JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

VOLUME 43 SEPTEMBER 2003 NUMBER 3

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The JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY is published at Immanuel Lutheran College, 501 Grover Rd, Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701-7199, by authorization of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. Subscriptions: $10.50 per year, $18.00 for two years, $26.50 for three years (Foreign: $14.50, $26.00 and $37.50), payable in advance. Issues are dated: March, June, September, and December.

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Books on Islam in Review

David Lau

Ever since the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001, there has been much discussion of the religion of Islam and what connection there is between Islam and terrorism. The following recent publications should prove to be useful tools in this on-going discussion.

Martin Luther and Riccoldo da Montecroce: *Islam in the Crucible - Can It Pass the Test?* (translated by Thomas Pfotenhauer), Morris Publishing, 2002. Paperback, 183 pages.

Martin Luther's role in exposing the Roman Catholic papacy as the Antichrist of Second

Thessalonians two is well-known among confessional Lutherans. Not so well-known is Luther's polemical writing against Islam and its prophet Muhammad. In Luther's time Islam was the religion of the Turks who threatened western Europe. In 1541 Luther wrote a hymn for children to sing "against the two arch-enemies of Christ and His holy Church, the Pope and the Turk" (Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal, 192). A more literal translation of stanza one (Lutheran Hymnal #261) reads like this:

> "Lord, keep us steadfast in Thy Word
> And curb the Turks' and papists' sword
> Who Jesus Christ. Thine only Son.
> Fain would tumble from off Thy throne"
>
> (Luther's Works, Vol. 53, p. 305).

At about the same time that Luther wrote this hymn he published his own German translation of an assessment of Islam by a Dominican monk by the name of Riccoldo da Montecroce (1242-1320), together with a few comments of his own. We now have all of this available to us in English, together with a foreword by Robert King (third vice president of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod), a preface and introduction by the English translator, a short biography of Muhammad, and a message from the publisher, Christian News.

In the days of Montecroce and Luther it was not considered politically correct to be polite or tolerant. Thus Muhammad and his *Qur'an* (or Koran) are exposed by both writers as heretical and self-contradictory. Luther bluntly says: "Muslims who receive Muhammad's Koran with sincere belief have been rendered senseless. They have been robbed of ordinary common sense. They are stones and lumps. Are they human, endowed with intelligence, and nevertheless believe the Koran knowingly and willingly? They alone must assume responsibility for their damnation" (127).

Nevertheless, Luther was not willing to label Muhammad as the Antichrist. "I do not consider Muhammad to be the Antichrist," he says; "he is far too gross, his devilish ways far too obvious — difficult to deceive those possessing faith and common sense. . . . Among us the pope is the real Antichrist" (136).

Robert Spencer: *Islam Unveiled - Disturbing Questions about the World's Fastest-Growing Faith*, Encounter Books, 2002. Hard cover, 214 pages.

Serge Trifkovic: *The Sword of the Prophet - Islam - History, Theology, Impact on the World*, Regina Orthodox Press, Inc., 2002. Paperback, 312 pages.

Serge Trifkovic's book is described on the front cover as "The Politically Incorrect Guide to Islam." Robert Spencer's book is also politically incorrect. In what way is this true? Both books argue strongly against the sentiment of many today (including President George W. Bush) that Islam is basically a peaceful and tolerant religion, and that the Islamic terrorists that trouble our society are not being faithful to their own religion. Both books try to persuade us that the example of Muhammad, the history of Islam from its beginnings until now, and what is going on at the present time throughout the world provide cogent evidence for recognizing Islam itself, not just the notorious terrorists, as a dangerous enemy threatening both Christianity and our Western civilization. The chapter headings of Robert Spencer's book are in the form of questions and furnish a good idea of what is discussed in the book.

Chapter One: "Is Islam a Religion of Peace?" His answer: "Most Muslims will never be terrorists. The problem is that for all its schisms, sects and multiplicity of voices, Islam's violent elements are rooted in its central texts (the *Qur'an* and the authentic *Hadith* or Traditions - DL). It is unlikely that the voices of moderation will ultimately silence the militants, because the militants will always be able to make the case that they are standing for the true expression of the faith" (37).

Chapter Two: "Does Islam Promote and Safeguard Sound Moral Values?" Answer: For Muslims Muhammad "is the supreme model for human behavior" (39). Since Muhammad's morals clearly fall far short of Biblical standards in such matters as marriage and treatment of women and slavery and war, we cannot expect Islam's morals to be superior in these areas.

Chapter Three: "Does Islam Respect Human Rights?" Answer: According to the Bible the God of the Christians does not want anyone to perish (Ezekiel 18:32). Allah, however, the god of Islam, is portrayed as determining the fate of all persons in advance, and as exhibiting no mercy to the hated non-Muslims. Whenever Islamic law, the *Sharia*, is established in a land, the hands of thieves are cut off, adulterers are stoned, and converts to Christianity are executed.

Chapter Four: "Does Islam Respect Women?" One popular writer on Islam, Karen Armstrong, has tried to establish a case for Muhammad's respect for women. But the contrary evidence is overwhelming. The *Qur'an* itself (Sura 4:34) says that disobedient women are to be admonished, sent to beds apart, and beaten (75). The practices of polygamy, child brides, easy divorce for men, and female circumcision (among some Muslim groups), and almost impossible requirements for proof of rape combine to indicate that there is little respect for women in Islam. Muhammad himself had many wives (although he limits his followers to four), and it is amazing how often Allah conveniently gave him a special revelation permitting him to have a woman or girl he coveted. One of his favorite wives, Aisha, was given in marriage to Muhammad when she was six years old, the marriage was consummated when she was nine years old and he was over fifty years old.

The remaining chapter headings consisting of questions (except for Chapter Eight) indicate the thrust of the rest of Spencer's book The reader can generally guess in advance what the answers to these questions will be. Chapter Five: "Is Islam Compatible with Liberal Democracy?" Chapter Six: "Can Islam Be Secularized and Made Compatible with the Western Pluralistic Framework?" Chapter Seven: "Can Science and Culture Flourish under Islam?" Chapter Nine: "Is Islam Tolerant of Non-Muslims?" Chapter Ten: "Does the West Really Have Nothing to Fear from Islam?" In all of these discussions it becomes clear that the politically correct opinions of persons such as Karen Armstrong and ex-president Bill Clinton, who tend to blame American Christianity for the misdeeds of Muslim terrorists, are not in agreement with the plain facts of history.

Chapter Eight discusses the Crusades, both those carried out by Muslims against Christians and those carried out by Christians to regain territory conquered by the Muslims. Obviously, the Christian Crusaders committed many atrocities. But so did the Muslims over a longer period of time. Spencer points out an important difference between the two when he says: "The (Christian) Crusaders who pillaged Jerusalem were transgressing the bounds of their religion in all sorts of ways. As for the Muslim armies who murdered, raped, pillaged and enslaved — what Islamic principles were they violating? After all, they were following the example of their Prophet" (137).

Spencer s conclusion: Whether or not Islam ever becomes dominant in Western Europe or elsewhere in the former lands of Christendom, the wars will not end. Militant Islam will not go away with the death of bin Laden, or Arafat, or Saddam Hussein, or anyone else (176).

Serge Trifkovic seems to have the same basic understanding of Islam as Spencer. Trifkovic s presentation is more historical in nature, beginning with a chapter on Muhammad, then a chapter on the teachings of Islam. and then a chapter on the history of Islam from the time of Muhammad s death to the present day.

This third chapter is entitled Jihad Without End. Trifkovic concludes: Islam . . . has created jihad and remains defined by jihad, its most important concept for the rest of the world. . . . Jihad is inherently religious as well as political: Islamic normative thinking does not separate the two (141). Islam is and always has been a religion of intolerance, a jihad wi thout an end. . . . Islam was spread by the sword and has been maintained by the sword throughout its history (132).

Trifkovic maintains that the persecution of Christians by Muslims has become a taboo subject in the Western academy (127). Since we have heard of Nazi cruelties, and the Holocaust has received millions of pages of print, he wonders why we have not heard of the 1915 massacre of the Armenians or the 1922 massacre of the Christians in Smyrna, Turkey, which he calls one of the great crimes of all times (124). That was the end of Christianity in Asia Minor (125).

In the fourth chapter, entitled The Fruits, Trifkovic emphasizes the lack of freedom in Islam as the basic fruit of its message. A Muslim is not free to believe or do what he wishes. He is under Islamic law, which is the only legal, legitimate, moral, and rational code (143). The details of this Islamic law, called the *Sharia* or *Shari'a*, are to be found in the *Hadith* where Muhammad offers the eternal model of behavior for every little detail of everyday life: when to blow the nose, how to wear shoes, how to urinate, and how to conduct sexual union in marriage (145).

Whenever Muslims gain control of a country, their aim is to make *Shari'a* the law of the land. Bringing the Gospel of Christ to Muslims in these countries is a very dangerous endeavor. All mainstream Muslim scholars through the ages have agreed that apostasy is to be punished by death (149). Thus those Muslims who are converted to Christ by the preaching of the Gospel are by that very fact subject to death. Trifkovic says: The death sentence for apostasy is strictly applied in Saudi Arabia (151). Even a Muslim who neglects prayers is regarded as an apostate and must be killed if he does not repent (152).

The lack of freedom under Islam is true especially for women, as we already noted above in our review of Spencer s book. Male Muslims may freely have as many as four wives (although Muhammad and other leaders had many more than this), may have sex with their slave girls in addition to this, and also take advantage of what can be called temporary marriage, that is, marriage for three nights or so without any permanent obligations. Such temporary marriage is in fact legalized prostitution.

Islam s record on such matters as slavery, racism, persecution of Christians, and anti-Semitism is abysmal. For example, the government in Sudan in Africa is slowly and methodically grinding down the society and economy of the Nuba (a tribe in southern Sudan among whom are many Christians - DL) and starving the entire population. . . . Food distribution is carried out exclusively by Islamic organizations, which use the promise of food as a means of converting Christians to Islam. The technique is very simple: If one does not bear an Islamic name, one is denied food (178-179).

"The all-pervasive lack of freedom is the hallmark of the Muslim world. Discrimination against non-coreligionists and women of all creeds, racism, slavery, virulent anti-Semitism, and cultural imperialism can be found–individually or in various combinations–in different cultures and eras. Islam alone has them all at once, all the time, and divinely sanctioned at that" (207-208).

