

# CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

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The Old Testament as Scripture of the Church

BREVARD S. CHILDS

The Christianizing of Abraham: The Interpretation  
of Abraham in Early Christianity

ROBERT L. WILKEN

Justification in Luther's Preaching on Luke 18:9-14

LOWELL C. GREEN

Open Letter to Charismatic Lutherans

PAUL F. HUTCHINSON

Process of Preparation

Genesis 22:1-14: From Text to Proclamation

ANDREW M. WEYERMANN

Homiletics

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# Justification in Luther's Preaching on Luke 18:9-14

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THE AUTHOR DEVELOPS THE THESIS THAT MARTIN LUTHER RESTED HIS PASTORAL preaching on doctrinal preaching. In a careful examination of texts of Luther, he demonstrates this and raises the question concerning the continuing importance of doctrinal preaching. The author is professor of history at Appalachian State University, Boone, N. C.

The church today is caught in the struggle between new ideas and the traditions of the past. This confusion has begun to appear in her proclamation. In preaching as well as in parish education, there is an unmistakable trend away from the use of the Bible as well as of the Creeds and Confessions. Dogma has become a bad word. Real textual preaching is disappearing from wide areas of Lutheranism in America, not to mention the other denominations. The notion is still widespread that preaching and teaching ought to be "relevant," and that they cannot obtain this quality from God's Word, but only from the problems of today.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, it might seem brash to offer the following study, which examines the place of doctrinal preaching in Luther's day and in our own. Many feel that doctrinal preaching is outmoded. And yet, this is more of a problem than one might imagine. There is really no such thing as preaching that is not doctrinal. Instead,

it is a question of how well doctrinal matters are handled. Much preaching that passes as "contemporary," "practical," or "socially relevant" is nothing but gross legalism; other examples show an understanding of the need to distinguish Law and Gospel.

Probably no one has handled the problem of Law and Gospel more skillfully than Martin Luther. One who reads his sermons not only will be immeasurably enriched in his own spiritual life, but also will come to a clearer grasp of the basic Christian doctrines and receive innumerable insights into how preaching can be both theologically competent and close to life as it is really lived.

## I. HISTORICAL AND EXEGETICAL PROBLEMS IN SURVEYING LUTHER'S SERMONS

There can be no question that formidable problems confront the scholar in using the sermons of Luther. However, there is a wealth of valuable material in Luther's preaching that we cannot dismiss. Furthermore, progress has been made in textual criticism. The scholarly historian will need to handle two kinds of problems: those

<sup>1</sup> See the discussion on the paradoxical character of relevance and irrelevance in Paul Waitman Hoon, *The Integrity of Worship: Ecumenical and Pastoral Studies in Liturgical Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), pp. 149—191.

dealing with the original situation in which Luther preached and those dealing with the transmission of the texts. Furthermore, a sound methodology will mean that we cannot wrest a few sentences from their context and that we must compare many examples of his preaching in their full relationship to what preceded and what followed a given remark. By exercising due care, we shall be able to come to a good and reliable picture of how Luther incorporated the doctrine of justification in his preaching.

First, we must be cognizant of problems related to Luther's delivery. For one thing, we quickly realize that Luther knew how to distinguish between the pulpit in the town church and his lecture platform at the university. Due to the diverse backgrounds of his listeners, ranging from the illiterate to university professors, he could not discourse learnedly on dogmatics. His sermons were marvelous examples of how the substance of dogma may be incorporated into the kerygma under concrete images. Furthermore, since Luther preached virtually without notes, the careful reader will not exaggerate the significance of chance remarks which the speaker would hardly have uttered in reading from a prepared text. To the various conditions which might have affected the preacher, we must add those related to the hearer. What were the acoustical conditions? In cases where the scribe was a "foreigner," might there be misunderstandings due to Luther's Saxon dialect? Was the listener able to write rapidly enough and to disentangle correctly his own notes? Since many redactors were pupils of Melancthon, we must also ponder whether other theological concepts unintentionally, or

even intentionally, might have influenced the hearing, recording, or subsequent editing of the text.

Luther's sermons have come down to us in a number of forms. In a few cases, we have texts which he himself edited for publication.<sup>2</sup> Also there are the postils—collections of sermons intended for reading in the church service by men who were not capable of preparing their own sermons; some of these were edited by Luther himself, but most were prepared by other hands.<sup>3</sup> A third group consists of notes taken down during Luther's actual preaching; some were reworked into texts for publication; while others have come down to us in their original form,<sup>4</sup> just as

<sup>2</sup> An example was Luther's sermon on the Parable of Dives and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), which appeared in a pirated edition with which he was much irritated. His reply, with the emended text, in *WA* 10 III, 176 ff. See also Georg Buchwald, *Predigten D. Martin Luthers auf Grund von Nachschriften Georg Rörers und Anton Lauterbachs* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1925—27), I, 1—2. This important work is referred to hereafter as Buchwald, together with the volume number.

<sup>3</sup> Luther's earlier Latin postil is in *WA* 7, 466—537. The German postils edited by Luther himself are found in *WA* 10 I and II, and *WA* 17 II. Roth's completion of Luther's work is found in *WA* 10 1/2, *WA* 17 II, and *WA* 21. Luther was dissatisfied with Roth's work and commissioned Cruciger to replace it. Although Roth's text was often more exact than Cruciger's, Luther seems to have preferred literary style to exact reproduction. (See Buchwald's introduction to Cruciger's Summer Postil, *WA* 22, p. xvii.) Dietrich prepared the sermons preached in Luther's home—the House Postil—which appeared in 1544, as it was revised by the Gnesio-Lutheran Poach in 1559 (Buchwald, I, 3 f.). Besides other introductory articles in the Weimar edition, see also Ernest G. Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), pp. 631—636.

<sup>4</sup> The most important of these are the notes of Rörer; see the table on page 735.

they were penned by the busy transcriber during the church service.

What is our purpose in utilizing Luther's sermons? If we want to know what Luther said when he was actually in the pulpit, the first two groups will not give us exact information. From several cases where we possess the original notes as well as the revision of a sermon for publication, we can see that Luther himself made changes which considerably altered them. This was partly due to his awareness of the difference between an oral and a literary style. Luther intended to pay Caspar Cruciger a compliment when he remarked that after Cruciger had finished editing a sermon for his postil, it was far better than anything that Luther himself had said<sup>5</sup>—a remark which the modern scholar may take negatively. Besides Cruciger, Stephen Roth, Veit Dietrich, and Andrew Poach prepared sermonic materials of Luther for publication. Since their postils were supposed to provide a sermon for every occasion, they did not hesitate to fill the gaps by drawing from extraneous material by Luther and Melancthon or even from their own sermons.<sup>6</sup> A fifth transcriber, John Aurifaber, seems to have taken greater liberties than the others in editing the texts, even where he restricted himself to materials that had originated with Luther.<sup>7</sup> Although their texts have historical value, they can only be used as corroboration with better texts, if we want

to determine how Luther actually preached in his Wittenberg pulpit.

