

# CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

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Heirs of the Reformation in the Pulpit  
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Bedeutung und Eigenart der Lutherbibel  
HEINZ BLUHM

Theology as *Habitus Practicus Theosdotos*:  
a Lutheran Emphasis  
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Brief Studies  
Homiletics  
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TWO SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY  
POLEMIC LITANIESTranslated by  
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[The polemics of the Lutherans against the Roman Catholics and of the Roman Catholics against the Lutherans in the seventeenth century were generally carried on with a bitterness and ferocity that our generation finds difficult to imagine apart from concrete surviving examples. Early in the eighteenth century an appendix to an academic dissertation over which John Christopher Wendler presided and at which John Nicholas Schwarz was respondent brings the two German satirical "litanies" which follow<sup>1</sup> into sharp and illuminating juxtaposition. The introductory sentences are in Latin.]

With a deceitful litany couched in the following words the Jesuit Vetter<sup>2</sup> once held our Evangelical<sup>3</sup> teaching up to ridicule:

Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy.

<sup>1</sup> Johann Christoph Wendler [praeses], *Dissertatio . . . praeliminaris qua asseritur . . . Lutheranos in praeiudicium doctrinae purioris neque supprimere neque corrumpere scriptores ecclesiasticos et profanos . . . respondente Iohanne Nicolao Schwarzio* (Jena: Vidua Meyeriana [1713]), pp. 52—57. A copy of this work is among the unaccessioned dissertations in the library of the Theological Seminary of the American Lutheran Church (Luther Theological Seminary) St. Paul, Minn.

<sup>2</sup> Conrad Vetter, S. J., born at Engen in Swabia, died at Munich in 1622 in his 76th year, held in high esteem by his coreligionists, prolific polemicist, and the indefatigable adversary especially of James Andreae (1528 to 1590), one of the authors of the *Formula of Concord*, and of Philip Heilbrunner (1546 to 1616).

<sup>3</sup> That is, Lutheran.

Lord God, the Father in Heaven;  
Lord God the Son, Redeemer of the world;  
Lord God, the Holy Spirit:  
Have mercy upon us.  
Be gracious to us:  
Spare us, good Lord God.  
Be gracious to us:  
Help us, good Lord God.  
From all castigation of the body;  
From all self-control and discipline;  
From all scourges;  
From all whips;  
From all strokes and blows;  
From all hair-shirts;  
From all sackcloth;  
From all monastic cowls;  
From all chastity;  
From all celibacy;  
From all fasting:  
Preserve us, good Lord God.  
From Ash Wednesday;  
From the whole of Lent;  
From Holy Week;  
From the four ember days;<sup>4</sup>  
From all vigils and eves of feasts;<sup>5</sup>  
From all sleeping on the bare earth;  
From the snow of St. Francis;<sup>6</sup>  
From the cold water of St. Bernard;<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays after St. Lucy's Day (December 13), the First Sunday in Lent, Whitsunday, and Holy Cross Day (September 14).

<sup>5</sup> Ash Wednesday, Lent, Holy Week, ember days, eves and vigils are all days of fasting and/or abstinence in the Roman Catholic Church.

<sup>6</sup> St. Francis of Assisi (1181?—1226), founder of the Order of Friars Minor. Cf. *Apology* IV, 211; XXVII, 21. As a remedy against violent temptations to impurity Saint Francis reportedly leaped naked into ditches filled with snow (Herbert Thurston and Donald Attwater [editors], *Butler's Lives of the Saints* [New York: Burns and Oates, 1956], IV, 25; hereafter cited as Butler-Thurston-Attwater).

<sup>7</sup> St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090—1153), founder-abbot of the Cistercian abbey at Clairvaux, "the last of the Fathers," evangelical but

From the thorns of St. Benedict;<sup>8</sup>  
 From the breast-plate of St. Dominic Loric-  
 cate;<sup>9</sup>  
 From the iron chains of St. Gall;<sup>10</sup>  
 From the cross of [Henry] Suso;<sup>11</sup>  
 From the rod of St. Bavon;<sup>12</sup>  
 From the heart-beater of St. Jerome;<sup>13</sup>  
 From the isolation of the hermits;  
 Preserve us, good Lord God.

