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Book Reviews

***One Lord, Two Hands? Essays on the Theology of the Two Kingdoms.* Edited by Matthew C. Harrison and John T. Pless. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2021. 487 pages. Softcover. \$39.99.**

“The man who considers something to be necessary which appears to others to be of little help, or even to be pernicious, does not hesitate to repeat the necessary teaching and is ready to make clear its necessity by summing up its essential elements. At the same time, precisely from the standpoint of necessity we cannot stop at summary repetition.” Such are the words used by Gerhard Ebeling, maybe the most prominent German Luther scholar in the second half of the twentieth century, in the introduction to his essay on page 12 of the book at hand, an essay which first was published in German in 1963 in one of Ebeling’s early books.

After having published voluminous collections of essays on equally controversial topics, such as women pastors (CPH, 2009) and closed communion (CPH, 2017), Harrison and Pless have ventured to equip the church of our day with another theological treasure chest which will prove its benefits for those who read, use, and apply it. Again, the editors added a question mark to the title of their book, making clear from the outset that important theological topics always lead us into conflict. “No other aspect of Luther’s theology has been so fiercely attacked as this doctrine. Where Luther drew a clear line between spiritual and temporal authority, and expressly emphasized that under no circumstances should these two realms be confused, this has been interpreted as if he had thereby opened the door to the secularization of society and given a completely free hand to the state. Some critics have gone so far as to see in this doctrine the ultimate root of the National Socialist ideology” (3).

This is no surprise, at all, when we take into account that conflict is intrinsic to the book’s topic anyway, since we are dealing with partially connected, partially overlapping, partially opposing spheres, realms, kingdoms, and powers. There is, after all, not only the kingdom to the left, and the kingdom to the right, but also the devil’s kingdom, seeking to destroy and confuse both kingdoms (18–20, 117, 127–128). And there is the angels’ kingdom, seeking to protect both kingdoms for the sake of mankind (128–130). Kenneth Hagen ends his excellent contribution with this magnificent statement: “Luther frames his understanding of the kingdoms with basically two horizontal and two vertical kingdoms. The frame is under siege by the devil and guided by the angels” (131). One may consult and pray Luther’s morning and evening prayer for this aspect. As long as the eschaton is still a matter of the

future, the church and every responsible theologian will not escape the obligation to prove on the basis of the New Testament and the gospel (5) the necessity of our theological doctrines, especially when they are disputed or left behind by many. This is done, as Franz Lau says, “by pitting Scripture against Scripture” (36) and by pondering the biblical testimonies in all their fullness, including Romans 13:1–7; 1 Peter 2:13–17; Acts 5:29; John 18:22ff; and Matthew 5:38ff (35–36, 77). It is also noteworthy that the relevance of the biblical distinction of God’s right hand and God’s left hand is overwhelmingly obvious in both above mentioned volumes by Harrison and Pless.

The distinction of the two hands of God, which throughout the ages are active and creative in the two “kingdoms” on earth, on one side is surprisingly clear (and clarifying our sense of reality, 13) and simple, and on the other side is deeply complex and permeates the Scriptures as well as the confessions of the church and thereby, of course, also any theology which claims to be biblical, confessional, catholic, Lutheran. Distinction, not confusion, nor separation (9), is the Lutheran solution for the relationship between both kingdoms, between the *iustitia civilis* and the *iustitia evangelii*, between the *coram mundo* relationship and the *coram Deo* relationship of mankind (26–29). Not only in this respect, the distinction of the two kingdoms is a result and a necessary implication of the distinction of law and gospel (14–18).

The complexity as well as the simplicity can be discovered in important passages of the Lutheran Confessions (Edmund Schlink’s excellent essay, taken from an English translation of his “Theologie der Bekenntnisschriften,” covers them all, 197–235), like Augsburg Confession Articles 16 and 28, the explanation of the Fourth Commandment and the Fourth Petition in the Catechisms, including the Table of Duties (433–442), parts of the Apology and the Smalcald Articles, and of course Formula of Concord Article 10 on the “Adiaphora” (193). The triune God as Creator and Saviour in his omnipresence and omniscience works in both realms, spheres, or kingdoms. In the world, that is, in the nations and peoples therein, God works through the law and through political human agents for the sake of preserving the world and protecting mankind against the evil one, who wants to destroy all human endeavours to organize common life by throwing everything into chaos and cruelty. In the church, that is, among God’s chosen people, God works through the gospel and the office of the ministry for the sake of saving ungodly sinners and reconciling them with their God and Creator through the precious blood and suffering of Christ. This also is directed against the evil one, who wants to destroy faith and love and the church through persecution and false doctrine. Wherever both kingdoms are confused, the theology of the cross is lost and a variant of the theology of glory creeps in (156–163).

