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# Some Word Studies in the Apology

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“WHEN I use a word,” said Humpty-Dumpty in Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking-Glass*, “it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less.”

In the history of Christian theology the tendency to do this has become almost an occupational disease, often making it difficult to understand theologians of the present and almost impossible to understand theologians of the past. Nor does this apply only to thinkers like Berdyaev, who found it necessary to coin his vocabulary as he went along, or to groups like the Gnostics, who sometimes seem deliberately to have chosen nonsense syllables to reveal their theology. It applies as well to those theologians to whom the modern reader feels closest, and to those words and technical terms of which he makes most frequent use. As Alan Richardson has said, “the early Church did not thus intend the word ‘person’ to mean ‘personality’ in the modern sense” when it formulated the doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>1</sup> Or, in the slightly facetious words of Professor Hayakawa: “Looking under a ‘hood,’ we should ordinarily have found, five hundred years ago, a monk; today, we find a motorcar engine.”<sup>2</sup>

The task of translating an earlier theological treatise becomes, therefore, all the more difficult if that treatise employs terms which also occur in present-day theological discourse. Translators all too readily assume that identity of orthography involves identity of content. Perhaps the only way to avoid such an assumption is to study the historical setting of a term and its various uses within a given treatise, and thus to abstract its meaning or meanings from its usage. The important place that the Lutheran Confessions occupy in Lutheran theology suggests that such word studies may be of some value in extracting their meaning, and the fact that the Confessions are themselves very conscious of the semantic problem in dealing with their own past would seem to justify a similar sensitivity on our part in dealing with them.<sup>3</sup> Thus, when they use a term like *sophistae*,<sup>4</sup> we are not to seek here merely another of the many classical allusions that dot the pages of the *Concordia*;

nor are we to translate the term with "sophisticated theologians." Rather, we must recognize here one of the more usual ways of labeling medieval scholastic theologians. In the present series of word studies in the Apology, we shall deal with *doctrina*, with *evangelium* and *lex*, with *scriptura*, *scripturae*, and *verbum* — all nouns that have to do with epistemology, thus continuing earlier studies on the problem of knowledge in the history of Lutheran theology.<sup>5</sup>

#### DOCTRINA

The term *doctrina* occurs in the Apology a total of 116 times. Its crucial implication for the question of church unity, especially the problem of the *doctrina evangelii* in Article VII of the Augsburg Confession, would seem to highlight the difficulty mentioned earlier in dealing with the Apology. For the term *doctrina* there does not seem to be altogether interchangeable with our English word "doctrine" as theologians now use that word.

One illustration of the differences between *doctrina* and "doctrine" is the fact that *doctrina* almost never occurs in the plural, and with regard to Christian *doctrina* never. The Apology does not attempt a classification of "doctrines" into "fundamental" and "non-fundamental" — or even into "primary non-fundamental" and "secondary non-fundamental." Useful though such a classification may have become later on, it did presuppose a plurality of doctrines of which the Apology does not speak. As a matter of fact, the plural *doctrinae* occurs but eight times in the entire Apology: once quoting Col. 2:22 on *doctrinae hominum* (VII, 35); six times quoting 1 Tim. 4:1 on *doctrinae daemoniorum* (VII, 40; XI, 16; XII, 141; XV, 41, twice; XXVII, 26), with the same term quoted in the singular as *doctrina daemoniorum* twice (XXIII, 58 and XXIII, 63); and once referring to *doctrinae operum* (XI, 2). From this it would appear that according to the Apology, Christians have one *doctrina*, while the possession of *doctrinae* is characteristic of demons, evil men, and those who prefer works to grace. This usage, interestingly, corresponds to that of the New Testament, where διδασκαλία and διδασκαλία are also in the singular when they refer to what the Christian Church teaches.

The unity of Christian teaching, then, would seem to be in the *doctrina*; the multiplicity appears not in the form of *doctrinae*,

but of *loci*. This interesting term, whose early roots seem to lie in Roman Stoicism, acquired special meaning in Melancthon's *Loci communes* of 1521.<sup>6</sup> One meets the term *locus* frequently in the Apology. Sometimes it means a passage from the Scriptures (e. g., II, 31) or from some other writing, like the Augsburg Confession (e. g., II, 3) or the Confutation (e. g., XXIII, 68). But it frequently denotes an article of faith, what contemporary theologians would call one "doctrine" alongside other "doctrines"! Our count reveals at least twenty instances where *locus*, either in the singular or the plural, would be the closest approximation in the Apology to "doctrine" as this is used today (Pref. 17; Pref. 18; IV, 2; IV, 3; IV, 5; IV, 87; IV, 171; XII, 3; XII, 10; XII, 59; XII, 90; XII, 98; XV, 49; XVI, 2; XVI, 13; XX, 4; XX, 5; XXIV, 9; XXIV, 14; XXVII, 20). Noteworthy in this catalog are the two instances (XII, 3 and XII, 10) where the phrase involved is *locus evangelii*.