The last two chapters and the conclusion of Trifkovic's book deal with the strange fact that Christian church leaders and Western political leaders do not seem to recognize Islam for what it is and for what it claims to be. In fact the United States has very often taken the side of Muslims in their battles with supposedly Christian enemies. In other cases the United States and its leaders, both political and ecclesiastical, have seemingly ignored large segments of Christian populations who have been persecuted and terrorized by Muslims. For example, Trifkovic points out how the Muslims of Indonesia have slaughtered hundreds of thousands of Christians in the last forty years or so. Yet the media have hardly even mentioned such goings on in American newspapers or on American television. Events in such places as Malaysia, Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya, Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Sudan, and Mauritania give evidence that often American leaders have favored Islam and its interests above Christian or even Western interests.

For example, this is what Trifkovic reports, in part, about Sudan and Mauritania. "Slavery is practiced exclusively by Arab Mauritanians and Sudanese on non-Arab citizens in both countries, and upon the introduction of *Shari a* laws in Mauritania and Sudan, respectively in 1980 and 1983, savage punishments like amputation and flogging have been applied mainly on non-Muslim blacks by exclusively Arab-Muslim judges. . . . Racially and religiously motivated incidents are occurring regularly; in 1990 alone, hundreds of blacks were slaughtered in Mauritania and 300,000 more were driven south as Arabic speakers rushed north from Senegal to take over their homes and lands" (254-255).

An Episcopalian bishop from Sudan visited the United States and reported these things, but hardly anyone paid any attention. "Sudan's death toll is larger than the combined fatalities suffered in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Somalia, and Algeria. Twice as many Sudanese have perished in the past two decades than all the war-related deaths suffered by Americans in the past 200 years. . . . The United States has intervened militarily and politically to 'save' the Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo from alleged genocides perpetrated by their Christian neighbors while it remains indifferent to the very real genocide of Christians that has been perpetrated by the ruling Muslims in Sudan for two decades" (255).

Even after September 11, 2001 our political leaders do not seem to understand the close relationship between terrorism and Islam. Especially our leaders do not seem to realize that Saudi Arabia itself, the birthplace of Islam, is the place of origin of many terrorists. And of course most ecclesiastical leaders in our country do not understand the vast chasm that exists between Christianity and Islam and are willing to accept the claim that the god of Islam is the same as the God of Christians.

Both Spencer's book and Trifkovic's book are recommended reading. We Christians need to know more about Islam, its teachings and its history, its claims and its fruits. Above all, we need to pray for Muslims, not that they may become more firm in their false religion, but that they may be led to Jesus Christ as their Savior from sin, even though such conversion and confession would mean their physical death. For, as Ernest Renan is quoted as saying: "To liberate the Muslim from his religion is the best service that one can render him" (301).

Peter G. Riddeli & Peter Cotterell: *Islam in Context - Past, Present, and Future*, Baker Academic, 2003, paperback, 231 pages.

This book claims that the current view, which is the politically correct view, places the burden of blame (for hostility between Islam and the Western world - DL) on the non-Muslim world and on the United States of America in particular (8). Riddell and Cotterell, on the other hand, believe that the roots of the problem . . . lie . . . in Islam s own history, both distant and recent (8). Their book is an attempt to look at the history and theology of Islam from the perspective of Muslims (7). The three parts of the book focus first on the distant past, then on the medium past, and finally on the more recent past and the present.

The first part reviews the familiar story of Muhammad s life and the teachings of the *Qur an* and the *Hadith*. Especially helpful are the sections showing the history behind the split between Sunni Muslims and Shi a Muslims, as well as the origin of such Muslim sects as the radical Kharijis, the mystical Sufis, the rational Mu tazila, and the more recent Ahma dis, who teach that Jesus was taken down from the cross alive and was resuscitated in the tomb through the efforts of Nicodemus, . . . eventually dying and being buried in Kashmir (80). The usual view accepted by Muslims is that Jesus was not crucified at all, but that Judas Iscariot or someone else was crucified in His place.

The second part traces the years when Islam was a powerful force in the world through its various empires, the Umayyad dynasty, ruling from Damascus in Syria; the Abbasid dynasty, ruling from Baghdad in Iraq; the Fatimid dynasty (Shi a) in Egypt; the Saljuq dynasty, ruling from Turkey; the Mongol invaders who themselves adopted Islam, the Mamluk dynasty; the especially powerful Ottoman dynasty in Turkey; the Safavid dynasty in Persia: the Mughal dynasty in India, one of whom built the famous Taj Mahal.

The authors of this book state that the Abassid period ushered in the fullest flowering of Islam. Arabic culture, arts, and knowledge were promoted during the first two centuries of Abassid rule. The peak of Abassid glory occurred under Caliph Harun al-Rashid (ruled 786-809) and his son al-Ma mun (ruled 813 -833) (88). Many of the radical Muslims of today want to recover that Golden Age of Islam. They believe that things have deteriorated because Muslims have not been faithful to Allah. This explains the urgency of their attempting to institute *Shari a* as the law of the land wherever they are located.

Other facts of history that help to explain the hostility of Muslims against the Western world include the Christian Crusades, the modern missionary movement that received its impetus especially through the work of William Carey, the establishment of Israel as a nation in 1948, and the present-day worldwide dominance of American finance, industry, and culture. In 1998 one Muslim commentator complained: People around the world are expected to eat greasy McDo n-ald hamburgers, drink pepsi or coke, wear Levi jeans, and gyrate to Michael Jackson music. If they have any spare time left, then the ubiquitous CNN is there to occupy it (158).

More so than Spencer or Trifkovic, Riddell and Cotterell maintain that not all Muslims are the same. There are three main groups: the Traditionalists, the Islamists, and the Modernists. One of the most influential Islamists has been Sayyid Qutb (died 1966), virulently anti-Western, whose vision for Islam was to recreate Muhammad s community in the modern world (116). The radical groups of today are Islamists, who want every Muslim to be engage d

in jihad against the Western world. A great number of terrorist groups are described, including the al-Qa ida network under Osama bin Laden. Especially significant is the fact that Islamic rel i-gious schools in many lands, especially Pakistan, are training the young to hate America and fight for Islam.

But the authors maintain that there is a moderate voice within Islam and that this a p-proach offers a sense of hope and optimism to non-Muslim observers of the Islamic world (182). These moderates are able to find references in Islamic literature that promote their position. A British moderate Muslim was even quoted as saying: It is the duty of every Muslim to spare no effort in hunting down, apprehending and bringing such criminals (as those responsible for the Sept. 11, 2001 attack - DL) to justice (184).

But who is winning the contest among Muslims, the Islamists or the moderates? There is a titanic struggle taking place between moderates and radicals for the hearts and minds of the Muslim masses in the middle (192). Islam has divided into three strong streams of thought. The first may be described as liberal and moderate. . . . The second. that of the radical Islamist, seeks to re-create in today s world the Islam of the seventh century. . . . The third group (the tra-ditional masses) is uncomfortably caught in the middle. . . . This third group is aware that the scriptures of Islam, read literally, more readily lend support to the Islamist radicals than they do to the modernizing liberals (213-214).

As Christians, we know that it is not Muhammad that is seated at the right hand of the Almighty God, ruling over all things in heaven and earth. No, it is Jesus Christ, not merely a prophet but God Himself, the only Savior of the entire world. We can safely entrust the future to Jesus, our Lord and God. Meanwhile we need to confess Christ, proclaim His name to all, and pray that His Gospel of salvation and forgiveness of sins will win its way into many Muslim hearts also.

The Third Use of the Law

Paul F. Nolting

[Historical note: During the sessions of the 1974 Convention of the Church of the Lu-theran Confession President Robert Reim requested Pastor Paul F. Nolting to prepare a paper on *The Third Use of the Law* to be presented at a specially called Pastoral Conference of the CLC. Since this doctrine had been under discussion for some time in various conferences of the CLC, a resolution of the problems that had arisen was deemed imperative. The first matter of concern was to isolate the *status controversiae*. Pastor Nolting endeavored to do that by reading all the papers that had been written by the leading protagonists of the conflicting points of view. There-after he submitted tentative theses and leading questions to those same men and also the Board of Doctrine, for they had become involved in the discussions. He solicited responses to determine whether or not he was on the right track and received the cooperation of all concerned. He then sent his findings to all the clergy members of the CLC to prepare them for the forthcoming con-ference. He also sent everyone two study papers, *Concerning the Distinction Between the Re-*

formed and Lutheran Concept of the So-called Third Use of the Law by August Pieper (*Theologische Quartalschrift*, April 1916), translated by Pastor Arthur Schulz and Dr. Martin Luther s Sermon on 1 Timothy 1:3-11 (St. Louis Edition, Vol. IX, 858-883), translated by Pastor Robert Wehrwein, assisted by Miss Ruth Schaller. Members of the clergy continued to supply valuable materials and insights into various facets of the doctrine. The writing of the paper was not completed until the end of the year. The paper was read before the Special CLC Pastoral Conference, which met at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota, January 7-9, 1975. Because of the length of the paper and the shortage of time the discussion was limited. A motion to print the paper on *The Third Use of the Law* for study was adopted (conference minutes). In fulfilling that resolution, Pastor Nolting also added three Inserts in response to the major points raised in the discussion.]

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THE THIRD USE OF THE LAW

INTRODUCTION

The issue of the third use of the law is a law/gospel issue. As such it strikes the very heart of our God s message to us. Error in this area blinds the mind and heart to an understanding of Holy Scripture and inevitably tends to undermine and destroy the gospel. On the other hand clarity in the proper distinction between law and gospel serves as a beacon to open up the Scriptures and so serves to set in ever sharper relief both the consuming glory of our God s holiness and the glorious good news that our God has had mercy, has shown grace in forgiving mankind, in and through His Son, our Lord Jesus.

Specifically, error in the area of the third use of the law leads to antinomianism, which reduces the holiness of God to human moral possibilities by the device of moral relativism, that is, by dethroning God and enthroning man as the moral standard maker. This cannot but lead to antigospelism, for if holiness is scaled down so that it is within human capabilities, of what need is a Savior from sin? On the other hand error in this area fosters synergism. Man believes that he possesses spiritual capabilities, which in fact he does not and cannot possess. This also leads to antigospelism, for the individual who imagines himself possessed of spiritual powers feels the need only for a moral guide, not for a Savior from sin. Antinomianism attempts to evade the demands of holiness, while synergism attempts to discount the effects of indwelling sin. Both un-

dermine the gospel. A third error is a distinct possibility. If the law is imposed upon the Christian insofar as he is new man, the flesh quickly suggests that the sure and proper formula for salvation is faith in Christ + good works. Thus again grace is disavowed and Christ cast away.

