



Luther
and the
Scriptures

by
DR. M. REU

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Heinrich C. Reu

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WARTBURG SEMINARY

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PREFACE

At a time when the question of the inspiration of the Bible is again in the foreground it seems well to inquire about Luther's position in this respect. There exists no treatise upon this question in the English language which rests on the sources and takes all aspects into consideration; and most of the numerous German publications on this subject are not entirely free from a certain bias. So I tried to step in and to give to the church what it needs; I leave it to her scholars to decide in what measure I succeeded. If only this would be recognized that one can maintain "verbal inspiration" and at the same time reject the theory of dictation, not a little would be accomplished, because the assumption that these two are identical seems to be nearly ineradicable. Luther maintained the first and rejected the second.

This treatise is based upon lectures delivered in 1938 at the Luther Academy at Dubuque, Iowa. They, however, are here much enlarged, and the extensive *Notes* appended are entirely new.

The text itself is kept free from Latin quotations in order that every one who is not familiar with this language can follow with ease. The *Notes*, however, are primarily for the scholar who is not frightened when he meets a few Latin sentences. The quotations from *Flacius' Clavis Scripturae* and, especially, from Osiander's *Gospel Harmony* are extraordinarily ex-

tensive because these books are so eminently rare in our country.

About one-fourth of the quotations from Luther have been translated by my colleague, Dr. J. C. Mattes.

A book like this is necessary although it does not sell rapidly; all the more I am thankful that our Wartburg Press finally decided to undertake its publication.

Wartburg Seminary,
January, 1943.

M. REU.

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LUTHER AND THE SCRIPTURES

1. INTRODUCTION

Luther and the Scriptures — this covers a large area. For this reason it will be well at once to eliminate those phases of the question which will not be considered.

We shall not enlarge upon the question as to when Luther first came into direct contact with the Bible. This question is carefully considered in our book *Luther's German Bible*.¹ There it is shown that at Magdeburg, while he was a pupil fourteen years of age, Luther purchased a "Postil," which in those days, as a rule, contained some 500 Biblical pericopes; that already in Magdeburg, or at least in Erfurt a little later, he saw a complete Latin Bible; that since 1501, when he took up his residence in the "Georgenburse" at Erfurt, a hospice for students, he daily heard a chapter from the Bible read and sometimes himself read a chapter at table; that in 1505, as he entered the cloister, he received his own Latin Bible, a copy bound in red leather, which he later most lovingly remembered; that he read the same daily with great zeal and acquired a most extraordinary knowledge of its contents; that, indeed, when in 1508 he was transferred to Wittenberg, he was obliged to leave his copy in the cloister at Erfurt, but found

other copies in Wittenberg, which in obedience to the regulations of the Augustinians he used daily; that in 1509 as a *Baccalaureus Biblicus* he took up the work of an instructor to introduce a class to the understanding of the Bible; and that in October, 1512, the *Lectura in Biblia* was entrusted to him for the rest of his life, and that from 1513 to his end he regularly delivered exegetical lectures.

Nor are we at this time interested in the question as to when Luther began to use the original text of the Scriptures in place of the Vulgate as the basis for his exegetical work. We know that soon after the appearance of Reuchlin's *Rudimenta* of the Hebrew language, 1506, he took up the study of Hebrew; that in his marginal notes to the *Sententiae* of Lombardus from 1509 onward he began almost imperceptibly to use what he had learned until this time; that the *Hebraeus*, to which he refers at various times in his lectures on the Psalms, 1513-1515, was nothing else than the Latin translation of the Hebrew original by Jerome and not the Hebrew original itself; but that, when he acquired the *Septem Psalmi Penitentiales* of 1512 by Reuchlin, where he found the Penitential Psalms in Hebrew with a Latin translation and brief grammatical expositions, he made use of this in connection with the above-mentioned *Hebraeus*; that when he wrote his exposition of the Penitential Psalms intended for the laity, 1517, he ceased to regard the Vulgate as authoritative and used the Hebrew text in Reuchlin's edition instead, though

we cannot as yet claim that the Hebrew original was now the basis of his exposition; but that this was the case when in 1519 he began to deliver his second series of lectures on the Psalms. Meanwhile he had received the edition of the whole Psalter in Hebrew, which appeared in 1516, as a present from his friend Johann Lang. Now he discloses a sufficient knowledge of the Hebrew actually to start out from the Hebrew original, and from this point onward it was and remained his principle: the Hebrew text is decisive.

We know that Luther took up the study of Greek at a date that followed his study of the Hebrew; that through his close association with Johann Lang, who had matriculated at Wittenberg in 1511 and remained as instructor in Greek until 1516, and later through Melanchthon, who had come to Wittenberg in 1518, he penetrated ever deeper into the knowledge of the same; that when Erasmus' edition of the Greek Testament, which first appeared in February, 1516, came to Wittenberg in August of that same year, he immediately used it and from that time onward made it basic for his lectures on Romans. This he continued during the years that followed. What an accurate knowledge of the Greek as well as of the Hebrew his work of Bible translation reveals is shown in detail in my above-mentioned book.²

And, furthermore, it is not my intention to present the evidence for the fact that Luther gradually relinquished the Middle-Age method of Bible expo-

sition and advanced to the only correct principle of exposition. We know that in 1513, when he began his lectures on the Psalms, he still operated with the fourfold sense of Scripture, the *sensus literalis*, *allegoricus*, *tropologicus*, and *anagogicus*, but that already in the course of his lectures he combined three of them into *one* and occasionally designated the *sensus literalis* as the *sensus primarius scripturae* behind which the *sensus tropologicus* must retreat. In his lectures on Romans, 1515-1516, and on Galatians, 1516-1517, this view becomes increasingly evident, and after 1519 his exposition is entirely controlled by the principle: Scripture has but *one* meaning, even though in his practical explanations of the Scriptures he still oftentimes pays tribute to the allegorical sense. He now declares in his writing against Emser, "Scripture shall not have a double meaning but shall retain the one that accords with the meaning by the words,"³ and again, "The Holy Ghost is the most simple author and speaker in heaven and earth, therefore His words cannot have more than one, the most simple meaning."⁴ In his Christmas Postil of 1522 he even writes, "If we concede that Scripture has more than one sense, it loses its fighting force."⁵

In the same year Luther emphasized the principle, "Scripture is its own interpreter," a principle which, incidentally, is repeatedly applied by him in his first series of lectures on the Psalms, and which today has become flesh and blood to us. At the Leipzig Disputation he stated: "That is not the right way

to interpret Scripture, to collect statements from different parts of the Bible without any regard for logical order or context. But that is the way it is commonly done, and it leads to nothing but errors. In order not to go wrong the theologian must, therefore, keep in mind the whole of Scriptures, compare the contradicting passages and as the two cherubim facing one another find the harmony of their mutual diversity in the center of the *propitiatorium*, that is, in the true understanding of Christ (*et contraria contrariis conferre et sicut duo Cherubim adversis cultibus utriusque diversitatis consensum in medio propitiatorii invenire*).”⁶

We shall not even spend time on the question as to which books Luther included in the New Testament canon, and how he arrived at the conclusion not to regard certain books as canonical, as to whether he was in this instance influenced by the position of Erasmus as well as by Cajetan — though we must touch upon this question as we proceed. We merely remark at this time that in his September Testament, 1522, in differentiation from his first exposition of the Psalms, in which he accepted all traditional books of the Vulgate, including the Epistle of James and the Old Testament Apocrypha, as canonical, he now does not regard the Epistle to the Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation as belonging to the canon.

And even less shall we attempt to show how Luther is given a totally new understanding of the contents of the Scriptures, so that in contradistinction

to the Middle Ages they became for him the message of Law and Gospel, and he found the heart of the same in Christ, the crucified and risen Lord. Thereby the Bible, hitherto a closed book, became the open Bible.⁷

We shall rather limit our subject in such a way that it shall deal with nothing but the question, *In which sense and to what extent was the Bible the authority for Luther*, with which Luther's opinion concerning inspiration is naturally inseparably conjoined.

2. SCRIPTURES BECOME THE SOLE AUTHORITY TO LUTHER

It stands to reason that Luther's attitude toward the Scriptures would be influenced by the fact that when he studied theology in the cloister at Erfurt, Erfurt and Vienna were the chief exponents of the *via moderna*, i. e., of Occamism, and that he also became an adherent of this trend of thought, especially also because the *Collectorium* of the Occamist Gabriel Biel was one of the most important textbooks studied by the young Luther. The Occamists, however, emphasized the authority of Scripture more strongly than did other Middle-Age theologians, though none of the latter denied it. They emphasized the facts that the Holy Scriptures are inspired of God, that they posit absolutely certain propositions of faith, that the Christian is obligated to believe only these, and that everyone who denies this faith must be regarded as a heretic.⁸ Whereas the advocates of the *via antiqua*, which had its chief bases in Cologne and in Leipzig, emphasized the use of the Scriptures for the edification of the masses,⁹ the Occamists were concerned chiefly with stressing the authority, the sole authority of the Scriptures. It was taught that if we desire to have a firm foundation that is strong enough to bear the load, we must turn to the Holy Scrip-

tures which have come into existence through inspiration. Occam emphatically declares: "What is not contained in the Scriptures, or cannot with necessary and obvious consistency be deduced from the contents of the same, no Christian needs to believe."¹⁰ and d'Ailli added, "A declaration of the canonical Scripture is of greater authority than an assertion of the Christian Church."¹¹

Yet this viewpoint could not produce evangelical and reformatory results, since despite all its emphasis and the decided assertion that only accordance with the Scriptures renders truths of faith obligatory, the conviction nevertheless obtained that the teaching of the Church and the teaching of Scripture are identical, and Occam insistently recognized not the Pope but the Church as the final judge of the question as to whether his understanding of the Scriptures is correct, for in the Preface to his *Compendium Errorum Papae* he confesses: "If I should have written something in this work which is contrary to Holy Writ or the teachings of the saints, or the assertions of the Most Holy Church, I submit myself and my words to correction by the Catholic Church — not the Church of malignants, or heretics, or schismatics and their protectors."¹² Though Occam thus ascribed to the Church as a whole this position as judge, which Church must then somehow function through a Council, there is noticeable in the Occamists in Erfurt a departure from this position, namely to the extent that in place of the Church as a whole, which func-

tions through a Council, they, in contradistinction to their leader, accepted the Pope as the spokesman of the Church universal.¹³ If we then note in Luther a strong emphasis on the authority of the Scriptures, indeed the sole authority of the Scriptures, this does not as yet present a new understanding unless there is coupled with it a disavowal of the other statement, that the teaching of Scripture is self-evidently identical with the teaching of the Church, and that the Council or the Pope as the spokesmen of the Church must pronounce the final judgment as to what is Scripture teaching and what not, as Luther in his letter of May 9, 1518, to his teacher Trutvetter gratefully declares that he taught him, "that religious teachings (*Glaubenslehren*) can be based only upon the canonical books, and that these above all others must have precedence."¹⁴ We shall, therefore, have to trace just how Luther gradually perfected this realization and thereby in truth advanced to the assertion of the sole authority of the Scriptures.

Luther's first statements concerning this matter we find in the *marginal notes* written by him in his personal copy of the Sentences of Lombardus, which, in 1510, as a *Sententiarius* he was called upon to teach. Here we find statements such as the following: "But you, dear reader, whoever you may be, take this as the word of a simple man: no one has ever yet had the experience that the vapors of the earth have illuminated the heavens, but rather that they hold back the light from the earth. By that I want to say that

theology is heaven, or, to put it still better, the kingdom of heaven. Man is the earth, and his speculations are the vapors; now understand the rest and see for what reason there are such great differences of opinion among the doctors. Note, too, that a swine has never been able to teach Minerva even though it often imagines that it can.”¹⁵ “All light must come from revelation, the human understanding is unable to understand supernatural matters.” “For since no one has seen them, whatever is added to revelation is certainly nothing but human invention.” “Arguments based on reason determine nothing, but because the Holy Ghost says it is true, it is true.”¹⁶ In connection with a disputed question Luther affirms: “Though many famous doctors hold this opinion, yet they do not have Scripture on their side but only arguments of reason. But I have the words of Scripture on my side in this opinion that the soul is the image of God, and so I say with the Apostle, ‘Though an angel from heaven, that is, a doctor of the Church, teaches otherwise let him be anathema!’” These declarations could also have been made by Occam and by d’Ailli. They do not as yet necessarily go beyond the opinion and the judgment of the *doctores*, i. e., the teachers of the Church, concerning the Scriptures. It was still an open question whether Luther would be willing to set the authority of the Scriptures, here maintained by him, in opposition not only to this or that statement of Middle-Age or other teachers of

the Church, but also to individual statements of the commonly accepted teaching of the Church.

Luther's *Lectures on the Psalms*, 1513-1515,^{16a} contain many declarations concerning the Scriptures. "What pasture is to the beast . . . , the nest for the birds, the stream for fish, the Scriptures are for believing souls.¹⁷ To the arrogant, of course, they are a stumblingblock;¹⁸ he will have nothing to do with them, since they offer him nothing.¹⁹ But to him who approaches the Scriptures with humility they open themselves²⁰ and themselves produce humility,²¹ change man from a desperate sinner into a child of God. They give everything which the soul needs,²² and it is to tempt God, if anyone will not be satisfied with the Scriptures. They are the fountain from which one must dip.²³ Each word of the same is a source which affords an inexhaustible abundance of water to everyone who thirsts after the saving doctrine.²⁴ God's will is completely contained therein, so that we must constantly go back to them. Nothing should be presented which is not confirmed by the authority of both Testaments and agrees with them.²⁵ It cannot be otherwise, for the Scriptures are divine; in them God speaks and they are His Word."²⁶ In his lectures on the Psalms Luther regards the expressions, "God speaks," and, "the Scriptures speak," as convertible. To hear or to read the Scriptures is nothing else than to hear God.²⁷ They are His sanctuary in which He is present. Therefore we dare not despise one single word of the Scripture for "all its

words are weighed, counted, and measured.”²⁸ The prophets who spoke or wrote the Word were the organs of the Spirit;²⁹ that is the precious fact that in them God himself is heard. For this reason we read in the Prophets, “The Word of the Lord came to me.” This is the friendliest and most intimate inspiration there is.³⁰ Every word of the Scriptures must be precious to us because it comes from the mouth of God, is written for us, preserved for us, and will be proclaimed to the end of days.³¹ Why in one place we read so and not otherwise can be understood only by him who will permit himself to be guided by God.³² How unconditionally Luther accepted the authority of the Scriptures is evident from the fact that he is willing to accept things as true and real which in any legend would be rejected as absurd, if they are covered by a word of Scripture.³³ No one should prefer his own opinion to that of the Scripture even if it seems much more plausible.³⁴

And yet Luther did not at this time regard the Scriptures as the sole authority. On one occasion he declares without equivocation that understanding of the Scriptures does not as yet guarantee the truth.³⁵ Heretics have also always appealed to Scripture and yet have fallen into erroneous ways. At this time he can even write that God did not put His Spirit into the letters but into the ecclesiastical officeholders, and to this view can apply Deut. 32:7, we must hear truth from their lips.³⁶ To the Church, as it progresses in understanding, will be revealed new truths. For this

reason only that which is authentic and canonized should be preached.³⁷ To the Church and the Church Fathers Luther still surrenders the right of his own and independent understanding of Scripture.

This remained Luther's attitude also during his *Lectures on Romans*, 1515-1516, although we now see most clearly how his relation to Scripture is growing ever more intimate and that he declares it as his mission to oppose philosophy and to "stimulate the study of the Scriptures."³⁸ And, indeed, at the University of Wittenberg the study of the scholastics retreated ever more into the background. On May 18, 1517, Luther could write to his friend Lang: "Our theology and St. Augustine now prosper and reign at our university. Aristotle is losing more and more; the lectures on the *Sententiae* are discredited. Only he can expect to have hearers who lectures about the Bible or Augustine or some other recognized teacher of the Church."³⁹ In his synodical sermon, which he wrote, not in 1512 as the Weimar Edition assumes, but in 1516 for the Provost of Leitzkau, he energetically declares that the work of pastors is the study and the preaching of Scripture. Here we read: "Therefore in this honorable meeting you may resolve many things and order everything well, but if you do not insist that it is commanded for priests, as the teachers of the people, to do away with all unauthentic legendary matter and to concentrate only on the holy Gospel and the holy exponents of the holy Gospel, to proclaim with a sacred reverence the Word

of truth to the people and omit at last all speculations of men, or add them only in moderation, setting forth their difference, and thus faithfully labor for the birth from God — I say, if you will not devote yourselves to this with increasing zeal, then I say to you in all frankness everything else will be as nothing. For that is the chief thing that matters, that is the essence of a genuine reformation, that is the very soul of all piety.”⁴⁰ In general there is evident in the sermons preached before the posting of the Theses, as far as they have been preserved, a strong emphasis on the Word as the Means of Grace. In the sermon of Oct. 5, 1516, even this sentence is found, “faith surrenders itself captive to the Word of Christ”⁴¹ — surely a strong emphasis on the authority of Scripture. And yet in addition to this the Pope, the Church and its accredited teachers, and the Councils are authorities, that claim recognition whenever the true understanding of Scripture is concerned. This view he shared until September, 1517, for then he concludes the powerful 97 Theses against scholastic theology with the words, “Herewith we would say nothing and believe we have said nothing which does not harmonize with the Catholic Church and the Church teachers.”⁴²

The developments between 1518 and 1520 helped Luther to divorce himself more and more from these authorities and to advance to the assertion of the sole authority of the Scriptures. Of special influence in this matter was the fact that the Pope through Prierias entered the lists of the defenders of

the indulgence traffic, the meeting of Luther with Cajetan in Augsburg, and his disputation with Eck in Leipzig. It would be most interesting to trace this development step by step and to note how progressive study of the Scriptures and the whole course of events, in a way, forced Luther to follow this course. Space forbids. I shall have to limit myself to the most important facts.⁴³

In his *Acta Augustana*, 1518, Luther writes, "One thing should not be concealed from you, that in this disputation nothing is sought but the clear meaning of Scripture."⁴⁴ In a letter to Staupitz dated September 1, 1518, Luther expresses his joy over the fact that the young theologians are filled with zeal for the Holy Scriptures.⁴⁵ In a writing, *Concerning Freedom of the Sermon, Papal Indulgence, and Grace*, June, 1518, we read, "Even though all saintly teachers had maintained this or that, it would mean nothing over against a single statement of Holy Scripture."⁴⁶ In the fall of that same year, soon after his meeting with Cajetan, Luther publicly appealed to a future general Council.⁴⁷ *Thereby the Pope was eliminated as an authority apart from and above the Scriptures.* During the first weeks of December he published his *Appellatio ad Concilium*. This contains the sentence, "The power of the Pope is not something opposed to nor above but for and under the majesty of Scriptures and truth."⁴⁸ In his exposition of the 110th Psalm that same year Luther emphasized the

fact that the Word of God alone is the power to overcome the world.⁴⁹

We come to the year 1519. On March 5, in connection with the Miltitz affair, Luther wrote: "It was never my intention to secede from the Apostolic Roman See; indeed, I am satisfied that the Pope should be called or even should be the lord of all. What business is it of mine? For I know that we must honor and tolerate even the Turk because of his power, and because I know, as Peter says, that there is no power save one that is ordained by God. But I am active for my faith in Christ, that they may not treat His Word as they please and contaminate it. Let the Roman decretals leave me the pure gospel and take away all else, I will not move a hair."⁵⁰ With this statement compare what the Reformer declared in 1522 when looking back at this time: "Now at first I dealt with this accursed abomination modestly, quietly, nicely, would have been glad to have popery and help it be something; except that I would have the Scriptures pure and clean and certain; did not yet know that it was *opposed* to the Scriptures but thought only that it was *without* the Scriptures like other secular government established by men."⁵¹

The disputation with Eck, 1519, especially led Luther ever farther on this course. *Now he also divorced himself from the authority of the Councils.* When he denied their infallibility he advanced from their fallibility to the infallible Scripture as the sole decisive norm for everything that wanted to be

accepted as divine truth, and thereby without more ado he identified Scripture and the Word of God. Thus in his *Disputatio J. Eckii et Mart. Lutheri*⁵² he applied the admonition of Paul, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good," to the decrees of Popes and Councils and expressly said of them that they have erred, but that Holy Scripture is the inerrant Word of God (*verbum Dei infallibile*). At this time, in connection with the daring statement that among the articles of Hus there were many perfectly Christian and evangelical articles which the Council at Constance had unjustly condemned, he also said: "A faithful Christian *cannot be forced beyond the Holy Scriptures* which are really the *divine law* (*jus divinum*) unless a new and authentic revelation is added; indeed, we are *prohibited by the divine law* from believing something that is not proved by the divine Writing or clear revelation."⁵³

At this time Luther also uttered the lofty statement that the authority of Scripture is far above the rational capacity of the entire human race, "The statement of all writings (*sc.* of the Fathers) must be judged according to the divine Writ, whose authority is greater than the powers of perception of the entire human race."^{53a} Since in this connection he was forced to express himself especially also concerning the statements of the Fathers, he continues, this I do not say "because I condemn the opinions of these so famous Fathers but because I imitate them, who come next to the Scriptures, and especially when the Scripture is

clear, cling to the Scripture itself.”⁵⁴ On the last day of the disputation Luther’s last sentence was a confession of the authority of the Scriptures, for he concluded with an expression of his sorrow over the fact that Eck did not penetrate any deeper into Scripture than the insect into water when it passes over it, indeed, that he flees from it like the devil from the cross, while he himself with all due reverence for the Fathers prefers the authority of Scripture.⁵⁵

Luther again speaks of the infallibility of Scripture in *Contra malignum J. Eckii judicium M. Lutheri Defensio*, which left the press on September 30, 1519. In the preface he refers to the statement of Augustine, “I have learned to ascribe this honor (namely the infallibility) only to books which are termed canonical, so that I confidently believe that not one of their authors erred,” and continues, “but the other authors, no matter how distinguished by great sanctity and teaching, I read in this way, that I do not regard them as true because they themselves judged in this wise but in so far as they could convince me through the authority of the canonical writings or other clear deductions.”⁵⁶ The same year, in his *Operationes in Psalmos*, Luther uttered the famous declaration: “Who is the Pope, what is the world, who is the prince of this world, that I should deny the truth of the gospel for their sake? Let him live who lives; let him perish who perishes; I will, if God gives me grace, always think so.”⁵⁷ In December he wrote to Dungersheim: “In this man-

ner I desire that the superiority of the Roman See be maintained, if necessary, although, as I said, neither at Leipzig was I able to demonstrate this, nor am I able today, nor to show any text of Scripture to those who oppose it. For thus I have no fear lest, in case a fight arises with heretics, we be exposed to mockery for having relied on our commentaries and for having spoken without the authority of Scripture. For the devil does not fear the reed of Egypt but the sword of the spirit. In this matter you and all others would greatly please me by examining the words of the Fathers in the light of Scripture, as we read in Acts (17:11) that even Paul's words were received by men who examined the Scriptures to see whether these things were so. You and Eck are accustomed to accommodate the words of the Bible to the words of the Fathers as though they did not desire to draw us to the Bible rather than to themselves. But contrariwise, it is my custom, following the example of Augustine, reverently rather *to follow up the stream to the source*, as Bernard boasts that he did."⁵⁸