Testifying to the comprehensiveness of *doctrina* is the fact that it sometimes means the theological position of one or the other party to the dispute, either the position as such or the position as brought to bear upon a particular issue. Thus there are references to *nostra doctrina* (IV, 4; IV, 396; XXVIII, 22) or *doctrina nostrorum* (XI, 1); and again to the *doctrina adversariorum* (IV, 4; IV, 16; IV, 47; IV, 287; IV, 300; IV, 302; IV, 314; IV, 316; IV, 319; IV, 376; XI, 10; XII, 78; XII, 89; XXIV, 50), the *doctrina sophistarum* (XII, 16), or to the *doctrina scholasticorum* (XXI, 4). It is significant that of these twenty references, twelve are from the crucial discussion of justification in Article IV, attesting not only, quantitatively, the length of that article, but also, qualitatively, the importance that the Apology attaches to this *praecipuus locus doctrinae christianae* (IV, 2).

But the fact that *doctrina* appears in the singular and signifies what we today might term a "doctrinal system" rather than a single "doctrine" does not prevent the Apology from dealing with single "doctrines" and using the term *doctrina* in so dealing. When it occurs in such a context, *doctrina* might well be taken to mean the doctrinal system as its good or bad points manifest themselves in a particular theological point. In this way *doctrina* frequently occurs with a genitive of subject; as *doctrina gratiae* (IV, 266);

*doctrina poenitentiae* (IV, 200; IV, 271; IV, 272; IV, 274; XII, 4); or *doctrina iustificationis* (IV, 377); or *doctrina poenitentiae et doctrina iustificationis* (XII, 59); or *doctrina operum* or *bonorum operum* (IV, 393; XI, 2; XXIV, 48); or *doctrina satisfactionis* (XXIV, 90). Even more frequent is the use of *doctrina* with the preposition *de*; since terms like *fides*, *poenitentia*, and *iustitia* are the usual objects of this preposition, it would seem to have the same connotation as the genitive (IV, 230; IV, 300; IV, 316; IV, 324; IV, 377, twice; IV, 382; XII, 3; XII, 16; XII, 178, twice; XII, 41; XXIV, 45; XXIV, 91; XXIV, 96). The fact that the *doctrina* is inevitably concerned with issues like penance, faith, grace, righteousness, and merit would bear out the centrality of these issues not only in the text of the Apology, but in its conception of what constitutes Christian *doctrina*.

In addition to the instances of *doctrina* with the genitive just mentioned, there are several uses that seem to be almost technical terms. One such is *doctrina fidei*, which appears five times (IV, 81; IV, 266; IV, 341; XII, 92; XVII, 62). But for the interpretation of the Confessions, the most helpful are probably those passages in which *doctrina* is connected either with *evangelium*, or with *lex*. Though the relationship of *lex* and *evangelium* will concern us in the next section of this study, the problem of *doctrina evangelii* in the Augustana necessitates a consideration of these passages here. The phrase *doctrina evangelii* as such occurs six times in the Apology, twice in exposition of the same phrase in the Augsburg Confession (VII, 5 and VII, 20) and four other times (XII, 34; XII, 85; XV, 6; XV, 51). In addition, *doctrina* is identified with, or at least closely connected with, *evangelium* in five more passages (IV, 20; IV, 230; IV, 377; VII, 8; XXIV, 48), and with the content of the *evangelium* in such passages as IV, 377 and XXVIII, 7. Even more frequent is the phrase *doctrina legis*, usually a term of opprobrium directed at the opponents' position, though occasionally it refers to instruction in the Law. In a number of these passages the *doctrina legis* is set in contrast to the message of the free forgiveness of sins, and in others that contrast is implied. *Doctrina legis* occurs fourteen times (IV, 20; IV, 188; IV, 230; IV, 269; IV, 277; IV, 287; IV, 289; IV, 301; IV, 377; IV, 387; XII, 34; XII, 78; XII, 85; XII, 89). The afore-mentioned contrast

and the general concern of the Apology with *evangelium* over against *lex* would seem to support the contention that in the phrase *doctrina evangelii* the term *evangelium* is used in its strict meaning, or what later Lutheran theologians called its "narrow sense." The *doctrina evangelii* would thus seem to be the announcement of the forgiveness of sins.