For more scientific purposes, our most valuable redactions are those of George Röer and Anthony Lauterbach. They are available in scattered volumes of the Weimar edition, as well as in a special edition prepared by Georg Buchwald.<sup>8</sup> Especially when we study these texts in their barely edited form, we are brought into the immediate presence of Luther as preacher, including even the colorful pulpit announcements. These texts have mystified many readers because of their curious mixture of German and Latin. One reason why Röer was such a capable transcriber of Luther's sermons, as well as of his lectures and table talk, was his skill in the use of Latin shorthand. There was only one problem: Luther preached in German! Hence, the resourceful scribe got as many of Luther's words as possible in German, while filling in the gaps, or catching up where he got behind, with Latin abbreviations. Although the resultant texts present some special problems to their readers, they provide us with our most reliable records of Luther's actual pulpit discourses.

In this study, we shall confine ourselves, in the main, to the sermons on the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (Luke 18:9-14). We have copies of at least 13 different sermons preached by Luther on this, the ancient Gospel for the Eleventh Sunday After Trinity; several additional redactions in the postils are of undeter-

<sup>5</sup> According to Luther's remark: "I think that Cruciger has made the sermon better than I preached it; when I delivered the sermon, there were not ten peasants in the church, besides the three princes and their company" (*WA Tischreden*, Vol. 3, No. 2869b).

<sup>6</sup> See Buchwald I, 2—6.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 5—6.

<sup>8</sup> Buchwald's contribution consists in solving the problems of the rather confusing materials, written in a combination of German and Latin abbreviations, and providing a fluent text. See bibliographical entry, footnote 2.

mined origin. They range from 1516 until 1538, or 1544, as shown at the bottom of this page.<sup>9</sup> The study of Luther's sermons in this manner offers several distinct advantages. On the one hand, the problem of ascertaining exact texts is partially solved; after comparing the many editions, one soon discovers marked similarities, which shows that the delivered texts generally convey Luther's thoughts, in spite of the arbitrary way in which they have been put together. On the other, a magnificent opportunity is given us to observe Luther's development over a period of more than 20 years. This can become a fruitful research technique, offering valuable additions to what we know about the reformer.<sup>10</sup> As we proceed, we shall try

to bear these historical problems in mind, giving preference to the texts of Rörer and Lauterbach, and, using the other texts critically, assign them a secondary role.<sup>11</sup>

trine of the ministry for my study, "Change in Luther's Doctrine of the Ministry," *The Lutheran Quarterly*, XVIII (1966), especially pp. 179—183, and thereby showed that the earlier transferral view of the ministry was modified by other considerations in his later thinking. A fine study of doctrine in Luther's preaching along the lines of the present essay was done by Emanuel Hirsch, "Gesetz und Evangelium in Luthers Predigten," in *Luther: Mitteilungen der Luthergesellschaft*, 25 (1954), 49—60, with special reference to Luther's preaching on the pericope of the Syrophenician woman; Hirsch, however, restricted himself to analyzing one sermon from *WA* 17 II, 201 ff.

<sup>11</sup> Luther's dislike for the Summer and Winter Postils of Roth was not entirely without foundation. One finds a rather suspicious citation in which Roth has Luther say in his sermon of Aug. 31, 1522: "I have said more about this elsewhere, especially in my book 'Von der weltlichen Oberkeyt'; you can read it there yourself" (*WA* 10 1/2, p. 353). Although this sentence is written in the first person, it appears

<sup>9</sup> This table of Luther's sermons on Luke 18:9-14 is adapted from the indices in *WA* 20, p. lxiv.

<sup>10</sup> I used this method to find additional materials that might illuminate Luther's later doc-

DATE	SOURCE	LOCATION
July 27, 1516	Löschner	<i>WA</i> 1, 62
Aug. 23, 1517 (?)	Roth	<i>WA</i> 4, 653
Aug. 31, 1522	Published sermon	<i>WA</i> 10 III, 293 (Cf. 10 1/2, 347)
Aug. 16, 1523	Rörer	<i>WA</i> 11, 162
Aug. 16, 1523	Roth	<i>WA</i> 12, 654
Aug. 7, 1524	Rörer	<i>WA</i> 15, 671
Aug. 20, 1525	Rörer	<i>WA</i> 17 I, 400
Aug. 12, 1526	Rörer	<i>WA</i> 20, 473
Aug. 23, 1528	Rörer	<i>WA</i> 27, 311 (Upper text)
Aug. 23, 1528	Copenhagen copy	<i>WA</i> 27, 311 (Lower text)
Aug. 20, 1531 (P. M.)	Rörer	<i>WA</i> 34 II, 138 (Upper text)
Aug. 20, 1531	Nuremberg copy	<i>WA</i> 34 II, 138 (Lower text)
Aug. 20, 1531	Luther's own outline	<i>WA</i> 48, 336
Aug. 11, 1532	Rörer	<i>WA</i> 36, 233
Aug. 24, 1533	Rörer	<i>WA</i> 37, 129
Aug. 12, 1537	Rörer	<i>WA</i> 45, 125
Sept. 1, 1538	Rörer	<i>WA</i> 46, 489
[Composite]	Roth's Summer Postil	<i>WA</i> 10 1/2, 347
[Composite]	Cruciger's Summer Postil	<i>WA</i> 22, 195

We must also make a few observations concerning exegetical problems. Luther did a splendid job of distinguishing Law and Gospel, and preached justification in the concrete sense. But this parable held certain inherent limitations. Unlike the Epistles of Paul, it does not use the essential noun "justification." Nevertheless, as Gottlob Schrenk has noted, forensic justification is actually present in this text from the synoptic gospels. The words of Christ, "This man went down to his house justified" (v. 14), mean "to be set free, to be declared forensically just."<sup>12</sup> The text also lacks any reference to the sufferings and death of Christ as the basis for justification. The fact that Luther does not often refer to Christ's saving work in this series of sermons does not mean that he neglected these so much as that he stuck to the text, as a reference to other series would show.

## II. LUTHER'S WAY OF PREACHING ON THE LAW, SIN, AND DIVINE WRATH

At the dawn of the Reformation era, a shallow concept of sin was widespread. Luther insisted that the merciful grace of God is upheld only where sin is magnified.<sup>13</sup> "Christ wasn't sacrificed for ficti-

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to be fabricated, for Luther's tract "Secular Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed" did not appear until half a year later (*WA* 11, 230 ff.). It seems doubtful that Luther would have made this statement in that particular sermon, if he would have made it at all. Date of publication of the postil was 1526.