Let me mention at least a few testimonies from the year 1520. In June, Luther wrote to the same Dungersheim, "We wish to be judged by Scripture; you wish to judge it . . . If the Fathers are to be read without selection and judgment, the Scripture is taken away."⁵⁹ In his writing, *Concerning the Papacy at Rome against the most famous Romanist at Leipzig*, which appeared toward the end of June, we read: "I merely contend for two things, the first,

I will not permit men to posit new articles of faith and scold, defame, and judge all other Christians as heretics, renegades, infidels only because they do not submit to the Pope. It is enough that we let the Pope be Pope (in which sense this is to be understood he clearly states in the foregoing); it is not necessary that God and His saints on earth are blasphemed for his sake. The other, everything that the Pope claims, makes, and does will I receive in this wise that I will first examine it according to the Holy Scripture. It must remain under Christ and be judged by Scripture. Where these two remain, I will let the Pope remain, yes, exalt him as highly as we may ever will; where not, I will regard him neither as Pope nor as Christian.”⁶⁰ On October 6 Luther’s powerful essay, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, appeared. In this, among other things, he rejects the doctrine of transubstantiation, as championed by Thomas Aquinas, and declares that he no longer shares it since he has learned “that the opinions of the Thomists, whether confirmed by Pope or Council, remain only *opinions* and do not become articles of faith even though an angel from heaven so ordered it. For what is maintained without the Scriptures, or without confirmed revelation, may be *opined* but need not be *believed*.”⁶¹ Again, in the article *De Ordine*,⁶² we not only read, “Councils have erred many times, especially the one at Constance,” but also, “This must be maintained, *that everything which we praise as an article of faith is confirmed clearly and purely and*

with evident testimony of Scripture, but that is something which we cannot do with the sacrament in question.” In regard to the Church Luther says in the same writing: “The Church also has no power to establish new divine promises of grace, as some foolishly speak, that everything which the Church ordains is of no lesser authority than that which is ordained of God, since she is guided by the Holy Spirit. For the Church comes into being through the word of promise through faith . . . God’s Word stands incomparably high above the Church, in this Word she, as a creature, cannot resolve, order, or execute but can only be resolved, ordered, and carried out. For who generates his father, who has first called his Creator into being?”⁶³ In his *Assertio omnium Articulorum*, published in the middle of January, 1521, Luther again repeats that he “most surely would not permit himself to be forced by the authority of any St. Peter, however great it may be, unless it is confirmed by the judgment of the divine Scripture,”⁶⁴ and declares in a rather extensive way that the explanation of the Fathers cannot bind him in his explanation of the Scriptures. Scripture is the *primum principium*; it is “in itself the *most certain, the most accessible, the most readily understandable* (book) *which interprets itself* and approves, judges, and illumines all (words) of all.” It must “reign as queen.”^{64a} On Good Friday, March 29 of the same year, Luther had completed his well-deserved coarse answer to Emser. Here he called *the Holy Ghost* the

most lucid writer and speaker whose writings do not need the help of church and tradition in order to be understood correctly if they are only taken in their literal sense.^{64b}

It was only the culmination point of this whole development when on April 18 he gave his famous answer in Worms: “Unless I am convinced by testimony from Scripture or evident reason (*convictus testimoniis Scripturae aut ratione evidente*) — for I believe neither the Pope nor the Councils alone, since it is established that they have often erred and contradicted themselves — I am conquered by the writings (i. e., passages from Scripture) cited by me, and my conscience is captive to the Word of God; recant I will and can nothing, since it is neither safe nor honest to do ought against conscience.”⁶⁵ This once forever established the *Sola Scriptura*.

This word of Luther spoken at Worms has often, unfortunately, been misconstrued. It has been inferred from it that Luther here demanded an unrestricted liberty of thought and conscience, according to which there is no such thing as an objective authority outside of ourselves, and man is responsible to no one but himself, his own subjective, arbitrary conscience. It is not to be denied that natural man would find his greatest delight in such an absolute freedom of thought and conscience, just as such freedom sooner or later always leads to a dissolution of morality and religion but never serves to fortify the same. Such unrestricted individualism, centering only in

itself, divorced from all objective authority, was, perhaps, advocated by Italian humanism but never by Luther. This needs no further proof even though historians like Harnack saw fit to write: "The Reformation protested against *all* formal, external authority in matters of religion. Thus Luther also protested against the authority of the letter of the Bible."⁶⁶ Whoever appeals to the confession of Luther at Worms in support of this deliberately closes his eyes to the fact that Luther expressly declared, "my conscience *is captive to the Word of God.*" Here that authority is posited before which even conscience must bow. Wilhelm Walther truthfully says: "It never entered the mind of Luther to deny *all* authority in the Church. Rather, by dethroning the mass of false authorities to which men bowed during the Catholic period, he enthroned another authority as the only one duly authenticated. Indeed, only to this end did he militate against the infallibility of the Church Fathers, Popes, Councils, and universities with such force, to make room for the 'Empress' who alone is worthy of all sovereignty, the Holy Scripture. Anyone to whom this must first be proved lacks even elementary knowledge in the field of the history of the Reformation."⁶⁷

It might be more readily understood when some infer from Luther's words at Worms that at that time he recognized two sources of religious knowledge, namely, Scripture and human reason, for he said, *convictus testimoniis scripturarum aut ratione*

evidente. To him *ratio* is usually human reason. Some took up this discovery with great joy and diligently examined it with the more innocent intention thereby to note a progress in Luther's development between Worms and his sojourn in the Wartburg and to establish the fact that in the solitude of the Wartburg he came to the conviction, *Sola Scriptura*. Others did so because they were reluctant to listen to Scripture alone and preferred to have their own reason accepted as the source of religious knowledge. For them it was a comfortable thought to shield themselves, as it seemed, behind Luther. If after the Diet at Worms Luther did speak a different language and accepted Scripture as the sole source of all religious knowledge, that could be interpreted as a step backward, and they could present themselves as the advocates of true progress. It is well known how Harnack loved to differentiate between high points and unfortunate regressions in the position of Luther. When he was at the high points he was free from every bondage of the letter, but when he regressed he again bowed to the sovereignty of the Scriptures and did so to such an extent that there was no longer any elbowroom for the human *ratio*.⁶⁸

But this opinion is wholly untenable for two reasons: It is neither permitted by Luther's usage of language, nor by his position toward Scripture before or after the Diet of Worms. Luther's way of speaking does not permit it, for Hans Preuss has most profoundly shown,⁶⁹ that for him *ratio* is not only a term

to designate the capacity to think, nor is it by any means only the designation of the reason of the natural, unregenerated man and in so far the antithesis to the Spirit of God, to grace, and the gospel, but that *ratio* is also often used by him in the sense of logical deduction or the logical cause. Luther's demand at Worms then means that he must be convinced from testimonies of Scripture or through logically correct deductions from such testimony before he can retract. That merely corresponds with his attitude toward the Scriptures before and after Worms. For Luther the question at Worms, as we have shown above, was this, whether the Pope, the Church, the Church Fathers, the Councils merit consideration as being authoritative in addition to or beyond the Scriptures, but never did he entertain the thought whether the *ratio* of man can be considered as such. Quite the contrary, his battle against Aristotle and his influence upon theology was at the same time a determined fight against every attempt to permit the human *ratio* in any wise whatsoever to be accepted as an authority in matters of faith.

Now only a few quotations to show that this would have been in diametrical opposition to what Luther, immediately *after* Worms, expressed concerning his attitude toward Scripture. On April 28, thus ten days later, he wrote his well-known letter to Emperor Charles. In this Luther reports: "The Chancellor of Baden and Dr. Peutingen also labored with me, and I again proposed, as formerly, provided

only that I were instructed by Scripture or plain conclusions (*ut per literas divinas aut evidenti ratione docerer*). Finally it was agreed that I should concede and entrust some selected articles to the judgment of an ecumenical Council. But I, who was always humble and zealously ready to do and to suffer all that in me lay, could not obtain *this one concession*, this most Christian prayer, *that the Word of God should remain free and unbound*, and that I should submit my books to your Sacred Majesty and the Estates of the Empire on that condition, nor that in yielding to the decree of a Council I should not submit to anything contrary to the gospel of God, nor should they make any such decree. *This was the crux of the whole controversy.*” Luther then continues: “For God, the searcher of hearts, is my witness that I am most ready to submit to and obey your Majesty either in life or in death, to glory or to shame, for gain or for loss. As I have offered myself, thus I do now, *excepting nothing save the Word of God*, in which not only (as Christ teaches in Matthew 4) does man live, but which also the angels of Christ desire to see (I Peter 1). *As it is above all things it ought to be held free and unbound in all*, as Paul teaches (II Timothy 2:9). *It ought not to depend on human judgment nor to yield to the opinion of men, no matter how great, how numerous, how learned, and how holy they are.* Thus does St. Paul in Galatians. I dare to exclaim with emphasis, ‘If we or an angel from heaven teach you another gospel, let him be anath-

ema,' and David says, 'Put not your trust in princes, in the sons of men, in whom is no safety,' Ps. 146:3. Nor is anyone able to trust in himself, as Solomon says, 'He is a fool who trusts in his heart'; Prov. 28:26, and Jeremiah 17, 'Cursed is he who trusteth in man' . . . For to trust in man in matters of salvation is to give to the creature the glory due to the Creator alone."⁷⁰

Not long after he had been brought from Worms to Wittenberg Luther wrote the treatise, *On Confession, whether the Pope has the power to command it* (not published until September). This reflects the word spoken at Worms on practically every page. Thus the Reformer says for instance in connection with Deut. 4:2, "But what is 'to add' (*zutun*) other than to teach more, and 'take away' (*abtun*) than to teach less than the Scriptures teach? It cannot be said of the exposition, for the exposition makes neither more nor less but interprets what is written. Is that not a clear statement said against all men? What are the laws of the Pope other than mere additions, concerning which the Scriptures give the devil a special name, and call him in Hebrew 'Leviathan,' i. e., one who adds to, who makes a thing more than it ought to be. Hence all who add man's laws to God's law are most surely the enemies of God and disciples of Leviathan."⁷¹ In connection with Isaiah 1:22, "To pour water into wine is to add man's teachings to God's Word, likewise to sell froth for silver."⁷² In connection with Jeremiah 23:16, "O pope, O bishop, O par-

son, O monks, O theologians, how can you get by here? Do you think it is a small matter when lofty Majesty forbids what does not come from the mouth of God and something else that is not God's Word?" "God's Word is so hard that it will suffer no additions, that it alone will be or will not be at all. God may suffer it that unclean additions run through our works and lives but in His Word, which should cleanse me from all addition and filth, He can suffer no addition, or our lives would never become clean in all eternity." "What else can Solomon intend with so many words (Prov. 4:24-27), do you think, than to keep us on the straight (*schnurgleichen*) path, that only God's Word and way may stand out before our eyes, and no bypath, be it to the right or to the left, good or bad. But now man's teachings are but mere bypaths and not the divine way (*Richtstrasse*)." ⁷³ In his *Rationis Latomianae Confutatio*, written in June during his stay at Wartburg Castle and published in September, Luther declares: "I would rather drink from the fountain than from the brook — will you forbid this? A twofold fact moves me to do this. First, that I would have the Holy Scripture pure in its own power, untainted by any touch, even that of saintly men, and unmixed with any earthly spice." ⁷⁴ At the end of November the Reformer published his writing, *On the Abuse of the Mass*. At the beginning of this we read: "Therefore let the unreasonable sophists, the ignorant bishops, monks, and parsons, the Pope with all his Gomorrahs

know that we were not baptized in the name of Augustine, Bernard, Gregory, Peter or Paul, nor yet in the name of those from Paris but only in the name of Jesus Christ. Him only, and Him not otherwise than crucified, *and no other do we acknowledge as our Master*. Paul does not desire that we should believe him or an angel, unless Christ lives and speaks in him. For we know well what the Fathers, the decrees, custom and the delusions of the Pope contain and include. What use have we for those of the Parisian guild when they write and say, 'Such an article is offensive; it is against the faculty of Paris; it is contrary to the articles put down by them,' and the like, which can be praised only by effeminate children and uncouth blockheads. We do not hear that Bernard lived and wrote thus. We only hear that according to the Scripture he should live and write. The saints were subject to error in their writings and to sin in their lives; Scripture cannot err."⁷⁵ Again, "It is not the Word of God because the Church says so, but because God's Word said so, therefore is the Church. The Church does not make the Word but is made by the Word."⁷⁶ His tract *On the Abuse of the Mass* was followed by *De Votis Monasticis Judicium* in which he again underlined the sole authority of Scripture.^{76a}

Hardly had he returned to Wittenberg after he had restored quiet through his famous eight sermons when in March, 1522, he wrote his essay, *To receive the Sacrament in both kinds*. Here we read among

other things: "Dear brother, believe me I have experienced it, the devil is not afraid of man's word or command. If he finds you on your deathbed, and you rest your conscience on the commandments of men and say, 'This I am commanded by the Pope, Church, princes, etc.,' he will toss you off so that not even a footprint of you will be left. But if he finds that you defiantly cling to God's Word and say, 'This did Christ command; here is His Word,' you will make the world too narrow for him."⁷⁷ During the summer he defended himself in a German as well as in a Latin treatise against the attack by King Henry VIII of England. I will quote only the brief word from the Latin writing, "They demand that we believe them; I do not demand that men should believe me but that they should believe the clear words of God."⁷⁸ From the German we quote: "But that he (King Henry) cites the statements of several of the Fathers and ridicules my arrogance that I alone would be smart whereas I am the greatest fool, does not affect me. For me it is enough that King Heinz can not quote a single Scripture. . . *But I place against the sayings of all Fathers, all angels, men's, devils' artifice and word, the Scripture and the gospel. Here I stand, here I bid defiance, here I strut about and say, God's Word for me is above everything; divine majesty stands by me (i. e., in and with the Word); therefore I will not give a hair though a thousand Augustines, a thousand Heinze-Churches were also against me, and am certain that the true Church with*

*me holds fast to the Word of God.”*⁷⁹ And even before this time⁸⁰ he had written that precious word, which since 1520 might be called the motto of his work and all his life, “*Free, free, free would we and should we be in all things that are outside of the Scripture. Defiance to him who would stop us.*” But in all other things his “conscience is bound by God’s Word.”

3. LUTHER'S PREFACE TO THE EPISTLE OF JAMES IS NOT PROOF FOR ANOTHER ATTITUDE

But did not Luther's translation of the New Testament appear in September of the same year, and do not the prefaces that are here prefixed to the New Testament as a whole, to the individual letters, and to Revelation contain statements concerning several books, especially James and Revelation, which presuppose an entirely different evaluation of Scripture than the one we have been led to believe in what was said before? ^{80a} Attention has ever and again been called to this, and since it is Luther's opinion of the letter of James that above all seems to stand in direct contradiction to the results of our preceding investigation, we take time and space to go into this matter somewhat in detail.

The preface to the Epistle of St. James, as it appeared in the September Testament of 1522, reads thus:⁸¹ "Though this Epistle of St. James was rejected by the ancients, I praise it and regard it as a good book, because it sets up no doctrine of men and lays great stress upon God's law. But to state my own opinion about it, though without injury to anyone, I consider that it is not the writing of any apostle. My reasons are as follows:

"First: Flatly in contradiction to St. Paul and all the rest of Scripture it ascribes righteousness to works

and says that Abraham was justified by his works in that he offered his son Isaac, though St. Paul, on the contrary, teaches, in Romans 4 that Abraham was justified without works, by faith alone, before he offered his son and proves it by Moses in Genesis 15. Now, although this Epistle might be helped and a gloss be found for this work-righteousness, it cannot be defended against applying to works the saying of Moses in Genesis 15, which speaks only of Abraham's faith and not of his works, as St. Paul shows in Romans 4. This fault, therefore, leads to the conclusion that it is not the work of any apostle.

“Second: Its purpose is to teach Christians, and in all its teaching it does not once mention the Passion, the Resurrection, or the Spirit of Christ. The writer names Christ several times but he teaches nothing about Him and only speaks of common faith in God. But it is the duty of a true apostle to preach about the foundation of faith, as He Himself says, in John 15, ‘Ye shall bear witness of me.’ All the genuine sacred books agree in this that all of them preach Christ and deal with Him. That is the true test by which to judge all books when we see whether they deal with Christ or not, since all the Scriptures show us Christ (Romans 3), and St. Paul is determined to know nothing but Christ (I Corinthians 15). What does not teach Christ is not apostolic even though St. Peter or Paul taught it; again, what preaches Christ would be apostolic even though Judas, Annas, Pilate, and Herod did it.

“But this James does nothing more than to drive to the law and its works; and he mixes the two up in such disorderly fashion that it seems to me he must have been some good, pious man, who took some sayings of the apostles’ disciples and threw them thus on paper; or perhaps they were written down by someone else on the basis of his preaching. He calls the law a ‘law of liberty’ though St. Paul calls it a law of slavery, of wrath, of death, and of sin (Galatians 3, Romans 7).

“Moreover, in chapter 5 he quotes the sayings of St. Peter, ‘Love covereth the multitude of sins’ (I Peter 4) and, ‘Humble yourselves under the hand of God’ (I Peter 5), and of St. Paul (Galatians 5), ‘The Spirit lusteth against hatred,’ and yet, in point of time, St. James was put to death by Herod, in Jerusalem, before St. Peter. So it seems that he came long after St. Peter and Paul.

“In a word, he wants to guard against those who relied on faith without works and is unequal to the task in spirit, thought and words, and wrests the Scriptures and thereby resists Paul and all Scriptures and would accomplish by insisting on the law what the apostles accomplish by inciting men to love. Therefore I cannot put it among the chief books though I would not thereby prevent anyone from putting it where he pleases and regarding it as he pleases; for there are many good sayings in it.”

To the preface of the whole New Testament of 1522 we find added, with the special heading, “What

are the true and best books of the New Testament," the following section:⁸²

"From all this you can now judge all the books and decide which are the best among them. John's Gospel and St. Paul's Epistles, especially that to the Romans, and St. Peter's First Epistle are the true kernel and marrow of all the books. They ought rightly to be the first books, and it would be advisable for every Christian to read them first and most and by daily reading make them as familiar as his daily bread.

"In them you find not many works and miracles of Christ described, but you do find depicted in masterly fashion how faith in Christ overcomes sin, death, and hell, and gives life, righteousness, and salvation. This is the real nature of the gospel, as you have heard.

"If I had to do without one or the other — either the works or the preaching of Christ — I would rather do without His works than His preaching; for the works do not help me, but His words give life as He himself says. Now John writes very little about the works of Christ but very much about His preaching, while the other Evangelists write much of His works and little of His preaching; therefore John's Gospel is the one, tender, true chief Gospel, far, far to be preferred to the other three and placed high above them. So, too, the Epistles of St. Paul and of St. Peter far surpass the other three Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

“In a word, St. John’s Gospel and his First Epistle, St. Paul’s Epistles, especially Romans, Galatians, and Ephesians, and St. Peter’s First Epistle are the books that show you Christ and teach you all that is necessary and good for you to know even though you were never to see or to hear any other book or doctrine. Therefore St. James’ Epistle is really an epistle of straw compared to them (*eyn rechte stroern Epistel gegen sie*); for it has nothing of the nature of the gospel about it. But more of this in other prefaces.”

Since in the later editions of his New Testament Luther did not repeat this section, some argued that in later years he changed his opinion concerning the Epistle of St. James. But this is not correct. Wilhelm Walther of Rostock showed that fact in his article, “Luther’s Later Opinion Concerning the Epistle of James.”⁸³ He based his arguments on notes that Luther added to his copy of the New Testament of 1530. These notes are plain enough. With reference to James 2:12 Luther remarked, “O this chaos!” with reference to James 3:1, “Oh, if you had observed this likewise” (and had not tried to be a teacher)! But we have still better proofs than these notes quoted by Walther. In the *Table Talks* we find this remark of the year 1532:⁸⁴ “Many have tried hard (*valde sudant*) to make James agree with Paul, as also Melancthon did in his Apology, but not seriously (*serio*; does that mean successfully?). These do not harmonize: Faith justifies, and faith does not

justify. To him who can make these two agree I will give my doctor's cap and I am willing to be called a fool." The strongest remark is from the year 1540 (?):⁸⁵ "Only the Popists accept James on account of the righteousness by works, but my opinion is that it is not the writing of an apostle, especially because it calls faith body and the works, soul. This is apparently absurd and against Scripture. Some day I will use James to fire my stove (*Ich werde einmal mit dem Jekel den offen hitzen*). We can adorn and excuse it, but only with great difficulties." From the year 1542 we find this notation:⁸⁶ "The Epistle of James we have thrown out from this school (Wittenberg) because it has no value (*denn sie soll nichts*). It has not one syllable about Christ. It does not even mention Christ once except in the beginning. I hold it is written by some Jew who heard only a dim sound concerning Christ but no clear, distinct message (*welcher wohl hat hoeren laeuten von Christo, aber nicht gar zusammen schlagen*); and because he had heard that the Christians put great emphasis on faith in Christ, he thought, I will oppose them and emphasize works. And this he did. Of the Passion and the Resurrection of Christ, this heart of the preaching of all apostles, he does not say a word. Then, there is no order nor method. Now he speaks of clothes, now of wrath, jumps from one thing to another. He uses this simile: As the body does not live without the soul, so faith is nothing without works. O Mary, Madonna! What a poor simile! He compares faith with

body while it should rather be compared with soul. Already the ancients saw this, therefore they did not number this Epistle with the Catholic Epistles.” And again:⁸⁷ “Here at Wittenberg we nearly thrust James out of the Bible.” In a disputation in 1543 Luther refused to accept a quotation from James because this Epistle lacks the necessary authority.⁸⁸

Now does this evaluation of the Epistle of James endanger any of the preceding results of our investigation concerning Luther’s attitude toward Scripture? By no means. One must read these quotations in their full context, then it becomes apparent that Luther did not class this epistle among the canonical writings; all, however, that we heard him say about his attitude toward the Bible refers to the canonical books. How can Luther’s opinion about a non-canonical book change our findings concerning his attitude toward the canonical books? We may personally reject Luther’s opinion about the canonicity of James, we may even stand in horror because of a word such as this, “*Ich werde einmal mit dem Jekel den Ofen heizen,*” but this gives us no right whatsoever to permit ourselves to be influenced in the least by his judgment concerning a non-canonical writing when we are about to answer the question as to his attitude toward the canonical writings. Only a little fairness is necessary to see that we must rule out all the objections against our results as far as they are based on Luther’s opinion concerning James. That Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation were not consid-

ered canonical by Luther is also proved by the fact that in his September Testament he did not add numbers to them and that he put a space between them and the others and thus made it quite obvious to everyone that in his estimation these four books do not stand on the same level with the other New Testament books. In the complete Bible of 1534 this is made even more pronounced by the fact that in the index of the Biblical books they are dealt with in the same way as the Old Testament Apocrypha.⁸⁹

And as far as the statement is concerned that James is "a letter of straw," it certainly does not speak well of the scientific trustworthiness of all those Protestant writers who hold this expression up as a proof for Luther's changed attitude toward Scripture. Especially since Kahnis in his *Lutherische Dogmatik* (III, 142ff.), under his mighty array of proofs for Luther's freedom concerning Scripture, quoted this statement,^{89a} many Lutheran writers thoughtlessly or under the influence of their liberal bias adopted it until it became nearly a household word with them when they characterized Luther's attitude toward the Scripture. They not only forgot that James was not a canonical writing to Luther; they also overlooked the fact that according to the context the statement is not an absolute statement. Only when one compares James with John and Paul and Peter can it, according to Luther, be called a letter of straw because it speaks so little of Christ and His redeeming work. And at the same time, when Luther put down this statement,

he conceded that it contains *viel guter Sprueche*. In 1917 Wilhelm Walther said:⁹⁰ “It is a strong misrepresentation of Luther’s statement if one writes, Luther called the Epistle of James a *stroherne Epistel*. With the same right Catholic writers declare that Luther considered gross immorality a thing of little importance because he once wrote, blasphemy is such a terrible thing that compared with it ‘a sexual sin is only a trifle.’”