A number of unusual and infrequent usages help to highlight the meaning of *doctrina*, and some are rather puzzling. *Doctrina christiana* appears eight times: three times in connection with *locus* as *locus* or *loci doctrinae christianae* (Pref. 17; IV, 2; XXIV, 45); twice as *summa doctrinae christianae* (XII, 124; XXIV, 46); once in connection with *scholae doctrinae christianae* (XXVII, 5); and twice in opposition to philosophy (II, 12 and IV, 390). That same opposition accounts for the single appearance of *doctrina Christi* (IV, 12) and of *doctrina Spiritus Sancti* (XVIII, 9); philosophy itself has a *doctrina de moribus* (II, 43), and there can be a *doctrina rationis* (IV, 288 and IV, 387). Once there occurs the phrase *doctrina apostolorum* (VII, 38) in antithesis to ritual, and in terms of the same antithesis the phrase *doctrina veteris et novi testamenti* (XXIV, 57). Terms like *doctrina scripturae* or *scripturarum* do not seem to appear at all. Students accustomed to Melanchthonian emphases will be surprised to read *pura doctrina* only twice (VII, 5 and VII, 20), and then as *doctrina evangelii*! The *doctrina evangelii* also accounts for one of the two instances of *vera doctrina* (XV, 51), *fides* for the other (XII, 98). The reference to *doctrina pia, utilis et perspicua* (XXIV, 51) seems to mean primarily the process of teaching, as do a few other references (IV, 22, perhaps in a secular sense; IV, 188; perhaps IV, 269).

From all of this the conclusion would seem warranted that by *doctrina* the Apology does not mean an isolated theological point or viewpoint, but the central affirmation by which both the individual and the Church may live or die. The division of *doctrina* into "doctrines" whose source in that affirmation is sometimes vague would therefore appear to have little support from the Apology. Written as it is with the hands of Melanchthon and the voice of Luther, the Apology thus succeeded, as did Luther, in describing that seamless robe which is the Christian *kerygma* and which, as *doctrina*, is in the best sense a theological "system."

## EVANGELIUM and LEX

The importance that the Apology attaches to the Law and the Gospel evidences itself statistically in the fact that the noun *evangelium* appears 211 times, and the noun *lex* almost twice as often, 420 times. From the discussion in Article V of the Formula of Concord one might draw the conclusion that the terms *evangelium* and *lex*, especially the former, are frequently employed by the Apology in their "broad" or *uneigentlich* sense. As the subsequent presentation will show, the instances of this are remarkably rare, and a number of them need precise exegesis.

One of the most striking features of the use of *evangelium* in the Apology is its connection with the concept of promise. Without counting the times that *promissio* is used in place of *evangelium*, we can judge this connection from the many times that *lex* and *promissio* stand in opposition to each other—as we shall see, exactly as many times as *lex* and *evangelium*. But there are also at least twenty-five places that explain *evangelium* in terms of the concept of promise, either with the verb *promittere* or the noun *promissio*. It is an interesting sidelight on ecclesiastical Latin generally—and Melancthon's humanistic and Ciceronian use of that Latin particularly—that the abstract noun *promissio* is more than twice as frequent as the verb *promittere*. *Evangelium* occurs in direct connection with the noun eighteen times (IV, 43; IV, 101; IV, 120; IV, 163; IV, 183; IV, 186; IV, 223; IV, 247; IV, 265; IV, 287; IV, 308—309; IV, 377; IV, 387; VII, 16; XII, 8; XII, 53; XII, 75; XII, 88). With the verb *promittere* it occurs seven times (IV, 5; IV, 238; IV, 264; XII, 35; XII, 75; XXIV, 24; XXVII, 34). This direct association of *evangelium* with promise in at least one eighth of the passages in which it occurs points to the importance that the concept of promise had in the theology of the Apology, as it did in the theology of Luther; but it also shows that, in these cases at least, *evangelium* means the Gospel promise of Jesus Christ.

Equally relevant are the passages, six of them the same as those just cited, that identify the content of the *evangelium* with justification and the forgiveness of sins. Throughout the Apology, the *evangelium* offers, conveys, and grants the *remissio peccatorum*; there are at least twenty-one such passages (IV, 5; IV, 20;

IV, 43; IV, 62; IV, 110; IV, 120; IV, 264; IV, 274; XII, 2; XII, 10; XII, 35; XII, 45; XII, 88; XII, 105; XV, 5; XVI, 6; XXVII, 11; XXVII, 13; XXVII, 34; XXVII, 54; XXVIII, 8). In addition, there are thirteen passages that identify the content of the *evangelium* not with *remissio*, but with *iustitia*, *iustificare*, and *iustificatio*, which the Apology usually equates with *remissio* (IV, 5; IV, 20; IV, 43; IV, 47; IV, 163; IV, 313; IV, 366; IV, 367; IV, 368; XV, 25; XV, 30; XVI, 8; XXVII, 23). For a decision on what the writer of the Apology intended by the word *evangelium*, then, these passages would seem to corroborate the impression from those dealing with the promise, that *evangelium* usually means the forgiveness of sins and justification, which are the promised gift of the Gospel.