By Thy discipline;  
 By Thy loneliness in the desert;  
 By Thy fasting;  
 By Thy sleeping on the bare earth;  
 By Thy cold and nakedness;  
 By Thy scourging;  
 By Thy whips and rods;  
 By Thy crown of thorns;  
 By Thy cross;

We preachers<sup>14</sup> beseech Thee:

That Thou wouldest preserve our backs  
 and shoulders from all discipline;

That Thou wouldest preserve utterly free  
 and clear of chastity all superintendents,  
 preachers, assistants, and Lutheran slaves of  
 drink;<sup>15</sup>

That Thou wouldest root out and destroy  
 all uncomfortable clothing and hair-shirts:

Hear us, good Lord God.

That Thou wouldest graciously take away  
 from us and abolish the Lenten and all other  
 fasts;

That Thou wouldest tread down under our  
 feet and crush all the processions of penitents;

That Thou wouldest provide us with good,  
 long, and juicy sausages and with many good  
 banquets, no less than with breakfasts and  
 good nightcaps;<sup>16</sup>

That Thou wouldest preserve and  
 strengthen us in this our present purpose;

That Thou wouldest preserve our wives,  
 our children, our servants and our maids  
 from all self-discipline [?], hair-shirts, fast-  
 ing, hunger, and thirst;

That Thou wouldest provide and preserve  
 to us good wine and beer;

carry that stone, for without it the church would  
 not have canonized you" (Butler-Thurston-Att-  
 water, III, 691).

<sup>14</sup> Roman Catholic polemicists assiduously  
 avoided the term "priest" (*Priester, sacerdos*)  
 to describe the Lutheran clergy, the validity of  
 whose orders and ministry they denied, and  
 regularly used the term "preachers" (*Praedi-  
 canten*) to refer to them.

<sup>15</sup> *Prost-Knecht*.

<sup>16</sup> This suffrage reads in the original: *Dass  
 du uns gute, lange und fette Würste bescheren  
 wollest, und viel guter Schlampotia, nicht  
 weniger Jentacula, und gute Schlaftrünck.*

severely orthodox in his theology, noted for the  
 austerities and self-mortification that he prac-  
 ticed. Cf. *Apology*, IV, 211; XII, 74; XXVII,  
 21; *Large Catechism*, Baptism, 50.

<sup>8</sup> St. Benedict of Nursia (480?—550?), who  
 withdrew from the licentious life of Rome to  
 become a hermit first at Subiaco, then at Monte  
 Cassino, and, without so designing it, the  
 founder of the Order of St. Benedict and the  
 "patriarch of Western monasticism." To over-  
 come the desire to forsake his hermitage evoked  
 by the recollection of a woman he had once  
 known, he once lacerated himself by rolling in  
 a patch of briars and nettles (Butler-Thurston-  
 Attwater, I, 652).

<sup>9</sup> St. Dominic Loricata (995—1060), an  
 Italian priest who, upon learning that his par-  
 ents had procured his ordination by means of  
 a simoniacal gift of goatskins to the ordaining  
 bishop, refused to exercise his priesthood fur-  
 ther and undertook to expiate his parents' sin  
 by a lifetime of penance. He constantly wore  
 a cuirass (Latin, *lorica*, whence his name) next  
 to his skin, burdened his limbs with chains,  
 flagellated himself intemperately, slept in a  
 kneeling position, and lived on bread, herbs,  
 and water. Cf. Butler-Thurston-Attwater, IV,  
 110—111.

<sup>10</sup> St. Gall (550?—645), an Irish missionary  
 who went to Gaul with St. Columban and later  
 became a hermit in what is now Swiss Swabia.