In some of the discussions on these matters in our midst the issues have been reduced to specific questions concerning commandments directed to Christians in Holy Writ, as to the difference between the mirror and rule uses of the law, as to the extent of the knowledge of God's will that the new man possesses. It is possible to present and discuss all these issues in a catechetical format. This method has the advantage of pinpointing specific facets of the problem, but it may also lead to a mole hole, rather than a vista-view of the problem.

A word of warning is in place. We need to be aware always of the effects of sin upon the intellect. The flesh within us never ceases to suggest that we can become as wise, yea wiser, than God. In pursuing this end, there is a tendency to fragment Scriptures rather than see the whole, to create pet phrases and expressions and then attempt to straitjacket the Holy Spirit in them or rape the godly discipline of exegesis and history in order to establish one's preconceived position. We need also beware of traditionalism. We are never to turn our backs upon the teachers which the Lord of the Church raised up in years before us. We are to sit reverently at their feet and learn from them, but we are not to use their forms and expressions of doctrine without grasping the scriptural truths beneath and behind those forms. We must constantly endeavor to make our own that which we have inherited from our fathers. Above all, we must ever beware of the fact that the flesh tries to make listening to an argument of an opponent almost impossible, for the mind is casting about for an appropriate rebuttal rather than trying to follow the opponent's line of thought. Let us endeavor to listen and compare what is spoken with the Word, not with the bits and pieces of our own wisdom. Let us also beware of hypocrisy that is camouflaged by piously asking for the Spirit's guidance and by professing willingness to be corrected by the Word, while inwardly being quite convinced that no argument can possibly change one's position. Let us beware likewise of the friction that is bound to develop as rough-hewn personalities clash in verbal exchanges, both on the conference floor and in the halls and washrooms. Let no one underestimate the enemy within and without, whose aim is to destroy that fragile creation of the Spirit, the unity of faith in the bond of peace.

The aim of your essayist will be to provide a vista-view of the problem before entering upon specific points. First we must understand the law, its proper uses and its limitations. To expect the law to produce what can only be produced by the gospel is to convert Christianity into paganism, grace into works. Second, we must seek ever anew to grasp and understand what our Savior-God has wrought for us in Christ Jesus. We must come to realize that the gospel both justifies and sanctifies. We tend to use certain phrases, as the gospel being the power of God and the motivation for sanctification, without fully grasping the glory of what we are saying and without following to the end the path on which those truths are leading us. The *opinio legis* of the flesh makes a grasping for the law to help achieve what can only be achieved by the gospel seem so natural and so necessary. Thirdly, we have to understand the nature of Mr. Christian. He is and remains, till the moment of death, possessed of a single ego that is at all times spirit and flesh, inseparably intertwined with an interpenetration of each spiritual force in the functioning of his intellect, will, and emotions with the result that each thought, word, and deed bears the imprint of both flesh and spirit. To appeal to the flesh with the gospel is an exercise in futility. To saddle the new man with the law is to smother the Spirit of life with a blanket of death. When Scripture speaks to Mr. Christian, it sometimes clearly indicates the duality of his personality, as in Romans 7 and Galatians 5. Sometimes it speaks only of the new man, as in 1 Timothy 1:9 and 1 John 3:9. And sometimes it speaks a warning specifically to the flesh, as in Ephesians 5:5. The Word must be rightly divided and rightly applied to Mr. Christian or law and gospel will be hopelessly confused.

We need to be reminded that the message of Scripture can be reduced to three statements:

You have sinned! Your sin is forgiven! Sin no more! The first is law, the second gospel, and the third evangelical admonition in which law and gospel are inseparably connected, yet dare not be mixed, which is applied to Mr. Christian who is both spirit and flesh. From the viewpoint of the law the three statements take this form: You are under the law and so damned! You have been freed from the law by the righteousness of Christ and so live! By the power of the Spirit you are to live in the law. We shall examine how the Scriptures speak in each instance, noting the terminology used and also how the language of Scripture is reflected in the Confessions of the Church.

THE "LAWFUL" USE OF THE LAW

Torah – Nomos

At the end of his career, on the plains of Moab, "began Moses to declare this law," הַזֹּאת אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה (Deut. 1:5). St. John summarizes the entire period of Moses' life, from Sinai to his death, with the words, "The law (ὁ νόμος) was given by Moses" (John 1:17). The Torah was the instruction that the eternal and immutable Jahveh (YHWH, יְהוָֹה) gave His people, according to which they were to live. In the Greek tongue this became ὁ νόμος, the well-known corpus of rules and regulations for living that verbalized and symbolized the holiness of God.

Insert: "The Holiness of God."

Holy – Separate

"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isa. 6:3). So sang the seraphim in the vision of Isaiah. "And they (the four "beasts," actually living ones or cherubim) rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty" (Rev. 4:8). So St. John saw and heard in the Throne Vision.

The basic meaning of "holy" is separate, removed, exalted. St. John saw a throne set in the heavens. He saw the Occupant who is described in terms of precious stones with a rainbow about the throne. Isaiah saw "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple" (Isa. 6:1). In both instances the seraphim or cherubim, one of the highest order of angels, stood around or by. The scene is super-mundane, transcendent. There is nothing comparable in this world with all the glory, majesty, power, and pageantry of man. God is in a class by Himself–transcendent, infinite in all His attributes, incomparable, the one and only "I AM." All gods that man makes with his hands or fashions with his mind are "nothings" in comparison with the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel. "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One" (Isa. 40:25). The rhetorical question is unanswerable! God is in a class by Himself, not to be confused with His creation as does pantheism and not to be identified with man as does humanism.

Man, modern and ancient, likes to refer to the Holy One with vulgar familiarity as "The Man Upstairs." In Christ Jesus the Holy One has drawn nigh to us as a loving Father to His children, so that we may with all boldness and confidence address Him as children address their dear fathers. But He is always the Holy One, before whom we are to bow our heads in reverent awe and silence. Yet as His children by faith in Christ Jesus we pray, "Our Father, Who art in heaven"– so high and lofty, who is able to help in every need. What amazing love has been shown us that the Holy One Of Israel has been made our heavenly Father by Christ Jesus!

Holy – Sinless

When Isaiah saw the Holy One of Israel sitting upon His throne and heard the song of the seraphim, he said, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 6:5). When Peter saw the miraculous draft of fishes, he cried out: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8).

Holiness is the opposite of sinfulness. Sin is stain; holiness is the whiteness of purity. God is holy; man is sinful. The holiness of God reacts to the sinfulness of man as a "consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). "Holiness is the absolute purity of God, according to which His affections, thoughts, will, and acts are in perfect consistency and harmony with His own nature and in ener-

getic opposition to everything not in conformity therewith" (A. L. Graebner, old Missouri Synod theologian).

"Ye shall be holy; for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:26). What does it mean to be holy? Leviticus 11 makes the distinction between clean and unclean animals, for sin penetrated from the mind through the body of man to the animal kingdom and to all creation. Israel was to be holy or separate unto the Lord by carefully observing the distinction between the clean and unclean. Leviticus 19 spells out the moral implications of holiness. "Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 19:4). Man is to be holy by making the Lord God the exclusive object of his worship. The conclusion of the first commandment is the Lord's own commentary on holiness: "For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God . . ." (Exod. 20:5-6). Man is furthermore to be holy by always placing his neighbor on a standing equal with himself: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; I am the Lord" (Lev. 19:18). Leviticus 20 announces the death penalty upon any breach of holiness.

What is the moral standard of holiness in the New Testament? Our Lord gave answer when a lawyer tempted Him by asking which of the 613 commands in the law was the greatest. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and prophets" (Matt. 22:37-40). Holiness demands love God-ward and man-ward, impossible for us, achieved for us by Christ.

In Paradise

There was no "law" in the beginning, for the purpose of law is to bring outwardly into existence what isn't there but should be there and to curb what is but shouldn't be. In so doing law reveals transgression, accuses, and condemns. What was in the beginning was the will of God, which reflected His essential nature, love. When God created man, He created him in His own image. That is, God instilled or impressed His moral nature or image upon man. Accordingly, man's thinking and feeling and willing reflected perfectly the moral will of his Creator. Our first parents naturally, freely, unselfconsciously, effortlessly loved God above all things and each other.

The Test Command

The command not to eat of the fruit of the forbidden tree was not to induce man to become what he was not yet, as though he had been created imperfectly, but rather to test him to determine whether he would retain and be confirmed in what he was and had by freely using it. The command, which was in the form of a warning, was necessary because man had no way of knowing the danger of such eating, for God had previously proclaimed His entire creation good. That warning was couched in the clearest, most forceful and unmistakable of terms, for God, the loving Father, spared no effort to warn His children against the mortal danger that threatened them.

The Effect of Sin

Sin entered and changed the nature of man from confidence towards God to suspicion of God, from love Godward and manward to unwavering selfishness, from hope to fear. Man's relationship to his God was changed from that of a child to a slave. Man's will no longer corresponded to the will of God. Sin ejected God's will from the soul life of man. God's will had become a foreign will, inexorably imposed upon stubbornly resisting, actively rebellious man.

The Characteristics of Law

For centuries, yea millennia, this situation existed, but was not brought out into the open, for there was no verbalization of the will of God. Sin was in the world with its killing effect, but there was no law and hence no imputation of sin (Rom. 5:13). Not until Moses did God reveal

His will in the form of divine instruction, the Torah, for man. That instruction came in the form of statutes, judgments, and ordinances which verbalized and symbolized the holiness of God. All these laws had their appropriate penalties, always culminating in the ultimate penalty, death, being cut off temporally and eternally from the congregation of God. The law has the inescapable and unavoidable characteristics of demands, threats and condemnations. These flow from the very nature of the divine Lawgiver. As Creator, He has the right to make demands upon His creatures. As the Holy One, He must threaten all who fail to conform to His holiness. As almighty Judge, He condemns and is able to carry out His every sentence of condemnation. However, the law, glorious as it was, was not and is not intended to be God's primary revelation to man. The gospel, which reflects His essential nature of love, promising rescue for fallen man and working historically to fulfill that promise, is and always remains God's primary revelation to man. The law entered, νόμος δὲ παρεισῆλθεν (Rom. 5:20), as St. Paul puts it. It came in from the side, a secondary revelation, to respond to the situation that had arisen when man failed to exercise his *posse non pecare*.

Use "Lawfully"

We now have the law. It is a good gift of God, but like every other gift of God it is to be used, not misused. "We know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully, ἐάν τις αὐτῷ νομίμως χρῆται (1 Tim. l:8). In especially two epistles, Romans and Galatians, Paul writes at length of the "lawful" use of the law. Here in the Timothy passage Paul speaks of the lawful use of the law in God's governance of the world.