The two kingdoms, thus, can be perceived and distinguished by looking at the means through which God works (the word here and the sword there), by looking at the goals which God brings about (temporal bliss here, eternal life there), by looking at the human agents, the “means and intermediaries” (33), through which God acts as through his “larvae” and “masks” (33) (political authorities here, the preachers of the gospel there). The very fact that both the incarnation of the Son of God and the work of the Holy Spirit through the mission of the church take place in time and space makes the relation between both realms and kingdoms inescapable for each generation. Manifold are the relations and touchpoints between both kingdoms. Manifold are the concrete manifestations of this relationship throughout history, from enmity, persecution, overreaching into the respective opposite realm from both sides, to peaceful mutual toleration, support, and even cooperation. And interestingly enough, the kingdom of the left can even serve as a metaphor for visualizing aspects of the kingdom of the right (130).

The complexity of the topic can already be discovered when Luther’s statements and positions are examined. Quite naturally, there are certain writings of the reformer which are named and elaborated upon by almost every scholar, discussing our topic from a historical perspective:

“Von weltlicher Obrigkeit/On Temporal Authority” (1523)—Nygren (5), Bornkamm (55, 103), Alfsvåg (79), Hagen (125–127), Slenczka (141–145), Stephenson (176–185), and Nestingen (189).

“Letter to the German Nobility” (1520)—Lau (32), Bornkamm (55, 92), and Slenczka (134–136).

“Whether Soldiers Can Live in a State of Salvation” (1526)—Bornkamm (103), Hagen (125–127), Slenczka (141–151), and Nestingen (189).

“Galatians” and “The Bondage of the Will”—Hagen (122–125) and Slenczka, (149–151).

There are differences of emphasis between the early reformer, who fought against papal theocracy, and the mature reformer, who fought also against the enthusiasts who wanted not only to terminate the abuse of power in both realms but who wanted to overthrow any authority on earth, thereby only producing chaos and bloodshed (7, 35, 79, 189, 334–350). To be sure, in his later years, Luther did not only talk about the “Two Kingdoms” but at least as prevalent also about the “Three Estates” or “Three Orders”: the Church, the Family or Household, and the State, as distinct, related, and interdependent agents of God’s preserving power (81–88). There were also situations when Luther was not able to make himself heard, both from the rulers and the ruled, like in the time of the Peasants’ War. And there was the question when and where legitimate resistance against ungodly authorities ends

and when and where illegitimate rebellion starts (145–149). This was the case during Luther’s lifetime and even more so after his death. The Magdeburg Confession, unfortunately, did not make it into the Book of Concord. Nevertheless, it is a highlight of sound Lutheran theology, which is made very clear in the essay by Wade Johnston (“We Must Obey God Rather than Men: The Lutheran Legacy of Resistance,” 395–405). Concerning some of the aberrations of the old and tired Luther, John R. Stephenson gives some marvellous advice when he writes: “The two kingdoms doctrine affords the most efficacious remedy for Luther’s own excesses” (187).

All authors whose contributions the editors have chosen to include into this volume lived most of their years in the second half of the twentieth century, some (though not many) still making their contributions in the twenty-first century. The division into two parts (“I. Foundations in the Theology of the Lutheran Reformation”, and “II. Implications for Doctrine and Practice”) is not fully convincing, since some articles in the second part would better fit in the first. But that might be a matter of taste.