<sup>12</sup> Schrenk writes: Paul is not the only one to use the term in the strict legal sense. Luke's statement concerning the publican in 18:4 can only mean "acquitted," "declared righteous." Schrenk, article, δικαιώω, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Gerhard Kittel, ed., II (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1935), 219.

<sup>13</sup> Luther discusses this in his *Rationis La-*

tiosus or painted sins, but for true ones, not for small but for great sins, not for one or two, but for all sins, not for conquered but for unconquered sins," as we read in the Great Commentary on Galatians (*WA* 40 I, 87). Luther realized that justification will not be meaningful for a person who does not see why he has to be justified before God. In our time, when a Paul Tillich can remark that it is almost impossible to make the reformational doctrine of justification intelligible to modern man, the basic reason seems to be that people have lost the consciousness of sin, as it is exposed by a true preaching of the Law; hence, the concept of divine wrath appears incomprehensible and even reprehensible. In view of Luther's powerful way of laying open man's sin and need to get right with God, we can profit greatly by studying his sermons.

"Two men went up into the temple to pray"—and they were both sinners! In most of his sermons on this text, Luther saw all mankind represented in the Pharisee and the publican as either arrogant or repentant sinners. The sins of the publican were manifest—offenses like extortion, injustice, and adultery, to use the words of the Pharisee. However, the Pharisee appeared to be a purely righteous individual. ". . . I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers. . . ." Luther is quoted thus by Rörer:

No one can condemn in this Pharisee the fact that he does those works, the fact that

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*tomianae . . . confutatio* of 1521. See the discussion by Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, tr. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 142—143. The presentation by Althaus on Luther's concept of sin further illuminates the subject we are considering.

he fasts twice [in the week]. Who could say otherwise than that he had done well? He is not a rapist, he does not steal, he doesn't seduce, he doesn't cheat, he doesn't falsify. I'd like to be called the emperor, here; I'd like to have a big share of his crown, like all his fellow citizens!<sup>14</sup>

We find a forceful statement in Cruciger's redaction: "This Pharisee was given by Christ as the highest example of a person following the Law according to his own powers" (WA 22, 203, 9—11). It seemed that he had broken none of the Ten Commandments; he appeared to be a paragon of virtue. "In conclusion, there you see all the commandments thrown together and the paragon of a fine and (as it appeared to the world) a God-fearing, holy man, who is set up as a mirror and example before all the world" (WA 22, 198). Luther likes to paint a vivid picture:

So he holds his body in bridle and under discipline. "I fast twice in the week." He throws all the commandments upon one heap: I am not unjust, I am obedient to my parents, etc. "Beyond this, I give the tithe of everything that I have rightly and honestly acquired." Thereupon both

tables of the Law. Thus he goes from the first to the last commandment, completely pure and pious.<sup>15</sup>

Now Luther draws his example to the ultimate point: The Pharisee did not claim for himself all the credit for his accomplishments; he said piously, "God, I thank *You* that I am not as other men." But now, let heaven explode! His arrogance had reached the limit. He had not only turned against God and man in breaking both tables of the Law but also had committed the blasphemy of making God the author of his self-idolatry! He attacked God as well as his fellowman in this prayer of thanksgiving. Now the tables were turned, and the Pharisee was shown to be the grossest of all sinners. He has broken all the commandments and has kept none. He really does not believe in God at all, but in the devil; for it is the devil who has taught him to trust in his own righteousness rather than in the grace of God. And if there were any doubt about it, it has become unmistakably clear in his lovelessness toward his fellowman: "I thank thee that I am not as other men."

This man, in his pridefulness, based his relationship to God upon his own good works, and thereby rejected God as he

<sup>14</sup> In this text with its mixture of German and Latin, typical of Rörer, I shall italicize the German words since they are fewer. In subsequent passages, I shall italicize the words of whichever language is used less, merely to aid the reader. "Nemo potest damnare in hoc Pharisaeo, quod ista opera facit, quod his ieiunat. Quis aliter diceret quam quod *wol gethan*? non est raptor, non furatur, aufert, non *betreugt*, non adulteratur, *da wolt ich den keyser heissen* magnam partem suae coronae, ut omnes cives sui" (WA 27, 312, 1—5). The reader can quickly see that a subjective factor is involved in disentangling these texts, especially when attempting to translate them into an equivalent, oral style of English. Hence, I shall try to provide the original redaction in a number of instances, so that the reader can evaluate my interpretations for himself.

<sup>15</sup> Rörer brings this characterization of the external good works of the Pharisee in the sermon from Sept. 1, 1538: "Item *belt* corpus *im zaun und in der zucht*: 'bis.' Item *wil* praecepta *all auff ein hauffen*: non iniustus, obediens parentibus *u.* Supra illud *do decimas von dem, das ich recht und redlich erworben*. Ibi ambae tabulae. Sic *ghet er her durch a l. praecepto usque ad ultimum, gantz rein und from*. Quare ergo non salvatur? Num iniustus *u.* *Wolt got, das der schalk allein gewest were* et non haberet ante et post se. Sed *das verderbt's gar*, quod confidens et alios contempsit i.e. *er hebt sich beide, uber Gott und mensch*. Idea servando legem transgreditur" (WA 46, 489).

really is. First, he rejected God as the righteous judge. "If it's done this way, you have the sentence: there are no greater sinners in the world than those who throw out God and put Satan in His place."<sup>16</sup> How can Luther say this? The Pharisee had really "made an idol out of his own good works, placed his righteousness higher than God, and made God into the devil and the devil into God."<sup>17</sup> This was manifestly the transgression of the First Commandment, which was the greatest of all sins. But not only had he rejected God as judge of all the world. Second, he rejected God as the merciful Father. "Consequently, he denied God and all his goodness."<sup>18</sup> This rejection showed that, in spite of his spiritual security, he didn't really know God at all: "As I was saying, his heart didn't know God nor desire his mercy."<sup>19</sup> But worst of all, he thereby belittled God: "For this reason, when he did not come to know the mercy of God, he turned divine mercy into mercilessness, and turned God into the devil."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> From the Rörer redaction of the sermon from Aug. 23, 1528. "Si fit, habes iudicium, quod non majores peccatores in terris qui *stossen got weck et Satan in locum*" (WA 27, 315, 9—10).

<sup>17</sup> From the same redaction: "ex suis operibus idolum facit et *setzt* suam iusticiam supra deum et facit deum *zum teufel* et econtra" (Ibid., 313, 12—13).