In the Introduction to the Epistle of James we also find these words: “All the genuine sacred books agree in this, that all of them preach Christ and deal with Him. That is the true test by which to judge all books when we see whether they deal with Christ or not, since all the Scriptures show us Christ (I Cor. 15). What does not teach Christ is not apostolic even though St. Peter or Paul taught it; what preaches Christ would be apostolic even though Judas, Anna, Pilate, and Herod did it.” Luther did not first come to realize in 1522 that everything in Scripture depends upon that which teaches Christ. He expressed this view already in his first exposition of the Psalms, 1513-1514. Already there we read, “I see nothing in Scripture but Christ crucified” (*Ego non intelligo usquam in Scriptura nisi Christum crucifixum*);⁹¹ and in a fragment of a sermon delivered on November 11, 1515, Luther says: “He who would read the Bible must simply take heed that he does not err, for the Scripture may permit itself to be stretched and led, but let no one lead it according to his affects but let

him lead it to the source, i. e., the cross of Christ. Then he will surely strike the center;" ^{91a} and in his Exposition of the Penitential Psalms, 1517, he says in conclusion: "This I confess for myself, whenever I found less in the Scripture than Christ I was not satisfied; whenever I found more than Christ, I never became poorer myself, so that even that seems true to me, that God, the Holy Spirit, does and will know no more than Jesus Christ, as he says of Him, He will glorify me." ^{91b} And according to Luther also in the Old Testament writings Christ can be found.

The *thought* itself is not new. Erasmus already said, "Nothing is to be sought in Scripture but Christ." ⁹² But the viewpoint is new. For Erasmus Christ was the center of the Scriptures because he is the best model of the moral life; for Luther, because He is the crucified and risen One who brought about forgiveness, righteousness, and life and gives it to us, as he continues in his Exposition to the Psalms, 1517, "Christ is God's grace, mercy, righteousness, truth, wisdom, power, comfort, and salvation, given us of God without any merit." ⁹³ We speak of this at this place for the reason that some have interpreted the sentence, "What teaches Christ" in connection with the Old Testament as though, according to Luther, only that in the Old Testament came into being under divine influence of which it can be said that it teaches Christ. That is a serious misunderstanding. It is not a matter of the origin of the Old Testament Scripture and its parts but of the value and the significance

which it still has for the Christian. That the Old Testament, too, in its totality, in the opinion of Luther, was the Word of God needs no further proof. Yet, let this at least be quoted from his Introduction to the Old Testament: "I beg and faithfully warn every pious Christian not to stumble at the simplicity of the language and the stories that will often meet him there. He should not doubt that, however simple they may seem, there are the very words, works, judgments, and deeds of the high Majesty, power, and wisdom of God; for this is Scripture, and it makes fools of all the wise and prudent and stands open to the small and foolish (Matt. 11:25). Therefore let your own thoughts and feelings go and think of the Scriptures as the loftiest and noblest of holy things, as the richest of mines, which can never be worked out, so that you may find the wisdom of God that He lays before you in such simple and foolish guise, in order that He may quench all pride. Here you will find the swaddling clothes and the manger in which Christ lies, and to which the angel points the shepherds. Simple and little are the swaddling clothes, but dear is the treasure, Christ, that lies in them."⁹⁴

4. SCRIPTURES REMAINED LUTHER'S SOLE AUTHORITY UNTIL THE END OF HIS LIFE.

And now just a few examples to prove that subsequently the Scriptures were still of binding authority for Luther.

We recall, in the first place, the determination with which in the Sacrament controversies following 1524, he clung to the *Est* of the Words of Institution as Christ's own word and the way in which he expressed himself in this matter. As early as 1523 he wrote in *Vom Anbeten des Sakraments*: "Beware of this; forget knowledge and understanding that are so vainly exercised as to how it is possible for flesh and blood to be present, and because they cannot comprehend it refuse to believe it. Hold fast to the word that Christ spoke, 'Take, this is my body, this is my blood.' *We must not wickedly trifle with God's words* as those who, without any clearly expressed warrant, want to give another meaning to some word differing from its natural meaning, as those do who sacrilegiously try to twist the word *is* into meaning 'it signifies,' and so distort this statement of Christ, 'This is my body,' that it is to mean, 'this signifies my body.' But we shall and will simply stand by Christ's words; He will not betray us, and we will repel such error with no other sword than the fact that Christ does not say, 'this signifies my body, but this is my body.'

For if such evil frivolity be permitted in one place so that we could say, without any foundation in Scripture, that 'is' means 'signifies,' there would be no protection against a similar interpretation in any other case, and all Scripture would be nullified because there would be no reason why such wicked trifling could be permitted in one case and denied in another."⁹⁵

When in the following year (1524) he published his *Brief an die Christen zu Strassburg* he wrote the well-known words: "This I will confess, that during a period of five years I would have regarded it as a great service if Dr. Carlstadt or anyone else could have shown me that there was nothing but bread and wine in the Sacrament. In this matter I suffered severe temptations and I twisted and turned and would gladly have escaped in this way because I saw clearly that by such means I could have given the papacy the hardest blow. There were two who wrote to me far more adroitly than Dr. Carlstadt and without twisting the words in this fashion according to their own imagination. *But I am captive, I cannot escape, the text is too powerful and will not permit its meaning to be altered by arguments.*"⁹⁶

Because Carlstadt maintained that the Words of Institution would be complete even if the words, "This is my body, which is given for you," were not included, Luther attacked him in his book, *Wider die himmlischen Propheten*, 1524-1525, with this statement: "What do you think? Is that not a mad, pre-

sumptuous spirit that seizes God's Word so impudently and extracts from it whatever it wants? Now, since these spirits boast that they will not say one word but will prove it by clear texts, we will have to deal with him in the same way that he deals in his own book with his poor Mr. Gemser and says, show proof, show Scripture passages, you must compel, force, frighten, and carry on so that there is no escaping you, etc. So we will properly use his own rule and say, Dear Spirit, you say that there are here two statements, the first, this statement, *'This is my body, which is given for you,'* is a separate statement and is not connected with the other. We pray you make us who see blind and show proof, show Scripture passages, force and compel us to acknowledge thus. How then, how then? Come, in God's Name, *show us one word* that says clearly and states incontrovertibly that this statement is a separate one, and we will believe it. Will you not? Then where is your spirit? Where is your God? Is he asleep? Or has he been overthrown? Marvelous! Dear children, how dumb and silent the spirit who writes so many books is on this point, and that he does not bring one word to prove that this statement is a separate statement! — Therefore this is our basis: *Where Holy Scripture establishes something that must be believed,* there we must not evade the natural meaning of the words nor wrest them from the connection in which they stand unless an express and clear article of faith compels us to ar-

range or interpret the statement otherwise. If we acted differently, what would become of the Bible?"⁹⁷

Two years later, when the controversy concerning the Sacrament flared up again, Luther wrote his notable book *Dass diese Worte Christi "Das is mein Leib" noch fest stehen, wider die Schwarmgeister*. In this, among other things, he emphasizes the fact that Scripture does not contradict itself, and that some things that may seem contradictory to us need not be contradictions in God's sight. He says: "Here, then, is the famous foundation about which they drivel the most to others and on which they insist most rigidly when they say that these two statements contradict each other; that Christ is set down in heaven and that His body is in the Communion, but do not prove it. They prove, indeed, that these two statements and their reason contradict each other. But it is not necessary to prove that, I could have assured them of that fact just as well. For that you say Scripture contradicts itself means nothing. Who cares about your opinion? But I would honor it and praise it if you could prove it by Scripture or otherwise. They will have to let it go, so that the text remains unshaken, 'This is my body.' If we have gained this point, that Oecolampadius cannot prove his assertion nor show how *Scripture is contradictory in God's eyes*, which he can never do, then the whole matter is settled, and we have preserved everything. For if this remains that the words, 'This is my body,' continue to stand, then Christ's body is in the communion, and the state-

ment of John 6, 'the flesh profiteth nothing,' will take its proper place. Then wonders enough will take place, the Sacraments will not be merely simple signs, and all their mob, which is so numerous, shall scatter and fly away like dust before the wind. For I know full well that we dare not regard Christ's body and blood as a useless or trivial thing." "If we should, however, permit our reason and sight to judge the articles of our faith and Scripture, as Oecolampadius here does, then every part of Scripture is, indeed, contradictory to the rest." — "For the text that states that Mary is a mother and a virgin contradicts the text that says: 'Increase and multiply,' further, 'I will make him an helpmeet for him.' If I should, therefore, deny that she was a virgin and proclaim that Scripture was contradicting itself, the rejoinder could properly be made; *Yes, for you and your reason it is a contradiction but tell me how it is a contradiction before God.* So also that Christ's body is in heaven and in the Communion is a contradiction according to Oecolampadius, and so it seems in his eyes. But we do not wish to hear his opinions but to hear what God says and how it appears to God. There he lies helpless and yet he must do something if his teaching is to be certain and sure. Here let them answer. Here let them see how they will destroy themselves. But they do nothing. Presently they will growl and whistle another tune that men should not see into what sort of a blind alley they have been forced."⁹⁸

The following year Luther published his *Vom Abendmahl Christi. Bekenntnis*. In this he says concerning the Words of Institution, "*These words were spoken by the mouth of God even though the fanatics do not value them more than if they had been spoken by a vagabond or a drunkard.*"⁹⁹ And a little farther on he adds: "We poor flesheaters must, nevertheless, continue to wonder how it comes about that such mighty braggarts and boasters are not able to produce anything against these poor, miserable five words except a mere naked, haughty contempt. But with such words they testify against themselves, showing what spirit they are of and how they value God's words when they inveigh against them as five poor, miserable words. That is, they do not believe they are God's words. *For if they believed they were God's words they would not call them poor, miserable words but would regard such words and titles as greater than the whole world and would fear and tremble before them as before God himself. For whoever despises a single word of God does not regard any as important.* If they were to inveigh against our comprehension and misunderstandings and not against God's words it would be tolerable. But how are those treated who do not regard these miserable words as miserable but deem them splendid, glorious, mighty, and terrible? What shall be done with them? We must also regard them as miserable fools who cannot despise these words nor set them aside. Since 'is' cannot here mean 'signify,' and 'my

body' and the statements 'the flesh profiteth nothing,' 'Christ sits in the heavens' cannot be twisted, and no valid reason be given for understanding the words in a different sense from their natural one, as we saw above, we have to insist and unalterably maintain that these *are nothing less than the clearest, most certain, sweet words of God that cannot deceive us nor fail us.*"¹⁰⁰

As late as 1544 he wrote in his *Kurzes Bekenntnis vom heiligen Sakrament*: "It is not certain that he who does not or will not believe one article correctly (after he has been taught and admonished) *does not believe any sincerely and with the right faith.* And whoever is so bold that he ventures to accuse God of fraud and deception *in a single word* and does so willfully again and again after he has been warned and instructed once or twice will likewise certainly venture to accuse God of fraud and deception in all of His words. Therefore it is true, absolutely and without exception, *that everything is believed or nothing is believed.* The Holy Ghost does not suffer Himself to be separated or divided so that He should teach and cause to be believed one doctrine rightly and another falsely."¹⁰¹

It was not only in connection with the Sacrament that Scripture was for Luther the absolute and uncorrupted authority. Throughout the following years he held to the same view. We shall cite a few examples — some taken from the period of the Sacramental

controversies, and some from the years following up to the time of his death.

The following passage belongs to the year 1524: "He is called a prophet who has received his understanding directly from God without further intervention, *into whose mouth the Holy Ghost has given the words*. For He (the Spirit) is the source, and they have no other authority than God."¹⁰²

In the exposition of the Second Epistle of St. Peter, of the same year, is the statement: "Says Peter, what has been written and proclaimed in the Prophets has not been imagined nor invented by men, but holy and devout men have spoken it *through the Holy Ghost*."¹⁰³

Between 1524 and 1526 Luther held his *Praelectiones in prophetas minores*. In these, in the exposition of Joel, he says: "The prophets do not state what they imagined and thought good but *what they had heard from God himself* and what He, who had created all things, disclosed to them either through dreams or vision; this they reveal and display to us. Consequently they are true hearers of God's Word, for the eternal, almighty God, *the Spirit of God governs their hearts and tongues*."¹⁰⁴

In the year 1526, commenting on Jeremiah 23, Luther wrote, "God's Word is not for jesting. *If you are not able to understand it, take off your hat before it*."¹⁰⁵

In his *Declamationes in Genesim*, of 1527, he emphasizes again and again: Even if we do not grasp

the reason for what is written we honor the Holy Ghost and trust that he knows better.¹⁰⁶

Between 1530 and 1533 Luther preached on weekdays on John 6 to 8. Here he repeatedly emphasized the thought that the Word of God is the touchstone (*Prüfstein, Streichstein*), the rule and plumbline, that tells us what should be preached and whether it is in agreement with God's will and revelation.^{106a} The same thought is expressed in the sermon preached on August 11, 1532.^{106b}

In *Praelectio in Psalmum 45*, of 1532, he asks, If one could attain to these [divine] things by his reason and senses, what need would there be for faith, what need for a Scripture that is given us from above through the holy Ghost? . . . "In theology only one thing is necessary: that we hear and believe and conclude in our heart: God is truthful, however absurd what He says in his Word may seem to our reason."^{106c}

In the Sermon on the Christian Armor, of 1532, we read: "When the devil has succeeded in bringing matters so far that we surrender *one* article to him, he is victorious, and it is just as bad as though all of them and Christ himself were already lost. Afterward he can unsettle and withdraw others because *they are all intertwined and bound together like a golden chain*, so that if one link be broken, the whole chain is broken, and it pulls apart. And there is no article that cannot be overthrown if it once comes to pass that reason intrudes and tries to speculate and

learns to turn and twist the Scripture so that it does agree with its conclusions. That penetrates like a sweet poison.”¹⁰⁷ It is true that this is said concerning the articles of faith and not about Scripture, but anyone who is familiar, even to a small degree, with Luther knows that what he states concerning the articles of faith, in his opinion, applies as well to Scripture.

The years 1532 and 1533 brought Luther’s lectures on the *Psalmi Graduum*. In these we read: “Not only the words but also the diction used by the Holy Ghost and the Scripture is divine (*Non solum enim vocabula, sed et phrasis est divina, qua Spiritus sanctus et Scriptura utitur*).^{107a} In April, 1533, Luther preached at Torgau and explained the Creed. Here he again and again emphasized the sole authority of Scripture in all matters belonging to the truths mentioned in the Creed, especially concerning the unity and the trinity of God and the virgin birth.^{107b}

From the year 1534 we note this declaration: “As Moses is the source from which all the holy prophets and apostles have drawn the divine knowledge and power of redemption and of the way of salvation through the inspiration, (*beneficio*) of the Holy Ghost, so we cannot arrange our labors better or more correctly than if we lead the students and scholars to the same source and seed of divine wisdom, *which the Holy Ghost has sown through Moses*, in such a manner that no reason nor strength

of human understanding can acknowledge or understand it apart from the support of the Holy Ghost.”¹⁰⁸

In 1535 Luther's Lectures on Galatians, delivered in 1531, were published. In these he said: “This vice lies in us that we admire persons and respect them more than the Word while God desires that we adhere to and have our mind fixed *alone upon the very Word*. . . He does not want us to admire or adore the apostolate in Peter and Paul but *Christ who speaks in them and the very Word of God which comes from their mouth*.” In speaking of the occurrence at Antioch (Gal. 2:11-14) Luther concedes that even prophets err and fail but only when they speak in their own spirit, not inspired by the Holy Ghost, as Nathan did when out of his own spirit (*ex suo spiritu*) he told David that he should build a house for the Lord. “This prophecy was immediately corrected by divine revelation.” Here Luther declares that even Gal. 3:16, a passage so often ridiculed, was written out of genuine apostolic spirit and understanding, and repeats that it is impossible that Scripture should contradict itself, and that a single tittle of Scripture is of greater importance than heaven and earth. *Scripture* he calls *the queen that alone should reign*.^{108a}

Beginning with 1535, Luther delivered *Lectures on Genesis* that continued almost to the time of his death. In them there is a great number of passages that state the sole authority of Scripture and that Scripture is written by the Holy Ghost. Since we

shall later, in another connection, refer to some of them we here mention only these few: In comparing Genesis with the stories of Latin and Greek writers Luther says, "It must be observed, however, that another one is the author of this book, namely the Holy Ghost"; or in explaining Gen. 26:19-21 he says, "The Holy Spirit wanted to write this to teach us," and in connection with Gen. 29:16-20, he remarks that it is the Holy Ghost who wrote it.

From the years 1537 and 1538 we have sermons on the first two chapters of the Gospel of John. In these Luther said: "These are *speeches of the Holy Ghost taken from Moses* (Genesis 1: God said, 'Let there be light') that can be comprehended by no human reason nor wisdom, not even the highest. Therefore we should not ask our reason but give the honor to the Holy Ghost that what he says is divine truth, and believe his Word, blind, even putting out the eyes of our reason." In 1538 to 40 followed the sermons on the third and the fourth chapter of John's Gospel. Arriving in his explanation at John 3:23f., he began this way: "This is a rather unimportant story, therefore we shall not devote much time to its explanation; indeed, I do not know how to say much about it. But since it is *written by the Holy Spirit*, we cannot well pass by this text but will treat it to some extent."

The little treatise, *Die drei Symbola oder Bekenntnis des Glaubens Christi*, was written in 1538. In this Luther discusses the meaning of Genesis 1:26

and rejects the interpretation of this passage which had been held by the Jews, that it was a "*pluralis majesticus*." He says: "And even if such swindle and evasion is accepted by men, do I have to believe the Jews when they affirm wrongly that Scripture is thus to be understood? And I see standing before my eyes *clear and mighty Scriptures, plain words, that have taken my conscience captive* so that I could not depart from them even for an angel from heaven."¹⁰⁹ In the same connection he remarks concerning Psalm 2:7, which he quotes: "Whether the Jews are so exceedingly wicked that they distort such passages or ignore them, is beside the question. Their objections are nothing but their own imagination, without any Scriptural warrant, invented for the purpose of evasion. But *here is the declaration and Scripture* that cannot be overthrown by human speculation."¹¹⁰ He immediately adds the statement: "When we want to be so proud and presumptuous as to judge according to our reason that God in His divinity must consist of a single person, though we have not seen Him, nor can anyone see him, and though we have the testimony of Scripture that there are three persons in the Godhead, then we are insolent fellows, who value our poor blind reason more than the statements of Scriptures. For *the Scriptures of God are His own witness* concerning Himself, and our reason cannot know the divine nature but still wants to judge concerning that about which it knows nothing."¹¹¹

In 1538 and 1539 Luther wrote his powerful book *Von den Conciliis und Kirchen* and published it in 1539. In this he says: "If anyone would see still farther that the dear holy fathers were men, let him read the little book on the four chapters to the Corinthians by Dr. Pommer, our pastor. From it we must learn that St. Augustine was right when he said . . . that he will not believe any of the fathers unless he has the Scriptures on his side. Dear Lord God, if the Christian faith were to depend on men and be founded in human words, what were the need for the Holy Scriptures, or why has God given them? Let us draw them under the bench and lay the councils and the fathers on the desk instead! Or if the fathers were not men, how shall we men be saved? If they were men, they must also have thought, spoken, and acted sometimes as we think, speak, and act, and then said, like us, the prayer, 'Forgive us our trespasses,' especially since they have not the promise of the Spirit, like the apostles, and must be pupils of the apostles . . . When they build without the Scriptures, i. e., without gold, silver, precious stones, they have to build wood, straw, and hay; therefore we must follow the judgment of St. Paul and know how to distinguish between gold and wood, silver and straw, precious stones and hay."¹¹²

During the last years of his life Luther published three writings against the Jews. The last one bears the title, *Von den letzten Worten Davids* (II Samuel 23). In this Luther cannot repeat often enough that

Holy Scripture is the work of the Holy Ghost. Space permits the inclusion of only two passages.

“Here (II Samuel 23:2, ‘The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue’) it becomes too marvelous and soars too high for me. God grant that I may at least partially attain to it, for he here begins to speak of the Holy Triune essence of the divine Godhead. First he mentions the Holy Ghost; to Him he ascribes all that the prophets foretell. It is these and similar statements to which St. Peter refers in the II Epistle 1:21, ‘For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of men, etc. . .’ Therefore we sing in the Creed, concerning the Holy Ghost, ‘Who spake by the Prophets.’ So *we refer all of Scripture to the Holy Ghost.*” — In the same way he refers to Dan. 7:13, 14. “So it is the Spirit who speaks through Daniel, for such secret thing no one could know if the Holy Ghost had not revealed it through the prophets as we have frequently said before, that *Holy Scripture has been spoken by the Holy Ghost.*”^{113a}

In his *Enarratio Capitis Noni Esaiæ*, of 1543-44 (printed 1546), he confesses: “I am much displeased with myself and I hate myself because I know that all that Scripture says concerning Christ is true, that there is nothing besides it that can be greater, more important, sweeter or joyful, and that it should intoxicate me with the highest joy because *I see that Scripture is consonant in all and through all and agrees with itself in such a measure that it is impossible to*

doubt the truth and certainty of such a weighty matter in any detail — and yet I am hindered by the malice of my flesh and I am ‘bound by the law of sin’ that I cannot let this favor permeate into all my limbs and bones and even into my marrow as I should like.”^{113b}

On January 17, 1546, Luther preached his last sermon in Wittenberg.¹¹⁴ It is necessary to read that sermon, in which he speaks more disparagingly of reason than ever before, to see how at the very end of his life he clung to the literalness of Scripture as the only authority in matters of faith.

