude that only he who has soundness of doctrine has the means whereby the weak may be helped toward strength.

To what extent did their evangelical pastoral concern lead the Reformers to do mission work? and foreign mission work? With the manpower they had available, one must marvel what was done. Concern for the gospel which had been restored to them, concern that it might reach souls beyond Saxony and Germany, led the elector to permit Bugenhagen, the pastor of the city church in Wittenberg, to be granted a leave of absence on a number of occasions in order to help organize the Reformation in Brunswick, Hamburg, Luebeck, Pomerania and especially in Denmark, where he remained for no less than five years. His stay in Luebeck was for a year and a half, and at Hamburg a good half year.

Who did the pastoral work at the city church during these leaves? The busiest man in Wittenberg, Luther. As a result we have commentaries on portions of Matthew and John, the sermons preached as Bugenhagen's substitute in Wittenberg.

This wasn't easy for Luther. In 1530, during Bugenhagen's absence in Luebeck, Luther wrote: "I have taken over Pomeranus' labors. I am preaching and lecturing, and I am distracted with cases." The latter seems to refer to the same problems which are distracting pastors today, marital cases. A few weeks later he wrote a friend: "I cannot find time to write to everyone. No longer am I only Luther, but Pomeranus, too, an official, a Moses, a Jethro, and what not? All things to all men."<sup>ccxii</sup> It appears that pastoral counseling is not the invention of the past few decades. It's part of our Reformation heritage.

But all of these absences of Bugenhagen taxed Luther to the limit. In 1538, when Bugenhagen was in Denmark, Luther wrote in a letter: "I am so overloaded with tasks and so troubled with sicknesses that I have often been compelled and still am, to leave my duties unperformed."<sup>ccxiii</sup> Four months later he wrote to Justus Jonas, who also was on a trip, "We are overwhelmed...with cases and duties, to the point of weariness. As an old man who has served his stint [Luther was 55], I should prefer to devote these days to an old man's pleasure, observing the miracles of God in the garden."<sup>ccxiv</sup> But it was another four years before Bugenhagen returned to Wittenberg.

All of this should be sufficient answer to any questions why the Lutherans at the time of the Reformation did not send missionaries far and wide. We must marvel at what they did. What a deep concern for the gospel they had, for the gospel needed by sinners! With such a blend of love for the gospel in its full truth and of love for people, sinners, what could not we do with the resources the Lord has made available to us!



The evangelical pastoral concern that we see in Luther is present also in the Confessions. While our Confessions certainly recognize the importance of holding to the truth because it is God’s truth, there is the refrain throughout the Confessions that doctrine is important because otherwise sinners will despair, will be robbed of their comfort.

About “our doctrine” Melancthon says that it “brings godly and salutary consolation to terrified consciences.”<sup>ccxv</sup> This is true of many doctrines, but particularly of justification, which “brings necessary and most abundant consolation to devout consciences.”<sup>ccxvi</sup> The adversaries abolish such consolations “when they extenuate and disparage faith.”<sup>ccxvii</sup> The word “consolation” appears again and again as the Confessions speak of forgiveness, the gospel, righteousness of faith. But this also happens as other doctrines are spoken of. The doctrine of election “affords glorious consolation under the cross and amid temptations.”<sup>ccxviii</sup> Absolution and the power of the keys is “an aid and consolation against sin and a bad conscience.”<sup>ccxix</sup> Baptism is profitable for strengthening and comforting ourselves.<sup>ccxx</sup> The Sacrament is administered to them that have need of consolation; it cheers and comforts the anxious conscience.<sup>ccxxi</sup> Even the language used in the Mass had the people in mind. Latin was used on account of those who are learned, and German for the sake of the common people, that they may learn something. Confession is to be retained “on account of the great benefit of absolution, and because it is otherwise useful to the conscience.”<sup>ccxxii</sup> Truly, concern for people, their consolation, their hope, freeing them from the terrors of sin, giving them life and salvation, runs through the Confessions. It was because of the misery Luther saw during his visits to churches that he wrote the Catechisms. He implored the pastors and teachers “to have pity on the people who are entrusted to you.”<sup>ccxxiii</sup>

The Confessions lead us to be concerned about truth in our teaching and preaching. But it is concern that does not stop with truth as it is in and of itself. It is concern for the truth for the sake of the people.