To this we must add several passages that set up an immediate connection between the *evangelium* and Christ. The Apology speaks of the *evangelium de Christo* (IV, 265; IV, 281; IV, 286; IV, 287; XII, 35), the *evangelium de beneficiis Christi* (XXIV, 48), the *evangelium Christi* (Pref. 15; IV, 390; IV, 400; XXI, 44); and sometimes it expresses that connection by means of a verb (e. g., IV, 101; IV, 189). Of special interest are the places in Article IV on justification that actually set up a parallel of Christ and the *evangelium*, almost making them synonyms (IV, 70; IV, 257; IV, 260; IV, 298). The promise, the forgiveness of sins, justification, Christ—this is what the *evangelium* brings.

And it brings this primarily through preaching and hearing. This would appear to be the connotation of the phrase *doctrina evangelii* discussed earlier; for as its use to translate the German text of the Augsburg Confession would suggest (*consentire de doctrina evangelii* translates: *dasz da eintraechtiglich nach reinem Verstand das Evangelium gepredigt*), *doctrina* connotes not merely the possession, but the communication of the *evangelium*. Over and above this, there are the twenty-one cases in which *evangelium* appears with the verb *praedicare* and the noun *praedicatio*, with the noun once more predominating over the verb more than four to one. The term *praedicatio evangelii* occurs seventeen times (IV, 260; XII, 29; XXIV, 25; XXIV, 30; XXIV, 32, thrice; XXIV, 34; thrice; XXIV, 35; XXIV, 36, twice; XXIV, 38; XXIV, 40; XXIV, 49; XXIV, 51), all but two of them in Ar-



ticle XXIV on the Mass. With *praedicare* we find *evangelium* in four passages (IV, 43; IV, 47; IV, 230; XII, 58). This *praedicatio* comes by a voice; knowing Luther's stress on the *viva vox evangelii*, we should not be surprised to find the phrase *vox evangelii* or *vox evangelica* used eleven times, several of them dealing with absolution (IV, 257; IV, 261; IV, 271; IV, 274, twice; XI, 2; XII, 2, twice; XII, 39; XII, 105; XXVII, 13). The correlative of this *praedicatio* and this *vox evangelii* is the hearing of the Church; for *fides concipitur et confirmatur . . . per auditum evangelii* (XII, 42; see also IV, 20; IV, 135; XI, 2; XII, 39; XVII, 8). On the other hand, reading is the bearer of the *evangelium* in apparently only one passage (VII, 27), where it may have reference to *evangelium* as a technical liturgical term (so XV, 42 and perhaps IV, 14). Thus, the *evangelium* is that announcement of the promises of God concerning forgiveness and justification in Christ which is preached to the Church and heard by it.

There are, nevertheless, passages in which *evangelium* has a more formal connotation. Thus, the verb *docere* with it means not only the actual process of teaching, but simultaneously the maintenance of a correct understanding of it (*pure ac diligenter docetur*, IX, 2; on *purum evangelium* also VII, 20; on *docere*, XII, 174; XV, 42; XXI, 35; XXI, 36; XXIII, 40; XXIV, 41; XXIV, 43; XXIV, 48; XXIV, 80). In addition to these passages dealing principally with the way the Evangelicals understood and interpreted the *evangelium*, there are three in which the *evangelium* is the object of *sentire de* or *consentire de*, these also having to do with the Church (Pref. 15; VII, 10; VII, 30). But the context of these suggests that here, too, *evangelium* means primarily what it means elsewhere in the Apology and is not equivalent to a set of intellectual propositions.

This consideration brings us to those passages in which the *evangelium* would seem to have normative significance, particularly as constitutive of the Church and its unity. Some of them offer no problem, since they explicitly indicate *evangelium* means the message of the forgiveness of sins. This would seem to be true throughout Article VII, which speaks of the *evangelium* as a norm at least four times (VII, 5; 16; 20; 30). But it directly connects this with

the *promissio* (VII, 16), with the possession of the Holy Spirit (VII, 28), with the *fides in corde seu iustitia cordis coram Deo* (VII, 31). And when it speaks of the Church retaining *purum evangelium* (VII, 20), it unequivocally points to the *fundamentum, hoc est, veram Christi cognitionem et fidem*. It avers that its opponents are guilty of no mere untrue *inutiles opiniones*, but of a subversion of this very foundation (VII, 22). Thus it means the *evangelium strictiori sensu*.