5. LUTHER NEVER ADMITTED ANY ERROR IN SCRIPTURE

It is true that some have maintained that there are three or even four passages in which Luther admits that Scripture has erred.^{114a}

1. In his *Lenten Postil*, published in 1525, he thus explains Romans 12:6: "Has any the gift of prophecy, let it be according to the analogy of faith." Here he distinguishes between prophecy and prophesy. "Prophecy is of two kinds. One speaks of future events, as did all the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles. The other form is the explanation of Scripture, as is said in I Cor. 14, 'greater is he that speaketh with tongues.' But since the gospel is the final proclamation and prophecy of the last day, wherein all are openly taught what will then take place, I believe St. Paul here refers to that form of prophecy to which he refers in I Cor. 14, namely, the explanation of the Scripture. For such prophecy is a common, permanent, profitable gift of Christians. Such prophecy, however, is rare." — "But mark the fact that St. Paul does not greatly value the prophecy that speaks of future events, as that which has existed in recent times, that of Lichtenberg, of the Abbot Joachin, and, in addition, almost the entire Apocalypse. For such prophecy, no matter how it pleases curiosity in showing what shall befall kings, princes, and other estates of this world, nevertheless, is a

needless prophecy in the New Testament, for it neither teaches nor improves Christian faith. So it is about the least of God's gifts, and the desire for it may come from the devil. But to explain Scripture is the noblest, highest, and greatest gift of prophecy. For all the prophets of the Old Testament have chiefly deserved the name because they prophesied concerning Christ (as Peter says, Acts 4 and I Peter 1). Furthermore, because they guided the people in their day by the right explanation and understanding of God's Word rather than because they occasionally proclaimed something concerning kings and worldly princes, which they did only seldom and *in which they often erred*. But the other form of prophecy they exercised daily and were not deceived. For faith does not err in those whose prophesying is like theirs."¹¹⁵

But does Luther really say that *in their writings* that have been transmitted to us the prophets erred in their statements when they prophesied future events concerning kings and other worldly matters? That is after all the only question with which we are here concerned. Dr. Wm. Walther of Rostock, the great Luther scholar, remarked concerning this passage:^{115a} "This evidently means to say that they did not possess the ability to foresee future events by the direct inspiration of the Holy Ghost, but that this ability, even for those possessed of the Spirit of God, is rather an art gradually learned by observation of the laws of the divine government of the world and of the exist-

ing religious and political conditions which must be a 'practiced art.' And naturally this is only possible in such a way that mistakes often happen. This was likewise the experience of the prophets. But for us the question is *as to whether the predictions preserved for us in Holy Scripture* contain error. Whether Luther held *this* opinion cannot be decided from this quotation. How often, for instance, Luther maintained that only through many errors Peter gradually came to the knowledge of the truth. The question as to whether, in his opinion, false predictions are found in the prophetic books of the Bible can only be decided by seeing whether he adduces proof for this passage, which he does not do, or whether elsewhere in his exposition of the prophets he notes something that in his opinion is an error. But up to the present time no one has found such a statement in his writings." That is undoubtedly correct. Besides, we would recall the fact that Luther himself had unmistakably explained that the prophets had not been continuously under the influence of the Holy Ghost. He commented on Gen. 44: "There is a common proverb among the theologians which says, '*Spiritus Sanctus non semper tangit corda prophetarum.*' The illuminations of the prophets were not continuous or perpetual. Just as Isaiah did not have uninterrupted revelations concerning great things but only on special occasions. The same thing is shown by the example of Elijah who said concerning the Shunammite, (II Kings 4:27), 'Let her alone; for her soul is vexed

within her; and the Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me.’”¹¹⁶ We are ready to go farther than Walther and to assert that the citation from Luther which has been used as a proof that he held that the prophets had erred in their writings which have been transmitted to us, excludes this very idea. Luther says that the prophets “were accustomed daily” to explain the Word to the people and so led the people of their day in true faith. Did they daily write portions of the Holy Scriptures that have been transmitted to us? As little as the daily explanation of the Word here mentioned refers to the written documents which have been transmitted to us, just so little do the declarations concerning kings and worldly persons to which reference is here made. An objective consideration of this passage demands that it be crossed off the list of passages in which Luther is supposed to have admitted that errors are to be found in Scripture.

2. Much has been made of another of Luther’s statements. It is found in his preface to the *Annotations of Wenceslaus Link* to the Five Books of Moses. There he is credited with saying of the prophets that in their writings there is frequently found “Hay, straw, wood, and not pure silver, gold, and jewels.” Everyone who knows anything at all concerning Luther’s attitude toward Scripture will be surprised at this dictum, only as long, however, until he reads it in its connection. Because this statement is continually being cited and is tirelessly repeated to set

Luther's attitude toward Scripture in a false light we will give it in its entirety. It reads as follows: "Of good books there have never been too many either in the past nor at the present time. We also have the sure command of the Lord that we shall search the Scriptures. And St. Paul commands Timothy to 'give attendance to reading.' Now such reading and searching cannot be carried on unless we have a pen at hand and note what has been especially imparted in the reading and studying so that we may mark and retain it.

"Without doubt, the prophets thus studied Moses, and the later prophets the earlier ones and wrote down in a book their good thoughts that were given by the Holy Ghost; for they were not such people as the fanatical spirits who have shoved Moses under the bench and have preached their own visions, imaginations, and dreams, but they daily industriously exercised themselves in Moses, as he had frequently and sternly commanded that his book was to be read, even by the king. Deut. 17 and Joshua 1.

"Though sometimes those faithful students and searchers of the Scripture *built with too much hay, straw, wood, and not pure silver, gold, and jewels*, still the foundation remained; the rest is consumed by the fire of the day as St. Paul says. And Moses says Deut. 26 (The correct reference is Lev. 26:10), 'ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new.'

"So we do with certain writings such as the Mas-

ter of the Sentences, Augustine, Gregory, Cyprian, and almost all the teachers. So it is right and well done that the one to whom the grace has been given applies himself zealously to study and preach and to share with others through books what God's goodness has imparted to them and so help to expound the Scriptures and to improve the churches according to the rule of I Cor. 14. For all shall be done for the edification of the church, that is for the glory of God, that we may praise the name of the Lord together with Moses."¹¹⁷

It certainly calls for only a small degree of fair-mindedness to understand what Luther intends to say. Just as Link made his annotations to the Pentateuch, so others are to take pen in hand when they read their Bibles and to note down the thoughts which the Holy Ghost awakens in them. So the prophets did when they studied the Pentateuch, or when the later prophets studied the writings of the earlier ones, and the good thoughts that came to them in such study they noted down. When they and other true teachers and searchers of the Scriptures had made such notes, hay, straw, wood were present as well as silver, gold, and jewels. Annotations, therefore, are to be read critically just as the writings of the Lombard, Augustine, Gregory, and other teachers were to be read critically. When grace has been given to anyone so that he receives it with true seriousness, searches and studies and then writes down and publishes what has been imparted to him by the goodness

of God, as Link had done in his Annotations, it has been well and rightly done. What some have attempted to read into these words, that the *Books of the Prophets* as we find them in the Old Testament had originated in this manner and therefore contained “Hay, straw, wood, and not only silver, gold, and precious stones” is nowhere to be found in this statement. It has simply been read into it.¹¹⁸ It is, therefore, very unfortunate that in his widely-used *Kompendium der Dogmatik* Luthardt cites this passage from Luther’s Preface to Link’s Annotations (probably on the basis of Koestlin) as evidence that in spite of his strong emphasis on Scripture as the Word of God Luther combined with it “vivid feeling for its human origin,” and it is still more unfortunate that when he revised the *Kompendium* Jelke allowed it to remain even in the last edition of 1937 (p. 110). That is certainly not “scientific” but superficial. This passage does not have a word to say about the origin of Scripture or concerning its character.

3. The third passage in which Luther is supposed to have admitted that errors are to be found in Scripture is a statement found in the *Tischreden*. “The Books of Kings are more trustworthy than the Books of Chronicles.” We shall not take refuge behind the fact that the memoranda of the Table Talks have to be used with the greatest caution, a fact that Scheel never grew weary of pointing out, and which Kroker was unable to controvert successfully. We shall only give the entire sentence from which

doubt the truth and certainty of such a weighty matter in any detail — and yet I am hindered by the malice of my flesh and I am ‘bound by the law of sin’ that I cannot let this favor permeate into all my limbs and bones and even into my marrow as I should like.”^{113b}

On January 17, 1546, Luther preached his last sermon in Wittenberg.¹¹⁴ It is necessary to read that sermon, in which he speaks more disparagingly of reason than ever before, to see how at the very end of his life he clung to the literalness of Scripture as the only authority in matters of faith.

the quotation has been taken. That will suffice to show with what little right anyone may use this as a proof for Luther's liberalism. The sentence reads: "The writer of Chronicles noted only the summary and chief stories and events. Whatever is less important and immaterial he passed by. For this reason the Books of the Kings are more credible than the Chronicles."¹¹⁹ What more does this state than that the Chronicles pass by many things and condense others which the Books of Kings include or offer in detail? In view of the different plan followed by these two Biblical books the value of Chronicles as a historical source is less than that of Kings. But there is not a word about errors in it. Or can we draw the conclusion that because John reports many facts in more detail and more extensively than the Synoptists, their accounts are erroneous, unreliable, or mistaken? There may be good historic reasons for beginning the consideration of the Lord's Supper with the more exact account of St. Paul, but does it follow that the accounts of Matthew and of Mark are unreliable and mistaken? We should be spared such frivolous and superficial assertions.

4. In the collection of Luther's statements with which Kahnis,¹²⁰ in his dogmatics, seeks to show how "freely" Luther dealt with Scripture there is the statement: "Luther thought that the allegorical explanation of the name of Hagar, in Gal. 4:25, was too weak to prove the point," and afterward others faithfully copied this statement. But if we compare

what Luther has actually written in his *Commentary on Galatians* we are inclined to question the “scientific method” of many German theologians, even those of conservative tendencies. We shall first give the passage in the form in which it is found in the manuscript of 1531 and then in the printed edition which was not edited by Luther himself. In the manuscript the comment on 4:21 reads: “He stopped and desired to conclude the epistle and hoped to speak when present; he is disturbed, and in his emotion he drops what is clear and takes up a comparison which powerfully moves the feelings. There are certain pictures, as it were, painted before the eyes. He smote their ears with words, with writings, now he presents an allegory and paints it in front of the nose. He knew how to allegorize well, but the imitation as we find it in Jerome, Origen is abominable. Allegories are dangerous. The allegory is not to be copied by anyone.”¹²¹ And afterward he remarks on v. 24: “Which things are spoken allegorically: is a flattering and fatherly speech. He does not judge by the allegory — Augustine — but the argument that has been undertaken is adorned. If the righteousness of faith opposed to the righteousness of works is not proven by other arguments, nothing is. But why alone? And it is so beautiful to add the allegory to the proven propositions. As one who has a beautiful home decorates it; if a tunic he adorns it.”^{121a}

In the printed edition the passage is given as follows (We give it in the quaint English translation of

1575): “Here would Paul have closed up his Epistle, for he desired not to write any more, but rather to be present with the Galatians and to speak to them himself. But he being in great perplexity and very careful for this matter, taketh by the way this allegory which then came into his mind. For the people are greatly delighted with allegories and similitudes, and therefore Christ Himself oftentimes uses them. For they are, as it were, certain pictures which set forth things as if they were painted before the eyes of the simple, and therefore he stirreth especially the simple and ignorant. First therefore he stirreth up the Galatians with words and writings. Secondly he painteth out the matter itself before their eyes with this godly allegory.

“Now Paul was a marvelous cunning workman in handling of allegories; for he is wont to apply them to the doctrine of faith, to grace, and to Christ, and not to the law and the works thereof, as Origen and Hierome do, who are worthily reprehended for that they turned the plain sentences of the Scripture, where allegories have no place, into unfit and foolish allegories. Therefore to use allegories, it is oftentimes a very dangerous thing. For unless a man have the perfect knowledge of Christian doctrine, he cannot use allegories rightly, and so he should do.”¹²² And following this: “Allegories do not strongly persuade in divinity, but as certain pictures they beautify and set out the matter. For if Paul had proved the righteousness of faith against the righteousness of

works by strong and pithy arguments, he should have little prevailed by this allegory. But because he had fortified his cause before with invincible arguments, taken of experience, of the example of Abraham, the testimonies of Scripture, and similitudes, now at the end of his disputations he addeth an allegory, to give a beauty to all the rest. For it is a seemly thing sometimes to add an allegory, when the foundation is well laid and the matter thoroughly proved. For as painting is an ornament to set forth and garnish an house already builded, so is an allegory the light of a matter which is already otherwise proved and confirmed.”¹²³

Luther says the very opposite of what Kahnis and others made him say. According to them, Luther held that the allegory here used by St. Paul was not valid, and this is produced as a proof that he assumed a “free” attitude toward Scripture and did not regard it as free from error. In fact Luther says that no allegory is sufficient (*nihil efficeret*) as *proof*, not even the one used by St. Paul, but *Paul did not use it as proof*, but after he had proved the teaching concerning justification by faith (and the freedom from the law) most thoroughly and in great detail in the preceding he now adds an *illustration* taken from history and especially adapted for his purpose.

It is true that Luther read his Bible with open eyes, if anyone ever did, with the result that much in it startled him and caused him concern. But it is quite another matter whether, as a consequence, he even once admitted that in the original documents of Scrip-

ture, in the original writings of the Prophets and the Apostles there were errors. We shall see that he did not admit this even in regard to purely external matters that have nothing to do with the faith.

The arrangement of much of the material in the Law of Moses seemed to him to be very disorderly, but this did not lead him astray into some source theory, nor made him question the credibility of the whole or of its parts. In his *Vorrede zum Alten Testament* he writes: "Why does Moses mix up his laws in such a disorderly way? Why does he not put the temporal laws together in one group and the spiritual in another and the laws of faith and love in still another? Moreover, he sometimes repeats a law so often and uses certain words so many times that it becomes tedious to read it or listen to it. The answer is that Moses writes as the case demands, so that his book is a picture and illustration of government and life. For this is what happens when things are moving — now this work has to be done and now that; and no man can so arrange his life (if he is to act in a godly way) that this day he uses only spiritual laws and that day only temporal, but God disposes the laws as he sets the stars in the heavens and flowers in the fields, and a man must be ready every hour for anything and do the first thing that comes to his hand. The books of Moses are mixed up just this way. That he is so inconsistent and often repeats the same thing shows the nature of his office, for one who is to rule a people with laws must always hold on, always insist,

and be patient with the people, as with asses. No work of law is done with pleasure and love; it is all forced and compelled. Since Moses, then, is a law-giver, he has to show by his insistence that the work of the law is a forced work and has to make the people weary, until through this insistence they recognize their illness and their dislike for God's law and long for grace."¹²⁴

Luther did not fail to see that the order of the prophecies in Jeremiah presented many a puzzling question. He says in his preface to this prophet: "Like the other prophets, Jeremiah prophesies of Christ and His kingdom, especially in the twenty-third and thirty-first chapters, where he clearly prophesies of the person of Christ, of His kingdom, of the New Testament and the end of the Old Testament, but these three subjects do not follow one another and are not separated in the book in the way they actually occurred. Upon the first subject, indeed, there is often something in a later chapter which happened before that which is spoken of in an earlier chapter, and so it seems as though Jeremiah had not composed these books himself, but that parts of his utterances were taken and written into the book. Therefore one must not care about the order, or be hindered by the lack of it."¹²⁵ But this did not prevent him from expounding the Book of Jeremiah and explaining it as the Word of God.

This naturally reminds us of a passage in his exposition of Habakkuk, of 1526. There he writes:

“Many have been confused in the prophets because they read about the Jewish state, and then they stop short and begin to speak of Christ, and everyone who does not understand their way of speaking thinks they speak in a strange fashion as though they hold to no order but hurl the hundreds into the thousands, so that men cannot comprehend them nor adapt themselves to them. Now it is a very dreary thing to read a book that does not maintain any order, when it is not possible to join one part to the next nor join them together so that they are properly connected as is proper when one wants to speak correctly.”¹²⁶ But this in no wise shakes Luther’s confidence that this is the word of the Holy Ghost. For he continues, “*So the Holy Ghost has had to bear the blame* of not being able to speak correctly but that like a drunkard or a fool He jumbles the whole and uses wild, strange words and phrases. But it is our fault that we have not understood the language nor the style of the prophets. It cannot be otherwise, because the Holy Ghost is wise and also makes the prophets wise. But one who is wise must be able to speak correctly; that never fails. But because whoever does not hear well or does not know the language well may think he speaks ill because he hears or understands scarcely half the words.”¹²⁷

It seems that it was difficult for Luther to be sympathetic toward the Book of Esther. In *De servo arbitrio* he says of it, “which, however, they have within the canon, though in my opinion more than all

the rest it ought to be outside the canon.”¹²⁸ But in his *Supputatio annorum mundi*, of 1541, he regards it as a reliable historical source and so uses it.¹²⁹

Luther was not unmindful of the fact that in the last sayings of Jesus concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world it is hard to draw the line exactly between what applies to the first and what to the second event; but that did not cause him to doubt that here, too, the Holy Ghost was speaking. In his Sermon on Matthew, of 1537, he says concerning Matt. 24:3: “The words are somewhat obscure and Matthew and Mark tell us the tribulations preceding the end of the world and, in addition, that Jerusalem shall be destroyed and also point to the destruction of the world in such a way that both are combined and mingled with each other, and it is the method of the Holy Ghost to speak thus in Holy Scripture.”¹³⁰

What Luther states in the following passages we may reject as being peculiar, but his closing words point out the right method of solving the difficulty. He concludes in this fashion: “Matthew here uses certain words that throw light on the end of the world, which is prefigured in the disasters and destruction of Jerusalem. For in the same way there will be tribulations in the church.”¹³¹

Luther was not unaware of the difficulties that arise when parallel passages in the Gospels are compared with each other. So in the *Lenten Postil*, of 1525, he discusses the order of time in the three

temptations of our Lord. He makes this statement: "The order in which these temptations came to Christ cannot be determined with certainty, for the evangelists do not agree. What Matthew places in the middle, Luke places at the end, and what he places in the middle, Matthew places at the end, as though he placed little importance on the order. If we want to *preach* about it or discuss it, the order of Luke would be the best, for it makes a fine sequence that the devil first attacks through need and misfortune and, when this does not bring results, follows with fortune and honor. Finally, when this is all in vain, he strikes out with all force with errors, lies, and other spiritual deceits. But because they do not occur thus in our daily experience, but, as it happens, a Christian is tempted now with the last, now with the first, Matthew did not pay much attention to the order, as would be fitting for a preacher. And perhaps Christ was so tempted during the forty days that the devil did not observe any particular order but came today with the one temptation, tomorrow with the other, after ten days again with the first and so on as it happened to take place."¹³²

Wilhelm Walther, to let one of the most noteworthy of Luther scholars speak, remarks about this statement: "The three temptations of Jesus are not reported by the evangelists in the same order. From this Luther concludes, 'The order in which these temptations came to Christ cannot be determined with certainty, for the evangelists do not agree.' It seemed

that 'Matthew did not pay much attention to the order.' If anyone were to preach about this account of the temptations, the order of St. Luke would be the best because in fact the temptations of Christians by no means always follow such a gradation. 'Matthew did not pay much attention to the order as would be fitting for a preacher,' and perhaps the 'devil actually did not observe any particular order but came today with the one temptation, tomorrow with the other, after ten days again with the first, and so on, as it happened to take place.' Consequently Luther puts at our disposal these possibilities: either Matthew did not care about the exact order and this is to be derived from Luke, or both have related the temptations as they occurred and each one related only one instance of recurring temptations. We may regard these solutions as we have a mind to, *but it remains clear that an inaccuracy in the Scriptural accounts is not admitted.*"¹³³ In this opinion of Walther's we concur.

In his exposition of the first and the second chapters of St. John, which was written during 1537 and 1538, Luther discusses the questions as to how this account of the cleansing of the Temple is related to that given by the Synoptists. He says: "The first question is as to how the two evangelists, Matthew and John, agree with each other; for Matthew states that it happened on Palm Sunday when the Lord entered Jerusalem, while here in John it is placed somewhere in the Easter season, soon after the bap-

tism of Christ, just as the miracle in which Christ turned water into wine took place about Easter, after which He journeyed to Capernaum. For He was baptized at Epiphany and He may easily have tarried a short time in Capernaum until Easter and began to preach and did what John here narrates about Easter. But these are questions that remain questions which I will not solve and that do not give me much concern, only there are people so sly and keen that they raise all kinds of questions for which they want to have answers. If one, however, has a correct understanding of Scripture and possesses the true statement of our faith that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has suffered and died for us, it will not be a serious defect if we are not able to answer them. The evangelists do not observe the same order, and what one places first another on occasion places last, just as Mark places the account of this event on the day following Palm Sunday. It is quite possible that the Lord did this more than once, and that John describes the first time and Matthew the second. Let that be as it may, it was before or after; it happened once or twice, in no case does it detract anything from our faith.