Law – a Curb

When man sinned in the garden, he initiated a perpetual, unending revolution against God. Before the flood God saw "that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Through the flood God destroyed that race of evildoers, but the judgment of the deluge did not change human nature. St. Paul describes the heathen nations as those who "hold [that is, hold down or suppress] the truth in unrighteousness," τῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἐν ἀδικίᾳ κατεχόντων (Rom. 1:18). Man cannot cease his rebelling against God, either by trying to declare God nonexistant by human fiat or by establishing man as the final arbiter of moral standards. But God compels man to know that He is God–through His law, which acts as a curb restraining rebellious man or, failing that, by working judgment upon the rebels. The man of God is to know this, "that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine" (1 Tim. 1:9-10). In practice God works this use of the law chiefly through what Luther called His left hand, the government. But when that fails, He interposes directly in human affairs, as in the case of the flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, etc.

The Law Condemns

In the first three chapters of Romans Paul tears the facade of self-justified righteousness from the face of both Gentile and Jew. The Gentile stands convicted without the law and by the law within that he has failed to live up to; the Jew by the written law, which is his boast, but which he has failed to keep (Rom. 2:11-23). This case by case, step by step, logical indictment and conviction of all mankind by St. Paul is a New Testament legal brief, restating the poetic indictment of Isaiah: "All flesh is grass and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass" (Isa. 40:7). What is the instrument that makes this indictment stand? "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every

mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19). The law, as the verbalization and symbolization of the eternal, immutable will of God, indicts and condemns man at his best and each man individually. The function of the law is to establish guilt. That it does, also against the modern moral relativist who presumes to declare God dead and installs man as the standard-setter for moral behavior.

The Law Works Wrath

In functioning as indicter and condemner of the entire human race, the law has the effect of working wrath. Paul wrote, "The law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15). The law works wrath because it exposes sin as transgression of the law of the holy God. If God is holy, He cannot tolerate defiance of His ethical standard for men. "The wrath of God is revealed against all unrighteousness of men" (Rom. 1:18). The law functions as a catalyst for that wrath.

The Law Hardens

The law, which is in itself good and holy, also works wrath in the sinner. This is the natural reaction of the self-willed sinner to the law of God, which appears to him as foreign and hostile. The law constantly forbids or demands what the flesh refuses to do or insists on doing. The law cannot and does not yield, for it is the verbalization of God's immutable moral order. As the law pushes its claims upon the sinner, the natural response is heightened resistance and increasing wrath. This is the process of self-hardening which, unless checked by the mercy of God, carries the sinner to the point of no return, that of judicial hardening. The cases of Pharaoh and Saul are warning documentaries on this fearful process, for "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31).

The Law – The Adamic Sin

The function of the law is to bring out the true nature of sin as rebellion against God. In Galatians 3:19 Paul asks the question, "Wherefore then serveth the law?" He answers, "It was added because of transgressions." What is the relationship between the law and transgressions? The law establishes transgressions as the universal guilt of mankind. "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin" (Gal. 3:22). "God hath concluded them all in unbelief" (Rom. 11:32). But how does the law go about establishing the guilt of all? Paul doesn't elaborate on this point in Galatians, but he does give a fuller delineation of this function of the law in his letter to the Romans.

After giving his lengthy comparison contrast of Adam and Christ, the one factor that remained untreated was the law. How does the law fit in? Paul states the function of the law in this way, "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound," ἵνα πλεονάσῃ τὸ παράπτωμα (Rom. 5:20). Τὸ παράπτωμα, "the offence," is the Adamic sin. Modern unbelieving theologians lightly dismiss the first eleven chapters of Genesis as mythology, as but a quaint and crude attempt to explain the origin of evil in this world. Scripture emphasizes the offence of Adam as the historic event that had devastating after-effects upon mankind. God saw and God knew that ''every imagination of the thoughts of his (man's) heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). God knew the cause, but man, ancient and modern, dismisses this cause as insufficient to explain what is to some extent empirically knowable, but which is rejected by the sin-blinded mind of man. So God brought in the law to make matters clear to all. He verbalized His holy will in the Ten Words. He thereby made it evident that what comes out of the heart of man into his bloodstream and all his organs, affecting his relationship with his God and all his interrelationships with his fellowman, is always and only the transgression of His immutable, moral will as revealed in the law.

The law serves as a prod to bring out into the open the inherited sin of Adam into which we are born. "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did

work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death" (Rom. 7:5). And again, "But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead" (Rom. 7:8). Sin is like a smoldering fire within; the law is the poker that stirs it up so that it burns brightly. As the "No, no!" of a mother to her child seems to stimulate the child into experimenting with precisely that which is forbidden, so the restrictive "Dos" and "Don'ts" of the law stimulate the sinner to do precisely what is forbidden. The "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" did not prevent but rather stimulated the perverse, stubborn rebellious hearts of the men of Israel to make the golden bull and so to initiate a continuous history of seeking after other gods, which gross defiance of the law the Jews, for the most part, carry on to this day.

The Law Reveals the Nature of Sin

What did our good and gracious God have in mind by giving the law, which kept on functioning in this way that it caused the sinner to sin more and more? Paul answered that question in this way: "That sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful" (Rom. 7:13). The law reveals sin as what it really is, not a minor character defect in man who is allegedly evolving into ever higher moral standards and not but a deviation from current social standards, but as transgression of the eternal, immutable, moral will of God and so as insubordination of the creature to the Creator, as rebellion of the subject against his Lord. Man, because of the effects of sin on his thinking, tends to think of sin but lightly; the law is the divine corrective, revealing to man how God views his sin.

The Law Makes Sin a Reality

The negative effect of the law is to expose man to the wrath of God; the positive effect is to make sin a personally experienced reality in the life of man. "By the law is the knowledge (epignwsij) of sin" (Rom. 3:20). "I had not known (egnwn) sin, but by the law" (Rom. 7:7). The forms of both the noun and the verb point to a personal, experiential knowledge of sin. David knew intellectually that he had sinned with Bathsheba and against Uriah. He could not drive the fact of his sins from his memory, try as he may. Neither could he successfully camouflage them from his conscience with the motions of ritual service. But it was not until Nathan directed the accusing finger of the law at David's conscience that his sin became a personal, condemning monster in his life. His penitential Psalms bare his soul: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight" (Ps. 51:4). Thus the law makes sin a real and a personal matter of rebellion against the holy God.

The Law – Justification

Associated with the biblical concept of justification are the following: faith, righteousness, Spirit, promise, life, Christ. In each instance the law is set by Paul as the antithesis. The only contribution that the law makes in the justifying of the sinner is the negative function of imprisoning the sinner in an escape-proof cell of his own making, thereby terrifying him with his guilt and the certain condemnation of the law and so forcing him to the brink of despair. This is the "schoolmaster" function (Gal. 3:24) until Christ enters the picture.

After methodically and conclusively establishing the guilt of the entire human race and then proclaiming the justification of mankind by grace "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24), Paul proceeds to the appropriation of that priceless gift by man. How does what was done on Calvary and what occurred in Joseph's garden become the priceless possession of the sinner? What part does the good and holy law have to play? The answer is as clear as it is decisive: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28). Those words flowed from the mind of a composed and calm Paul. From the agitated mind of Paul, engaged in a life/death struggle against faith-murdering errorists in Galatia, came words to the same effect: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2:16). The law stands exposed as the antithesis to both justification and faith.

In chapter four of Romans Paul uses the revered figure of Abraham to demonstrate that the law is the antithesis of the promise and faith. Abraham is the heir of the world by faith in the promise, not through the law. Accordingly, "if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect" (Rom. 4:14).

Appealing to the personal experience of the Galatians Paul set the law over against the Spirit, the Creator of life: "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of

the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. 3:2). The covenant of the promise, confirmed in Christ, cannot be disannulled by the law, which came four hundred and thirty years later (Gal. 3:17). The law stands as the antithesis of the promise, also of life, for "if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law" (Gal. 3:21). Christ Himself stands over against the law, for "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4). From one angle and then from another angle and then from another Paul establishes the antithesis of the law to all and everything that creates new life.

The Law – Sanctification

Justification is always complete, sanctification is a process. Justification is a series of dots, each complete in itself and touching the preceding, symbolizing the state of grace. Sanctification is a line with an arrow, continuing on to death and the new day at the end of this era. Justification is life for the condemned sinner; sanctification is living that life. What part does the law play in sanctification?

Romans six proclaims the necessity of death to enable life and living in sanctification to begin and continue. It is a death to sin, which is revealed in all its loathsomeness as rebellion against God by the law. Christ died and was buried for us, to take away our sin. These are historical facts, the proclamation of which is the gospel. These historical facts by baptism cause a death and create a resurrection in man–death to sin, life unto Christ. Paul concentrates the attention of his readers on these facts of salvation and their effects by using his first imperative in his letter: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:11). Then follows, in the remainder of the chapter, encouragement to live unto the Lord by enrolling one's body in the day by day living of this new life, which has been created in us by faith in the death and resurrection of Christ centuries ago, "for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14).

Romans seven presents another death and resurrection, death to the law and again life with Christ. Using the example of the law's binding a woman until death to her husband, Paul applies, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law –with its demands, threats, and condemnation–by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom. 7:14). Again, death to the law is the prerequisite for the new life of obedience or life in Christ.

In his earlier letter to the Galatians Paul had scored the inability of the law to produce life: "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law" (Gal. 3:21). The point in Galatians was to demonstrate the necessity of something better: the promise of a life-giving Savior. In the eighth chapter of his epistle to the Romans Paul again stresses the inability of the law to produce a life of righteousness, but then continues to show how this goal was achieved in and through Christ: "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending forth his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:3-4). What the law could not achieve in man, Christ by the power of the Spirit does achieve, a righteousness of life according to the law. Again it is evident that the law can neither create nor sustain this new life of righteousness that is the life of a child of God.

But the new life of righteousness is a life in and according to the law. Just what part the law has to play in this new life, which the law cannot bring about but which is nonetheless according to the law, will be examined a bit later.

The Law – Temporary

The primary self-revelation of God to man is the gospel, as is obvious from the very first

word of God to fallen man, the Protevangel (Gen. 3:15), and the subsequent revelation of God to Moses as Jehovah, that is, the eternal, immutable God of all love and grace for sinners. The revelation of His holy will on Mt. Sinai in the form of the law was secondary, necessitated by the intrusion of sin and by the Lord s plan to isolate unto Himself one nation upon the face of the earth as the historical matrix from which the promise was to evolve at the God-appointed time. Paul speaks of the temporary nature of the law in the schoolmaster passag e. Speaking historically as a Jew, Paul writes, But when faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster unto Christ (eij Criston) that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster (Gal. 3:24-26). Historically, the law was given to fulfill a specific need and purpose from Moses until Christ. Substantively, whenever Christ enters the soul-life of an individual, the law immediately loses its grip on that person. Yet both Christ and the holy Apostles preach the law also to the regenerate, indicating that there remains an element in Mr. Christian that is permanently bound under the law.