<sup>11</sup> Bl. Henry Suso (1295?—1366), German  
 Dominican, pupil of Meister Eckehart, famed  
 mystic and spiritual director.

<sup>12</sup> St. Bavon or Allowin (died 653?),  
 a nobleman from the region of Liège who led  
 a somewhat dissolute life until the death of his  
 wife brought him to repentance; he retired to a  
 forest hermitage and died there.

<sup>13</sup> St. Eusebius Jerome of Stridon (342? to  
 420), ascetic, hermit, secretary to St. Damasus  
 of Rome, Biblical scholar, translator of the  
 Vulgate. A picture of this contentious saint  
 shows him striking his breast with a stone; this  
 prompted Sixtus V to say, "You do well to

That Thou wouldest accept this our holy pleading and praying:

Hear us, good Lord God.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world:

Have mercy on us.

O Christ, hear us.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

But Dr. Theodore Hyselius (under which name Dr. Matthias Hoe<sup>17</sup> is hiding) took justifiable exception to this and with a most truthful parody published at Leipzig in 1608 gave a true-to-life expression to the prayers of the Jesuits and the monks:

From the Sacred Scriptures;

From all of the Old and New Testaments;

From the prophet Daniel;<sup>18</sup>

From the Gospel and the Revelation of St. John;<sup>19</sup>

From the Letters of St. Paul to the Romans and the Galatians;

From the works of St. Augustine;

From the invocation of God alone;

From the extirpation of idol-images;

From pure, ancient, catholic doctrine;

From Christ's own bloody sacrifice;

From His merit and salvation;

From His holy blood in the Communion;

From bread and wine in the Sacrament;

From strong and confident faith in Christ;

From the hope of everlasting life;

From ordinary food and vegetables;

From less than elegant meat;

From the holy estate of matrimony;

From obedience to parents;

From obedience to government;

From labor, anxiety, cross, and work;

From much preaching;

From devotion and a penitent heart;

Preserve us, good Lord God.

We poor sinners and Esauites<sup>20</sup> beseech Thee:

That the Pope at Rome would preserve alive all bishops, cardinals, abbots, monks, and priests;

That all our treatises and councils may continue to enjoy their dignity;

That the Roman antichristian church may retain the whip-hand in matters of religion;

That the reading of the Bible be forbidden to the laity;

That all debates and discussions of the question if the Pope at Rome is the Antichrist be prohibited:

Hear us, all Saints.

That no one may peep into our heretical hand of cards;

That the veneration of images and the acquisition of indulgences may increase daily;

That our mistresses and cooks will long retain their good looks;

That other mistresses will always be available;

That our penitents in the confessional will make us happy by keeping their answers to our questions brief;

That they will gladly undertake the satisfactions that we impose on them;

That our bastards and illegitimate children may be promoted to high honors;

That the emperor, kings, princes and lords may be brought under the power, coercion, and obedience of the clergy;

That we may receive the red hats of cardinals and the croziers of bishops;

That we may possess fat prebends and rich livings;

<sup>17</sup> Matthias Hoe von Hoeneegg (1580 to 1645), Austrian nobleman, Imperial count palatine, total abstainer, a zealously orthodox Lutheran theologian and polemicist whose detestation of Roman Catholicism was exceeded only by his antipathy to the Reformed religion, prolific author, Electoral Saxon court preacher at 22, director general of the German Lutheran churches in Prague, from 1613 on the influential senior court preacher, adviser, and confidant of the Saxon Elector.

<sup>18</sup> Daniel 11, 31—38; 12, 11; cf. *Apology*, VII, 24 (German paraphrase); XV, 19—21; XXIII, 25; XXIV, 45.

<sup>19</sup> Possibly Hoe has Revelation 13 and 17 in mind.