<sup>18</sup> From Rörer's redaction of the sermon preached on Aug. 7, 1524. "Negat ergo deum et omnia bona sua" (WA 15, 672, 11).

<sup>19</sup> "Ergo cor suum non cognoscit deum neque vult eius misericordiam. . ." (Ibid., lines 14—15).

<sup>20</sup> "So *ghet er nit her*, quare cum dei misericordiam non noscat, *macht er die* divinam misericordiam *zu einer unbarmherzigkeit* et ex deo diabolum" (Ibid., lines 16—18).

To Luther's concept of sin as that which robs God of his honor, we might add an interesting

Luther finds this sad diagnosis confirmed by the Pharisee's uncharitable attitude toward the publican. If he had truly loved God, and had been a humble believer, he would not have sought to glorify himself at his neighbor's expense; instead, he would have tried to help the publican. He would have prayed: "Oh God, we are all sinners; one is as bad as the other—this poor sinner also. Have mercy upon us all." Then he should have taken him in with the rest of the congregation. After this, he should have prayed for him. "Thereby he would have carried the man on his own back and borne him to God, prayed for him, and thereby fulfilled also the second command which deals with Christian love, as Paul wrote to the Galatians. 'Bear one another's burdens,' etc."<sup>21</sup>

parallel from Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo?* Lib. I, Caput XI: "Hoc est debitum, quod debet angelus et homo Deo, quod solvendo nullus peccat; et quod omnis, qui non solvit, peccat. Haec est iustitia sive rectitudo voluntatis, quae justos facit sive rectos corde, id est voluntate; hic est solus et torus honor, quem debemus Deo, et quem a nobis exigit Deus. Sola namque talis voluntas opera facit placita Deo, cum potest operari; et cum non potest, ipsa sola per se placet, quia nullum opus sine illa placet. Hunc honorem debitum qui Deo non reddit, aufert Deo quod suum est, et Deum exhonorat; et hoc est peccare" (Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 158, p. 376).

<sup>21</sup> This is taken from a colorful passage from the less dependable text of Cruciger; one should not forget, however, that Luther felt that Cruciger properly put in print the substance of what Luther had preached in the pulpit. "Also ist [der Pharisäer] zu drümmern gegangen, das er nit ein buchstaben der gesetz erfüllt hat, den het er also gesagt: ach got wir sindt alltzumal sündler, einer ist wie der ander, der arme sunder hie auch, erbarm dich unsser, und het sich mit hinein getzogen in den gemainen kuchen und gesagt: Ach got genad uns, so het er gottes pot erfüllt, das erst. Darnach het er gesagt: Ach got ich sihe, das der ein sunder ist, steckt dem



For Luther, the outward transgression is, at most, only a symptom of the reality of sin. On the one hand, sin is basically pride.<sup>22</sup> Pride had been behind Lucifer's revolt; this had led to his banishment from the presence of God. In the same way, pride was to blame for the fall of Adam and Eve. They wanted to become like God. "When the devil came he really said: 'You will become like gods,' etc. They thought: 'God is patient. What difference will one apple make?'" (WA 36, 253). But this action brought about their fall and that of the whole race. Their pride had thus paved the way for the Pharisee's pride.<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, sin is an act of unbelief and of actual turning against God. The Pharisee not only robbed God of His honor and unseated Him as divine judge, but belittled Him in several ways. The Pharisee accused God of ignorance when he found it necessary to inform God of his virtues; he made God out to be stupid, as though He could not see or hear for Himself what the man was like.<sup>24</sup> The

teuffel im rachen, und het in also genomen auff den Ruckhen und vor got bracht, fur in betten; so het er das ander bot auch erfult vonn der christlichenn lieb, wie Paulus sagt Gal: 'Alter alterius onera portate' u" (WA 10 III, 301, 21 to 302, 5).

<sup>22</sup> The concept of sin as pride, or as egocentricity, has attracted the interest of the Swedish Luther scholars. For a convenient summary of their research, see Edgar M. Carlson, *The Reinterpretation of Luther* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1948), pp. 51—57.

<sup>23</sup> See WA 27, 316—317; 36, 234—236.

<sup>24</sup> From Röer's text, sermon of Aug. 16, 1523: "Incredulitas maximum peccatum est, quia negare est deum. Praesumptio quoque est, qua sibi errigit deum" (WA 11, 162). Pride dethrones God: "est sedere in sedem dei et deum deiicere in inferos" (Röer text from 1526, WA 20, 474, 6). Pride belittles and insults God: "Non ut alii homines, quid facit

Pharisee was damned according to Jer. 2:13; he had forsaken the fountain of living waters, that is, God's grace, and had hewn out broken cisterns, that is, had substituted self-righteousness.<sup>25</sup> Röer's transcription sums it up as follows:

On this account you see the judgment reversed. The Pharisee says: "There is no better man than I." God turns it around: "There is no worse man in the world than you." And so God judges and turns it completely back. This is to make the devil out of a holy man. This, God is wont to do.<sup>26</sup>

The Pharisee, who claimed to be so much, but was abased by God, did not trust God at all. He saw in God only a severe and unjust judge, the one and only person who could ever condemn him (WA 4, 653). And this was the kind of God whom he therefore had to deal with.

In a sermon outline for Aug. 20, 1531, Luther spoke of three kinds of sinners. First, there were the manifest sinners, whom also the world could judge, since they were notorious and unrepentant. Second, there were those who admitted their sinfulness, but only hypocritically. Third,

is miser ex se, deo et mundo? Vide, quale cor in his verbis brevibus: facit deum stultum, qui nihil audit vel videt . . . quod deum facit stultum et aufert ei honorem?" (WA 20, 475, 24).

<sup>25</sup> Röer's transcription from the sermon of Aug. 7, 1524: "Hier. 2. 1. 'deserunt deum' i. e. fidem non habent, in suis operibus vivunt, 2. 'cisternas' u. dicunt: opera quae facio, sunt bona, et sic deum faciunt mendacem. Her, inquit deus, ich wil mit dir umbgben" (WA 15, 672, 37).

<sup>26</sup> From the same sermon as the previous footnote: "Vides itaque iudicium verti. Ipse dicit: non est melior homo me. Deus vertit: non est peior in mundo te. Ita deus iudicat et strack kert ers umb. Hoc est ex sancto facere diabolum, ita solet deus" (WA 15, 672, 20).

there were those who acknowledged their unworthiness, but, by faith, were able to connect "merciful God" and their "sin" (WA 48, 337). We can observe how this short sketch was turned into the sermon for Sunday afternoon. Luther's delineation of the second group is especially striking. These are they who acknowledge that they are sinners until the preacher tells them this from the pulpit; suddenly they become very angry with the preacher, and blame him for daring to preach the Law in such a way that it uncovers their sins.<sup>27</sup> Thus Rörer reports Luther's sermon:

Accordingly there are other rascally sinners, of whom there are many among us, and I also am one. They hear that God is merciful to those who acknowledge their sins, and so they march up confidently and think that they are publicans according to the Parable. They want to be companions of that publican.