Summary

When is the law used lawfully ? When it is remembered that there was no law in the b eginning, that sin necessitated the law, that because of sin the law serves as a curb to maintain outward order in the world, that the essential characteristics of the law are demands, threats and condemnation, that the law therefore accuses and establishes the guilt of mankind and so works wrath, that the law reveals the devastation wrought by the sin of Adam by revealing the effects of sin in man and the true nature of sin as rebellion, that the law makes sin a personal reality in the life of the sinner, that the law in no way can either justify the sinner or create and sustain the new life of obedience, and that hence the law is historically and in the life of each individual only temporary until Christ comes. However, without and apart from Christ the law stands there with its unyielding demands, unmerciful threats, inescapable accusations, and certain condemnation.

THE DYNAMICS OF THE FAITH-LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN

The just shall li ve by faith (Hab. 2:4 and Rom. 1:7). Faith is the quintessence of the life of a child of God. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16). For we walk by faith, not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). Without faith it is impossible to pleas e God (Heb. 11:6). The entire life of a Christian flows from faith, which the Spirit of God creates and sustains.

Faith changes the relationship of the individual to his God. It makes the guilty innocent: Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law (Rom. 3:28). There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1). It r estores alienated man to fellowship with his God: Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself . . . And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled (Col. 1:20-21). Justification is the legal term, reconciliation the social term. Together they convey the changed status of the sinner to his God: from guilty to forgiven, from at enmity to at peace. By virtue of this change, effected by our Lord s fulfilling the law for us and suffering the penalties of that same law for us, our God no longer looks upon us as Judge, but as loving Father. By faith the blessings of these changes are ours.

Faith restores sonship. When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Gal. 4:4-5). For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God (Rom. 8:14). Through faith we reenter the relationship to our God in which man was originally created. God is once again Father; believers are children. The relationship of loving Father and trusting child has been restored. The Father encourages and sustains His chil-

dren; the children respond with loving and willing obedience.

Faith and love are simultaneously and inseparably intertwined. Faith is the invisible, love the visible side of the new life. Faith . . . worketh by love (Gal. 5:6). Faith is not first given its proper form by love, but faith and love are simultaneously created by the Spirit of God. Faith stands ever with open hand Godward to receive the continued assurance of the divine grace that forgives sin for Christ s sake and simultaneously reaches toward God and man in love. God is love (1 John 4:8). That love is self-giving, for God spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all. That selfless love is reflected in the faith-life of the believer. We love him, because he first loved us (1 John 4:18). That love cannot but reach out to one s fellowman, for this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also (1 John 4:21). Love, which is the inseparable companion of faith, is the potential solution to every moral problem, for love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. 13:10).

Faith recreates the individual. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new (2 Cor. 5:17). For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:10). What is the nature of this new creation? Jeremiah spoke of it: After these days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people (Jer. 31:33). The position of the law of God has been changed from an external, coercive and constraining force imposed upon a rebellious subject to an inner attitude or way of thinking in the child of God. Insofar as the child of God is new man, the image of God has been restored. Ezekiel foresaw the same blessing: I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, (Ezek. 11:19-20). By working faith and so giving forgiveness of sin and restoring fellowship with God, the Spirit restores the image of God, that gyroscope of love that cannot but move man to walk in love according to the will of God.

By faith we are taught of God. In the new covenant prophecy Jeremiah revealed that God Himself would write His law in the hearts of His people and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord (Jer. 31:34). Isaiah spoke of the future age of the Spirit when all thy children shall be taught of the Lord (Isa. 54:14). Our Lord referred to these prophecies in His *Bread of Life* sermon at Capernaum: It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me (John 6:45). St. Paul speaks of the glorious gospel truths that God hath revealed . . . unto us by his Spirit (1 Cor. 2:10). In First Thessalonians he indicates that love is immediately taught, But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another (1 Thess. 4:9). St. John assures all believers, But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things (1 John 2:20). Faith is the chief means by which our God teaches believers what they must know. Some of the fathers use the word intuitive to describe this way of receiving knowledge.

Faith is evidence of the indwelling Spirit. No man can say that Jesus Christ is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 12:3). The moment the Spirit of God creates faith in the heart, he indwells that person, making him a temple of the Holy Ghost. No one can have Christ without the Spirit, but only by the Spirit. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (Rom. 8:9). As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God (Rom. 8:14). Which way does the Spirit of Christ, who is the Spirit of truth, lead? Never into darkness, error, or lawlessness of any kind, but only into light, truth, and life according to the immutable moral will of love. The antithesis of the Spirit is the works of the flesh, as Paul contrasts in Galatians five. Thus the Spirit ever functions as the unchanging counter force to sin and positive force for righteousness.

By faith Christ dwells in the believer. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me (Gal. 2:20). Christ came to remove sin and restore righteousness; that was the goal of His mission to earth. Faith rests on His objective acts to remove both the guilt and the power of sin and to restore righteousness. When Christ comes, by the working of the Spirit, into the life of an individual, He brings the dual blessings of His righteousness to cover our unrighteousness and His strength and guidance to lead us in the path of righteousness.

By faith we are united with the God of our salvation. In His sacerdotal prayer our Lord pleaded, that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us (John 17:21). By faith we are mystically united with the God of our salvation, in whom is all holiness without spot or blemish. St. Peter refers to this source of spiritual strength in his second epistle when he assures the saints that our Lord Jesus according to his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature . . . (2 Pet. 1:3-4).

By faith we walk in the light. In him was life; and the life was the light of men (John 1:4). That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (John 1:9). The holiness of God was in Old Testament times manifested to man in the form of light, as in the burning bush and the pillar of fire. Light is the visualization of holiness, purity, sinlessness according to the immutable will of God that reflects His love. St. John picked up the light theme, with which he began his Gospel, and used it in his first epistle, This is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1:5-7). As children of the Light, we walk by the power of that Light in the light, but never perfectly because of the drag of the flesh. So it is that we always need the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse us from lapses into darkness.

By faith we are free. This is a tremendous biblical concept, the implications of which can easily escape us. We would, therefore examine the New Testament use of this concept of freedom or liberty.

(To be continued)

STUDIES IN LUTHER: LUTHER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH AND WRITINGS ABOUT THE JEWS—PART III

Paul D. Nolting

INTRODUCTION

In the two previous parts of this ongoing study, Luther s relationship with and writings about the Jews were considered up to and including his publication of *On the Jews and Their Lies* in early 1543.[1] It has been the goal of this study to help the reader understand the reasons lying behind the change in Luther s attitude towards the Jews over the course of his career, and to examine whether or not charges of anti-Semitism leveled against Luther in the Twentieth Century are true.

As noted in those earlier parts, Luther in his treatise *That Jesus Christ was Born a Jew*

(1523) encouraged his fellow Christians to "deal gently" with the Jews and to "receive them cordially" with the hope that they might be gained to the Christian faith.[2] By the time Luther wrote *On the Jews and Their Lies* (1543), his views had changed significantly. Anecdotal evidence of Jews receiving baptism only to mock the Christian faith, personal dealings with Jewish scholars who blasphemed Christ, and reports of successful Jewish proselytism of Christians in Moravia led Luther to harden his attitude over against the chance of any large-scale conversion of the Jews. Given his growing conviction that the end times were near, Luther became determined to refute what he considered to be false, deceptive, and dangerous rabbinical views and thereby strengthen his fellow Christians by defending the Christian faith. In this third part of our essay, we will consider Luther's two final major treatises concerning these false rabbinical views, both of which were written in 1543.

ON THE TETRAGRAMMATON AND THE GENEALOGY OF CHRIST[3]

In his essay *"On the Jews and Their Lies"* Luther had promised his readers to review and refute certain Jewish legends mentioned in the work of Purchetus entitled *Victoria adversus impios Hebraeos* (Victory over the Godless Hebrews). Purchetus, a Carthusian monk from Genoa, had written the book about 1300. He reported various Jewish legends, which blasphemed Jesus' origin, powers, and person. This essay, *On the Tetragrammaton and the Genealogy of Christ,* appeared in March 1543. It was not written to debate with the Jews, nor did Luther have hopes of converting masses of Jews, for this Luther felt was next to impossible—as if Satan himself could be converted! Rather, Luther hoped to defend the Christian faith and strengthen his fellow believers. In the introduction to the treatise, he stated that he was addressing these words to…

> …the Germans…to warn (them), to strengthen and to honor our faith; not to convert the Jews, which is just as possible as to convert the devil.[4]

Luther began the work by reminding his readers that the Jews of Jesus' day had accused Him of performing miracles through the power of Beelzebub (cf. Luke 11:15). He went on to translate the false Jewish legends, which spoke of mystical writings, which included the Tetragrammaton (God's Name), carved into the floor of the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant once stood. Those writings, supposedly, would give great powers to anyone who could memorize them. The legend continued that in order to prevent anyone from ever memorizing the writings and obtaining the powers of God's name preventive measures were taken. Bronze statues of two dogs were placed at the entry of the temple. If someone were ever to gain access to the writings, the dogs would bark so ferociously that the person memorizing them would forget them before leaving the temple.