“But we have to reckon, as all the histories do, that Christ was baptized in the thirtieth year of His life, that He began to preach after His baptism and preached for three full years. The remaining time that followed the third year and was the beginning of the fourth, beginning with either the Festival of the Circumcision or Epiphany Day and continuing until

Easter (which can be reckoned as almost a half year), He continued to preach, because He preached three and a half years (though it fell a little short of that time). So it could easily have been that when Christ was thirty years old and after He had been baptized, that in the first year of His activity and at the first Easter of that period He did this, but it is a matter of no importance. *When discrepancies occur in the Holy Scriptures and we cannot harmonize them, let it pass, it does not endanger the article of the Christian faith,* because all the evangelists agree in this that Christ died for our sins. As for the rest, concerning His acts and miracles they observe no particular order, because they often place what took place later at an earlier date.”¹³⁴

Here again we shall let Wilhelm Walther speak. His comment is: “From the attempt of Luther to reconcile the accounts of Matthew and of John concerning the time of the cleansing of the Temple by Jesus the conclusion has been drawn that in Luther’s opinion inspiration does not exclude all error and uncertainty in matters unessential to the faith. In this connection Luther, however, only asserts that there are several possible explanations that would solve the difficulty. Either here, as frequently in other places, one of the evangelists has not observed the chronological sequence, or the cleansing of the Temple occurred several times. The third possibility, namely that one or both of the evangelists wanted to keep things in their chronological order but fell into error, is not men-

tioned by Luther. It does not matter if we are not able to furnish an answer for such side issues. Even if someone were to maintain that there were three cleansings of the Temple, that would not be heresy.”¹³⁵

Here we might add what Luther said in 1528 in his *Vom Abendmahl Christi, Bekenntnis*, concerning the relation of the accounts Luke gives of our Lord's parting cup and the circumstances of the Last Supper as they are recorded by Matthew and by Mark. We shall give his entire statement: “If anyone is ready to listen, we should have enough with St. Luke's account, so well and clearly does he speak of the Last Supper. He first describes the last drinking of Christ (as was stated above) and says: ‘And he took the cup, and gave thanks and said, Take this and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come!’ Here Christ testifies that this will be the last drinking of wine that He will share with his disciples, but soon after He gives them the cup of wine of the New Testament, etc. If this had been the last drinking of wine, what He gave them afterward could not have been wine. If it be not wine, it must be what He calls it, namely His blood. So here Luke states conclusively that there cannot be mere wine in the Supper of Christ. Here the objection may be raised, who knows whether Christ spoke these words concerning the last drinking before or after His supper, since Luke writes that He spoke such words

before the Supper, while Matthew and Mark write that He spoke them after the Supper. Very well, then it depends on which of the evangelists kept the correct order in his account. If Luke did so, the matter is simple, and our understanding of it correct, and without doubt the fanatics have nothing to stand on, but if the fanatics question this, we are still sure that we are right, and that is sufficient. Now let us hear from the evangelists' own statements which one preserves the right sequence in his account. St. Luke testifies at the beginning of his Gospel that he wanted to record all things from the beginning in order. And he proves his assertion by his Gospel in which one event follows another most fittingly, as all the world knows. But Matthew and Mark made no such promise. Neither do they do so, as could be shown by many examples, as when Matthew describes the temptations of Christ (St. Matt. 4) and the appearances of Christ after the resurrection, etc., where he does not retain the regular order. And St. Augustine in *De Consensu Evangelistarum* bestows much labor on the question. Just at this point in the Supper Mark departs from the regular order when he places 'And they all drank of it' before the words, 'And He said, This is My blood,' which from the very nature of things it ought to follow.

"Therefore there is no question that Matthew did not retain the exact order, but Luke has obligated himself to do so and does so in fact. So Matthew and Mark must be arranged according to the order given

by St. Luke, and not the opposite. So we must say that Matthew and Mark have placed after the New Supper what took place after the old Supper and is to be located there. For they were not greatly concerned about the order but were satisfied if they wrote history and truth. Luke, however, who wrote after them, states that the reason for his writing was that many others had written such accounts without regard to the order of events, and that he, therefore, had resolved to write them in proper order. And so many are also of the opinion, which is quite credible, that St. Paul referred to St. Luke when he said approvingly, 'We have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches.' So this further shows that Luke strove to maintain the correct order, that he not only describes the last drinking but the whole Passover and says: 'And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And He took the cup, etc.' There you can see that in one account everything is related in correct order, both concerning the eating and the drinking, which Matthew and Mark do not do. So the last thing before the eating of the New Supper is in the proper place, so the last act in the drinking before the new Supper must have its correct place. For in each

case it is the last thing, and neither is to be separated from the other.

“Here we again come to the aforementioned position. If Luke retains the right order (as has now been proven), then Christ drinks the last drink of wine before the new Supper. If, then, He drinks the last drink of wine before the New Supper, simple, mere wine cannot be received in the new Supper. For His word is very clear when He says that He would no more drink of this fruit of the vine.”¹³⁶

Here, too, the question is not whether Luther is correct in his exposition; whether his estimate of the entire Gospel according to St. Luke or of this particular passage is tenable or not. Anyone familiar with the textual questions involved, with which Luther could not possibly be acquainted, would hardly make the account of St. Luke the starting point in a consideration of the Biblical teaching concerning the Lord's Supper, just as little as we can agree with Luther when he thinks that the Lord Himself drank of the chalice. That was the presupposition of his argument, and it is clearly expressed afterward when he says: “How if Christ had not partaken of the cup in His Supper, but only the disciples? I reply. What if a fool can ask more questions than ten wise men can answer? It is not recorded that He shared in the last drinking, nevertheless He would not have given it to the disciples alone but would have drunk with them. Again, if the disciples after the last drinking drank the Lord's blood, without doubt He drank with them.

But why do I fool with such questions? It is enough for the first statement in St. Luke, which is clear enough, that it is not the fruit of the vine; then it cannot be anything else than the blood of Christ according to His word, 'This is my blood.' ”¹³⁷

Here there is a question regarding three matters only. 1. According to Luther the evangelists did not purpose to recount everything in chronological order, neither did they do so in fact. 2. They did so only when, as in the case of Luke, they pledged themselves to observe a strict sequence. 3. When they so pledged themselves they really gave an exact account.¹³⁸

In his *Exposition of the Prophet Zechariah*, of 1527, in the explanation of the passage 11:12ff., Luther raises the question, "Why does Matthew (27:9) attribute the text of the thirty pieces of silver to the prophet Jeremiah when it appears here in Zechariah?" He answers: "It is true this and similar questions do not mean much to me since they are of no particular profit, and Matthew has done enough when he has cited a genuine text even if he does not have the correct name, just as in other places he cites texts but does not give them in the exact words of Scripture; we can pass that by, and it does no harm that he does not use the exact words, for the sense has been preserved, and so here, what does it matter if he does not give the name exactly, because more depends on the words than on the name. And that is the manner of all apostles who do the same thing,

citing the statements of Scripture without such meticulous care concerning the text. Wherefore it would be much harder to question their procedure than to question Matthew here about the name of Jeremiah. Let anyone who loves idle questions ask on. He will find more to question than he can answer.”¹³⁹ Here the striking form of the question, *why* Matthew expressed himself in this way, shows that Luther does not intend to discuss *the* question as to whether Matthew has *erred*. He admits that it would make no difference if Matthew had made a mistake here, but he avoids saying that he has really done so. He just mentions it as a possibility while affirming the fact of Matthew’s custom of not quoting literally. In the first case he twice uses the word “if,” in the second place he says “that.”¹⁴⁰

If Luther, indeed, has never directly admitted that an actual mistake is to be found in a Scripture passage, and if instead, when an incorrect historical allusion or a contradiction of another Scripture passage seems to be evident, he sought some expedient that might remove the difficulty and frequently in doing so ventured to propose daring hypotheses, he did not mean by his expressions, “that is a matter of no importance,” or, “that does not affect the matter,” that it was a matter of indifference to him as to whether an actual error occurred or not. This has frequently been asserted and at first glance seems plausible. But, aside from his entire habitual attitude toward Scripture, it is evident from the passages, when they

are read carefully, that this is not the case. In the passage cited above, that is taken from the *Exposition of the First and Second Chapter of John*, 1537 and 1538, there is the statement: "But these are questions that remain questions which I will not solve and that do not give me much concern, only there are people so sly and keen that they raise all kinds of questions for which they want to have answers. If one, however, has a correct understanding of Scripture and possesses the true statement of our faith that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has suffered and died for us, it will not be a serious defect if we are not able to answer them." And following this: "When discrepancies occur in Holy Scripture (namely concerning such chronological questions as these: how many years Jesus taught openly, how the account of the Temple cleansing in John agrees with Matthew, and similar questions) and *we cannot harmonize them, let it pass*, it does not endanger the article of the Christian faith." In these statements Luther does not say that it is a matter of indifference to him whether they contain errors or not but only that his faith would not be endangered if, in spite of his best efforts, he would be unable to *solve* the apparent contradictions or *to prove the in consequence of all skeptical questions*. He dismisses the matter if he cannot prove it conclusively, but his inability to do so neither commits him to the opinion that these passages really contain error, nor is his faith in salvation thereby imperiled.

6. EVEN THOSE PARTS OF SCRIPTURE THAT DO
NOT CONCERN OUR SALVATION WERE CON-
SIDERED ERRORLESS BY LUTHER

In the preceding study we already began to show that for Luther not only those passages which relate to our salvation are without error but even the secondary matters that have no direct relation to salvation and the faith of salvation. There are a particularly large number of statements of this sort in his lectures on Genesis that he delivered between 1535 and 1545, as we find them in three large volumes of the Weimar Edition. It is true that we do not have the exact words of these lectures but have them only in the not always reliable editions of Veit Dietrich and of others that appeared between 1544 and 1554, but as these expressions are scattered through the whole work they can hardly be additions by a later hand.

Even in the introduction Luther expresses himself on the question as to how the six days of creation are to be understood. He recalls that Hilary and Augustine, these two great lights of the church, were of the opinion that the world was created suddenly and not gradually in the course of six days.¹⁴¹ Then he opposes this view and writes: "Because we are not sufficiently able to understand how these days occurred nor why God wished to observe such distinctions of times, *we shall rather admit our ignorance*

than attempt to twist the words unnecessarily into an unnatural meaning. As far, therefore, as St. Augustine's opinion is concerned, we hold that Moses spoke literally not allegorically or figuratively, that is, the world and all its creatures was created within the six days as the words declare. Because we are not able to comprehend we shall remain disciples and leave the instructorship to the Holy Ghost."¹⁴²

He had previously expressed himself in a similar fashion in his sermons on Genesis of the year 1527. In these he said: "I have often said that anyone who wishes to study Holy Scripture shall see to it that he sticks to the simple meaning of the words, as far as possible, and does not depart from them unless he be compelled to do so by some article of the faith that would demand another meaning than the literal one. For we must be sure that there is no plainer speech on earth than that which God has spoken. Therefore, when Moses writes that God in six days created heaven and earth and all that therein is, let it so remain that there were six days, and you dare not find an explanation that six days were one day. Give the Holy Ghost the honor of being wiser than yourself, for you should so deal *with Scripture that you believe that God Himself* is speaking. Since it is God who is speaking, it is not fitting frivolously to twist His words to mean what you want them to mean, unless necessity should compel a departure from their literal meaning, namely when faith does not permit the literal meaning."¹⁴³

Luther's explanation of the second day's work is significant: "This is most remarkable that clearly makes three parts and places the firmament midway between the waters. I would gladly imagine that the firmament was the highest system above all things, and the waters not hanging above but under the heavens and that they are the clouds that we see, so that waters parted from waters could be understood as clouds divided from our waters upon the earth, but Moses says with clear words that the waters are above and below the firmament. Therefore *I must bring my own ideas into captivity and assent to the Word even if I do not understand it.*"¹⁴⁴

That Luther was not ready to admit that there were errors even in the numerical statements of the Bible we see in his exposition of Genesis 11:27, 28: "This passage is among the most obscure statements of the Old Testament that has caused us many questions, which a diligent reader will encounter here and there in the older and more recent writers. — There is added another fault, that vain spirits hold it very praiseworthy if they can pass unrestricted judgments concerning the difficult and dark statements of Scripture and then can obstinately maintain their opinions. This is a disease of our nature against which an exegete of Holy Scripture should carefully guard himself."¹⁴⁵ Then he discusses the question as to what, in his opinion, makes these passages so difficult: "The second question is still more difficult, though neither Lyra nor the other teachers have paid attention to it.

That in connection with Abraham sixty years are lost for us. For the reckoning the text brings with itself is easy. Terah was seventy years when he begot Abraham, now Abraham, when he was seventy-five years old, left Haran, where Terah had died. If you add these together you will have 145 years. But when the account reckons together the years of Terah, it shows clearly that when he died he had lived 205 years. The question is, therefore, as to how we can account for these years. It would be unfitting to follow the example of audacious people who, when they arrive at such difficulties, immediately dare to correct books written by others. For my part I do not know how I should correctly solve the questions though I have carefully reckoned together the years of the world. So *with a humble and proper confession of ignorance* (for it is the Holy Ghost who alone knows and understands all things) *I conclude that God*, because of a certain plan of His own, *caused seventy years to be lost* out of Abraham's life so that no one would venture from the exact computation of the years of the world to presume to predict something certain concerning the end of the world."¹⁴⁶ This hypothesis (because Luther does not express his opinion) may appear even absurd to us moderns, but it will not seem so absurd if we recall that at that time it was customary to place the age of the world at six thousand years, but Luther risks this hypothetical reckoning rather than to admit an error in the Biblical fig-

ure. He does not even consider the possibility of such an error.

Concerning Genesis 12:4 (“Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran”) Luther remarks: “This is a clear and certain statement that Abram went forth not from Ur but from Haran when he was seventy-five years old. So it is necessary that we understand that he went forth twice. The first time when his father Terah went forth with his sons, Abraham and Lot, from Ur of the Chaldees; and although this journey was planned and meant to reach the land of Canaan, hindered by some mischance, he remained there for a time as the above text clearly shows. But when Terah was dead, Abraham again changed his dwelling place and proceeded from Haran to the land of Canaan.”¹⁴⁷ Then he comes back to the explanation of this passage in the light of Gal. 3:17: “This is to be noted, moreover, in this connection that if anyone desires to reckon the time of the giving of the law by what Paul says, the beginning must be made from that year when he was seventy-five years old. For from this year it is exactly four hundred and thirty years to the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt, for until the entrance into Egypt is reckoned 215 years, so the people of Israel were the same number of years in Egypt. So if these years be added together, the result is the same as that given by Moses in Exod. 12:40, and Paul, Galatians 3, namely 430 years.”¹⁴⁸

Finally Luther comes back to his assertion that the call of Abraham had taken place while he was still in Ur, in Chaldea, and then he continues: "Now the passage in Acts 7 does not agree with this opinion, for there St. Stephen, whose authority must be respected, repeats these words and clearly says that these words were spoken to Abraham in Mesopotamia; thus Moses and Stephen disagree. How shall we reconcile them? Both are credible witnesses, and yet they do not agree with each other. The customary reply has been that Abraham was twice called: once in Ur of the Chaldees, perhaps by the patriarch Sem, and afterward in Haran. Moses, however, is content with the mention of the second call in Haran. Thus they do not contradict each other, for Moses relates the later, Stephen the earlier call." To this he at once adds: "Nevertheless, it seems to me that this account is told accurately by Moses and not by Stephen, who received the knowledge of this occurrence from Moses alone. Now it often happens that when we relate anything incidentally we do not pay close attention to all the details as those do who write down what has happened for the benefit of posterity. So Moses is a writer of history, but Stephen depends on the account given by Moses and concerns himself little about the particulars but is intent on making the hearers understand that the fathers of this people did possess neither the law nor the Temple but were, nevertheless, well-pleasing and acceptable to God. This is the main thing on which Stephen insists,

namely that God would justify, forgive sin, and bestow everlasting life, not because of the Temple, circumcision, or the law, but only because of the promised seed, whom the synagogue had slain.”¹⁴⁹

These are sound observations, and we could never understand how in these statements Luther could have been accused of admitting that there are errors and contradictions *in the Scriptures*. It is true that he expresses the opinion that the *speech of Stephen*, recorded in Acts 7, is not in complete agreement with the account given by Moses, and he gives possible explanations for this disagreement, but that does not mean that he asserted that there are contradictions *in Scripture*. Was it not the duty of the author of Acts to record what Stephen actually had said? Since when does a writer who records a historical speech with all its inaccuracies and errors become responsible for such inaccuracies and errors? Wilhelm Walther is again right when he remarks regarding this passage: “Luther wants to explain how *Stephen* came to make inaccurate statements. The infallibility of the Bible does not come into question at all for him, since he takes it for granted that this account faithfully reports what Stephen said and is therefore correct.”¹⁵⁰

Regarding the statement in Gen. 24:22, that Eliezer had given Rebekah an earring and two bracelets, with a specification as to their weight, Luther makes this comment: “What is here told appears to reason to deal with carnal and worldly matters, and I myself wonder why Moses has so much to say con-

cerning such trifling things and speaks so briefly concerning far more sublime matters. However, there is no doubt that *the Holy Ghost wished that these things should be written* for our instruction, for there is nothing small, nothing useless presented to us in Holy Scripture; but all things that were written, were written for our learning, Rom. 15:4. For God wishes to be recognized in all things, both small and great.”¹⁵¹

What is recorded in Gen. 38 certainly does not concern matters that involve our salvation, and yet Luther speaks of them as having been written by the Holy Ghost. He says: “*Wonderful is the diligence of the Holy Ghost in describing this filthy and obscene happening*, relating it even to the last details, so that He did not hesitate to speak of the birth of the twins and the breech made by the second. Why did *the most pure mouth of the Holy Ghost* descend to the utterance of such low and despicable things which are obscene and filthy and moreover damnable, as if such things could be of profit for the instruction of the Church of God? What has the church to do with it?”¹⁵² We can pass by the profound understanding of Luther’s answer, because it does not concern what is our only interest at the present moment, that he regards this history as the result of a special influence of the Holy Ghost on the writers. Subsequently he twice returns to the same question. The second time he says: “Therefore this account of the thirty-eighth Chapter testifies of His (the Holy Ghost’s)

presence, that He is so near and *that He yields His tongue* for the narration of such abominable and depraved matters.”¹⁵³ In his sermons on Genesis, of 1527, we find a similar statement: “It is true that this is a coarse chapter, but this is the way in Holy Scripture, and so *the Holy Ghost* has written it.”¹⁵⁴

In the introduction to the exposition of the forty-fourth chapter Luther writes: “I have frequently admonished, and it is always to be impressed on men, that *the Holy Ghost writes* such jocular and trifling things concerning the great patriarchs, though He might have selected great and holy episodes. — Why does He not present extraordinary tokens of monastic fasting and of men of iron, such as the Carthusians wish to appear to be? — The dispute, moreover, is whether this sport in which Joseph engaged with his brethren could be pleasing to God and through what suggestion or spirit he did it. To this I reply that this that was done by Joseph is so *recorded by the Holy Ghost* that we may perceive how we shall rightly live before God.”¹⁵⁵

It is still difficult to harmonize the number of those who emigrated to Egypt with the other statements of the forty-sixth chapter. Luther also discussed these difficulties in his Lectures on Genesis in connection with Gen. 46:19-27. He was very conscious of the difficulties and twice refers to the figures as “confused” which “no exegete has been able to set right.”¹⁵⁶ He then rejects the number seventy-five given in the Septuagint and subsequently by Stephen

(Acts 7:14). He is inclined to regard this number as an error of a copyist and sticks to the traditional Hebrew text. But that there is an error here he does not suggest but would solve the difficulties as he understands “the text disjunctively and copulatively,” that is, that one divides and again adds together. How he carries this out in this particular case would lead us away from our discussion and must be read in the commentary itself, but these words of Luther must be specially noted: “But why was such exactness necessary in these genealogies? Or why did God wish that we should exercise and trouble ourselves with such numbers which, it would seem, are altogether useless? For what is it to me whether sixty or seventy souls went down into Egypt? I have often said, and it should always be impressed on men, that God wished that this people should have a certain and illustrious origin on account of Christ, who should be born from them. Therefore there is recounted with such diligence the order of the fathers in the entire history of Holy Scripture in the Books of the Judges of the Kings and of the prophets, so that everyone might know who were the ancestors of Christ, that He was not born in an unknown or obscure place.”¹⁵⁷

The fact that Luther seriously concerned himself with Biblical chronology is evident not only from the commentary on Genesis but also from his *Chronikon*, first printed in 1541, or to give it its Latin title, *Supputatio Annorum Mundi*. Here, too, he resorts rather to a hypothesis than to admit that there is an error in

the text. So to explain the differences in the years attributed to Jehoram and Ahaziah in II Chron. 22:2 and II Kings 8:26 he resorts to the explanation of Jerome and Lyra and says: "These twenty years of both Jehoram and Ahaziah are passed over in silence on account of their wickedness, but that there should be no error in the histories they were added to the age of his son Ahaziah."¹⁵⁸ We do not now ask whether this is a correct solution; we only emphasize the fact that Luther resorts rather to such a hypothesis than to admit that there is an error.

The fact that Luther regarded even the chronological figures of Scripture as having been written under a special guidance of the Holy Ghost he makes clear in the introduction of this same *Supputatio Annorum Mundi* in two passages. First: "Less fault in truth is to be found with Eusebius, who was, indeed, (as Jerome writes) an admirable and most diligent man. Concerning all the other historians we complain, and they complain among themselves that they lack an exact reckoning of the years. Wherefore I have set them aside and in this work I have desired to gather the computation of the years mainly from the Holy Scriptures on which we can and ought to base it."¹⁵⁹ At the end of the introduction he states still more clearly: "This consideration influenced me, that I did not entirely hold the historians in contempt, but that I preferred the Holy Scriptures to them. I use them so that I am not compelled to contradict Scripture. *Because I believe that in Scripture the true God*

speaks but in the *histories* good people according to their ability show their diligence and fidelity (but as men) or at least that the copyists were capable of erring.”¹⁶⁰

In 1539, when Luther heard about the heliocentric theory of Copernicus, he remarked at the table that he rather believed Holy Scripture, “For Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, not the earth.”¹⁶¹ Even in such matters of natural science the Scripture was a higher authority for him. The fact that we cannot conclude that the geocentric cosmology was an unbreakable belief for Luther or that his theological opinion hindered the spread of the new heliocentric cosmology is a matter that can only be indicated here.¹⁶²

If we survey these statements of Luther concerning the absolute inerrancy and the agreement of Scripture with itself, it would be easy to deduce from them proof that he held that the sacred writers were directly or indirectly urged by the Holy Ghost to attempt their authorship and that the content and the proper word were alike provided by the Holy Ghost. Luther does not use the terms *impulsus ad scribendum*, *suggestio rerum*, and *suggestio verbi*,^{162a} just as he never systematically presented his views concerning inspiration but only alluded to it incidentally, but what these terms express could easily be proved from his writings. Only, as we must at once emphasize, in none of these three factors did he regard the cooperation of the personality of the writers as being excluded.

7. ABSOLUTE INERRANCY, HOWEVER, LUTHER
DID NOT ASCRIBE TO OUR PRESENT TEXT BUT
ONLY TO THE ORIGINAL DRAFTS OF
THE BIBLICAL BOOKS

Furthermore, it should hardly be necessary to stress the fact that Luther did not predicate inerrancy nor lack of contradiction with regard to the transmitted Hebrew or Greek text, but only with regard to the original documents of the prophets or the apostles, or, in case they availed themselves of an amanuensis as, for example, St. Paul, of the words they dictated. That follows naturally from the fact that he frequently refers to the transmitted text as erroneous and even on occasion ventured corrections of his own.