These are fine evangelical sinners, who employ the words of that publican, but not from the heart. It lasts until they have their first experience, when through a devil or a preacher or an angry neighbor God takes them on. Then he who at first was humble says: "I cannot bear such a thing. I shall not bear it." Those who at first were of the most patient sort, when they are taken on, they are not willing to bear it. That's the way it goes today in our parts with our preachers and neighbors. Of course, our people don't say: "I fast twice in the week," etc., but they say: "I'm being treated wrongfully. I will not stand for it." So it goes with our junkers, burgers, and peasants.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Thus in Cruciger's Summer Postil, WA 22, 207.

<sup>28</sup> "Dornach syndt ander schalkhafte Ssunder, quales plures nostrum sunt et ego sum. Qui audiunt deum misereri agnoscentibus pec-

In a day such as ours, when there is a growing coldness toward the Christian message, and when lawlessness is rife, it might seem that the conscientious preacher should not go so far as Luther in unmasking the hypocrisy of many who lead lives that are outwardly good. It might appear that the minister should strive to get more people to conform outwardly to the Ten Commandments. But "civic righteousness" is not the aim of the evangelical preacher, who dares not be misled by social disorder. While he is not indifferent to the needs of this life, his primary task is to work for the everlasting salvation of his hearers. An atomistic doctrine of sin, which deals only with the outward manifestations of sin, will not lead to the conviction of the heart; it will only make hypocritical Pharisees of his audience. The intention of Jesus' parable is to make unmistakably clear that when two men went up into the temple to pray, both of them were sinners. There was really only this difference between them: one acknowledged his sin and trusted in God—he was a truly repentant sinner; the other did

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cata sua, et deinde securi incedunt et putant se esse publicani istius loci. *Sie können sich stellen, das sie die gesellen sein* ut ille publicanus" (WA 34 II, 140). "Das syndt euangelische Ssunder, qui quidem verbis illius Publicani utuntur, sed non ex corde, *es weret Sso lang usque ad experienciam, wen sie got durch eyn teuffel odder prediger und bossen nachbar angreyfft*, Tunc ille humilis prius dicit: *Ich kan das nicht leyden. Ich wyls nicht leyden.* Qui prius fuit specie pacientissimus: *wen sie angegriffen werden, Sso wollen sie es nicht leyden.* Ita hodie in nostra regione contingit *An unsern predigern und nachbarn.* Quamvis non dicunt: 'Ego ieiuno bis' u. sed dicunt: *Myr geschicht unrecht. Ich wyls nicht leyden, also syndt unsere junckerleyn und burgern und pauern*" (Ibid., 141, 18–29).

neither—he was an unrepentant sinner.<sup>29</sup> The Pharisee said: "For all that, it is God alone who can condemn me." But the publican said: "Notwithstanding, it is God alone who is able to save me and set me free" (WA 4, 653). Repentance and faith are what distinguish his sin from the sin of Judas. (WA 48, 337)

### III. HOW LUTHER PREACHED ON THE GOSPEL, DIVINE GRACE, AND FORGIVENESS

On the basis of the Law, the publican was lost; but on the basis of the Gospel, all was different. Luther could preach this distinction in such a lively and homely manner that he was actually teaching the profoundest theology without the listener realizing it!

God's judgment seat and man's judgment seat are two completely different things. In the eyes of the world, murderers, adulterers, and other evildoers must be chastised. God must hold himself above the government; that is one kind of judgment seat. But before God's own judgment throne, where He Himself judges without mediation, it goes in such a way that sinners may receive grace. There, knaves are held to be pious, and the pious to be knaves.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> It is this point which was taken up and developed most notably in the sixth thesis of C. F. W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1897), especially pp. 80 to 86.

<sup>30</sup> This text is taken from a Nuremberg recension of a 1531 sermon: The Nuremberg recension, in the hand of Frederick Myconius, seems to be based upon notes of the less dependable Aurifaber; however, it is in the Latin-German form, indicating that it is unedited, and, therefore, relatively direct and dependable. "Gotes richtstul und Menschen richtstul sunt duo. Coram mundo plecti debent homicidae, adulteri u. uber dem regiment muss got selber

Thus, the publican must overcome the Law, and press on to the mercy of God. This was no easy matter. The Law of God is terrifying. Already in Paradise it had warned that breaking God's command would lead to death (Gen. 2:17). Once more on Sinai, God's wrath against sin was clearly proclaimed (Ex. 20:5). How then could the publican expect to be heard when he beat upon his breast and said, "God be merciful to me, a sinner"? These two concepts, sin and grace, do not belong together in the realm of human reason. Where had he gotten courage to unite the two—to make sin and grace "rhyme"? Evidently, reason had been overcome by faith. Somewhere, he had come to the message of the Gospel. We read in a pirated text:

Therefore it must have become known to him previously, and in his heart, that God is gracious, kind, and benevolent to all who humble themselves, confess their sins, call upon him, and beg for his grace. [WA 10, III, 295, 6]

Only through faith could he have faced the fact that he was a sinner, but that God would be propitious. "I am a miserable sinner, but you are a gracious God," he said; he had learned "to bring together sin and grace, and to divorce from another sin and wrath" (WA 34 II, 145 f.). The Gospel stands high above the Law, and God's mercy far surpasses his wrath. Where this is recognized, faith dwells in the heart:

Therefore this is the art: if your conscience is heavy laden, do not take much of your learning from the Law, but in-

halden. Das ist eyn richtstul. Aber vor gotes eygen richtstul, ubi ipse solus sine medio iudicat, do gehets also zw, ut peccatores gratiam habeant. Do syndt die schelke frum, die frummen schelke" (WA 34 II, 139 f.).

stead deal with grace, and say: "I am a sinner, but I rhyme with this the word 'grace.'" This is the greatest art of all — to divorce from each other sin and Law, and to rhyme together sin and grace.<sup>31</sup>

When one reaches out for the grace of God and confesses that He is good, one pays God the highest tribute and truly glorifies His name. In the act of humbling one's self and exalting God, one "lets God be God," one fulfills the First Commandment of the Decalog, and, thereby, the entire Decalog.

The Publican lets God be God. He keeps his place as a man, as he has been born, and gives to God the tribute that He is kind; he knows what is the true worship of God. This is genuine faith, through which God is repaid, and by which is given what he owes God. And he fulfills all the commandments of God on the spot.<sup>32</sup>

On the basis of this faith which glorified God, the publican was declared just.