The legend goes on to say that Jesus of Nazareth, who is identified as the "child of a whore,"[5] obtained his miraculous powers by memorizing those writings. He supposedly entered the temple during the reign of a certain Queen Helena, copied the words down on a piece of paper, slashed open his leg, placed the paper inside his leg, and then healed it with the powerful name. After leaving the temple, having forgotten the words due to the barking of the dogs, he slashed open his leg once again to retrieve the paper with the writings and name written on them, thus securing the power once again. He gathered disciples, convincing them that He was the promised Savior by making the lame walk, by cleansing lepers, and finally also by raising the dead. When denounced by the Jewish wise men as merely a sorcerer, he was able to elude capture because of his powers. Interestingly enough, the "hero" of the legend was Judas Iscariot, who informed the Jewish leaders of the source of Jesus' power. The Jewish leaders induced Judas to gain similar powers. Then when Jesus attempted to fly up into the heavens to prove He was the promised Savior, Judas flew up into the sky after Him, collided with Him, and caused both to fall to the ground. In the fall Jesus broke His arm, which allowed for His capture. He was thereafter sentenced to death as an exposed impostor, but was not crucified on a wooden cross,

for He supposedly had power over them. He was rather crucified on a strong stem of a "cabbage-stalk."[6]

Luther began his refutation of this legend by pointing out that Queen Helena lived 250 years after Christ, and so could not have ever been part of the story of Christ. Secondly, he went on to say that the thought of statues of bronze dogs barking as if they were alive clearly is unbelievable. Thirdly, Luther said you would have to believe that Christ died on a cabbage-stalk large enough to hold Him, which is entirely unreasonable. Finally, he stated that you would have to believe the rabbis above Moses, the other authors of the Bible, and God Himself. In frustration, but also with tongue in cheek Luther wrote:

> Would you now like to become a pious, true Jew—then give yourself over, and let it be said, that you believe what the rabbis say, even if it goes against God, reason, angel or all creatures. For here you hear that a Jew should believe that the right hand is not a right hand when a rabbi speaks. God has well said, yes, He has through His eternal Word created, ordered, and named that the right hand should be and be called the right hand, as all angels and creatures know it. But such may well be true, until a rabbi approaches and says, no, it shall not be, but what I call a right hand, that will be a right hand. What should God's Word and work together with all angels and creatures' testimony be against a rabbi, who is so far higher and better than God and all creatures.[7]

Luther speculated that some Christians might suggest that he not mock and ridicule the poor Jews, but in reality he believed he had indeed done too little, in view of the fact that the Jews had mocked more and had a god, who was the master of mockery—the devil. Luther pointed out that Satan by these legends mocked God, all of Christianity, and the Jews themselves, who had been led to believe them. He explained that pure reason would suggest that miracles, such as making the lame to walk, the cleansing of lepers, and the raising of the dead, could only be performed by someone possessing divine power—not some sorcerer! As for the Jews—how is it, Luther asked, that they would grant that simple letters could possess and give such power to ungodly men, but then deny the power to be found in the promises and commands of God?

Luther went on to explain Jewish cabalistic (mystical) practices taught in conjunction with the legends already mentioned. He explained how the Jews used the 216 letters of the words of Exodus 14:19-21 to obtain secret information. They would line up the letters into three rows, producing 72 three-letter root words, which when interpreted mathematically named 72 angels whose power could then be controlled.[8] He then asked a very legitimate question. If the Jewish wise men in the legend knew how to secure the power of the writings themselves and could thereby secure the control of 72 angels, why did they let Judas Iscariot obtain that power rather than securing it for themselves? The answer was that the entire legend was blasphemous foolishness and ought to be rejected as teachings of the devil.

At this point Luther alluded to a stone carving on the wall of the city church of Wittenberg to describe his estimation of these rabbinical teachings. Its crudeness brought strong, negative reaction from southern German and Swiss reformers after this treatise was published.[9] Luther wrote:

> Here at Wittenberg on our parish church is a sow carved in stone, and lying under her are young piglets and Jews who suckle there. Behind the sow stands a rabbi, who lifts up the sow's right leg and with his left hand pulls the sow's rump toward him, bends down, and with great interest looks at the Talmud under the sow's rump, as if to read and learn something difficult and special.[10]

How was it possible that anyone could believe these lies? Luther could only conclude that Satan had captured their minds, causing them to believe that the mastery of mere letters would enable them to control both God and angels—to cause them to make the letters themselves into hundreds of idols!

Luther suggested that on the basis of the Old Testament scriptures, which the Jews claimed

to embrace, they should believe in Jesus. Moses had told them that if a prophet came and was not able to do the things he claimed to be able to do, they would know he was a false prophet (cf. Deut. 18:20-22), but Jesus had performed the miracles He claimed to do and should be accepted. Luther lamented over the fact that the Jews should be so concerned about letters and, in fact, refuse to utter the name LORD while r ejecting the Savior promised by the LORD. He pointed out that the Second Commandment does not apply only to one name for God. Therefore, it would only be logical, following the approach of the Jews, never to mention any name of God, yet that was unthinkable!

When concluding the first part of this treatise Luther stated in effect that the Jews felt themselves to be smarter, wiser and more understanding than God Himself, [11] with the unhappy result that they indeed bring God to shame, the Scripture is d ishonored, and they bring themselves to damnation. [12]

In the second portion of the treatise Luther dealt with two exegetical issues raised by the rabbis: (1) The difference between the genealogies of Christ as found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, and (2) The proper interpretation of Isaiah 7:14.

Before addressing these points, however, Luther commented that the Jews were really not interested in learning about these matters, but rather raised them only to ridicule the Christian belief. This they ought not do, Luther maintained, for Moses himself had foretold that another Prophet would come to whom they were to listen (cf. Deut. 18:15), something, of course, the Jews refused to do! In fact, Luther stated, the Jews railed against the Christians, claiming that there was no proof that Mary had even descended from David. Luther challenged them to prove their own lineage, suggesting that there was more proof of Mary s Davidic line than their own Jewish line!

Luther then wrote extensively, citing numerous Old Testament passages, which pointed out that the promised Savior would be a prophet, priest, and king introducing a new covenant, which would be inscribed upon human hearts. Consequently, it was only reasonable to recognize that He would produce a new book, in which He would outline the chief articles of faith the true nature of the church, baptism, and the keys. But this, both the Pope and the Jews despised. Luther wrote:

> these things we read and know, and so are true Christians. But the Pope wi th his church knows nothing of this and also does not esteem it. The Jews know ever so much of it as a sow knows of the Psalter.[13]

Luther contended that the entire Old Testament, Moses and all of the prophets, stand in opposition to rabbinical teaching. Consequently, the Jews only salvation would be to embrace the New Testament. Christians, Luther asserted, having accepted Jesus as the Messiah understood both the Old and the New Testaments, while in view of their stubbornness the Jews understood neither. Luther wrote:

> Then first of all it is indeed certain, that they do not understand the promises of the Messiah. Secondly they do not understand the Ten Commandments, because without the Messiah they cannot be understood. Thirdly, they cannot understand what the ceremonies mean. That is, because the priesthood has ceased, they also do not understand the customs or underlying meaning of the ceremonies. Fourthly, no Jew understands the noble and precious example or life of the fathers Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, or in summary, the entire people of Israel.[14]

Luther now turned to demonstrating that Mary was the descendant of David. He spent considerable time attempting to reconcile the two family lines as presented by Matthew and Luke, suggesting in the end that Joseph and Mary were cousins.[15] He mentioned that he could understand why the Jews in Jesus day, especially those who lived with Jesus throughout His first thirty years in Nazareth when He served them as a carpenter, might have questioned Jesus initial

claims. If Hans N. a poor man s son were to go off and begin claiming to be a king, Luther admitted that most people would think him foolish. [16] Yet given the fact of the Old Testament promises and prophecies, Jesus man y miracles, and finally His resurrection from the dead, there could be no mistake concerning His identify as God s Son and the promised Savior.

In the final pages of this treatise Luther defended the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14, that Jesus would be born of a virgin. He began by offering any Jew or Hebrew scholar 100 Gulden if they could produce an instance within the Old Testament where the Hebrew word almah does not mean a virgin. [17] He then condemned the rabbinical interpretation of the passage, which suggested that Isaiah was making reference to his own wife who was pregnant, and that his meaning was that the God-intended sign was this, that his wife would have a son rather than a daughter. Luther rather crudely and derisively called such exegesis J ewish piss and Jewish sweat. He suggested that while the super holy Jews, these circumcised saints expected the accursed Goyim to accept their wisdom, he would rather be a fool with Isaiah and Matthew. [18]

Luther went on to defend the interpretation of almah as a virgin in Isaiah 7:14, with reference to the prophecy of God in Genesis 3:15, where the seed of the woman was promised as Savior. Clearly the Savior would come from a woman with no natural, human father. This in Luther s eyes was also critical for a theological reason the promised Savior had to be born without original sin. In comparing our situation to that of Jesus, Luther wrote rather interestingly:

> We are also children, conceived and born of the Holy Ghost, like Christ, except that we have come to this by grace and only for the sake of His will. He, however, has half of his person, that is, that He is God s Son. He did not have to be born again, not being stuck with the old birth of sin and death, as we lost children of Adam.[19]

In closing, Luther accused the Jews of treating the Bible like so many pieces of paper, out of which they could cut little figures at will. The Bible, however, was God s alone, and Luther warned his fellow Christians not to believe the damned work of the devil produced by Jewish rabbis.[20] Was there a possibility, given everything that the Jews had said and done, that they still might be converted? Luther closed the treatise with these words:

> Whether they will be converted, that we commit to God s g race, that they (indeed a few) might with us recognize and praise God the Father, our Creator, together with our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit in eternity.[21]

ON THE LAST WORDS OF DAVID – 2 SAMUEL 23:1-7

While at the end of the treatise, *On the Tetragrammaton and the Genealogy of Christ*, Luther had stated that he would have nothing more to do with the Jews, neither writing of them or against them, [22] he was upset by Jewish claims that Christian translations of the Bible, and of the Old Testament in particular, were flawed. They claimed Christian translators lacked proper knowledge of Hebrew grammar. Luther pointed out, as he began this treatise *On the Last Words of David* that without a proper understanding that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, you cannot properly understand the Bible, grammar not withstanding. In addition, Luther pointed out that the Jewish writers could not agree among themselves regarding their grammatical points, which suggested that their criticisms were unwarranted. Luther wrote:

> Saint Jerome reports that he was moved to translate the Bible anew from Hebrew into Latin by the sneering reproach of the enemies of Christ, the Jews, to the effect that Christians did not have the correct Bible in the version then in use throughout Christendom. The reason given was that a number of words and letters were faulty and altogether different from the Hebrew . And in our day, too, so many are busying themselves with translating that history may repeat itself and there may be so many Bibles in the course of time and so

many wiseacres who claim a mastery of the Hebrew tongue that there will be no end of it.

That will inevitably happen if we pay attention to what the Jews say and think of our Bible. After all, they are not in agreement among themselves, and they expound Scripture arbitrarily and quote out of context with their grammar. If we were to heed them, we could never acquire a uniform Bible, since every rabbi claims to be superior to the other .

Therefore such mockery of the Jews does not disturb me, and their opinion would not impel me to learn a single letter of the Hebrew language. The reason for this is this: We Christians have the meaning and the import of the Bible because we have the New Testament, that is, Jesus Christ, who was promised in the Old Testament and who later appeared and brought with Him the light and the true meaning of Scripture .

For that is the all-important point on which everything depends. Whoever does not have or want to have this Man properly and truly who is called Jesus Christ, God s Son, whom we Christians proclaim, must keep his hands off the Bible that I advise. He will surely come to naught. The more he studies, the blinder and more stupid will he grow, be he Jew, Tartar, Turk, Christian, or whatever he wants to call himself .