From the content the same would seem to be true of the accusation that the opponents teach *contra evangelium* (IV, 400 and XXVIII, 20), and do things *extra evangelium* (XXVIII, 8): *ut mereantur remissionem peccatorum*), as well as of the counterclaim that the Apology's statements are *evangelio consentanea* (IV, 293). The expressions *contra expressum evangelium* (XII, 122; XII, 172; XII, 173), *secundum evangelium vivere* (XXVII, 12; XXVII, 17; XXVII, 39), and *propter evangelium* (XXVII, 41 and 42) are quotations from the opponents' attack upon the Augsburg Confession. The phrase *iuxta evangelium et iuxta veteres canones* (XI, 4) may be the same. In Article XVI *evangelium* would seem to be ambiguous, perhaps because of the way the *Schwaermer* used it in opposition to civil authority: it brings *remissio peccatorum* (XVI, 6) and *iustitia aeterna* (XVI, 8), and yet *evangelium prohibet vindictam privatam* (XVI, 7). The fact that this latter is a reference to the Gospel of St. Matthew may help to clarify the meaning of *evangelium* here, as it may in other places where *evangelium* is ethically normative (XXIII, 61; but see XXIII, 64; also XXVII, 41, where the reference is to St. Mark 10:29). There is a possibility that this use of *evangelium* to designate the first four books of the New Testament is even the basis of a passage around which discussion centered before the Formula of Concord: *evangelium enim arguit omnes homines, quod sint sub peccato* (IV, 62); for the passage is an interpretation of our Lord's command in Luke 24:47. In any event, this isolated instance among the more than 200 times that *evangelium* appears in the Apology would not seem to detract from the content which that word usually has, namely, the grace and mercy of God in the forgiveness of sins.

How earnestly the Apology means its concept of *evangelium*

becomes even clearer in an examination of the term *lex*. It is striking, for example, how seldom the Apology uses the term for human laws. When one considers the historical setting of the Apology, addressed to the Holy Roman Emperor, it is surprising to find that *lex* means civil law in less than a dozen instances (XVI, 1; XVI, 3; XVI, 6, twice; XXVIII, 14, twice; perhaps IV, 22; perhaps IV, 280; perhaps XXIII, 55). Even more surprising in view of the Apology's protest against abuses in the Papacy is the rarity of instances in which *lex* means church law: outside of Article XXIII, which uses it thirty times to designate the law of compulsory sacerdotal celibacy, there are only a very few such instances (VII, 23, twice; XXVIII, 6; perhaps IV, 236). In view of Biblical usage, one is also surprised to find how seldom the Apology means the Old Testament by the term *lex*, and then either in connection with the *populus in lege* (IV, 207; VII, 14, twice; VII, 16; XIII, 9) or the sacrificial system of the Old Testament period (XV, 32, twice; XXIII, 27; XXIV, 21; XXIV, 34; XXIV, 97; XXVII, 58). There are also some places in which *lex*, strictly understood, stands in opposition to *novum testamentum* (XXIII, 27; XXIV, 35; XXIV, 36). There are at least two in which the contrast of *lex* and *evangelium*, which, as we shall see, is usually quite precise, seems to refer to the contrast between the Old Testament and the New Testament (VII, 14—16; XXIV, 24).

It is not surprising to have Melancthon say: *humana ratio naturaliter intelligit aliquo modo legem* (IV, 7), for the capacity of the natural reason to grasp the *lex* is central to the thought. In Article IV, therefore, he even co-ordinates *lex* and *ratio* several times with an *et* or an *aut* (IV, 21; IV, 39; IV, 230; IV, 291; IV, 297; IV, 387). At the same time this article insists that *falsum est hoc, quod ratio propriis viribus possit . . . legem Dei facere* (IV, 27). Alongside these references to the relation between *lex* and *ratio*, however, it is very difficult to find any statement to the effect that the *lex* is a revelation. Perhaps the closest to such a statement comes in the contrast between the first and the second table, in which the first table is termed *illa aeterna lex et longe posita supra omnium creaturarum sensum atque intellectum* (IV, 131; see also *lex civiliter intellecta*, IV, 394). Otherwise, the assumption seems to be that not the capacity to perform, but the

capacity to know the *lex*, or surely its second part, is available to the natural *ratio*. Indeed, the apostolic declaration *Lex est paedagogus* (Gal. 3:24) applies to the *iustitia rationis* (IV, 22, 23). In view of this, one would expect to see *lex naturae* occur oftener than it does (XXIII, 19), though its place seems to be taken by *ius naturale* (e. g., XXIII, 9; XXIII, 60; XXVII, 51). Melancthon clearly indicates that he usually means the Moral Law by *lex*, and he carefully indicates its relation to the *caeremoniae* of the Old Testament (IV, 6; IV, 87; IV, 124; IV, 134; XXIII, 64; XXVII, 58).