How can we possibly believe the true doctrine of original sin that all people are conceived and born in sin and that this damns, without concern for the masses of humanity and for each individual on the way to death? Or are we more concerned about seeing people die in a burning building? We believe the truth about Christ, that his atonement is for all people, that God will have all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. This is part of our sound doctrine. But can we truly believe that and not be concerned that all may get to hear what God has most surely prepared for them too? Can we have the truth without concern about the many people who don’t as yet know it? If having the truth does not lead to sharing the truth one wonders whether the truth is really known. The Reformation, which will inspire concern for the truth of Holy Scripture in us, will likewise lead us to an evangelical pastoral concern to serve sinners with that gospel truth. To attempt to serve people without the truth is like the blind leading the blind. But to have the truth without concern for people is wasted riches. Like the unused talent it will finally be taken away.

What a rich heritage we have in the Reformation! How true it is that we are the kind of pastors we are because of Luther and the Reformation. But the reason remains—because the Reformation is grounded in Scripture and leads into Scripture. Our heritage is not based on Reformation tradition, but on the living and abiding Word of God. May God preserve that to us!

## Endnotes

### Lecture I

<sup>i</sup> LW 32, 112f; quoted in E.G. Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1950) p 504f.

<sup>ii</sup> St. L., I, 1595; quoted in Ewald M. Plass, *What Luther Says, An Anthology* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959) #1194.

<sup>iii</sup> St. L., XIX, 108; Plass, #1196.

<sup>iv</sup> St. L., X, 2213f; Plass, #1202.

<sup>v</sup> *Triglotta*, p 39.

<sup>vi</sup> *Trig.* p 101.

<sup>vii</sup> *Trig.* p 851.

<sup>viii</sup> *Trig.* pp 851, 853.

<sup>ix</sup> LW 26, 98.

<sup>x</sup> St. L., VIII, 820.

<sup>xi</sup> W-T 4, No 5017, quoted in Plass, #2102.

<sup>xii</sup> St. L., VII, 1086; Plass, #2103.

- xiii LW 26, 98f.
- xiv LW 41, 216.
- xv LW 31, 343.
- xvi LW 32, 111.
- xvii *Trig.* 855f.
- xviii LW 38, 86.
- xix LW 38, 88.
- xx LW 49, 328, n 25.
- xxi LW 49, 328.
- xxii St. L., XVI, 1404.
- xxiii St. L., VIII, 802.

## Lecture II

- xxiv LW 44, 126.
- xxv LW 44, 127.
- xxvi *Ibid.*
- xxvii LW 36, 112.
- xxviii LW 31, 354.
- xxix LW 31, 355.
- xxx LW 40, 34f.
- xxxi LW 40, 40.
- xxxii LW 40, 35.
- xxxiii *Ibid.*
- xxxiv LW 44, 129.
- xxxv *Ibid.*
- xxxvi LW 40, 35.
- xxxvii LW 44, 129.
- xxxviii LW 13, 329.
- xxxix *Ibid.*
- xl LW 13, 330.
- xli LW 13, 332.
- xliv *Ibid.*
- xliv *Trig.* p 49.
- xliv LW 31, 356.
- xlvi *Ibid.*
- xlvi LW 40, 390.
- xlvi LW 40, 34.
- xlvi LW 44, 129.
- xlvi LW 40, 384.
- <sup>1</sup> LW 26, 17.
- li LW 26, 18.
- li *Ibid.*
- liii LW 13, 333.
- liv LW 13, 334.
- lv St. L., VII, 1040; Plass, #2897.
- lvi *Trig.*, p 575.