If I were offered free choice either to have St. Augustine s and the dear fathers , that is, the apostles , understanding of Scripture, together with the handicap that St. Augustine occasionally lacks the correct Hebrew letters and words as the Jews sneeringly accuse him, or to have the Jews correct letters and words which they, in fact, do not have everywhere but minus St. Augustine s and the fathers understanding, that is, with the Jews interpretation, it can be easily imagined which of the two I would choose. I would let the Jews with their interpretation and their letters go to the devil, and I would ascend into heaven with St. Augustine s interpretation without their letters .

Furthermore, since the Jews repudiate this Christ, they cannot know or understand what Moses, the prophets, and the psalms are saying, what true faith is, what the Ten Commandments purport, what tradition and story teach and prove. But according to the prophecy in Isa. 29: 12, Scripture must be to them what a letter is to an illiterate. Indeed, he may see the letters, but he is ignorant of their significance . [23]

Luther concluded his introduction by stating that he would demonstrate this truth by considering David s fi nal words. As he turned to David s introductory words, Luther pointed out that David believed in and relied upon the promised Savior to come, whose glory he was now moved to proclaim as the sweet psalmist of Israel.

In the first place it is that I am the man to whom God promised the Messiah of the God of Jacob, that the Messiah will descend from me, from my blood, from my tribe and family. I am sure and convinced of this not only because this has been promised to me by God, whose words are certain and reliable and who will not lie to me, but also because I firmly believe this, because I hold to this unswervingly and immovable, knowing that I cannot be disappointed in this belief, and because I implicitly trust in God s Word with all confidence. Therefore I am cheerful and stand ready to live or to die when and how God wills. I know where I, or my soul, will abide, where I will leave it. I will not have to go astray or linger in doubt or depart wretchedly. I have God s definite assurance regarding His Messiah, and on that account I also have a firm and inflexible faith.[24]

Luther pointed out that for David, praising his Lord was not something from which he would take a break, for he was compelled by his faith to proclaim God s grace and mercy. It was, after all, the sweet doctrine of his Savior, which was of utmost importance to David. Luther wrote:

When David uses the word sweet he is not thinking only of the sweetness and the charm of the Psalms from a grammatical and musical point of view, of artistic and euphonious words, of melodious song and notes, of beautiful text and beautiful tune; but he is referring much more to the theology they contain, to the spiritual meaning. That renders the Psalms

lovely and sweet, for they are a solace to all saddened and wretched consciences, ensnared in the fear of sin, in the torture and terror of death, and in all sorts of adversity and misery.[25]

As Luther proceeded his overriding goal was to strengthen the Trinitarian faith of his fellow Christians. Beginning with 2 Samuel 23:2-3, Luther pointed out that all three members of the Trinity were present in David s thinking. The Holy Spirit spoke on behalf of the Father about the Son, the Rock of Israel. Luther observed that those with a carnal mind might over look these distinctions and assume that the same Person was both speaking and being spoken about, and that the rule of which David spoke was purely a worldly rule. However, such ignorance was no excuse for a failure to understand the text, and the rejection of a proper understanding, which was based upon the grace of God, would not be overlooked by God. Luther warned:

He is Judge over the quick and the dead. Do you imagine that because Turk, pope, Jew, and the whole evil host of the world and the devil do not want His grace but rave against it they will on that account escape His might? They will surely be taught their lesson; for He who sits in the heavens laughs . [26]

To demonstrate that his spiritual understanding of this prophecy was the proper interpretation, Luther alluded to God s promises to David in 2 Samuel 7:11 -16 and 1 Chronicles 17:10-14. The Son of David to whom God made reference and the house He was to build could not be Solomon and the temple, Luther contended, for no temple could contain God and the reign of this Son of David would be eternal. Consequently, Luther repudiated the stupid zeal of the Jews for their emphasis on the physical temple and a political rule. God was interested in ruling in the human heart (cf. Isa. 66:2), and His rule, David said, was to be an everlasting rule which existed beyond the lifetime of any single human being as well as beyond the borders of any single kingdom. Luther wrote:

We have heard that this house of God is larger and better and more glorious than heaven and earth. And if David s Son, the Messiah, is Master and Lord of this house, He is certainly also Master and Lord of heaven and earth and far superior to and better than these. For He who is Lord over this house, as God Himself is, must self-evidently be superior and be Lord over heaven and earth, as God Himself is. And that can be none other than the one God, Creator of heaven and earth. From this we deduce that Messiah, David s natural Son, must be true God and no strange god.[27]

Luther went on to point out that the eternal house and rule of which David spoke could not be the physical temple build by Solomon, or any temple built in Jerusalem for that matter, because the Jewish temple was ultimately destroyed. A physical interpretation simply did not accord with the facts!

Luther then cited a number of Old Testament passages, which spoke of the promised Savior as true God, and thus he defended the deity of Christ as understood by Nathan in his prophecy and David in the text under study. He concluded then regarding the Jewish views:

My dear friends, tell me, can this and similar verse tolerate the Jews stupid conception of their Messiah, who is to be a mortal, earthly king on earth, resident in Jerusalem? This is ruled out when God here places in juxtaposition His Messiah and heaven and earth, saying: The heavens will vanish like smoke this will not happen without fire (2 Pet. 3: 12); the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die like gnats. But His Salvation, He says, which is near at hand, His Righteousness, which has gone forth shall remain forever and be an eternal light; for He is the Lord Himself and your God (cf. Isa. 51: 15).[28]

Citing reason as the underlying element of all opposition to th e doctrines of the Trinity and deity of Christ, whether it be Jew, Muslim, or anyone else, Luther wrote:

Here is where Mr. Smart Aleck, reason, takes offense, presuming to be ten times wiser than

> God Himself, asking: How can God take His eternal dominion and bestow it on someone else? What would He be retaining for Himself? Did we not say above that God says in Isa. 42: 8, My glory I give to no other, nor My praise to graven images ? And it is partic u-larly impossible for God to bestow this on a human being, who has not existed from eternity, as God has, but who had a beginning in time, who was born and who is mortal, as we Christians confess and preach of Jesus Christ, David s and Mary s Son. The Jews, M o-hammed, the Turks, and the Tartars also belong to this category of superintelligent people. With their spoonful or nutshell full of brain they can comprehend the incomprehensible essence of God and say that since God has no wife, He can also have no son. Fie, fie, fie upon you, devil, together with Jews and Mohammed and all who are the disciples of blind, deaf, and wretched reason in these exalted matters, which none but God alone can fathom, which we grasp only in the measure in which the Holy Spirit has revealed them to us through the prophets.[29]

After summarizing his arguments for a Trinitarian view of David s words, Luther went on to discuss various passages regarding the Messiah, which explained His work of redemption, and which were not understood by the Jews. He commented that the Jews stubbornly insisted on their own opinions in spite of what the prophets said. As far as Luther was concerned, he was ready to let them go their way. [30]

Luther proceeded to discuss the proposition that wherever the Hebrew text readily yielded a harmonization with the New Testament, this must be the only right interpretation, irrespective of what the Jews, Hebraists, and anyone else might say. Luther then compared John 1 and Genesis 1, focusing on the word as the means by which creation occurred the word being distinct from God, but also one with God. He alluded to 1 Corinthians 10, which identified Jesus Christ with the LORD delivering Israel from Egypt and involved with their wilderness wanderings, and then commented that in spite of the ranting of the Jews and Mohammed, it was a fact that Jesus of Nazareth was the God of the First Commandment. He suggested:

> It is of no avail to Jews, Turks, and heretics to feign great religious zeal and to boast against us Christians of their belief in the one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and that they devoutly call Him Father. These are nothing but inane and empty words with which they take the name of God in vain and misuse it contrary to the Second Commandment . For if you were to ask such a very saintly Jew, T urk, or heretic whether he believes that this one God, Creator of heaven and earth (whose name they exalt so piously and whom they call Father although all this falsely) really is a Father and has a Son in the Godhead outside of creation, he would be horrified in his great holiness and would regard this as frightful blasphemy. And if you would ask further whether the same, one God, Creator, Father (as they call Him with their lying mouths) is also a Son, who has a Father in the Godhead, he would stuff up his ears in his great zeal, gnash his teeth, and worry that the earth might swallow you and him. And if you continue to ask whether the same, one God, Creator, and Father (as they boastfully call Him) is also a Holy Spirit, who has the Father and the Son, from whom He derives His divine essence, this super holy man would run away from you as though you were the vilest devil just come from hell.[31]

For further proof of Jesus deity, Luther turned to Genesis three and stated that the promised Savior had to be true God, for His work involved defeating Satan, who was more powerful than man, and the giving of life, which only God could do. He then demonstrated that this was the opinion of Adam and Eve who identified their first child with the Lord in Gene sis 4:1. Luther pointed out:

> I am convinced, if the most rabid Jews, who crucified Christ, or the still viler ones of today, who would fain crucify Him still more ruthlessly a story is current about Jews and Turks who recently crucified a cat in Budapest, Hungary, and then carried it about with many blasphemous words in derision and disdain of our Lord Jesus Christ[32] I say, if such

wicked and venomous crucifiers of God and of cats could believe, or if they, even without belief, would acknowledge grammatical truth in languages generally, they would declare: "Yes, you accursed Goyim, if it is true that the Seed of the woman is God and Man, then we would be well aware of this text, where Eve says: 'I have gotten the Man, Jehovah,' agrees uncommonly well with that idea, and we freely admit that the language would easily and precisely yield the meaning that this Son is that Man and God the Lord…" But since they cannot tolerate the truth that God became incarnate through a woman, this text and all of Scripture must be mistaken, or they must give it an entirely new face.[33]

Luther alluded to Genesis 22:18 and God's promise to Abraham that he would be a blessing to all the nations of the earth. He then observed that it was rather ironic that while God promised blessing to all people the Jews wished all non-Jewish people to be damned, while claiming to be the only children of God. As a blessing to all nations, Luther suggested, the "Seed of Abraham" could not be a mere man, but He must be the one true and natural God, who alone would be able to administer such a blessing.