This we knew before the protocols of the commission for the revision of the Bible translation were published in the third volume of the *Deutsche Bibel*, but since then we see clearer in many respects and have more examples at hand to prove this point. The following facts are significant:

1. At times Luther changed the traditional verse divisions. So he remarks on Psalm 25:6, 7: *Hodie ibi volumus fortiter pugnare cum grammaticis et novum versum incipere*. So he would transfer the words

“Today . . . hear” to the following verse.¹⁶³ On Psalm 102:25: *Ibi debet initium esse alterius versus*. He wants to divide verse 25 and make a new paragraph of verses 26-28.¹⁶⁴

2. What is more important, to him the present superscriptions of the psalms do not always seem reliable, for in the sessions of the commission he said concerning the heading of Psalm 92: *Si titulus recte est*.¹⁶⁵

3. He deviates from the traditional punctuation of the Hebrew text. In his writing *Vom Schem Hamphorash*, of 1543, we find a number of such cases. Especially noteworthy is the change of punctuation in Isaiah 9:6. The traditional punctuation led to the translation: “The Wonderful Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father calls his (the Messiah’s) name The Prince of Peace.” Luther takes the Jewish punctuators severely to task, sees in their punctuation a determined attempt at removing from the prophecy the prediction of the divinity of the coming Messiah, demands that their punctuation be rejected, and the text be read as he translates it: “His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”¹⁶⁶ He even urges the Christian Hebrew scholars to publish a new Hebrew Bible that would be free from the wrong punctuation invented by the Jews.¹⁶⁷

4. He deviates even from the traditional text and reconstructs it anew (mostly in conformity with

the Septuagint and the Vulgate). So the traditional text of II Chron. 18:29 demands the translation: “He will disguise himself and will go to the battle”; Luther changes the third person to the first: “I will disguise myself and go to the battle” (Septuagint: κατακάλυψόν με καὶ εἰς ἐλεύσομαι εἰς τὸν πόλεμον; Vulgate: *mutabo habitum et sic ad pugnam vadam*).¹⁶⁸ Or he translates the first part of Job 33:17, “*dass er den Menschen von seinem Vorhaben wende,*” “that he may withdraw man from his purpose” (Septuagint: ἀποστρέψαι ἄνθρωπον ἐξ ἀδικίας αὐτοῦ; Vulgate: *ut avertat hominem ab his quae facit*) whereas in the traditional text, on account of the lack of an equivalent for the preposition “from,” not God is the subject, but man: “that man do away the wrong doing.”¹⁶⁹ Or in Job 40:21 the traditional text has *zeelim*, but Luther reads *zelilim* and translates accordingly (Septuagint: ὑπὸ παντοδαπὰ δένδρα κοιμᾶται; Vulgate: *sub umbra dormit in secreto calami*).¹⁷⁰ Of special importance in this connection are again several passages in *Vom Schem Hamphorash*.^{170a} Luther is acquainted with the fact that the transmitted text sometimes has the adverb of negation instead of the dative of the personal pronoun and vice versa (f. i., Josh. 5:14; I Sam. 19:19).¹⁷¹

5. A number of times he declares that the traditional text is simply an error in copying. On I Kings 5:19 he remarks: “*Ich wollte gerne sehen, wo 80 und 70 Tausend Zimmerleute mit ihren Aexten, etc. Wann das Land so viele Beile gehabt est mirum. Forte Judei corruerunt textum,*”¹⁷² and adds the ques-

tion, "Are two hundred thousand men perhaps 2,000?" In the edition of the Bible of 1545 we find the following gloss on II Sam. 23:8: "In the Hebrew text we read: 'These are the names of David's mighty men: Joseb, Basebeth, Thachmoni, who was the most renowned among them.' Ipse Adino, Ha Eznib, and slew eight hundred at one time. Here we believe that the text has been corrupted by a scribe, probably because of a copy in illegible writing and through poor letters, and so Adino was written for Orer and Ha Eznib for Ethhanitho. For those who learned Hebrew well know how easy it is in a poorly written manuscript to read Daleth for Resh, Vau for Nun, He for Thau. Therefore we have corrected it according to the text of I Chron. 11."¹⁷³ In Acts 13:20 we read, "After that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet." Luther at first had added the gloss: "This reckoning is to begin with the exodus from Egypt as is customary in Scripture, Exodus 12, and not from the time of the first judge, Judges 1.," so, for example, in the edition of 1534. In his own copy Luther changed the number 450 in the text to 350, erased the gloss, and substituted the following: "Some texts have 400 (altogether 450), but the histories and reckonings of the years do not permit it. It is an error of a scribe, who wrote four instead of three, which could easily happen in the Greek." This gloss was printed in the edition of 1541. In Mark 15:25 we have the statement: "And it was the third

hour, and they crucified Him.” It is evident that this contradicts John 19:14. In the edition of 1534 is found this gloss: “That is, they began to arrange for His crucifixion, but He was crucified at the sixth hour as the other evangelists write,” but then the gloss continues: “But some think that the text was corrupted by the scribes so that in place of the letter ζ (which signifies six in the Greek) the letter γ was written (which signifies three) because they are not unlike.”¹⁷⁴

Frequently, when the traditional text almost compels one to accept a defect, as in I Sam. 13:1, or when it at least suggests it as in II Sam. 14:26, Luther attempts to help himself in another way. So he writes in the revision protocol concerning I Sam. 13:1, where the traditional text can hardly be translated otherwise than, “Saul was one year old when he became king,” as follows: “Saul had reigned one year, this is not said regarding the year of his age but of his reign. Before he had been in power, afterward, etc.”¹⁷⁵ So the translation came about: “Saul reigned one year, and when he had reigned two years over Israel, etc.” It is not our purpose to investigate the tenableness of this interpretation. On II Sam. 14:26 he said, according to the protocol: “It is a strong hyperbole: one hundred drachmas are one apothecaries’ pound, two little pounds. The shears must have been weighed with it.”¹⁷⁶

These examples must suffice. It is no new discovery nor an “evasion” when inerrancy is ascribed only

to the original text and not to the text we possess today. That was taken as a matter of course by Luther. And it is noteworthy that he not only discussed these problems with the small circle of scholars who sat with him around the table, working on the revision of the translation, but that he mentions them in the glosses printed in his translation intended for the common people.

8. LUTHER DOES NOT IDENTIFY INSPIRATION WITH
DICTATION; HE RATHER EMPHASIZES
HUMAN COOPERATION

No matter how emphatically Luther emphasized the inerrancy and the consistency of the original text of Holy Scripture as the work of the Holy Ghost, he is also, on the other hand, convinced of the personal cooperation of the original authors. They are not, in his opinion, mechanical instruments and dead machines, mere amanuenses who set down on paper only what was dictated to them by the Spirit of God. He regarded them rather as independent instruments of the Spirit who spoke *their* faith, *their* heart, *their* thoughts; who put their entire will and feeling into the words to such an extent that from what Luther reads in each case he draws conclusions concerning the character and the temperament of the authors. So the Prophet Joel reveals himself in his writing as a “gracious and gentle man, who does not scold and censure like the other prophets but implores and bewails.”¹⁷⁷ Amos, on the other hand, is “violent, scolding almost all the way through his book, so that he is well called, Amos, that is a burden or what is burdensome and vexatious”; and he explains this as being due to his calling and from the fact that he was sent as a “stranger” from the Kingdom of Judah to

the Kingdom of Israel, for, he continues, “because he is a shepherd and not one of the order of the prophets, as he says in the seventh chapter, moreover, he goes from the branch of Judah, from Tekoa, into the Kingdom of Israel and preaches there as a stranger.”¹⁷⁸ Of Jeremiah, however, Luther says that he is always afraid that he censures too much, for which reason he compares him with Philip Melancthon. In Paul he observes the deepest emotion because of his writings and can say of his words, “these words are violent above measure, from which it is easy to see that he was much more violently moved than he was able to express in words.” Yes, he adds, “So it has come about that St. Paul under the influence of his intense thought could not control his own word so well, and his speech has become somewhat disordered and peculiar.”¹⁷⁹

It was self-evident to Luther that the evangelists gave consideration to the plan according to which they would relate the history of Jesus and, with that in mind, selected and arranged their materials accordingly, abbreviating here and expanding there. In the *Church Postil* Luther says in the Sermon for the Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity (St. Matt. 24:15-28): “In this chapter is described the conclusion and end of both kingdoms, that of Judah and that of the whole world. But the two evangelists, Matthew and Mark, mingle the two and do not keep the order that has been preserved in Luke, for they are concerned only about telling and repeating the words without

troubling themselves as to the order in which the words were spoken.” “So understand that Matthew here weaves together and combines the end of the Jewish nation and of the world, mixes them into one dish. But if you wish to understand it you must separate it and apply the parts to their respective ends.”¹⁸⁰

Luther thinks of the prophets as studying Moses industriously, and the later prophets studying the earlier ones, thus furnishing themselves, to a certain degree, with ideas for what, at the appointed time, they wrote down under the guidance of the Spirit. In this study they may have frequently erred, not in that which they later wrote under the guidance of the Spirit and which then became a part of Scripture; but that study was a preparation for the later task.

In the year 1534 the following remark is attributed to Luther in the *Table Talk*:¹⁸¹ “None of the prophets’ sermons are described fully and completely, but their disciples and hearers gathered now one saying, now another, and brought them together. So the Bible was preserved.”

Luther calmly admits that in the compilation of his laws Moses included much that was already in force in Israel, for in a letter of January 7, 1527, written to the Landgrave Philip after the latter had sent him the *Reformatio Ecclesiarum Hassiae*, he stated that it contained too many new laws for him to advise its immediate publication and then continues: “It is my opinion, that as Moses did in the giving

of the law, which for the larger part he took from the usages customary among the people and codified what was of ancient usage," the Landgrave should act in the same way.¹⁸² When the Old Testament scholar Guthe, in his pamphlet, *Luther und die Bibelforschung der Gegenwart* (1917), p. 22), wrote in connection with this statement: "Luther had the correct impression of the Pentateuch, that they (the laws) are in great part the appropriation of the established legal usages of Israel, and thinks of its introduction, that Moses gradually at various times enforced them. These are opinions which present-day scientific investigation of the Old Testament had to attain by painstaking effort, and which, today, as a result of important discoveries, we can prove to a certain extent," this advocate of the Wellhausen School put more into Luther's words than Luther actually had said, but this is certainly perfectly clear, that, according to these words, Luther held that Moses did not simply frame his laws as the result of divine dictation, but that in their drafting he himself cooperated to a very marked degree.

But does it follow, because Luther at one time could speak thus of the Law of Moses and at another time could insist as strongly or even more strongly that the Books of Moses and all of Scripture were the result of the working of the Spirit, that he held different views at different times and that he never arrived at a unified, consistent judgment concerning Scripture? That statement has frequently been made,

and consequently both liberals and conservatives claimed that Luther shared their views. Then it was fashionable to assert that the “freer” statements were characteristic of the young Luther and the others of the later Luther, who had already to a large degree lost his freedom of judgment. If anything at all has been proven by our citations from Luther, it is certainly this, that this once so popular distinction between the young and the old Luther, even in what related to Holy Scripture, is a purely imaginary idea that is contradicted by the sources themselves. It is true that in the beginning Holy Scripture was not the only authority for Luther but it became more and more so in the course of time. At all times, however, he regarded it as the inerrant Word of God.^{182a}

Or should we resurrect the equally ancient assertion that Luther was at best no systematic thinker, and that, therefore, no consistent views concerning the character of Scripture or of its origin can be derived from his writings? In reply to this old statement it is encouraging to be able to cite the conviction of two recognized Luther scholars of our day. Emmanuel Hirsch wrote in the preface to his fine dissertation, *Luthers Gottesanschauung* (1918): “Luther’s portrayal of God is not only the most living and definite but also the clearest and most logical that Christian theology has produced.” Should he of whose conception of God this could be said have been as contradictory in his opinions concerning Scripture as some would have us think? And Karl Holl wrote in 1923:

“The statement which has almost become a proverb, that Luther was not a systematic thinker, is for the most part only a cloak to cover the laziness that does not try seriously to understand Luther’s apparently contradictory statements. But what is due Augustine and Goethe should also be proper in Luther’s case. If a systematical thinker is thought of as a man who is able to appreciate the relation of great ideas to each other, then Luther was a greater systematic thinker than Calvin, to say nothing of Melanchthon. The art of scholastic presentation does not make a systematic thinker.”¹⁸³

It is true, in a single passage, as far as we now know, Luther uses the term *calamus* in speaking of the Biblical writer and his activity. It was Moldaenke who in 1936 called our attention to this fact.¹⁸⁴ But this passage is found in one of Luther’s earliest writings, in his *Dictata super Psalterium*, of 1513-1515. In this he used the terminology of the medieval theology, of his former theological teachers.¹⁸⁵ In medieval times the nouns *calamus* and *secretarius* and the verb *dictare* are often found in this connection. However, even in this passage the term *calamus* is modified by the preceding as well as the following statements.¹⁸⁶

Both facts were certain to Luther: the divine origin of Scripture and its resultant inerrancy, on the one hand, and, on the other, the active cooperation of the human personality of the authors in their composition. The fact that he appreciated the latter distinguishes his view from the inspiration theories of

the later dogmaticians who either entirely or to a great extent excluded such cooperation;¹⁸⁷ that he did not grow weary of emphasizing the former, establishes his agreement with them. Only in the true unity of both views do we arrive at the whole truth.

The fact that Adolf Harnack opposed this truth, and that Koestlin, Loofs, R. Seeberg, and others¹⁸⁸ grasped it only partly, does not alter this in any way. It is not the first time that historians were biased by their own theology and did not see the facts or misconstrued them. We have to thank Wilhelm Walther for restoring the correct picture on the basis of careful study of the pertinent sources. It is unfortunate that A. Schleiff,¹⁸⁹ in his thorough theological-exegetical introduction to the ninth volume of Luther's *Deutsche Bibel*, of 1939, did not word the section on Luther and verbal inspiration more carefully and less ambiguously. It is true that "the teaching of verbal inspiration, even to the extent of including the Hebrew vowel points, as that was held by the later orthodoxy" was not Luther's conception, because the later orthodoxy regarded it, to a greater or a lesser degree, as simple dictation. But if every form of verbal inspiration, including the conviction of the inerrancy of the original documents, is to be eliminated from Luther's theology, as Schleiff's words might indicate, that simply does not agree with the facts.

In this country the slogan has been proclaimed: "Lutheran theology in its classic period knew nothing

of a verbal inspiration.”¹⁹⁰ This, too, is true only if it refers exclusively to the dictation theory. If, however, it is to include the rejection of the inerrancy of the original documents, it cannot be supported by Luther’s views, who certainly is the greatest exponent of the “classical” period of Lutheran theology.

9. NOT LUTHER BUT OTHER THEOLOGIANS OF HIS
TIME WERE ON THE ROAD TO THE MECHAN-
ICAL DICTATION THEORY

While Luther was never an exponent of the mechanical or dictation theory, there were other Lutheran theologians of his time who were on the road to this theory, which again shows how wrong it was to say, "The classical period of Lutheran theology knew nothing of a verbal inspiration."

First of all we think of Andreas Osiander at Nuernberg. Whether it was correct to say that the Brandenburg-Nuernberg *Kirchenordnung* of 1533, of which he was at least the co-author, already pointed in this direction is rather doubtful. Like many other *Kirchenordnungen* of the sixteenth century it contains a section on the doctrine that is to be preached in Nuernberg and in Brandenburg-Ansbach. Frank, who was well versed in the pertinent literature, called it "a treasure of the first and most refreshing period of the century of the Reformation."¹⁹¹ In it we read in the first part:¹⁹² "Scripture is sure, for it is not given by men but by the Holy Ghost, as St. Peter testifies saying, 'Knowing this first that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by

the Holy Ghost.' Therefore those uncertain, man-made doctrines are futile and injurious as Christ and the prophets declare; but the certain holy Scripture is profitable and wholesome as Paul testifies saying: 'All Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.'" Since this *Kirchenordnung* was used in many German churches outside of Nuernberg and Brandenburg-Ansbach it certainly helped to base the doctrine of inspiration upon these two passages: II Peter 1:21 and II Tim. 3:16; but Hans Emil Weber¹⁹³ was hardly right when in the mere use of these two Scripture passages he saw an indication of an inspiration theory tending toward mechanism.

Matters stand entirely differently with regard to the *Gospel Harmony* of Osiander which appeared four years later.¹⁹⁴ This book is not widely known; in our country it is found in only a few libraries, and even in Germany it is a rare book. It is, as far as we know today, the first harmony of the Gospels published by a Lutheran theologian.¹⁹⁵ Many know Andreas Osiander only from the role he played in the struggles concerning the doctrine of justification during the last years before his death. While in these his activity, although representing some elements of truth, was disastrous, we should not overlook his great life work at Nuernberg from 1520-1548. He was overwhelmed by the wisdom, clarity,

effectiveness, and majesty of Holy Scripture, held in so high an esteem already by his parents, and wanted to be nothing else than a Scriptural theologian. He admired the four Gospels especially, and the publication of a good harmony of the Gospels appeared to him very desirable and, when executed in the right manner, something truly glorious. He was acquainted with the attempts made in this direction in the ancient church and thought much of Gerson's *Monotessaron seu Unum ex Quatuor Evangeliiis*, but none of them satisfied him because he was of the conviction that the evangelists, besides their own great care in preparing and writing the Gospels, were to such a measure under the influence of the Holy Spirit that "they did not write a single word nor even a single letter which was not absolutely historically true and had not the Holy Spirit's approbation." He conceded that the four Gospels seem to differ in content as well as in their (chronological) order but was, nevertheless, convinced that behind their seeming confusion there was a most complete harmony. In order to bring this harmony to light and at the same time to lose not a single word of the four Gospels written under such unique influence of the Holy Spirit Osiander wrote his *Gospel Harmony*, "in which", as he says on the title page, "the evangelical history of the four Gospels is woven together into such a whole that not a single word of an evangelist is omitted, not a single word not found in their Gospels is added, the order of none disturbed, every-

thing left in its place, everything, however, so distinguished by means of letters and signs that what is peculiar to each evangelist and what one has in common with another can be recognized at the first glance." He could consistently apply this principle only by assuming that every section of the Gospels which distinguishes itself by this or that element from another similar one in spite of all often great similarities with another section, presents a different event or a different speech. So Osiander differentiates not only the pericope of the cleansing of the Temple in John 2 from the one found in Matt. 21:12 ff. and in Luke 19:45 ff., but also the latter from the one found in Mark 11:15, because the cleansing recorded by Mark did not take place on the day of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem but on the following day (lib. I, 21; III, 37. 40). He differentiates not only the Sermon on the Mount recorded by Matthew from the Sermon on the Field recorded by Luke (I, 29-35; II, 4), two acts of the healing of the leper (I, 36. 40), two centurions of Capernaum (I, 36; II, 6), the two travellers of Mark 16:12 from the two of Luke 24:13 (IV, 36, 37), but he counts also not less than four blind men that were healed when Jesus visited the house of Zacchæus in Jericho, one when he entered the city (according to Luke), one when he left the city (according to Mark), and immediately following the two mentioned by Matthew! Osiander was ridiculed on account of this procedure. Melanchthon wished that it might be as easy to bring the Evangel-

icals into harmony with each other as Osiander established the harmony of the four Gospels! But Osiander was motivated by his endeavor to uphold the trustworthiness of the Biblical writers for fear that the giving up of a single word of the Gospels might endanger the belief in the authority of Scripture; and that would have been most horrible to him.¹⁹⁶ From this it is evident that Osiander was in complete agreement with Luther concerning the verbal inspiration and the resulting absolute inerrancy of Scripture, and yet we miss in him the relative freedom that was peculiar to Luther in regard to the question of harmonizing the four accounts of the Gospels.¹⁹⁷ And also this is evident: as much as Osiander emphasizes the inerrancy of Scripture he cannot be counted among the exponents of a mechanical or dictation theory. The statement in his preface mentioned above: “For the purpose of writing the four evangelists employed not only the industry of their diligence, but also the energy of the Holy Spirit so that they inserted into their books not a single word or letter that did not correspond to historical truth and was not approved by the Holy Spirit (*Quattuor evangelistas tantum non modo suae diligentiae industriam verum etiam Spiritus sancti ἐνέργειαν ad scribendum attulisse, ut verbum nullum ac ne literam quidem ullam, nisi certissima historiae veritatis invitante, ac Spiritu sancto approbante libris suis inseruerint*),” ought to preclude this forever, because here the self-activity of the writers is emphasized; they did not

write their accounts without *diligentiae industria*, and in describing the activity of the Holy Spirit he uses not the term *dictare*, but *temperare cogitationes, interne moderare, consilium suppeditare*, etc. Only this is true, his emphasis upon the absolute correctness of every single word and the whole construction of his Gospel harmony could easily be misconstrued to prove that according to him Scripture came into existence by dictation of the Holy Ghost.¹⁹⁸ And in that sense, but in that sense alone, can we place Osiander among those who paved the way for the dictation theory. Whoever read his preface and his *Annotationes* with some care should have been sufficiently guarded against such a misconception and have known that Osiander himself in no way was an adherent of the dictation theory.¹⁹⁹

Thirty years after the publication of Osiander's *Gospel Harmony*, the *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae*, by Matthias Flacius, appeared.²⁰⁰ Since parts of this collection of theological essays date back to the first years of Flacius' teaching activity,²⁰¹ we have the right to mention him here. His *Clavis Scripturae* is a great work, the fruit of a mind that Holl correctly called the sharpest of all theologians in the second half of the sixteenth century. In the first part, his Bible dictionary, he reveals a knowledge of the Bible and an understanding of its contents that is surprising and admirable, while the second part contains a hermeneutic filled with the principles and practical rules that are still today basic for all sound exegesis. We

limit ourselves to the question concerning the inspiration of Scripture. Flacius follows in the footsteps of Luther. The whole Scripture is to him a great organic unity brought about by the Holy Spirit through men called for this purpose and acting as his “organs,” with the result that God Himself speaks to men in and through the Scripture. The truth and the trustworthiness of Scripture are based upon this very fact that He is its author.²⁰² Therefore there is no contradiction nor error in the Bible.²⁰³ Sometimes a statement might appear to us to be erroneous, but that is our own fault. The fact that the Gospels at times record a saying of Christ or an historical event in nearly the same words he explains by pointing to the Holy Ghost who gave the writers not only the thoughts but also the consonant words.²⁰⁴ It was this conviction of the absolute truth and trustworthiness of Scripture that led Flacius to the assumption that even the vocalization of the Hebrew text in some form or other was original and was made under the influence of the Holy Ghost.²⁰⁵ Because it was God who spoke through the Biblical writers, Flacius also assumed it as possible that at times the prophets and the apostles did not fully comprehend the import of their words, that the Holy Spirit pointed to future realities of which they understood only as much as the Spirit granted them to conceive.²⁰⁶ Who still dares to maintain that the classical period of Lutheranism knew nothing of a verbal inspiration? And, as stated above, Flacius defended his view concerning

the vocalization of the Hebrew text in a public lecture at Wittenberg one week after Luther's death!