In the first part, the foundations are laid by two authors from Scandinavia (Anders Nygren from Sweden, 1949; Knut Alfsvåg from Norway, 2005), four from Germany (Gerhard Ebeling, 1963; Franz Lau, 1965; Heinrich Bornkamm with one essay from 1966 and two more contributions from his book [German, 1953; English: 1966]; Notger Slenczka, 2012), and Kenneth Hagen from North America (1995). In the second part, thirteen contributions by North American authors from different Lutheran churches follow (Steven Paulson, John R. Stephenson, James A. Nestingen, Zachary Oedewaldt, Gregory Seltz, Erling Teigen, Kenneth F. Korby, Paul T. McCain, Peter Brock, Gregory P. Schulz, Wade Johnston, Matthew C. Harrison, and John T. Pless). This is supplemented by four prominent German names with rather older contributions (Hermann Sasse, 1932; Edmund Schlink, 1961; Jobst Schöne, 1969; Werner Elert, 1940). The biggest surprise for a present-day German reader is the appearance of Bornkamm (“Luther on the Nation”; “Luther on the State”) and Elert with the extensive eschatological chapters from his Dogmatics “Der christliche Glaube.” Both works are not really present any more in German theology or in the consciousness of present-day German theologians. But they sure are worth reading.

Concerning the application of the doctrine of the two kingdoms in certain historical situations, it certainly is no surprise that the editors included Hermann Sasse’s magnificent essay from 1932 “The Church and the Political Powers of Our Time” into this collection (236–256). Sasse, one year before the “great dictator” seized power, clearly and openly stated that Point 24 of the Nazi party program was in no way compatible with the biblical doctrine of man’s sinfulness and would—if

implemented into state law—necessarily result in the persecution of the church. Zachary Oedewaldt (257–268) comments on this text by showing that both, the state and the church, had lost their specific identity at the outset of this conflict and that utilitarianism in both realms had driven out the quest for the truth (see also Brock’s essay, 372–375). Oedewaldt writes, concerning the time of Nazi rule in Germany: “It is not that the people turned their back on the church, but rather the church turned its back on them” (261).

This, to be honest, sends shivers through the bones of the reviewer, since my observations and my resulting sentiment concerning the many ways the churches and their representatives in their vast majority at least in Germany acted during the years of the COVID pandemic in the 2020s, is exactly the same: “It is not that the people turned their back on the church, but rather the church turned its back on them.” This happened in a situation which could be fittingly labelled a backslide into “medieval” practices. Thus it can be learned in one of Bornkamm’s contributions, when he writes concerning the endeavour of many medieval rulers in German territories to overreach into the church (111): “Without further ado, they made bold to interfere with church matters in emergencies (and it is always easy to construe any situation as an emergency).”

Concerning application to further historical and political situations, the reader of Jobst Schöne’s contribution will find interesting glimpses into the situation of the divided city of Berlin in post-war Germany with the communist East facing the capitalist West who was about to experience not only the revolution of the students (308–319). Only rare are explicit applications in our volume to our present time, which in many respects is a time of harvesting what had started with the not only sexual revolution in the 1960s. Some of the authors mention the relevance of the doctrine of the two kingdoms for topics like sexual ethics (including “gay marriage”) or abortion (85, 304–307, 376–394).

Steven Paulson, in his outstanding essay, takes this a step further. He does so by showing how the church, if it is faithful to the theology of the cross, proves itself to be a nuisance for the champions of “liberal democracy.” “Today the state particularly overreaches” (163). This is the case especially since the state nowadays without much ado confuses “the government’s powers of recognition with those of God himself. In short, people need their Creator’s recognition; they need His justification. The problem in the old world is that the only conceivable way people possess to get God’s recognition is through works of the Law, and so such people force the state to give them what God will not” (168).

The state cannot seem to reject religious zealotry without throwing the baby out with the bathwater, and against all fears to the contrary, it is not the church that encroaches upon the state, but the state encroaches upon the church. . . .