## Lecture III

- lvii Heinrich Boehmer, *Road To Reformation* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1946) p 39.
- lviii Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, Oxford, 1952, p 1.
- lix LW 44, 133.
- lx LW 44, 134.
- lxi J. M. Reu, *The Augsburg Confession, A Collection of Sources with an Historical Introduction* (Chicago, 1930) p 362f.
- lxii LW 2, 114.
- lxiii LW 1, 232.
- lxiv LW 1, 233.
- lxv St. L., VI, 254; Plass, #312.
- lxvi *Ibid.*

- lxvii LW 16, 136.  
 lxviii LW 1, 232f.  
 lxix LW 2, 164.  
 lxx St. L., II, 469; Plass, #168.  
 lxxi *Ibid.*  
 lxxii St. L., III, 1890.  
 lxxiii Apology IV, 108; Tappert, 122.  
 lxxiv A.C., XXVIII, 49; Tappert, 89.  
 lxxv Ralph A. Bohlmann, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1968), p 34.  
 lxxvi St. L., X, 1018; Plass, #188.  
 lxxvii LW 6, 123.  
 lxxviii St. L., XV, 1481.  
 lxxix St. L., XIX, 1073.  
 lxxx St. L., I, 712.  
 lxxxi St. L., IX, 356.  
 lxxxii St. L., III, 21.  
 lxxxiii LW 33, 90.  
 lxxxiv LW 33, 35.  
 lxxxv LW 33, 25.  
 lxxxvi *Ibid.*  
 lxxxvii *Ibid.*  
 lxxxviii LW 33, 27.  
 lxxxix LW 33, 28.  
 xc *Ibid.*  
 xci *Ibid.*  
 xcii LW 33, 91.  
 xciii LW 33, 92f.  
 xciv LW 33, 94.  
 xcvi St. L., IX, 130f; Plass, #181.  
 xcvi St. L., III, 1916; Plass, #171.  
 xcvi St. L., IX, 1980; Plass, #172.  
 xcvi St. L., XIX, 1361; Plass, #173.  
 xcix St. L., XX, 781; Plass, #282.  
 c St. L., XVIII, 1820; Plass, #284.  
 ci LW 40, 190.  
 cii St., L., III, 20f; Plass, #286.  
 ciii St. L., XIX, 1312; Plass, #287.  
 civ LW 45, 358.  
 cv LW 45, 359.  
 cvi LW 45, 360.  
 cvii LW 32, 199.  
 cviii St. L., XVIII, 1820; Plass, #284.  
 cix St. L., XIX, 1312; Plass, #287.  
 cx Cf. FC, S.D., VIII, 39ff; *Trig.*, p 1027ff.  
 cxi St. L., XX, 249.  
 cxii St. L., XIX, 25; Plass, #283.  
 cxiii St. L., XX, 249; Plass, #285.  
 cxiv St. L., IX, 635.  
 cxv St. L., XIX, 904; Plass, #292.  
 cxvi St. L., XVIII, 1840; Plass, #295.  
 cxvii St. L., XVIII, 1307; Plass, #281.  
 cxviii LW 47, 681.  
 cxix LW 9, 21.  
 cxx St. L., XVIII, 1293; Plass, #268.  
 cxxi *Ibid.*  
 cxxii St. L., V, 335; Plass, #229.  
 cxxiii WT, #5751; Plass, #199.  
 cxxiv St. L., XII, 1149; Plass, #247.

- cxxv St. L., VII, 218; Plass, #206.  
 cxxvi Bohlmann, 111.  
 cxxvii Bohlmann, 124.  
 cxxviii *Ibid.*  
 cxxix Bohlmann, 123.  
 cxxx St. L., XIII, 1911; Plass, #3714.  
 cxxxi LW 23, 80.  
 cxxxii LW 22, 10.  
 cxxxiii St. L., IX, 828; Plass, #219.  
 cxxxiv LW 22, 219.  
 cxxxv LW 1, 264.  
 cxxxvi LW 48, 54.