He emphasized the divine factor in the act of inspiration and verbal inspiration so often and with such force that since Preger it has become the generally accepted view that he was the first exponent of the dictation theory in the Lutheran Church.²⁰⁷ And yet this is not true. We owe it to Moldænke that we today see more correctly. In order to prove that Flacius' theory of inspiration was not identical with the later dictation theory we need not lay much emphasis upon the fact that he has fine sections on the peculiarity of each one of the four evangelists as well as of Paul's writings, more profound than most writers after Luther, because the later dogmaticians were also not blind regarding these peculiarities and yet were adherents of the dictation theory; they explained them as accommodations of the Spirit to the vocabulary and the personal characteristic traits of the writers. Of greater importance is the fact that, according to Flacius, Mark used Matthew when he wrote his Gospel, Luke used Matthew and Mark, and John used all three Synoptic Gospels.^{207a} Concerning Paul he says that he wrote *ex animo ardenti*.²⁰⁸ The terms used for the activity of the Spirit are *instructio*, *confirmatio*,²⁰⁹ (and they are used in the same sentence in which the absolute trustworthiness of Scripture is maintained) or *suggestio*.²¹⁰ It is true, a few times the verb *dictare* is used, but Moldænke (p. 308) shows what Flacius intends to express

thereby. Furthermore, when Flacius explains II Tim. 3:16 he in no way indicates that Θεόπνευστος calls for the dictation theory.^{210a} Finally, when in 1559 the *Magdeburg Centuries* began to appear,^{210b} whose principal “gubernator” Flacius was, and in the first and the second book offered sections *de doctrina* containing also paragraphs on Holy Scripture, the authors reprinted them from the Σύναγμα written by Johann Wiegand and Matth. Judex, the co-laborers of Flacius, and the Σύναγμα is far from advocating the dictation theory. So we believe Moldænke was right when he said that the view that Flacius introduced the mechanical or dictation theory into the Lutheran Church can no longer be maintained. But so much is true, he who does not read him carefully could easily arrive at this assumption, and thus Flacius may have paved the way for the dictation theory although he himself did not hold it. Verbal inspiration he taught, but not mechanical inspiration by means of dictation.

Matters stand differently with regard to the *Confession* that Justus Menius wrote at the demand of the Duke of Saxony and that was accepted by the representatives of the Duchy assembled at Weimar in March, 1549. O. Ritschl (I, 132) called our attention to this *Confession*.^{210c} From the section on Scripture we quote the first part completely,²¹¹ and in the Notes we give also the second part, because this important text is hardly known in our country.²¹² As far as I know, it was the first time that such a detailed

article concerning Scripture made its appearance in a Lutheran confession. It was occasioned by the demand of the Emperor to introduce the *Interim* in the Duchy of Saxony. In this we read concerning Scripture and its authority: We confess “that the Holy Scripture, called Bible, that is, the books of the holy prophets and apostles, is the word and mouth by which the eternal majesty of God reveals itself to the human race so that no man can perceive or know anything certain and trustworthy about the essence or the will of the divine majesty unless he perceives and learns it from Holy Scripture. For although both, prophets and apostles, like ourselves, were natural men and descendants of Adam they, nevertheless, have not spoken nor written as men write out of their own mind; and their books and writings are certainly not their own human imaginings. It is God the Holy Ghost who spoke through their mouth and wrote through their hand. He is the real master and author of Holy Scripture, who to make known to men his word and teaching used mouth and hand of the prophets as His organ in no other way than the prophets and apostles used their pen and ink to write the word and as David used his harp to play on it. Therefore, as the pen wrote and the harp played, not by themselves, but as the hand of the prophets and apostles conducted and governed them, just so did the prophets and apostles teach and write concerning the essence and will of the almighty and the eternal Majesty not by themselves but according to that

which God the Holy Ghost gave into their hearts and mouth.” Here we for the first time have a purely mechanical conception of inspiration, and that in a Lutheran confession written by a man who was an adherent of the gospel since 1522, who took part in the Marburg colloquy of 1529, in the colloquy resulting in the Wittenberg Concordia of 1536, in the negotiations at Smalcald 1537, in the colloquies at Hagenau and Worms, of 1540-41, protested against the Augsburg *Interim*, and always had Luther’s confidence.

Further we must consider Georg Major’s *De origine et autoritate verbi Dei*.²¹³ It first appeared in Wittenberg in 1550, but during the following ten years it was republished at least three times. This fact and the description of the book given by Kawerau urged me to search for it until I found a copy of the first edition in the Krauth Memorial Library at Philadelphia. But the book was a disappointment to me. It is certainly not “a first attempt dogmatically to develop the doctrine of Scripture,” as Kawerau states it. It is a writing that was occasioned by the news that the council, begun in 1545, was to be continued at Mantua. It wants to show that Scripture alone can decide authoritatively in matters of doctrine and cult, since it alone is the *vox et mandatum Dei*. Since it is this, it is inerrant.²¹⁴ In all dubious cases exegesis has to follow the rule that Scripture is its own interpreter and has to compare the dark passages with the clear ones. “Since God is the author of Scripture He is

also its sole interpreter.” The question as to how this word of God came into existence is answered only in general terms: it was divinely communicated to the writers; they were urged by the Holy Spirit. Verbal inspiration is a fact to Major, but he did not define the kind of a verbal inspiration that he accepted. Since with the exception of the Thuringian Confession of 1549 no Lutheran theologian up to 1550, as far as we know, taught an inspiration by dictation, and since nothing in the writing of Georg Major points to this theory, we hardly have a right to ascribe such a view to him.²¹⁵

Nine years after the publication of Major’s book there appeared a work which Otto Ritschl not wrongly called “the first orthodox Lutheran dogmatics.”

It was jointly written by Johann Wigand and Matthaeus Judex who at that time worked together at Madgeburg and collaborated with Flacius in the publication of the first volumes of the well-known *Madgeburg Centuries*. It even became a part of the first volume of these *Centuries*, but it was also published separately under the title: *Syntagma, seu Corpus Doctrinae Christi, ex novo Testamento tantum, Methodica ratione, singulari fide et diligentia, congestum*. The *Syntagma* was dedicated to the senators and governors of Lübeck, Hamburg and Lüneburg and should be a confession of faith taught in the territories of these cities.²¹⁷ It contained the whole of *Loci Dogmatici*, in better order than we find them in Melancthon’s *Loci*.²¹⁸ The method followed is this.

There is usually given a very short statement concerning the individual *locus*, then the *locus* is divided up in the most important points or questions and these are proved by quotations from Scripture. These quotations fill the greater part of the book and betray an admirable knowledge of Scripture.²¹⁹ For our purpose it is of importance that we find here for the first time a *locus* concerning the Word of God and another one concerning Holy Scripture. Both open both parts of the book. In the first part the quotations are taken from the four Gospels, in the second from the Acts and the apostolic writings.²²⁰ In the Old Testament volume which appeared after the one on the New Testament we find the same two *loci*.

It is surprising that Ritschl maintains that according to Wigand and Judex neither the Old nor the New Testament are the product of divine inspiration.²²¹ This is untenable for in the *Epistola Nuncupatoria* to the Old Testament section they wrote: "Whatever was translated has been written down into books under the *singular inspiration of God*" (*singulari Dei inspiratione et bonitate*), and how could they again and again call God the author of the Bible and declare that the approved canonical writings are without contradiction and error, if they were not convinced that Scripture came into existence by means of a unique, a "singular" inspiration through God?²²² This, however, is true: they did not develop a theory of inspiration, they did not describe the mode of the divine cooperation with the writers; their interest was in the result and not so

much in the way how this result was obtained. Just so it had been with Luther. He was convinced that the facts related in the Bible are historically true, that the doctrines taught there are a correct expression of the divine truth and will, that the words used to describe and express them are in real consonance with these facts and truths and that the holy writings as they left the hands of the writers or as they were dictated by the prophets and apostles to their secretaries, as a whole and in all their details were without a contradiction and error. Luther, however, was convinced of this unique character of the Bible and its books not because these human writers made use of all their intellectual, emotional and volitional powers in writing them, investigated everything and tried to find the corresponding word for every statement — Luther did not deny that, he rather maintained this human activity and cooperation — but because he was convinced that the Holy Spirit was behind this all, that directly or indirectly he induced them to write, that he gave them what they needed, contents and word, that the writers were only in a secondary sense the authors, that the *autor principalis* was God, and that, therefore, the Bible is the Word of God. In this respect Wigand and Judex, these “Gnesio-Lutherans,” were true Lutherans, true and faithful disciples of Luther.

Before Wigand and Judex published the *synagma* Wigand in 1557 had published: *Methodus oder Heubtartikel Christlicher lere, wie sie in der*

Kirchen zu Magdeburg furgehalten und geleret werden, and this was followed in 1559 by its Latin translation.²²³ These books were written for the congregation and have actually been read for a number of years in the public service. Here we mention them, because, as far as our present knowledge goes, they were the first catechetical writings that contained a section on the Word of God, its nature and origin, its certitude or trustworthiness, its fundamental difference from all human word and philosophy, its division in Law and Gospel, its binding authority for all, and its efficacy for life and salvation. The question after the origin of the Word of God is answered thus: It is revealed by God and comprehended in the trustworthy and undoubted writings of the prophets and apostles. Among the nine reasons why the doctrine comprehended in Scripture is really the Word of God appears also this one: It is in all articles of faith without contradictions (*consentiens et conformis*). Instead of proofs from Scripture we find the usual ones taken from history and experience. II Tim. 3:16 is quoted, however, not as proof for the inspiration of Scripture, but for the fact that the Word of God and Holy Scripture are not a dead letter, but full of power and efficacy. Of importance is that here “Word of God” and “Holy Spirit” are used as identical. The Bible is the Word of God — that was apparently considered sufficient information for the common people.

And, indeed, as long as the divine authority of the Bible is maintained, and as long as it is conceded that

it is the product of a unique cooperation of the Holy Spirit and the human writers and, therefore, as a whole and in all its details the Word of God without contradiction and error, so long the question after the mode of inspiration is of an entirely secondary nature, and so long one is in harmony with the best Lutheran theologians from Luther up to the year 1570.

NOTES

1. M. Reu, *Luther's German Bible*, Columbus, O., Lutheran Book Concern, 1934. By the publication of this book, recognized in America and in Europe as the standard work on this subject, all former views have become antiquated.

2. Pages 114-124.

3. Pages 124 - 133, Weimar Edition of Luther's Works, 7, 650, 21ff. We always quote the Weimar Edition.

4. W. 7, 650, 21ff. We add a passage from *De servo arbitrio* of 1525: "Thus we should judge: one should admit in not a single passage of holy Scripture a sequela or a tropus if it is not demanded by the apparent character of the words (*circumstantia verborum evidens*) or by a doubtlessly resultant contradiction to an article of faith (*absurditas rei manifestae in articulum fidei peccans*). Everywhere we should rather abide by the simple, pure and natural sense of the words as demanded by the grammar and the use of speech created in men by God." W. 18, 700.

5. W. 10, I, 169, 2f. In his lectures on Deuteronomy in 1523-24 Luther says of the *sensus literalis*: "*Tota est fidei et theologiae christianae substantia*," and adds: "In sorrow and temptation this sense alone endures and overcomes the gates of hell and sin and death and triumphs to the praise and honor of God." W. 14, 560, 13.

6. W. 2, 361, 12. Compare *Luther's German Bible* p. 349.

7. *Luther's German Bible*: Luther's eyes are opened to the heart of Scripture, pp. 101-114.

8. Fr. Kropatschek, *Das Schriftprinzip der luth. Kirche*, I. *Die Vorgeschichte. Das Erbe des Mittelalters*, Leipzig, 1904, pp. 438ff. Even Thomas Aquinas said: *Auctoritatibus canonicae Scripturae utitur (sacra doctrina) proprie et ex necessitate argumentando; auctoritatibus autem aliorum doctorum ecclesiae, quasi arguendo ex propriis, sed probabiliter. Innititur enim fides nostra revelationi apostolis et prophetis factae, qui canonicos libros scripserunt, non autem revelationi, si qui fuit aliis doctoribus facta* (*Summa I, qu. I; art. VIII.*) Bonaventura: *Auctoritas principaliter residet in sacra scriptura, quae per spiritum sanctum est condita tota ad dirigendam fidem Catholicam* (*Breviloquium V, 7*). Duns Scotus: *Quod sacra scriptura sufficienter continet doctrinam necessariam viatori* (*Sent. Prolog. qu. II, 14*). Occam: *Qui dicit aliquam partem novi vel veteris testamenti aliquod falsum asserere aut non esse recipiendam a catholicis est haereticus et pertinax reputandus* (*Dialogus p. 449*).

9. We mention a few of the leaders: Johann Heynlin at Paris, Tuebingen, and Basel; Paul Scriptoris at Tuebingen; Jacobus Philippi at Basel; Ulrich Surgant at Basel; Werner Rolewink at Koeln; Gregor Reisch at Freiburg; Sebastian Brant at Basel and Strassburg; Geiler von Kaisersberg at Strassburg.

10. *Occam: Ergo christianus de necessitate salutis non tenetur ad credendum nec credere quod nec in biblia continetur nec ex solis contentis in biblia protest consequentia necessaria et manifesta inferri* (*Dialog. p. 411, 769f.*). This authority of Scripture is based upon its divine inspira-

tion: *quia instinctu spiritus sancti ibidem est scripta et asserta* (*Dialog.* p. 822, 834).

Arnoldi of Usingen, one of Luther's teachers, said: *Auctoritas sacrae scripturae praevallet auctoritati conciliorum, Papae et cuiuscumque in doctrina fidei et morum, nempe quia apostolis, non Papae nec conciliis Christus dederit potestatem edendi sacrae scripturae libros.* (Nic. Paulus, *Der Augustiner Barthol. Arnoldi von Usingen*, Freiburg 1893).

11. P. Tschackert, *Peter von Ailli*, Gotha 1877, Appendix p. 10.

12. *Occam: Si quid autem scripsero in praesenti opusculo quod scripturae vel doctrinae sanctorum seu sacrosanctae ecclesiae assertioni repugnet et adversetur, correctioni praefatae ecclesiae catholicae — non ecclesiae malignantium, non haereticorum, non schismaticorum nec eorum fautoribus — me et dicta mea subicio et expono* (*Compendium Errorum Papae*, p. 958).

Peter d' Ailli: Recipimus tamquam scripturas canonicas seu divinas propter auctoritatem ecclesiae catholicae, quae eas ita recepit et approbat (Tschackert, *Appendix*, p. 11).

Gabr. Biel: Sanctionibus ac decretis apostolicis, quae scripturae sacrae legi divinae et naturali obviare certum non est, etiamsi dubium fuerit, assensus et obedientia est praestanda (*Sermones de temp.* 157).

Arnoldi von Usingen: Qui ecclesiae non credit, non potest firmiter scripturae credere (Nic. Paulus, l. c., p. 77).

Trithemius of Sponheim: Neque sine scriptura habet ecclesia auctoritatem, neque sine ecclesia fidem habet scriptura, ut duarum fiat sententia una (Kropatscheck, l. c., p. 443). — R. Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* III, 1930, p. 724: "In spite of the fact that in principle the

Scriptures are acknowledged as the sole authority, positive interest in discovering Bible truth is almost entirely absent. In the last analysis, the real interest of Occam as well as of many of his contemporaries, in stressing the authority of the Bible, was to secure a means of criticism by which the authority of the church's dogmas could be shaken, or the dialectics with which they were upheld at least be made more complicated. By stressing the sole authority of the Bible the Nominalists also helped to prepare the way for the coming of the Reformation. By this ecclesiastical positivism, however, they impede its progress mightily and contributed very little toward the work of rediscovering fundamental Bible truth."

13. Heinrich Boehmer, *Der junge Luther*, Gotha, 1925, p. 41.

14. W. *Briefe* I, 74, 171: *Ex te primo omnium didici, solis canonicis libris deberi fidem, caeteris omnium iudicium, ut B. Augustinus, imo Paulus et Johannes praecipiant.*

15. W. 9, 65.

16. W. 9,62; 9,35; 9,46.

16a. October 19, 1512, the doctor's degree was conferred upon Luther and the *Lectura in Biblia* was taken over by him, obligating him to lecture regularly on the Bible. In the spring of 1513 he prepared himself for lectures on the Psalms and actually delivered them from 1513 to 1515. The text of the lectures is found in W. 3, 11-652 and 4, 1-526. Compare H. Boehmer, *Luthers erste Vorlesung*, Leipzig, 1924; Emil Koerner, *Luther und die Schrift*, Chicago, 1926 (pp. 40-155); E. Vogelsang, *Die Anfaenge von Luthers Christologie nach der ersten Psalmenvorlesung*, Berlin, 1929; F. Held, *Augustins Enarrationes in Psalmos*

als exegetische Vorlage fuer Luthers erste Psalmenvorlesung (*Theol. Studien und Kritiken, Lutherana VI*), 1930; Ad. Hamel, *Der junge Luther und Augustin*, especially vol. II: *Der Sententiar von 1509-10 and Der Exeget der Psalmen von 1513-1515 in seinem Verhaeltnis zu Augustin*, Guertersloh, 1934.

Dictata super Psalterium, 1513-1515. Weimar Edition III and IV:

17. W. III, 640.
18. W. III, 21.
19. W. IV, 324; III, 575.
20. W. III, 517.
21. W. III, 330.
22. W. III, 587.
23. W. III, 577 f.; 406.
24. W. III, 64, 13; 315, 17; 474, 19; 571, 26.
25. W. IV, 180, 11: *Nihil (in scriptura) est exponendum, nisi auctoritate utriusque testamenti probetur et consonet.*
26. W. III, 41, 6; 451, 26.
27. W. III, 14, 9; IV, 318, 14.
28. W. III, 64, 13; 315, 17; 474, 19; 571, 26; 486, 15: *Omnia verba Dei sunt in pondere, numero, mensura.*
29. W. III, 347, 11: *Deus ipse, ipse inquam per se deus; non iam Moses aut Helias, sed deus locutus est, id est loquetur in Sanctuario suo; III, 262, 30: propheta vult, quod lingua sua sit organum spiritus sancti.*
30. W. III, 15, 5: *Nescio quid intimioris familiarissimaeque inspirationis in isto verbo significat. Alii prophetae sese locutos esse fatentur, hic autem non se, sed per se locutum esse spiritum singulari modo pronunciat.*

31. W. IV, 535, 1ff.: *Nam evangelium audiendum est, quasi dominum praesentem, quasi Christum loquentem audiamus: quod enim pretiosum sonabat de ore Domini, et propter nos scriptum est et nobis servatum et propter nos recitatur et propter pastores recitabitur et donec seculum finiatur.*

32. W. IV, 318, 23: *Atque ita sicut Christum Judaei in carne tractaverunt, qui est veritas: ita iidem et haeretici Scripturam tractant, conspuunt, crucifigunt et occidunt. Nisi quod os eius non comminuunt, id est non tollunt aliquid de Scripturis et textu.*

33. *De diva Barbara sermo*, W. 4, 639.

34. W. IV, 517, 36ff.: *Quare ubicunque et a quocunque profertur aliquis sensus, qui non repugnat fidei regulis, nullus eum debet reprobare aut suum preferre, etiam si suus sit multo evidentior et magis proprie literae consonat.*

35. W. IV, 436; in the explanation of Psalm 140.

36. W. III, 579, 1ff.: *Spiritum enim legis posuit deus non in literas in papyro positas, in quas haeretici confidunt, sed in homines officiis et ministeriis praepositos ut ex illorum ore requiratur. Alioquin quid facilius diabolo quam seducere eum, qui suus Magister esse nititur in Scripturis reiecto hominis ministerio? Unum verbum male intellectum in tota scriptura confusionem facere potest.*

37. W. IV, 345.

38. *Lectures on Romans, 1515-1516*. W. 56, 371, 17ff.: *Ego quidem credo me debere Domino hoc obsequium latrandi contra philosophiam et suadendi at sacram scripturam. Nam alius forte si faceret, qui ea non vidisset, vel timeret vel non crederetur ei. Ego autem in illis detritus multis iam annis et multos itidem expertus et audiens video, quod sit studium vanitatis et perditionis. In these lectures*

Luther emphasized several times the unity of the Scripture and the duty to accept it in all its parts, *vide* W. 56, 252, 10ff.: *Sed cur dicit "omni verbo" (Matt. 4:4)? Quia scilicet si unum verbum non credideris, iam non vivis in verbo dei. Quia in omni verbo totus est Christus et in singulis totus. Ergo in uno negatus totus negatus est, qui in omnibus.* — W. 56, 253: *Omne verbum vocale . . . velut Domino ipso dicente suscipiamus, credamus, cedamus et humiliter subiiciamus nostrum sensum. Sic enim justificabimur et non aliter.* — W. 56, 249, 20ff.: *Fides enim consistit in indivisibili; aut ergo tota est et omnia credenda credit aut nulla, si unum non credit. Ideo Dominus eam comparat uni margaritae, uni grano synapis, etc. Quia 'Christus divisus non est', ergo in uno totus negatur aut totus affirmatur. Nec simul potest negari et confiteri in alio et alio verbo.*

39. W. Briefe I, 99.

40. *Sermo praescriptus praeposito in Litzka*, W. I, 13.

41. I, 87, 28: *Proficiens ergo est, ubi homo iam nudo verbo credit sine opere sicut hic regulus (John 4:46ff.), postquam audivit sibi negari signa et prodigia, captivavit se in verbum Christi et credidit.* Concerning the church we find this statement already in the *Dictata super Psalterium* of 1513-15: *Similiter significat, quod ecclesia ubera, quibus lacte pascit infirmos, non habet discincta sicut heretici, qui sua docent, sed captiva in auctoritatem Scripturae, non docens nisi verbum dei* (W. 3, 261, 13ff.).

42. W. I, 228, 34ff.

43. Compare Hans Preuss, *Die Entwicklung des Schriftprinzips bei Luther bis zur Leipziger Disputation*, Leipzig, 1901; Otto Scheel, *Luthers Stellung zur Heiligen Schrift*, Tuebingen, 1902; Paul Schempp, *Luthers Stellung zur Heiligen Schrift*, München, 1929.

44. *Acta Augustana*, W. II, 18.

45. *W. Briefe*, I, 194, 25.

46. W. I, 384. Compare W. I, 390, 24ff.; here Luther remarks in regard to Matt. 16:19 that these words are higher than St. Peter and Paul and all popes.

47. W. II, 34-40.

48. W. II, 39, 30f.

49. W. I, 695, 1ff.: "The meaning of the prophet is that Christ uses no other power against the world than only the Word of God, as we daily see that he acts against the sin, the sinner, and the devil with nothing but the Word, and yet by means of the Word he has converted and subjected the whole world and till the last day his own will defend themselves against all temptation with the Word and defeat all the attempts of devil, flesh and world." — Compare Luther's word to Spalatin of 1521 over against Hutten's offer to defend the gospel by the sword (*manus et arma*): *Nollem vi et caede pro evangelio certari . . .* Through the Word the world has been conquered, the church was preserved, through the Word it will also be renewed; but the anti-Christ also, as he began without external power (*manu*), will also be destroyed without external power, through the Word" (*W. Briefe* II, 249, 12ff.).