The state religion decides it can stand churchly laws and traditions of one sort or another as long as these laws and traditions are kept private and are not pushed on others in the public square – but it cannot stand the *divine election of the Gospel*. The Gospel removes the false hope of the general faith that the Law actually saves. Thereupon is the actual end of history. History’s end comes not with a bang, but a whimper of gentle approval of the bourgeoisie that we have reached the best of all possible worlds in the form of liberal democracy and the freedoms it—and it alone—gives. The state will set you free. If Christ came to them and said, “I will set you free,” they would say: “But we have never been slaves to anyone, we are our own father. Who are You to claim we are unfree and need some savior other than ourselves?” Yet not only is this false faith produced by a liberal democracy appointed to destroy the preaching of the Gospel—to persecute it—it is positively and necessarily appointed to death instead of life in the old world, to nihilism instead of benign neglect. The government becomes preoccupied with structures of death, removing what it considers those who refuse its equality: abortion, the culmination of the right to medical care in the form of euthanasia, the redefinition of marriage as letting people love whomever they want (as long as there is the law of adult consent to enter a self-interested contract). . . . The state that authorizes itself also establishes its own power to make new laws as the only divine power left in the world. (168, 170–171)

Paulson takes the reader far beyond historical knowledge and theological correctness. He draws conclusions for the present situation which the churches in the Western world have settled in so comfortably and numb. Paulson’s observations hurt, ache, and are troublesome. But they—like the doctrine of the two kingdoms which he very wisely applies in his essay—serve as salutary medicine. Paulson’s essay should be read and pondered over and over again.

There are many reasons to be thankful to the editors that they have undertaken the important service to publish this book. May it serve as a helpful and enlightening contribution for the challenges which face the church in our day and age. May many Christians, theologians, and ministers of the church, Lutheran and beyond, experience, what Matthew C. Harrison writes so wonderfully about the teaching of the “Two Kingdoms”: “It is the particular greatness of Luther’s teaching that it frees the conscience, and stiffens the backbone when needed, in the context of life’s manifold and frequent challenges” (407–408).

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***Lutheran Service Book: Companion to the Services.* Edited by Paul J. Grime. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2022. 1,052 pages. Hardcover. \$99.99.**

Are the “worship wars” of the 1980s and 1990s over, or have they gone underground? Regardless of how you answer that question, the publication of *LSB: Companion to the Services* marks a turning point in the worship history of the LCMS. Gone are the days of frantically trying to stay ahead of the onslaught of contemporary Christian music. There was a time in our history when “Join the Resistance: Support the Liturgy” was both a slogan and a T-shirt sold by CPH. It would now seem that the liturgy is no longer the resistance, but the establishment.

This is, in the words of the Preface, the “everything else” that accompanies the two-volume *Lutheran Service Book: Companion to the Hymns*, which came out in 2019. From psalmody to the orders of service, this covers everything to do with *LSB* apart from the hymns themselves.

Its publication as a separate volume is but one of many markers that set these volumes (taken together) as a maturing of our church’s ongoing conversation regarding liturgy and worship. There was one volume that accompanied *The Lutheran Hymnal*, one volume after *Lutheran Worship*, and various volumes that came out in the nineties and early two thousands. *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice* (CPH, 1993) is as much an apology for a Lutheran approach to worship as it is a commentary on *LW* itself. Then at the end of the decade came *Through the Church the Song Goes On* (CPH, 1999), a volume designed to prepare for a new hymnal. When this volume was produced, A. L. Barry was president, and it seemed as though the course to a new hymnal would be fairly easy sailing.

Some storms cannot be foreseen.

A. L. Barry’s death in 2001 began a decade of uncertainty when it came to the synod and worship. Dr. Gerald Kieschnick was elected in the summer of 2001, and the smooth sailing leading to *Lutheran Service Book* turned into three years of rocky waters, storms big and small, and culminated in *LSB* being passed at the convention by a remarkable margin (92 percent, as I recall).

LSB was actually released in 2006, and since that time we have seen a collection of companion volumes, all with the signature wine/burgundy color. This volume marks (I believe) the final volume that will come out as a part of the *LSB* Hymnal Project, twenty-three years after *Through the Church the Song Goes On* was published. Now that is a hymnal legacy!

In many respects, it is not one book but six. There are a series of prefatory essays that set the stage, and then sections on the church year, the Divine Service, the daily office(s), and pastoral acts (e.g., Holy Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Matrimony, and the Burial Rites), culminating with a commentary on services for Lent and Holy

Week. Each one of these sections could be a volume in its own right. Taken together as one volume, it makes the substantial list price a little less painful (MSRP is \$99.99).