By far the most illuminating uses of *lex* are those many passages that explain it in relation to the *evangelium* or the *promissio*. We have seen earlier that *evangelium* and *promissio* are often synonymous and that the Apology generally uses *evangelium* in its particular sense. That impression is corroborated by, and it corroborates, the distinction between *lex*, on the one hand, and *evangelium* and/or *promissio* on the other. In addition to the two passages mentioned earlier that use the distinction of *lex* and *evangelium* to define the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament, there are thirty-one that contrast *lex* with *evangelium*, thirty-one more that contrast *lex* with *promissio*, and sixteen more that contrast *lex* with both *promissio* and *evangelium*. Those that posit an antithesis between *lex* and *evangelium* are: IV, 20; IV, 47; IV, 230; IV, 255; IV, 256; IV, 257; IV, 269; IV, 281; IV, 286; IV, 287; IV, 291; IV, 308; IV, 310; IV, 311, twice; IV, 313; IV, 366; IV, 368; XII, 34, twice; XII, 77; XII, 85; XII, 89; XII, 141; XIII, 9; XVI, 3; XXIII, 41; XXIII, 64; XXIV, 34; XXIV, 43; XXVII, 12. Those in which the antithesis is to *promissio* alone are: IV, 5; IV, 40; IV, 42, twice; IV, 44; IV, 48, 49; IV, 59; IV, 79; IV, 102; IV, 164; IV, 165; IV, 180; IV, 182; IV, 183; IV, 188; IV, 266; IV, 285; IV, 292; IV, 294; IV, 295; IV, 297, twice; IV, 298; XII, 8; XII, 79, thrice; XII, 80, twice; XII, 86; XII, 87. And those in which *lex* opposes both *evangelium* and *promissio* are the following: IV, 70; IV, 110; IV, 183; IV, 186; IV, 238; IV, 257; IV, 260; IV, 261; IV, 287; IV, 377; IV, 387; IV, 388; XII, 8; XII, 53; XII, 75; XII, 76.

All but seven of these seventy-eight individual references are either to Article IV on justification (fifty-three) or to Article XII

on penance (eighteen). Of the 420 times in all that *lex* occurs, 267, or about sixty per cent, are in Article IV alone. Dealing as it does in these two articles with justification and penance, the Apology is at pains to discuss the significance of the *lex* and of human works in opposition to the gift of the Gospel; for, as it says later on, *Christus . . . succedit Moïsi* (XXVII, 17). That opposition also exists between the *lex* and *fides* (IV, 43; VII, 31); between the *lex* and *mors Christi* (IV, 178; XXIV, 23); between the *lex* and *Christus* (IV, 296); between the *lex* and *gratia* (XII, 103). This is because, as Article IV repeatedly asserts, *lex non potest fieri sine Christo . . . sine spiritu sancto* (IV, 126; IV, 132; IV, 135; IV, 184; IV, 256; IV, 269; IV, 270; IV, 388) — an assertion that echoes throughout the Apology (e.g., XII, 37; XII, 86; XVIII, 10). Without Christ the *lex* is no comfort, but only a terror with its accusation.

For, as the Apology states at least ten times, *lex semper accusat* (IV, 38; IV, 128; IV, 167; IV, 204; IV, 270; IV, 285; IV, 295; IV, 319; XII, 34; XII, 88). The *semper* in this phrase seems to imply that, for the Apology, the primary function of the *lex* even in the Christian life is to accuse. Once (IV, 319) it expressly means that *lex semper accusat nos etiam in bonis operibus*, and one or two other times it implies this (XII, 88; IV, 257, *tantum accusat*). But sometimes the phrase *lex semper accusat* is followed by something about the *evangelium* or *fides*, and this is in turn followed by *cor . . . incipit . . . facere legem* (IV, 270) or *incipimus legem facere* (IV, 295). Elsewhere, the reference is explicitly to those who have no faith (*alioqui*, IV, 167). Thus the *semper* may not always mean "both before and after faith," but rather "constantly in the lives of those who have no faith." For those who have faith, Article IV of the Apology coins a special phrase, ascribing to them an *inchoata impletio legis* (IV, 161; IV, 174; IV, 177; IV, 214; IV, 219; IV, 270; IV, 368).

Later interpreters of the Confessions, like C. F. W. Walther and Edmund Schlinck, have therefore succeeded in grasping the pulse beat of the *Concordia* with their stress on the distinction of *lex* and *evangelium*. From the more than six hundred instances in which *lex* or *evangelium* appears, it seems safe to conclude that here, if anywhere, is the leitmotif of the Apology.

## SCRIPTURA, SCRIPTURAE, and VERBUM

Protestant theologians and historians have often put the recovery of the authority of the Scriptures alongside justification by faith as the two basic principles of the Reformation. Apparently in the nineteenth century, these two principles acquired the name "formal" and "material."<sup>7</sup> There would seem to be need for more detailed analysis of this entire issue. For example, Luther's exegetical work needs much study, the hermeneutics of Melancthon and later Lutherans has barely been touched, and the exegetical content of the Confessions also deserves more attention than it has received.<sup>8</sup> The present essay confines itself to word study, and from the material that follows it would seem that the distinctiveness of the Reformation's view of the Scriptures does not come forth first of all in what a document like the Apology says about *scriptura* or *scripturae*, but in the way it uses the Scriptures. This latter question, however, lies beyond the modest scope of this study.