Luther spoke of one more reference in particular, Exodus 33, and concluded that the Lord was speaking to Moses of two distinct persons—Father and Son. He concluded that Moses' words surely reflected a Christian interpretation, confirming the teachings of the New Testament, and motivating him then to want to "free the whole Hebrew Bible for the Jews from their shameful and blasphemous commentaries."[34] He suggested that Christians do the following as they attempted to persuade those who do not believe in the Trinity and deity of Christ:

This is what we will do: We will go to them and dine with them. Their kitchen and cellar are better stocked than ours. They can offer us meat and drink in abundance and dine us sumptuously. In other words: Let each one take the prophets in hand, read them diligently, and note where the Lord, Jehovah, Jesus Christ, speaks distinctively and where He is spoken of. You have now heard that it is He who speaks with Moses on Mount Sinai, who guides Moses and the people, and who performs miracles. And although He does not act alone here, but the Father and Holy Spirit work with Him and do the same work, He nevertheless reveals Himself in those words and deeds to show that He is a Person distinct from the Father in the one, divine essence. And whoever observes so much in Scripture (which not everybody does) that he notices where one Person speaks of the other, indicating that there are more than one present, will soon discern which is the Person of the Father and which is that of the Son. And if you have mastered the distinction of the Father and the Son, then the distinctive presence of the Holy Spirit is also established immediately.[35]

Luther summarized his thoughts by concluding that the Scriptures, both Old and New Testament, plainly taught the doctrine of the Trinity. This was so important to understand because the Scriptures, Luther said, were given for the sake of the Messiah, who was sent as our remedy to remove sin, death, and wrath, while restoring innocence, life, paradise, and heaven.[36]

When confronted by some of the objections to this teaching on the part of the Jews and the Turks, Luther responded with justifiable sarcasm:

The Jews and Turks presume to be extraordinarily smart, supersmart, and look down upon us Christians great dolts. If Christ is God, they say, how can He die like a man, for God is immortal? If He is man, how can He be God's Son, for God has no wife? Here the saying is pertinent: Money implies honor, said the frog, and sat down on a penny. Here these wise, yes, wise, wiser, wisest people, the Turks and the Jews, teach us that God cannot die and that He has no wife. How could we stupid Christians ever acquire such profound wisdom if these great and supergreat teachers would not instruct us, apprising us silly ducks and geese of the fact that God has no wife and that He cannot die? It would not at all be surprising if the earth on which Jew or Turk deigns to tread would leap over the heavens, in awe of such wisdom, would tumble down with stars, suns, and moons, and fall to the feet

of Jew and Turk or into the abyss of hell; for it indeed reflects unfathomable wisdom that God has no wife and that He cannot die! O Lord God, Christians understand none of these things! Who would provide a wet nurse for God? Where would He get a nursemaid? Who would bury Him? Who would furnish the music and dance at His wedding? Who would read Requiem Mass for Him? Fie on us Christians to worship a mortal God and make Him a married man! Blessed, blessed are Mohammed and the rabbis who inform us otherwise! No, shame on you, you senseless Mohammed! Should you be called a prophet, who are such an uncouth block-head and ass?[37]

Luther went on to cite many of the Messianic prophecies pointing to the humiliation of Jesus. This, he pointed out, was nonsensical and stupid to Jews and Muslims. Reason did not allow such a thing, so it was to be expected that the Jews would find nothing of it in their writings, which focused on the external, or that Mohammed, who focused on the sensual, would find nothing of it in his Koran. The Christian, however, with humility would thank and praise his God for the blessings he received through Christ here in this life, and the punishment he would avoid at the time of death. Luther wrote:

Thanks and praise be to God in all eternity that we Christians know that Messiah is God s one eternal Son, whom He sent into the world to take our sins upon Himself, to die for us, and to vanquish death for us. He is both God s and Mary s Son in one undivided Person and in two distinct natures. The devil and his pander and whoremaster Mohammed and his Schamhaperists, the Jews, may be offended at this; they may blaspheme and curse (whoever cannot refrain), but all of them will tremble eternally for this in the depth of hell with howling and gnashing of teeth. God willing, that day is not far removed. Amen.[38]

Luther identified the Jewish writers of the New Testament and those Jews of the early church as being true Jews to whom all Christians should listen and whose example they should follow. They performed miracles and their words had helped govern the church for over 1,500 years. In contrast, the present-day Jews followed the example of those hard-hearted Jews of the Old Testament. They failed to interpret properly the writings of the prophets, and instead perverted everything blaspheming, cursing, murdering, and telling lies against the true Jews.

Near the end of the treatise Luther finally returned to the subject at hand, admitting that he had digressed and meandered enough. With regard to verses six and seven, which spoke of the sons of Beliel who were like thorns that are thrown away, Luther commented that David was speaking of those Jews who would not accept Jesus Christ as the Messiah. Luther contended that David was speaking in the spirit and about the kingdom of Christ and the ultimate judgment that would come upon all who reject Him. Regarding them Luther observes sadly:

Neither God s benefactions nor His miracles could convert them and cannot convert them now; but with the iron and spear of the Romans they were ejected and consumed with physical fire together with their city in their own dwelling. Over and above that, wherever they are in exile, they are still burning within themselves with the spiritual fire of divine wrath.[39]

Luther concluded the entire writing with these words:

Let this be my translation and exposition of David s last words according to my own views. May God grant that our theologians boldly apply themselves to the study of Hebrew and retrieve the Bible for us from those rascally thieves. And may they improve on my work. They must not become captive to the rabbis and their tortured grammar and false interpretation. Then we will again find and recognize our dear Lord and Savior clearly and distinctly in Scripture. To Him, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be glory and honor in eternity. Amen.[40]

ENDNOTES

[1] Cf. *Journal of Theology*, "Studies in Luther: Luther's Relationship with and Writings about the Jews, Parts 1-2; Volume 39:1 (March 1999) and Volume 39:4 (December 1999).

[2] *Luther's Works*, American Edition, 45:229.

[3] The author is unaware of any English translation of this treatise. Those portions presented in this essay will be the author's translation unless otherwise noted. The German script will be reproduced in the footnotes from the St. Louis Edition of *Luthers Saemmtliche Schriften* with references to the Weimar Edition provided.

[4] Weimar Ausgabe 53:579; St. Louis Edition 20:2030, "...das Deutsche...zu warnen, unsern Glauben zu stärken and zu ehren; nicht die Juden zu bekehren, welches ebenso möglich ist, als den Teufel zu bekehren."

[5] WA:53:582; St. Louis Ed.:20:2032, *"ein Hurenkind."*

[6] WA 53:581-586; St. Louis Ed. 20:2031-2035.

[7] WA 53:589; St. Louis Ed. 20:2038, "Willst du nun ein frommer treuer Jude werden, so ergib dich, wie gesagt, daß du glaubest, was die Rabbinene sage, es sei wider Gott, Vernunft, Engel oder alle Creaturen. Denn hie hörst du, daß ein Jude soll glauben, es sei die rechte Hand nicht die rechte Hand, wenn's ein Rabbi sagt. Gott hat wohl gesagt, ja, er hat's durch sein ewiges Wort geschaffen, geordnet und genannt, daß die rechte Hand solle sein and heißen die rechte Hand, wie es all Engel und Creatur bekennen. Aber solches mag wohl die Wahrheit sein, bis ein Rabbi dazu kommt und spricht, nein, es sei nicht also, sondern was ich die rechte Hand heiße, das ist die rechte Hand. Was sollte Gottes Wort und Werk sammt aller Engel und Creatur Zeugniß sein wider einen Rabbi, der so weit höher und besser ist, weder Gott und all Creatur?"

[8] WA 53:596-597; St. Louis Ed. 20:2045-2047.

[9] Brecht, Martin, *Martin Luther—the Preservation of the Church,* Volume III (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993) 347. Zurich theologians commented that the book was only worthy of a swineherd, not of a great shepherd of souls.

[10] Brecht, 346f. Translated by James L. Schaaf. WA 20:600; St. Louis Ed. 20:2050f.

[11] WA 20:608; St. Louis Ed. 20:2060.

[12] WA 20:609; St. Louis Ed. 20:2061, "Denn sie brauchen's doch Gott zu Schanden, der Schrift zu Unehren, and ihnen selbst zum Verdammniß."

[13] WA 20:620; St. Louis Ed. 20:2074, "...hievon reden und wissen wir, so rechte Christen sind; denn auch der Pabst mit seiner Kirche hievon nichts wieß, achtet sein auch nicht. Die Juden wissen eben so viel davon, als ein Sau vom Psalter."

[14] WA 53:622; St. Louis Ed. 20:2076, "Denn erstlich ist ja das gewiß, daß sie nicht verstehen die Verheißungen von Messia. Zum andern verstehen sie nicht die zehn Gebote, weil ohne Messia die nicht können verstanden werden. Zum dritten können sie nicht verstehen, was die Ceremonien meinen. Dazu, weil nun das Preisterthum gefallen, verstehen sie auch nicht wohl die Weise oder Larve der Ceremonien. Zum vierten versteht kein Jude die edlen köstlichen Exempel oder Leben der Väter, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaak, Jakob, Joseph, David, Summa, des ganzen Volks Israel."

[15] It does not appear that Luther ever considered a more simple approach to this issue, that is, that Matthew is presenting Joseph's family background, while Luke presents Mary's family line.

[16] WA 53:631; St. Louis Ed. 20:2087.

[17] WA 53:634; St. Louis Ed. 20:2091. Note: Luther mentions that "almah" is found four times in the Old Testament. *Young's Analytical Concordance of the Bible* lists a total of seven such instances.

[18] WA 53:637; St. Louis Ed. 20:2094.

[19] WA 53:642; St. Louis Ed. 20:2100, "Also sind wir auch Kinder, aus dem Heiligen Geist empfangen und geboren, Christo gleich, ohn daß wir aus Gnaden und um seinetwillen dazu

kommen; er aber hat's seiner Person halben, darum, daß er, Gottes Sohn, nicht durft anderweit geboren werden, ist in der alten Geburt der Sünden und Todes nicht gesteckt, wie wir verlorne Adamskinder."

[20] WA 53:644; St. Louis Ed. 20:2103.

[21] WA 53:648; St. Louis Ed. 20:2108-2109, "Welche sich bekehren wollen, da gebe Gott seine Gnade zu, daß sie (doch etliche) mit uns erkennen und loben Gott den Vater, unsern Schöpfer, sammt unserm Herrn Jesu Christo, und dem Heiligen Geist in Ewigkeit. Amen."

[22] WA 53:648; St. Louis Ed. 20:2108.

[23] LW, 15:267-269.

[24] LW, 15:271-272.

[25] LW, 15:273.

[26] LW, 15:278.

[27] LW, 15:283.

[28] LW, 15:290.

[29] LW, 15:292.

[30] LW, 15:297.

[31] LW, 15:314f.

[32] There is no outside confirmation available to substantiate this report.

[33] LW, 15:321.

[34] LW, 15:329.

[35] LW, 15:335f.

[36] LW, 15:338.

[37] LW, 15:340.

[38] LW, 15:342f.

[39] LW, 15:352.

[40] LW, 15:352.

(To be continued)