The contributors to the volume include many of the individuals who were instrumental in shaping the structure and content of the services in *LSB*. They include Paul J. Grime (who also served as the editor), Thomas M. Winger, William M. Cwirla, Kent J. Bureson, Timothy C. J. Quill, Scott E. Johnson, Andrew S. Gerike, D. Richard Stuckwisch Jr., Mark P. Surburg, Frank J. Pies, and Randy K. Asbury.

It would be difficult to review each of the sections of this volume and give them justice. What follows may be considered a dip into the waters of this fantastic work.

The volume begins with an essay on the liturgy by Thomas M. Winger, longtime professor and now president at our sister seminary in St. Catharines, Ontario. Unlike *LWHP*, the tone of the essay reflects how matters of worship are more settled than they were a generation ago. He handles everything from the sacrament/sacrifice to adiaphora in matters of ceremony. The result is an approach to Lutheran worship that is centered around Jesus Christ as the one who serves (Luke 22:27), and how the doctrine of Christ, his person and work, shapes everything about Lutheran worship.

One of the more adventurous essays in the volume is by Kent J. Bureson, who served as the dean of the chapel at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, for many years. Entitled "Soaked in Christ: The Gift of Symbolism," Dr. Bureson does us a great service by introducing the Lutheran reader to the symbolic world, and tries to redeem the use of symbolism and its relationship to ceremony. Because of our objections to a symbolic understanding of Christ's presence in the Supper, *symbolic* in Lutheran circles has come to mean "not real." While that is true when dealing with dogmatic questions around the Lord's Supper, understanding how imagery and symbolism fits in our liturgical life together is enormously helpful. It is about time that we start talking about this more in the LCMS, and not just leave it to Gordon Lathrop and others in the ELCA to be the only voices on the topic.

The commentaries on the various services are delightful. They manage to give historical context, biblical and doctrinal logic, and solid pastoral advice on what and how things are in *LSB*, without going too far overboard on either critiquing what is different or turning into a sort of liturgical hagiography.

Probably the biggest criticism of this volume will come not from what is said, but over what is not said. It does not really address the phenomenon of contemporary worship. It does not try to answer questions about musical style, at least not at a larger level. The goal of this book is not to critique the American worship scene or any particular tradition. The goal is to provide context and

commentary on the services in *LSB*. As long as that is understood by the reader, it will be well.

One other minor quibble. The list price of \$99.99 is substantial, whereas the Kindle ebook price is \$84.99. As a reference volume, this is one of the works that would make a lot of sense to have as some kind of print/ebook package. Please, CPH?

I was a young pastor when the synod in convention passed *LSB* in 2004. As a delegate to that convention, I had an inkling of what good could come from a hymnal that would work to unify the practice and doctrine of the LCMS. What I did not know was how much *LSB* would shape my own ministry and the ministry of many still to come.

This volume is a culmination of work which began in the mid-1990s with the “Real Life Worship Conferences” all over the country. What began as a slogan has become the water we swim in as pastors and teachers.

Lutheran Service Book: Companion to the Services will not answer every liturgical ephemera about our hymnal. That is what Google is for. But this volume will help set us on the path to receiving the gifts of God in the Divine Liturgy with grace and reverence. And that is a very, very good thing.

Todd A. Peperkorn

Himnario Luterano. Santiago: Editorial de La Iglesia Luterana Confesional de Chile, 2021. 1075 pages. Hardcover.

La iglesia cristiana es litúrgica. So begins the much-needed and greatly awaited *Himnario Luterano (HL)*. The liturgical church lives by the word of God—receiving his gifts and saying back to him what he first says to us. Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs redound to his glory with much thanksgiving. To lead this praise and adoration, the church takes into her use a hymnal. Our brothers and sisters from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina, the Confessional Lutheran Church of Chile, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Paraguay undertook this weighty responsibility with reverent and deliberate care, giving us *HL* to guide the liturgical life of Spanish-speaking Lutherans around the world.

HL sits within a Spanish-language hymnal tradition closely resembling our own English hymnals. In 1964, *Culto Cristiano (CC)* attempted to unite Spanish-speaking Lutherans around the world under a common hymnal. Four different church bodies from five Hispanic countries, along with the LCMS and the Latin-American committee of the LWF, all contributed towards the first universal hymnal for Spanish-speaking Lutherans. A similar demand arose in the mid-1980s, leading to ¡*Cantad Al Señor!* (*CAS*) in 1991. *HL* seeks again to unify the Spanish-speaking

Lutheran world under one common hymnal—*una maravillosa obra de gran impacto*.