A study of *scriptura* and *scripturae* in the Apology shows that the terms occur a total of only 123 times — *scriptura* seventy-four times and *scripturae* forty-nine times. Though there is no evidence available, it is possible that this preponderance of the singular over the plural may reflect German influence. It does seem clear, though, that the Apology intends no distinction between *scriptura* and *scripturae* by this variety of usage; thus it can say: *dissentiant a scripturis. Scriptura enim non praecipit* (XVI, 11). The exact scope of the *scriptura* is not clear, since the Apology does not even once use a term like that which the Augustana quotes from Augustine: *contra canonicas Dei Scripturas* (Augustana XXVIII, 28), though it does use the phrase *contra manifestam scripturam spiritus sancti* (Pref. 9). Neither in the discussion of Tobit 4:11 (IV, 277 to 280) nor of 2 Macc. 15:14 (XXI, 9) is there any objection on the grounds that these books are apocryphal; at most, the context of the latter passage (*testimonium nullum . . . in scripturis praeter*) may be an exceedingly subtle statement of such an objection. It would seem that prophecy is a property of the *scriptura* (e.g., XXII, 17), but even this property seems to exist outside the *scriptura*, in the Sibyl (XXIII, 3).

An even more knotty problem is the relation between *scriptura* and ecclesiastical tradition. There are several phrases like *prophetae*,

*apostoli et sancti patres* (XXIV, 96; see also XII, 73; XIII, 23; XXI, 41). But of the 123 times that *scriptura* or *scripturae* appears, more than one fifth, or twenty-eight passages, co-ordinate it with *ecclesia* or *patres* or a specific father. *Scriptura* is thus co-ordinated seventeen times: II, 32, twice; II, 42; II, 50; IV, 54; IV, 102, 103; IV, 106, 107; IV, 166; IV, 211—213; IV, 323; IV, 326; XII, 119; XIII, 2; XVIII, 10; XX, 5; XXIV, 66; XXIV, 67. *Scripturae* appears in such a connection eleven times: IV, 29; IV, 171; IV, 389; IV, 392; X, 3; XII, 16; XIII, 2; XXI, 2, 3, 10; XXIV, 15; XXIV, 65; XXIV, 94, 95. It seems that in one of these passages, but only one, the term *patres* refers to the Old Testament faithful (IV, 54). This co-ordination highlights the fact that the *veteres scriptores ante Gregorium* (XXI, 3; XXIV, 6) receive the gentlest possible treatment in the Apology, since Gregory I seems to be the dividing line between those theologians whom the Apology criticizes and those whom it does not (XXIV, 94, *ut maxime*). The statement *veteres fere propiores sunt scripturae, quam recentiores* (XXI, 41) seems to be setting off the earlier scholastics like Peter Lombard (see II, 20; XII, 119) against the later ones. The statements of the Apology about the *scriptura* seem to assume a *consensus quinquesaecularis*.

To these major problems in the use of *scriptura* and *scripturae* we can add several minor ones. For a study of Reformation hermeneutics, it would be important to determine the significance of *argumenta ex scriptura sumpta* (IV, 117), as contrasted with an *artificium ratiocinandi ex scripturis* (XX, 12). It would be important to determine the normative significance of *testimonia* and *mandata ex scripturis* (XXIV, 89), of *praeceptum* and *exemplum ex scripturis* (XXI, 10), and of *consilium in scripturis* (XXVII, 46). An examination of the mode of argument in the Apology could not ignore, either, the co-ordination of *scriptura* with the *sermonis consuetudo* (IV, 357) and with the *iurisconsultus* (XXIII, 11).

In Lutheran theology the concept of *scriptura* has always been closely tied to the concept of *verbum*. Just how close that tie should be, Lutherans have not always agreed, and answers have ranged all the way from a complete identification to a radical distinction.

The Apology uses the term *verbum* in the sense of *verbum Dei* a total of 107 times. Only once does *verbum* mean the Logos of John 1 (III, 1), and this a parallel to the Augustana. There are three passages in which *verbum* and *scriptura* are used in the same sentence. The phrase *neque verbum Dei neque exemplum scripturae* (XXI, 31) suggests that the *scriptura* has in it both *exempla* and the direct *verba Dei*. That suggestion helps to explain the declaration that marriage is a *res licita et approbata verbo Dei, sicut copiose testatur scriptura* (XXIII, 28); for here, too, *scriptura* would appear to be the source or *Urkunde* in which the *verbum Dei* is available. The third such passage, which is discussing liturgical practice, appears to make some similar distinction: *tum ut discant homines scripturam, tum ut verbo admoniti concipiant fidem* (XXIV, 3). None of these passages identifies *scriptura* and *verbum Dei*.