It is almost startling to see the prominence that Luther attaches to faith, as well as the relative silence regarding the work of Christ or the role of imputation; the latter two elements are absent because they do not occur in the text, and will be found

in sermons of Luther where they are introduced in the text, or are brought in for other reasons. But in handling this parable, Luther finds his materials within the text. The rather astonishing description of faith as a payment to God is perhaps more characteristic of the earlier sermons. In the somewhat problematical published version of the sermon from 1522, Luther is represented as saying of the publican: "There he gave God His honor and paid Him by means of faith." In Roth's later editing of this text for the Summer Postil, prepared in Luther's circle and published in a volume with a preface by Luther himself, the words recur.<sup>33</sup> In Rörer's redaction of a sermon from 1525, Luther says: "This is true faith, by which God is repaid and is given that which he owes to God." (WA 17 I, 404)

Luther says unexpected things. These almost shocking statements of his ought to be explained in the context of his total theology, especially as he developed it in the explanation to the First Commandment in the Large Catechism.<sup>34</sup> There, Luther insists that God does not request, but *de-*

<sup>31</sup> Also from the Nuremberg text: "Drumb ist das die kunst: si consciencia laboraverit, dicat non multum cum lege, sed cum gracia agere et dicat: Ego sum peccator, sed ich reyme die gnade darczw. Sed ist die grosst kunst von eynander scheyden ssunde und gesecz und zwsammen reymen Ssunde und gnade" (WA 34 II, 145,29 to 146,4).

<sup>32</sup> Thus Rörer's report of the sermon of Aug. 20, 1525: "Hic sentit deum esse deum. Manet homo, qui natus est, et dat deo, quod sit benignus, scit, qui verus cultus dei. Haec fides vera, per quam deus solvitur et datur, quod deo debet. Et hic statim implevit praecepta dei" (WA 17 I, 404, 1).

<sup>33</sup> "Da gibt er got sein ehr und betzalt in durch den glauben" (WA 10 III, 299, 15). Roth's version: WA 10 I/2, 349—350.

<sup>34</sup> The passage in the Large Catechism, easily found in English translations under First Commandment, is found in *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche. Herausgegeben im Gedenkjahr der Augsburgerischen Konfession 1930*, second ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1952 ff.), p. 560, line 30. For a parallel, see Luther's "Von den guten werckenn" (Treatise on Good Works), WA 6, p. 202, pp. 205—206, etc. A notable study of this aspect is by Paul Althaus, "Gottes Gottheit als Sinn der Rechtfertigungslehre Luthers," *Luther-Jahrbuch*, XIII (1931), 1—28, reprinted in Paul Althaus, *Luther und die Rechtfertigung. Drei Aufsätze* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1971), pp. 9—31.

*mands*, faith. This is what every sinner owes God. When the sinner comes to believe in God, he supplies what has been lacking in his relationship with God. He pays or repays what he has owed God, and what God has demanded, namely, faith. Although calling faith a payment might seem synergistic, the intention is the very opposite. Luther wants to say that the sinner can offer God nothing; only God can save; to have faith means no more than to accept that free mercy and grace of God. To claim in one's self nothing but sin and unworthiness, and to ascribe all goodness and clemency to God—this is faith, and to have faith is to have forgiveness and salvation. God says: "Give me faith, that is, hold me for God. This is my honor and your salvation." In other words, man pays nothing; he only acknowledges that God alone can save; this, paradoxically, is called the payment which saves. Luther further protects the monergism of grace by emphasizing that saving faith is due solely to the creative work of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit convicts of sin, points out the mercy of God, and moves the individual to faith, thus overcoming the objections of reason.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> From Luther's sermon of 1526 in Rörer's copy: "*Wer kans lassen? nemo nisi quem deus invisit suo spiritu sancto, ut sua peccata agnoscat et misericordiam dei, alias non fit, quia ratio vult aliquid esse*" (WA 20, 478, 7). From the same sermon: "*Da brengt er die gnad, quae eum servat in peccatis. Et orat 'gnedig,' 'audivi a te, quod sis propitius, iram tuam sentio, peccata mea te faciunt mihi iudicem, quo veniam? ad te non possum, quia peccata impediunt, a te non, quia peius fit.' Ibi spiritus reget, gratia est maior quam peccatum*" (Ibid., 477, 5). See the report of a later sermon, that of Aug. 12, 1537: "*Es donum spiritus sancti converti vere, a peccato fugere et deum sequi*" (WA 45, 126, 25).

There has been much confusion of late over what Luther taught regarding justification. As anyone knows who has worked extensively with the sources, Luther did not have as much to say about justification as a doctrine as those assume who derive their material at second hand. Moreover, the doctrine found in the Lutheran Confessions is often closer in its formulation to Melancthon than to Luther.<sup>36</sup> Undoubtedly, much of the lack of consensus among Lutherans at the 1963 assembly at Helsinki was due to the influence of the teachings of Gustaf Aulén and Karl Holl. Aulén had held that "Justification is simply the Atonement brought into the present."<sup>37</sup> Holl had asserted that the sinner

<sup>36</sup> See my book (with Theodore G. Tappert and Willem Kooiman), *The Mature Luther* (Decorah, Iowa: Luther College Press, 1959), especially pp. 127—129, where I have discussed this involved question. While the doctrine of imputation is to be found in Luther's works, it was more characteristic of Melancthon. I have worked this out much more fully in 1969 in an unpublished manuscript, *Luther and Melancthon on Justification*. This is, of course, mainly a historical problem, in no way invalidating the doctrinal position taken by the *Book of Concord*.

<sup>37</sup> Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement* (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1951), p. 150. Aulén criticizes the position of Anselm, Melancthon, and the Lutheran Confessions as teaching that the atonement was effected by Christ as man and not as God; Aulén means to rectify the situation by representing the atonement as achieved by Christ after his divine nature alone. Of course, this was not the position of the Formula of Concord, which rejected both the proposition that the atonement depended upon the divine nature alone (Osiander) as well as that it rested solely upon his human nature (Stancarus), and held that both natures worked jointly (doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*!), in agreement with the Council of Chalcedon (FC, Epitome VIII). When Aulén rejects the concept of the

is not justified on the basis of the merits of Christ, imputed by God to the believer; he had held instead that the sinner was justified on the basis of a righteousness developed within the believer by God. God in His predestination not only foreknew, but also foreordained, that justification in which the sinner would be perfected, a development which would first be completed at death. Since God knew the state of perfection which the sinner would at last reach, He declared him already just in the present.<sup>38</sup>

blood atonement, he seems unaware of Luther's own statements, as in the Small Catechism, Second Article, or in the Seven Penitential Psalms: "darumb bespreng du mich mit dem waren bocksblut Ihesu Christi, und davon werde ich ynn warheit und grundlich ynnerlich rein on alle mein wircken odder mügen" (WA 18, 502, 36).