#### Lecture IV

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 cxxxviii *Triglotta*, 829.  
 cxxxix *Trig.*, 831.  
 cxl LW 35, 164.  
 cxli LW 35, 165.  
 cxlii *Ibid.*  
 cxliii LW 35, 168f.  
 cxliv LW 35, 170.  
 cxlv *Trig.*, 121,5.  
 cxlvi *Trig.*, 173,65.  
 cxlvii *Trig.*, 801,2.  
 cxlviii St. L., IX, 798; Plass, #2276.  
 cxlix *Trig.*, 121,3.  
 cl *Trig.*, 121,7.  
 cli St. L., XVIII, 1317; Plass, #2284.  
 clii *Trig.*, 53,8.  
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 cliv *Trig.*, 957.  
 clv *Trig.*, 801,4.  
 clvi *Trig.*, 959.  
 clvii *Ibid.*  
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 clx LW 24, 249.  
 clxi *Ibid.*  
 clxii St. L., XI, 1330; Plass, #2286.  
 clxiii *Ibid.*  
 clxiv Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom* (New York: Harper, 1899) II, 94. Sess. VI, Chap. VII.  
 clxv Schaff, II, 99. Sess. VI, Chap. X.  
 clxvi *Trig.*, 81,38.  
 clxvii *Trig.*, 81,48.  
 clxviii *Trig.*, 81,46.  
 clxix *Trig.*, 83,57.  
 clxx *Trig.*, 83,52f.  
 clxxi *Trig.*, 45, IV, 1–2.  
 clxxii *Trig.*, 929, 37.  
 clxxiii *Trig.*, 945,22.  
 clxxiv *Trig.*, 941,10.  
 clxxv *Trig.*, 869,20.  
 clxxvi StL, III, 545; Plass, #643.  
 clxxvii StL, III, 544; Plass, #643.  
 clxxviii StL, XI, 2258; Plass, #644.  
 clxxix StL, III, 544; Plass, #643.  
 clxxx StL, XI, 2258; Plass, #644.

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 clxxx<sup>ii</sup> StL, VII, 924f; Plass, #861.  
 clxxx<sup>iii</sup> LW 22, 225.  
 clxxx<sup>iv</sup> *Ibid.*  
 clxxx<sup>v</sup> LW 22, 225f.  
 clxxx<sup>vi</sup> LW 22, 227.  
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 clxxxix Heinrich Boehmer, *Road to Reformation* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1946) p 176.  
 exc LW 48, 46.  
 exc<sup>i</sup> *Ibid.*  
 exc<sup>ii</sup> LW 31, 365f.  
 exc<sup>iii</sup> LW 31, 366.  
 exc<sup>iv</sup> LW 31, 367.  
 exc<sup>v</sup> *Ibid.*  
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 exc<sup>vii</sup> *Ibid.*  
 exc<sup>viii</sup> LW 51, 73.  
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 cc<sup>ii</sup> LW 51, 72.  
 cc<sup>iii</sup> *Ibid.*  
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 cc<sup>v</sup> LW 51, 74.  
 cc<sup>vi</sup> LW 51, 90.  
 cc<sup>vii</sup> LW 51, 83.  
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 cc<sup>ix</sup> LW 51, 76.  
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 cc<sup>xii</sup> LW 21, XX.  
 cc<sup>xiii</sup> LW 22, X.  
 cc<sup>xiv</sup> *Ibid.*  
 cc<sup>xv</sup> *Trig.*, 205,182.  
 cc<sup>xvi</sup> *Trig.*, 121,2.  
 cc<sup>xvii</sup> *Trig.*, 137,60.  
 cc<sup>xviii</sup> *Trig.*, 1079,48.  
 cc<sup>xix</sup> *Trig.*, 493, VIII, 1.  
 cc<sup>xx</sup> *Trig.*, 743, 44.  
 cc<sup>xxi</sup> *Trig.*, 67,30.  
 cc<sup>xxii</sup> *Trig.*, 71, 13.  
 cc<sup>xxiii</sup> *Trig.*, 533,6.