While *CC* shares much affinity with *TLH*, as *CAS* with *LW* (and not just that the first two are red and the next blue), so also, *HL* immediately presents itself as the *LSB en español*. It looks, feels, and roughly follows the same layout. They share the same cover design, fonts, and images. The rites, such as Baptism and Private Confession, are nearly identical (however, *HL* does not include any rites for Confirmation, Weddings, or Funerals). Those familiar with *LSB* will find *HL* a larger (heavier!) version of the same—except, of course, the different language.

But *HL* offers more than a mere translation. While *LSB* provided a scaffolding, *HL* reveals a content clearly driven by its own South American context. Similar to *LSB*, *HL* offers five Divine Service options. The first comes from *CAS*; the second from *CC*; the third from the Argentinian hymnal, *Himnario Evangelico Luterano* (1982), which adapts *LSB* Setting 3; the fourth comes from Chile's *Himnario Luterano* (2018); and the fifth loosely adopts Luther's *Deutsche Messe*. Other interesting differences include the following:

HL's unique presentation of the Small Catechism, which not only differs in translation from the recent CPH edition, but also reverses the order in the fifth chief part, placing "Office of the Keys" prior to the Short Form of Confession.

After every salutation, *HL* retains the traditional response: "y con tu espíritu [and with thy Spirit]."

HL includes all of the appointed collects and proper prefaces.

HL provides no list of commemorations, moves the Feast for St. Mary from August 15 to September 8, recommends violet before blue for the Advent season, omits rose for *Laetare*, leaves white as the third option for Maundy Thursday, and has the Last Sunday white.

HL includes in its prayers a particular collect "Por las diaconisas [For Deaconesses]," which reveals their enduring impact on the mission in South America.

HL has new psalm tones (often with guitar chords).

HL includes about 93 psalms, 8 of which are partial, and 15 provide antiphons.

Perhaps we should also say something about the hymns. Like *CC*, the first hymn is "Oh, ven! Oh, ven Emanuel!" (*HL* 371). Unlike *CC*, however, *HL* includes all seven stanzas as well as the "O Antiphons." The whopping 669 hymns in *HL* eclipse the 412 hymns in *CC* (including the 1976 appendix, which brought it to 477 hymns). The improvement exceeds the number. Compared to *CC*'s 11 Gerhardt hymns (six

of which were added in the later CC appendix), *HL* boasts 15. The contrast grows with Luther: *CC* had 6 (adding two more in 1976), while *HL* has 31. The massive translational effort must be noted. For instance, Sergio Fritzler accounts for 46 of the hymns, half of which were original contributions, the other half are translations—chiefly of German hymns like Luther and Gerhardt. Thanks to Fritzler, *HL* now includes for the first time “Savior of the Nations, Come” (385), Decius’s “Lamb of God, Pure and Holy” (453), Luther’s “Christ Lay in Death’s Strong Bands” (510), and “Jesus Thy Boundless Love to Me” (919).

Finally, a more mundane word must be said of the book itself. Due to COVID limitations, the production is bulkier than desired. Another printing (on thinner paper) will help. In the process, the pages can also be reduced with a reduction in graphic size (particularly the musical lines in Divine Service Setting Two and the Psalms). Speaking of the Psalms and a second printing, any expense of size should be sacrificed in order to include the whole Psalter!

These Southern Cone churches—and we, in the LCMS as well—pray that through this work the Lord will produce great fruit for his kingdom. *Esperamos que, como resultado de la publicación del Himnario Luterano, la iglesia hispano parlante encuentre un recurso de testimonio, fortaleza, unidad, esperanza e inspiración.*

Though retailers do not currently stock this hymnal, Lutheran Heritage Foundation makes this resource available for a donation. Churches with Hispanic Ministries will find this and many valuable Spanish-language resources at www.lhfmissions.org/spanish/request-lhfs-spanish-books/.

Rev. Dr. Geoffrey R. Boyle