<sup>38</sup> The best-known statement of Holl's position is found in his essay, "Die Rechtfertigungslehre in Luthers Vorlesung über den Römerbrief mit besonderer Rücksicht auf die Frage der Heilsgewissheit," in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, I (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1948), 111—154. Equally important, but often overlooked by scholars, is his article, "Die Rechtfertigungslehre im Licht der Geschichte des Protestantismus" (1922), in *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, III (ibid., 1928), 525 to 557. Holl's findings are historically correct, insofar as they are limited to the Young Luther; they are faulty from the standpoint of doctrinal history, if one takes into account the later position of the Mature Luther. (See my book referred to in footnote 36, pp. 113—123, where I have developed this in greater detail.) The understanding of justification in the Young Luther, as it was so brilliantly interpreted by Holl, deals with the doctrine of the pre-Reformation Augustinian monk.

This is not the appropriate place to refute Holl and Aulén, which I have done elsewhere; but our survey of Luther's preaching has shown us, thus far, that neither Aulén's "dramatic theory of the Atonement" nor Holl's "analytic doctrine of justification" stands close to the material which we have before us in the sermons on the Pharisee and the publican.

Except perhaps for some formulations from his early years, Luther does not make justification dependent upon the sanctification within the believer. The publican is declared righteous on the basis of a righteousness which he already possesses (*justitia passiva*), not on a righteousness which God foresees in the future (*justitia activa*). Good works must follow faith, but faith alone justifies.<sup>39</sup> Rörer informs us that Luther expressed it in 1525 as follows:

And the Publican fulfills all the commandments of God on the spot, through sanctity, done all at once by grace alone. Who could have foreseen that, under this dirty fellow? <sup>40</sup>

He was no longer a dirty fellow. He was justified. He had rejected human works-righteousness and accepted the saving righteousness of God. Henceforth, although his good works might not be visible to human eyes, no one might dare call him a sinner. "He rightly distinguished, gave God His place as God, and subsequently he judges nobody." (WA 27, 315, 2—3)<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> From the pirated edition of 1522: "Darumb mercket das wol: der gelaube machte allein frumb, aber die weil der in mir verborgen leit und ist ein gross leben, ein grosser schatz, so muss der durch die werck herausser dringen, den glauben betzeugen, die gots gnad preissn, menschen werck verdammen, must die augen nider schlagen, das du den nechsten auch mit dienest und zu got bringest, dan darumb lest dich auch got leben, sunst müst man dir als baldt den kopff abreissen" (WA 10 III, 298, 26 to 299, 5). Note the strong emphasis upon personal evangelism as the only reason why God puts up with us and gives us additional time in the world!

<sup>40</sup> From Rörer's redaction of the 1525 sermon: "Et hic statim implevit praecepta dei, ibi mera gratia per sanctitatem, *wer het sich des stuck versehen unter dem unflat?*" (WA 17 I, 404, 3—5).

<sup>41</sup> Cf. these two Rörer editions — "Et

The fact that God had forensically justified the publican imposed upon him the obligation to lead a righteous life henceforth. Luther points out that the man had not been praised because he remained as he had been, but because he humbled and abased himself. "He stood afar off." God justified him, and he went home a righteous person—to lead a new life of righteousness.<sup>42</sup>

#### IV. DOCTRINAL PREACHING TODAY, ESPECIALLY IN REGARD TO JUSTIFICATION

Forensic justification is highly relevant to modern man whether he recognizes the fact or not. His world stands under the judgment of God, and is found wanting. For a few years one might be able to evade this inexorable truth, but sorrow, sickness, and death come eventually to every human being. No preacher who withholds the awefulness of God's Law can keep a good conscience; he is not called upon to be popular, but only to tell the truth. Only the truth about God's wrath at the sinner can make it possible for the believer to

sequitur *das allerschönste bekentnis*: dat deo honorem, quod misericors *und gnedig*, et dicit se peccatorem. Si prius fecisset 100 adulteria *und war unrecht*, tamen *hette er ein gnedigen Got* propter hoc quod fudit misericordiam dei. *Is scheidet recht, setzt got an gots stat*, et postea neminem iudicat" (WA 27, 315, 21 to 316, 3). "Ut neminem iudicet, non dixisset: hic peccator est" (WA 15, 675, 19).

<sup>42</sup> This paraphrase is taken from the following Röer transcript, which I find almost impossible to translate accurately: "Non laudatur publicanus, quod manet, sed se *gedemütiget und genidriget und abgestanden*, et quod ierit in domum iustus, et quod deus iustificaret *uber seim gebet*. Ista verba non *bringen mit*, quod mansit peccator, sed *begetet gnad und hulffe*, ut deus priora peccata remittat *und fort an geb*, id factum" (WA 45, 125, 25—29).

be saved by apprehending what is contained in God's promises. Martin Luther and C. F. W. Walther saw this clearly.<sup>43</sup> Let us now see how Luther transformed abstract doctrine into the living word as he preached it from his Wittenberg pulpit.

From Luther as well as Walther we learn that preaching of the Law is never to be enjoyable. Some preachers today are immensely popular because they speak out against sensational sinning; they do not offend their hearers, nor shake them in their deadly complacency, but instead give them a feeling of superiority over those who are condemned. Such a misuse of the Law can only make hypocrites of men and cause their spiritual downfall.<sup>44</sup> Luther preached differently. He made the wrath

<sup>43</sup> Walther's book, referred to in footnote 29, should be worked through carefully by every preacher; in spite of its archaic form, its content is pure gold. On the inexorableness of man's dilemma before the Hidden God, see also Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), pp. 43—49.

<sup>44</sup> It is basically the misuse of the Law that is responsible for the Pharisee whom Luther portrays so vividly in this group of sermons. See Walther's discussion of the misuse of the Law, op. cit., especially Theses XVI and XXIII, as well as Thesis VI. See also the discussion on Law and Gospel in the Formula of Concord, Article V, both in the Epitome and the Solid Declaration. Regarding Luther's discussion of Law and Gospel, it might be pointed out that we have no systematic statement from him; the "Rhapsodia seu concepta in librum de loco iustificationis cum aliis obiter additis" (WA 30 II, 657—676) of 1530 is from the hand of Dietrich. In this respect, we cannot follow Walther's citation of Luther; he simply did not have access to the critical texts, which appeared later in the Weimar edition. Most *Lutheriana* on Law and Gospel present textual problems similar to those in interpreting his sermons. No doubt much of what we call Luther's teaching on Law and Gospel goes back to Melancthon, the first Lutheran dogmatician.

of God so personal that every honest hearer must capitulate with the publican: "God be merciful to me, a sinner." But Luther's proclamation of the healing Gospel was such that the most troubled heart could find the assurance — God wants even me! — and receive forgiveness and peace with God.