<sup>20</sup> *Esauit*, Latin *Esauita*, a Lutheran pun on *Jesuita*, "Jesuit," that had the Old Testament picture of the hated Edomite descendants of Esau in view. It occurs at least as early as 1560, for example in James Andreae's *Bericht von der Einigkeit und Uneinigkeit der christlichen Augspurgischen Confessions verwandten Theologen* etc. (Tübingen: n. publ., 1560).

That the living will make generous provision for masses and vigils;

That on every fast-day we may have good pike and dainty morsels in place of meat;

That our days may be good and lazy;

That we may be able to speak unabashedly against Christ and His merit;

That we may slander, vituperate and persecute the Lutheran preachers one and all;

That our nightcaps in monasteries and our well-appointed snack-times do not decrease;

That the people be misled and blinded by us ever more and more;

That the Lutheran churches all be destroyed;

That all Lutheran books — as Dr. Gretser<sup>21</sup> proposes in his book — be burned and all Lutheran preachers be killed;

And that their parishes and incomes be turned over and given to us to spend on high living:

Hear us, all Saints.

That the Jesuwits,<sup>22</sup> Capuchins,<sup>23</sup> monks, and other priests will be listened to unhindered in the churches throughout the whole empire;

That we may all be promoted to the advantages of purgatory and there become somewhat accustomed to the everlasting fires of hell;

That we may not be severed from our captains, Beelzebub, the Roman antichristian papists, and their whole company:

Here us, all Saints.

<sup>21</sup> James Gretser, S. J. (1562—1625), professor at Ingolstadt, author or co-author of 233 titles that fill 17 volumes, participant in the Regensburg Colloquy, and the unrelenting adversary of Giles (Aegidius) Hunn(ius) (1550 to 1603) of Wittenberg.

<sup>22</sup> German *Jesuwiten*, another Lutheran pun on *Jesuiten*. Sometimes *Jesuitter* was reproduced as *Jesu-wider*, "opponents of Jesus."

<sup>23</sup> These bearded Franciscans — possibly to atone for the defection of their third general, Bernardino Ochino (1487—1564), to the Reformed religion — were, next to the Jesuits, in many ways one of the most energetic monastic forces at the disposal of the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation.

Through your chilblains and your lice-infested cape:

Hear us, good St. Francis.

Through your cold water:

Hear us, good St. Bernard.

Through your thorns:

Hear us, good St. Benedict.

Through your breastplate:

Hear us, St. Dominic Loriccate.

Through your iron chains:

Hear us, good St. Gall.

Through your unholy cross:

Hear us, good Suso.

Through your rod:

Hear us, good St. Bavon.

Through your heart-thumping:

Hear us, St. Jerome.

Through your merits, the masses you have ordered said, and your pilgrimages:<sup>24</sup>

Hear us, all Saints.

O holy virgin Mary, have mercy on us.

Virgin Susanna,<sup>25</sup> have mercy.

Virgin Margaret,<sup>26</sup> have mercy.

Virgin Ursula,<sup>27</sup> have mercy.

Pontiff, have mercy. Amen.

<sup>24</sup> The German reads: *Durch euer Verdienst, Mess-Stiften, und Wallfariem*. This may mean: Through your merits, the masses said in your honor, and the pilgrimages made to your shrines.

<sup>25</sup> St. Susanna is the subject of a very unreliable legend that was extremely popular in the Middle Ages. The kernel of truth in the account is that on her refusal to marry a pagan relative of the Emperor Diocletian she was put to death about 190.

<sup>26</sup> St. Margaret, who enjoyed great veneration throughout Europe and whose history has been encrusted with almost impenetrable layers of medieval legend, was martyred at Pisidian Antioch during the last general persecution in the third century.

<sup>27</sup> St. Ursula, a British chieftain's daughter and a Christian, fled from England with a number of her compatriots (medieval legend makes them out to have been 11,000 virgins) before the invading Saxons in the fifth century, only to be martyred by the heathen Huns when they ravaged the country about the mouth of the Rhine, where the British emigrés had settled. The shrine of St. Ursula and Her Companions in Cologne was famous throughout the Christian world.