There are, on the other hand, more than a dozen passages in which *verbum* is equated with *evangelium*, *promissio*, or their content (IV, 35; IV, 230; IV, 266; XII, 40; XII, 49; XII, 75; XII, 99; XIII, 11; XIII, 13; XXI, 17; XXIV, 28; XXIV, 29; XXIV, 33; XXIV, 48; XXIV, 69; XXIV, 70). And in the same number of passages *verbum* is parallel to the *sacramenta* in the same way that *evangelium* is parallel to them (e.g., XII, 42). The passages in which *verbum et sacramenta* is a designation for the means of grace are: IV, 73; VII, 3; VII, 19; VII, 28; VII, 36; IX, 2, twice; XIII, 5, thrice; XIII, 7; XIV, 1; XIV, 4; XXIV, 69; XXIV, 70; XXVIII, 13. There seem to be only four passages in which *verbum* means Law, and each of these explains what it means quite explicitly (IV, 257; XII, 29, which uses *evangelium* the same way; XII, 34; XII, 48). The declaration that *serviunt ministerio verbi sacerdotes, docent evangelium de meritis Christi* (XXIV, 48) indicates what the term *verbum* means when it appears in the phrase *ministerium verbi* (IV, 73; XIII, 7; XIII, 10; XIII, 11; XIII, 13; XXVII, 22; XXVIII, 13).

Additional light on the meaning of *verbum* comes from an examination of the words that are used with it. It may be a Germanism — or, for Melancthon *horribile dictu*, a medievalism — that in passages describing the *verbum* as an instrument or means, the normal instrumental ablative (IV, 346; XII, 29; XII, 32; XII, 49;



XXIII, 8, twice; XXVII, 46; XXVII, 70; XXVIII, 10) is no more frequent than the construction *per verbum* (IV, 66; IV, 67, thrice; VII, 7; IX, 2; XII, 40; XII, 44; XIII, 5; XIII, 13; XXIII, 30, twice; XXIV, 70). Alongside these the phrase *propter verbum* is both less accurate and less frequent (IV, 153; XXIII, 34; XXIV, 28), while *ex verbo* seems to mean more or less the same thing (II, 13; IV, 73; XXI, 12; XXIII, 4). Negatively, there are the phrases *adversus verbum* (XXIII, 70; XXVIII, 14), *sine verbo* (IV, 262; XIV, 17, twice; XXVII, 58), and *contra verbum* (II, 26). Perhaps even more enlightening than the prepositions are the verbs that appear with *verbum* as their object. The most frequently used are *habere verbum* (IV, 191; XXI, 31; XXVII, 58; XXVIII, 14, twice), *tradere* (VII, 36; XII, 34; XXIV, 70; XXVIII, 18), and *credere* (XXIV, 29 and XXVIII, 18). The use of *evangelium* is paralleled by references to *praedicatio* (IV, 257; XII, 29; XXIV, 33), to *vox* (XXVIII, 19), and to hearing (IV, 67 and XII, 5), as well as by the use of the verb *audire* (XII, 71; XXIV, 29; XXVIII, 19). Most other verbs appear with it only once, including the highly significant *docere* (XIV, 4), *assentiri* (IV, 304), and *apprehendere* (IV, 67).

From this it would appear that in most instances the Apology follows its own rule: *verbum in novo testamento est promissio gratiae addita* (XXIV, 69). Or, as it states in almost poetic phrase, *Deus vere per verbum vivificat, claves vere coram Deo remittunt peccata* (XII, 40). For the *verbum Dei* is truly God becoming articulate, what Luther called the *Deus loquens*. While the studies underlying this essay are not comprehensive enough to warrant any far-reaching conclusions, they should point up the need for careful concordance study in all the Confessions and for unbiased analysis, on the basis of such concordance study, of what the Confessions really mean.

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#### FOOTNOTES

1. Alan Richardson, *Creeds in the Making* (London, 1951), p. 62.
2. S. I. Hayakawa, *Language in Action* (New York, 1941), p. 58.
3. In addition to the precise discussions in the Formula of Concord regarding *accidens*, *essentia*, etc., there is the Apology's careful discussion of the word *sacramentum*, Art. XIII, par. 3—17, esp. par. 17. Henceforth, I shall refer to the articles of the Apology by means of Roman numerals and to the paragraphs by means of Arabic numerals.

4. For example, Pref. 17; XII, 16.
5. "Natural Theology in David Hollaz," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, XVIII (1947), 253—263; "The Origins of the Object-Subject Antithesis in Lutheran Dogmatics," *ibid.*, XXI (1950), 94—104; "The Relation of Faith and Knowledge in the Lutheran Confessions," *ibid.*, pp. 321—331.
6. Paul Joachimsen, "Loci communes. Eine Untersuchung zur Geistesgeschichte des Humanismus und der Reformation," *Jahrbuch der Luther-Gesellschaft*, VIII (1926), 27—97; also Quirinus Breen, "The Terms 'Loci Communes' and 'Loci' in Melancthon," *Church History*, XVI (1947), 197—209.
7. On the origins of this distinction, cf. Albrecht Ritschl, "Ueber die beiden Prinzipien des Protestantismus," *Zeitschrift fuer Kirchengeschichte*, I (1876), 397—413.
8. Gerhard Ebeling summarizes and corrects much of the earlier study of these questions, including Holl's epoch-making analysis of Luther, in "Evangelische Evangelienauslegung," *Forschungen zur Geschichte und Lehre des Protestantismus*, X (1942).