Luther's manner of making the Scriptures alive sometimes led him to astonishing use of his imagination, as in the following example.

So Adam and Eve were pure and healthy. They had eyes so sharp that they could have seen through a wall, and ears so good that they could have heard anything two miles away. All the animals were obedient to them; even the sun and the moon smiled at them. But then the devil came and said, "You will become just like the gods," and so on. They reasoned: "God is patient. What difference would one apple make?" Snap, snap, and it lay before them. It's hanging us all yet by the neck! <sup>45</sup>

The sinner's conversion was described as turning one's face to God and one's back to the devil.<sup>46</sup> Luther drew many illustrations from daily life and contemporary figures. As hypocrites, he pressed into his service Duke George of Saxony or the re-

ligious enthusiasts.<sup>47</sup> The common touch was surely evident when he comforted his hearers that "on this earth we can't all be equal, we can't all be lords and rich people."<sup>48</sup> Luther was really using terms that the most common man or the most uneducated barmaid could grasp when he likened the difference between a true and a hypocritical faith, saying that the latter "floated upon the heart like the foam on a mug of beer."<sup>49</sup>

The popular appeal of doctrine, even of bad doctrine, is undeniable.<sup>50</sup> On the campus of a state university, such as the one where this writer serves, one can hear the complaint of students who claim that their

<sup>47</sup> *WA* 36, 234, 1 and 16.

<sup>48</sup> "Auff erden kunne wir nicht gleich sein, kunnen nicht alle herrn u. sein" (*WA* 36, 235, 24).

<sup>49</sup> "Das last uns nu wol gesagt sein, das ists nun das Sant Lucas und S. Peter sovill von wercken sagen, das man nicht hyn gehe und gedenck: Ja ich wil nun glauben, und macht im mir ein getichten glauben: wann der allein auff dem herten schwebeth wie der schaum auff dem byer, heist ein getichter glauben. Neyn neyn, der gelaub ist ein lebendig, wessenlich dingh, das macht den menschen gantz neu, wandlt im den muth und kert in gantz um" (*WA* 10 III, 297, 15—21). This selection from the pirated edition of 1522 might give a clue to Luther's displeasure with its contents. He seems to have preferred Cruciger's tendency to remove such picturesque bits as the "foam on the beer," perhaps in recognition of the difference between an oral and a literary style. In my judgment, though, this reference to beer-foam sounds authentic, even if it irked Luther to see such expressions in print.

<sup>50</sup> Some examples of doctrinal preaching among the sectarians: "What Happens One Minute After Death"; "What Is Jesus Doing Now?"; "Ten Centuries of Peace [millennium]"; "How Long Till Armageddon?"; "Who Are the Angels?"; "N.N., How Far from Hell?"; "The Sin That Cannot Be Forgiven." One notes a strong concentration on the eschatological element.

<sup>45</sup> Röer gives his report of the sermon of Aug. 11, 1532, in the following words: "*Sic Adam et Eva* waren rein, leib, hetten scharff augen, das sie hetten durch ein wand mögen sehen und so gut öhren, das sie hetten auff zwo meil wegs mogen hören. *Omnia animalia* waren yhn gehorsam, Son, Mond lachet sie an. *Cum vero diabolus* veniebat: *Eritis sicut dii* u. *Cogitabant: deus patietur* was ists umb ein apffel? plitz, platz, ligt er da. Hengt uns noch allen, am Hals. *Sic deiicit deus superbos et erigit humiles*" (*WA* 36, 253, 3).

<sup>46</sup> "*Ad deum faciem* kere und ruck *diabolo*" (*WA* 45, 126, 18).



home churches did not teach them real doctrine, and one can watch them seek out the propagandists for the religion of Baha'i or Zen Buddhism. Perhaps the church must learn a lesson from this.

In spite of the abuses sometimes encountered in doctrinal preaching, such preaching can be reformed and rejuvenated. Several suggestions might be laid down in conclusion, points drawn from the pulpit work of Luther. (1) Doctrinal preaching should be grounded in the Biblical text, and accord with the Creeds and Confessions of the church. (2) Dogmatics belongs in the study, but not in the pulpit, where not its technical formulations, but only its conclusions, are in place. (3) Shun the abstract and cultivate the concrete; relate dogmas to life as it is lived. (4) Speak on the level of the people's understanding; avoid stilted terms, words of foreign derivation such as Latinisms, and seek for pungent, Anglo-Saxon expressions, while avoiding the banal or vulgar. (5) Instead of using technical terms such as "justification," "sanctification," "grace," "inspiration," "atonement," and so on, try to use vivid images. Of course, a congregation must also be educated to understand the terminology of the Christian faith; however, doctrinal preaching dare not attempt to take the place of the classroom.

Preaching on justification is needed in our day possibly even more than it was in Luther's. Demagogic leaders of youth and propounders of easy morals are laying the

foundation for moral ruin of countless individuals. There are more bruised reeds in our churches today than many preachers imagine.<sup>51</sup> Time is running out. The eschatological moment is here. Life-and-death issues must be dealt with. But few have surpassed Luther's simplicity and profundity when he says:

I'm a poor sinner, but you are a gracious God. These are precious words, which bear a costly teaching and comfort. For they bring together sin and grace, and separate sin and wrath from each other.<sup>52</sup>

Boone, N. C.

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<sup>51</sup> Many years ago, one of our experts on pastoral counselling wrote that a guilt complex lies at the root of most neuroses. See William E. Hulme, "Pastoral Counselling and Lutheran Theology," *The Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. V (1953), pp. 70—77. If men like Hulme, Siirala, and Smits are right, a guilt complex cannot simply be disposed of by cheerful words but will only become more deeply seated, and only the doctrine of justification through the passive righteousness, imputed from Christ, can satisfy the craving for cleansing.

<sup>52</sup> In Röer's text, these words appear as follows: "Ich armer sunder, du gnediger got. Es sind seer kostbare wort, die kostlich lere und trost in sich haben, ut zusammen tragen *peccatum et gratiam*, von einander scheiden sund und zorn" (WA 34 II, 145, 18 to 146, 2). See the solution of the Röer and Lautenbacher texts in Buchwald's edition: "Ich armer Sünder, du gnädiger Gott! Es sind sehr kostbare Worte, die köstliche Lehre und Trost in sich haben, dass sie zusammentragen Sünde und Gnade und voneinander scheiden Sünde und Zorn" (Ibid., II, 448).