50. *W. Briefe*, I, 356, 6ff.

51. W. X, 2, 232.

52. W. II, 288, 36ff.

53. W. II, 279, 23ff.

53a. W. II, 309.

54. W. II, 309.

55. W. II, 382 — *Praefero ego auctoritatem scripturae.*

56. W. II, 626 — *Canonicorum librorum auctoritate vel probabili ratione.*

57. W. V, 452.

58. W. *Briefe* I, 601, 32ff.

59. W. *Briefe* II, 125, 11ff. *Nos Scripturam iudicem volumus, vos contra Scripturae iudices esse vultis . . . Si patres sine delectu et iudicio sunt legendi, tollatur Scriptura.* At the end of May Luther had already written to Dungersheim: *Video enim te niti patrum dumtaxat autoritatibus, cum noris nos non recipere ullos nisi iudice Scriptura. Unde, quaeso, possit ullus nostrum scire, quis patrum recte dixerit, si Scriptura per ipsos dumtaxat est intelligenda, ac non potius ipsi per Scripturam iudicandi . . . Nolo mihi libertatem meam captivari, quam Paulus dedit dicens: 'Omnia probate, quod bonum est, tenete'* (W. *Briefe*, II, 113).

60. W. VI, 321f.

61. W. VI, 508.

62. W. VI, 560f.

63. W. VI, 561. — Compare W. VI, 506. Here Luther refutes the view that I Cor. 11 with its references to the distribution of the cup was intended only for the Corinthians and would not be binding for the whole church, and says: "If we admit that any epistle or any part of any epistle of Paul does not apply to the church universal, then the whole authority of Paul falls to the ground. Then the Corinthians will say that what he teaches about faith in the epistle to the Romans does not apply to them. What greater blasphemy and madness can be imagined than this? God forbid that there should be one jot or tittle in all of Paul which the whole church universal is not bound to follow

and keep!" (*Absit, absit ut ullus apex in toto Paulo sit, quem non debeat imitari et servare tota universalis Ecclesia*).

64. W. VIII, 133, 33: *Igitur sive Papa sive pars sive Concilium sic aut sic sentiat, nemini debet esse preiudicium, sed abundet quisque in sensu suo in eis rebus, quae necessariae non sunt ad salutem. In libertatem enim vocati sumus, ut non sit necesse credere verum, quod alius homo sentit vel dicit, contenti eis credere, quae in scripturis docti sumus. Si vero Papa poterit ullo iota probare, se habere ius condendi etiam minimam legis literam, nedum articulos fidei statuendi, libenter haec revocabo. Usus et praesumptionem, quibus hactenus praevaluit, non curo; Scripturas sanctas quaero, quandoquidem omnia, quae in ecclesia fiunt, e scripturis sanctis auctoritatem et exemplum habere debent.* — W. VII, 134, 14ff: *Ego enim docui Conciliis dissentire et resistere si quando contraria vel scripturae vel sibi ipsis statuissent; Scripturam, inquam, volo iudicem esse Conciliorum.* — W. VII, 134, 36: *Vide hic, sanctissime Papa, Paulus anathema iubet esse, etiam si angelus de coelo aliud docuerit. Enquanto magis anathema esse debet si Papa de terra vel Concilium de inferno docuerint.*

64^a. W. VII, 96ff.: "It is a notorious error to believe that by a statement such as this, 'It is not permitted to explain Scripture by one's own spirit' (*proprio spiritu*) we are called upon to put the holy Scripture aside and to direct our attention to the commentaries of men and believe them. This explanation, I maintain, is doubtlessly invented by Satan himself that by that means he might lead us far away from Scripture and into a desperate understanding of Scripture. On the contrary, this statement wants to say that Scripture is to be understood alone through that spirit by whom it is written, which spirit you can find more present and alive

nowhere than in his holy Scripture written by him. Therefore, our endeavor must be not to put aside Scripture and to direct our attention to the human writings of the Fathers, but to spend all the more and all the more persistent labor alone on the holy Scripture, all the more since there is great danger that one might understand it with his own spirit, in order that the employment of such persistent labor might overcome that danger and finally assure us of the spirit of the Scripture which can be found nowhere else but in Scripture, for 'here he did put up his tabernacle and in the heavens (that is, the apostles), his dwelling place.' . . . Or tell me if you can, who is the judge who finally decides when two statements of the Fathers contradict themselves? Here the judgment of the Scripture decides, and this cannot be done if we do not give Scripture the first place so that Scripture in itself is the most certain, the most accessible, the most readily understood which interprets itself and approves, judges, and illumines all (words) of all (*ut sit ipsa per sese certissima, facillima, apertissima, sui ipsius interpres, omnium omnia probans, iudicans et illuminans*), as Psalm 118 (119:130) says. Here the Spirit plainly ascribes to Scripture that it illumines and teaches, that understanding is given alone through the words of God as through a door or, as they call it, a first principle (*principium primum*) with which everyone who will come to light and understanding must begin. Again: " 'Principle or head of thine words is truth' (Ps. 119:160). There you see that truth is here ascribed only to the head of the words of God, that is, if you learned the words of God in the first place and used them as the first principle when you judged the words of all. And what else does this whole psalm do than to condemn the foolishness of our labor and call us

back to the fountain (*revocet ad fontem*) and teach us that we should first of all and alone spend our labor on the Word of God and that the Spirit is ready to come voluntarily and to expel our spirit so that we pursue theology without danger? . . . Therefore, nothing but the divine words are to be the first principles (*prima principia*) for Christians, all human words, however, are conclusions which are deducted from them and must again be reduced to them and approved by them. They must first of all be well known to everyone but not sought through men nor learned by them, but men must be judged by them. If this were not true, why should Augustine and the holy Fathers, whenever they contradict each other, go back to the holy Scripture as to the first principles of truth (*ad sacras literas seu prima principia veritatis*) and illumine and approve by their light and trustworthiness their own that is dark and uncertain? By doing so they teach that the divine words are more understandable and certain than the words of all men, even their own. . . I do not want to be honored as one who is more learned than all, but this I desire that Scripture alone rule as queen (*solam Scripturam regnare*), and that it is not explained through my spirit or other men's spirit but understood by itself and in its own spirit" (*per seipsam et suo spiritu*).

64.^b W. VII, 650, 21f.: "*The Holy Spirit is the most simple writer and speaker in heaven and earth; therefore His words have only one sense, the most simple one, which we call the literal sense.*" — W. VII, 638, 26ff.: "In order that these wordjugglers may be seen in their true light, I ask them, who told them that the fathers are clearer and not more obscure than the Scripture? How would it be if I said that they understand the fathers as little as I under-

stand the Scriptures? I could just as well stop my ears to the sayings of the fathers as they do to the Scriptures. But in that way we shall never arrive at the truth. If the Spirit has spoken in the fathers, so much the more has He spoken in His own Scriptures. And if one does not understand the Spirit in His own Scriptures, who will trust him to understand the Spirit in the writings of another? That is truly a carrying of the sword in the scabbard, when we do not take the naked sword by itself but only as it is encased in the words and glosses of men. This dulls its edge and makes it obscurer than it was before, though Emser calls it smiting with the blade. The bare sword makes him tremble from head to foot. *Be it known, then, that Scripture without any gloss is the sun and the sole light* from which all teachers receive their light, and not the contrary. This is proved by the fact that, when the fathers teach anything, they do not trust their teaching but, fearing it to be too obscure and uncertain, they go to the Scriptures and take a clear passage out of it to shed light on their teaching, just as we place a light in a lantern, and as we read in Ps. 18: "Thou wilt light my lamp, O Lord." "

65. Kluckhohn und Wrede, *Deutsche Reichstagsakten unter Karl V.*, II, 560ff. M. Reu, *Thirty-five Years of Luther Research*, Chicago, 1917, p. 68ff.

66. A. Harnack, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, 174.

67. W. Walther, *Der Glaube an das Wort Gottes*, Leipzig, 1903, p. 57.

68. A. Harnack, *Dogmengeschichte*, III, 2, p. 728.

69. H. Preuss, *Was bedeutet die Formel "Convictus testimoniis scripturarum aut ratione evidente" in Luthers ungehoernter Antwort zu Worms?* (*Theol. Stud. u. Kritiken*) 1908.

70. W. *Briefe* II, 306ff.
- 71 - 73. W. VIII, 141. 142. 143. 145.
74. W. VIII, 103.
75. W. VIII, 484f.
76. W. VIII, 491.
- 76.^a W. VIII, 597, 1ff.: *Ego plane huius solius verbi autoritate, cum sit verbum Spiritus sancti, qui est Deus noster benedictus, Amen, ausim universos monachos a suis votis absolvere et cum fiducia pronunciare vota eorum esse coram Deo reprobata et nulla.* — W. VIII, 584, 10ff.: *Deus autor evangelii.*
77. W. X, 2, 22.
78. W. X, 2, 191.
79. W. X, 2, 256.
80. W. X, 2, 253.
- 80.^a W. *Deutsche Bibel*, I — IX. In English by Ch. Jacobs in *Selected Works of Martin Luther*, Philadelphia, Pa., Vol. VI, 365-491.
81. *Selected Works of Martin Luther*, Philadelphia, VI, 477-479.
82. L. c., VI, 443-445.
83. W. Walther, *Luthers späetere Ansicht ueber den Jacobusbrief. Zur Wertung der deutschen Reformation*, Leipzig, 1909, pp. 170ff.
84. W. *Tischreden* 3292 a.
85. W. *Tischreden*, 5854, belongs perhaps to 1540.
86. W. *Tischreden*, 5443.
87. W. *Tischreden* 5974.
88. K. Holl, *Luther*, 1923, p. 561.
89. Facsimile edition, Leipzig, 1934. *Das Neue Testament* a3^b. — Otto Ritschl, *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus*, Leipzig, 1908, I, 70f.: *Luther hat ebenso noch*

in seinen letzten Lebensjahren wie im Beginn seines reformatorischen Auftretens unter dem Begriff heilige Schrift nur die biblischen Bücher verstanden, die ihm als kanonisch galten, und nicht auch die andern, deren Kanonizität er bezweifelte. Denn wie schon in den Resolutionen zur Leipziger Disputation (W. 2, 425), so stellte er auch noch in einer Disputation aus dem Jahr 1543 der Verbindlichkeit der Stelle Jac. 2:17 die Autorität der ganzen übrigen heiligen Schrift gegenüber (Paul Drews, *Disputationen Dr. M. Luthers*, 1895, p. 714: *Non est tanta eius [sc. ep. Jacobi] auctoritas, ut propterea doctrina fidei relinquatur et discatur ab auctoritate reliquorum apostolorum et totius scripturae*). Und beide Male identifizierte er die *tota alia scriptura* oder die *auctoritas reliquorum apostolorum* schlechtweg mit dem Begriff *tota scriptura*. Galt ihm also als die ganze heilige Schrift der apostolische oder überhaupt der biblische Consensus, mit Ausschluss speziell des Jacobusbriefes und im Gegensatz namentlich zu dessen zweitem Kapitel, so war in seinem Sinn die Wendung *tota scriptura* überhaupt kein Ausdruck für den gesamten literarischen Bestand des überlieferten Kanons der heiligen Schriften. Sondern als heilige Schrift oder als ganze heilige Schrift und somit als autoritativer Kanon können ihm nur diejenigen biblischen Bücher gegolten haben, gegen die er keine kritischen Bedenken hatte, sondern die nach seiner Ansicht, wenn auch in verschiedenem Grad, so doch wirklich Christum trieben und davon ihre authentische prophetische oder apostolische Herkunft verrieten.”

89.^a This note is printed at the end of this book.

90. W. Walther, *Luthers deutsche Bibel. Festschrift*, Berlin, 1917, p. 66.

91. W. IV, 153, 22 compare III, 597.

91.^a W. I, 52, 13ff.

- 91.^b W. I, 219, 25ff.
92. Oekolampad confesses to have learned from Erasmus to seek nothing in Scripture but Christ (*nihil in sacris litteris praeter Christum quaerendum*); cf. O. Scheel, *Luthers Stellung zur Schrift*, 1902, p. 10.
93. W. I, 219, 30ff.
94. Facsimile edition of Luther's Bible of 1534, Leipzig, 1934, I, a ij. *Selected Works of Luther*, Philadelphia, VI, 367.
95. W. 11, 434, 17ff.
96. W. 15, 394, 12ff.
97. W. 18, 145, 11; 147, 23ff.
98. W. 23, 119, 11ff.; 121, 1ff.
99. W. 26, 448, 18ff.
100. W. 26, 449, 3ff.
101. W. 54, 158, 21ff.; 158, 28ff.: "For all heretics are of this kind: At first they deny only one article, but afterward all must be denied. It is as with a ring; if it has only one defect, it can no longer be used; and if a bell cracks in only one place it does not any longer sound and is useless." — Compare note 38 and W. 56, 249, 20ff.; 252, 10ff.; W. 32, 59, 21. 30; W. 50, 269, 16. — W. 31, I, 208, 11: *Doctrina debet esse rotundus et aureus circulus sine rima. Quid prodest, credere omnes articulos Judaeos totam scripturam sanctam, negant unum articulum: Christum . . . si unum (articulum) amittimus omnes amittimus.*
102. III, 1172.
103. W. 14, 31, 25ff.
104. Walch VI, 2169. — W. 13, 94, 30ff.: "Jerome and also other interpreters of the prophets worry themselves very much concerning the connection of the text because they do not consider the whole fact or the whole matter,

as the Holy Ghost has comprehended it as a whole, the people [of Israel] and the kingdom of Christ. Therefore, he who wants to understand [the prophet] must comprehend the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Christ as one whole (*comprehendant simul regnum Israel et regnum Christi in communem conspectum*), then there will be the best connection." — W. 13, 100, 31ff.: "These promises are very beautiful and very rich and very far-reaching, proposed by the Holy Spirit for the purpose that the discouraged soul or the conscience seeking comfort at the time of the anger and wrath of the Lord may find a refuge in them." — W. 13, 103, 20ff.: "We observe everywhere the faithful teacher, the Holy Ghost, who does not want your condemnation."

105. W. 20, 571, 23. — Compare W. 23, 699: "In matters of faith that concern the divine essence and will and our salvation we must close our eyes and ears and all our senses and hear only and observe diligently what and how the Scripture speaks and wrap ourselves completely in the Word and follow it without measuring it by our reason."

106. W. 24, 31, 34, 42, 64, 65, 70 etc.

106.^a W. 33, 276, 3ff.: "If I am to examine the spirit I must have the Word of God; this must be the rule, the touchstone, the *lapis lydius*, the light by means of which I can see what is black and what white." — W. 33, 304, 19ff.: "This is decisive; it does not matter what name he [the preacher] has, if he only teaches faithfully . . . has the Word of God as plumb line." — W. 46, 771, 29ff.: "What, then, will you do? Will you condemn them? No, I do not want to condemn Benedictum and others, but I will take their books and go with them to Christ and his Word

as the touchstone and compare the two.” — W. 46, 780, 10ff.: “If one says, the church or the bishops decided this, then answer: Come, let us go to the touchstone and let us measure with the right yardstick and examine whether it agrees with the *Pater Noster* and with the Articles of Faith and whether he also preach forgiveness of sins. If it agrees with what Christ taught us, then let us accept it and do according to it.”

106.^b W. 36, 501, 23ff.: “We, however, who want to be called Christians should not ask what human wisdom says and how it agrees with reason, but what the Scripture teaches.”

106.^c W. 40, II, 593, 24ff.: *Si possem ista assequi ratione et sensibus, quid opus esset fide? quid opus esset Scriptura divinitus per Spiritum sanctum revelata? . . . In theologia tantum est audiendum et credendum et statuendum in corde: Deus est verax, quantumcunque rationi videantur absurda, quae Deus in verbo suo dicit.*

107. Walch IX, 450. Again: “The articles of our faith are sufficiently founded in Scripture; hold it fast and do not permit it that someone twists it with his glosses, and interpret it according to human reason. If someone tries to besmear it with his reason or your own thoughts, then answer: Here I have the plain word of God and my faith; to this will I hold without further thinking, questioning, listening, nor asking whether it harmonizes or not, nor will I listen to you although you are quoting another text or passages drawn from your head in contradiction to this, for *Scripture is not against itself* nor against any article of faith although it is so according to your head.”

107.^a W. 40, III, 254.

107.^b “Here I hear that Christ is of one essence with the Father and that there is, nevertheless, not more than one God. Where can I here set down my foot, find firm ground; how can I conceive or conclude it? It sounds too ridiculous in my ears and does not enter my reason. It is not to be grasped with your reason, you should rather say: When I hear the word sounding from above, then I believe it although I cannot grasp it nor understand it nor let it enter my head, as I can grasp with my reason that two and five are seven and let me tell no one otherwise. But if He should say from above, no, two and five are eight, then I should believe it against my reason and feeling. If I am resolved to judge then I cannot believe, but I am resolved to believe him who judges and decides. To this I cling in life and death, for I trust in him whom I consider wiser and who can count better than I; although I also know it I am going to believe him; what he says I will consider as truth even if the whole world should say otherwise. Thus you must do here: although reason cannot conceive that two persons are one God — it is as if I would say: two are not two, but two are one — word and reason are here in conflict, nevertheless reason should not play the master nor be the judge and doctor, you rather take off your hat and say: two are one although I cannot see nor understand it, but I believe it. Why? For his sake who said so from above” (W. 37, 40). — And again: “Do you say this does not agree with each other, then I answer: Surely not; this is just what I maintain. It does not agree according to reason, according to your head and human understanding. But it agrees and must agree in faith and according to God’s Word. . . This Word one must follow and stick to it as to something that is not invented by men but sent down

from heaven. . . Shortly He does not want to be mastered and harmonized by us but he wants to be believed and have the honor that He alone is wise, and that we have to direct our thinking in harmony with His Word. . . The only correct attitude is to take off the hat before it, to say 'yes' and to accept it as truth. . . We are now in another high school in which we have to learn not what men know and understand but what God Himself says and teaches" (W. 37, 44). Compare W. 37, 54.

108. Walch V, 1081. Short preface to the explanation of Psalm 90.

108.^a "Paul takes them all together, himself, an angel from heaven, teachers upon earth, and masters of all kinds, and subjects them to the holy Scripture. Scripture must reign as queen (*haec regina debet dominari*), her all must obey and be subject to. Not teachers, judges, or arbiters over her, but they must be simple witnesses, pupils and confessors of it, whether they may be the Pope or Luther or Augustine or Paul or an angel from heaven" (W. 40, I, 120). — "I let you cry in your hostility that Scripture contradicts itself, ascribing righteousness now to faith and then to works. It is impossible that Scripture contradict itself; it only seems so to foolish, coarse, and hardened hypocrites" (W. 40, I, 420, 27f.) — "We abandon the talk of the Jews and stick to St. Paul's understanding which, not without cause, emphasizes the little word 'seed' and thereby indicates that Holy Scripture in Gen. 12:3 and 22:18 speaks of a single seed not of many, and says plainly that Christ is such seed. Paul does so out of a genuine apostolic spirit and understanding. We Christians do not care if such interpretation does not please the Jews. Paul's interpretation weighs more with us than all glosses of the rabbis" (W. 40, I, 464, 6ff.). — "One letter, even a single title of Scripture means more to

us than heaven and earth. Therefore, we cannot permit even the most minute change" (W. 40, II, 52, 16f.).

109. W. 50, 279, 36ff.

110. W. 50, 281, 14ff.

111. W. 50, 282, 1ff.

112. W. 50, 543f. Compare the whole first part of this treatise: The church cannot be reformed in accordance with the Fathers and the Councils. "St. Bernard says that he would rather drink from the spring than from the rill. So all men who can drink out of the spring forget the rill, except as they use the rill to bring them to the spring; thus the Scripture must remain master and judge" (W. 50, 520).

113. W. 54, 34, 32ff.

113.^a W. 54, 48, 20ff.

113.^b W. 40, III, 652, 12ff.

114. W. 51, 123ff. We quote only a few passages: "Reason, the devil's bride, the beautiful wench, steps in and wants to be wise, and her saying she considers as the saying of the Holy Spirit, — who can help in such a condition? No jurist nor medical man nor king nor emperor, because it is the worst whore the devil has." "Reason is by its very nature an obnoxious whore, but she will not harm me if I only resist. Indeed, she is beautiful, she glitters beyond measure. Preachers are necessary to point the people to their childhood creed: 'I believe in Jesus Christ.' The Father cries from heaven: 'Hear ye Him' . . . Thou scabby, rebellious whore, thou holy reason, dost thou hear that it is written: 'Him hear ye'? (W. 51, 192, 1ff). — About four weeks later Luther preached the last of his sermons (at Eisleben, February 15, 1546). His text was Matt. 11:25ff. In this he said: "Here is the Lord whom alone you ought to hear in these matters" (W. 51, 194, 1ff.).

114.^a Compare Kahnis, Note 89^a; Koestlin, *Luthers Theologie* II, 262 (somewhat changed in the last edition II, 21). Loofs, *Leitfaden der Dogmengeschichte*, 746; O. Scheel, l. c., 47. 54; P. Schempp, l. c., 67, and many others.

115. W. 17, II, 38, 24ff.; 39, 19ff.

115.^a W. Walther, *Das Erbe der Reformation*, 1. Heft: *Der Glaube an das Wort Gottes*, 1903, 47f.; the new edition (1917) has the subtitle: *Die normale Stellung zur Heiligen Schrift*, p. 99f.

116. W. 44, 575, 24ff.

117. W. 54, 3, 25ff.

118. Compare Note 115^a.

119. W. *Tischreden* I, 364.

120. Compare Note. 89^a

121. W. 40, I, 652, 9ff.

121.^a W. 40, I, 657, 1ff.

122. W. 40, I, 652, 30ff.

123. W. 40, I, 657, 13ff.

124. *Works of M. Luther*, Philadelphia, VI, 372ff.

125. *Works of M. Luther*, VI, 409f.

126. VI, 3093.

127. VI, 3093.

128. W. 18, 666, 23.

129. W. 53, 111f.

130. W. 47, 566.

131. W. 47, 567.

132. W. 17, II, 196, 15ff.

133. W. Walther, *Die normale Stellung*, p. 105f.

134. W. 46, 726, 11ff.

135. W. Walther, *Die normale Stellung*, p. 105.

136. W. 26, 460, 16ff.

137. W. 26, 462, 17ff.

138. Chemnitz, in his section of the famous *Harmony of the Gospels*, stated that the evangelists had determined, as is stated in John 20:31, to record the words and the deeds of Christ that the church might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, through which those who believe on His Name have eternal life, that they might be published in all the world, strengthened, and maintained for succeeding generations. With this in mind, they paid more attention to arranging the Gospels in such a way that they would substantiate this purpose than to a painstaking exactness in matters of chronology. So it came about that the evangelists, though they preserved complete agreement in the truths of the words and the deeds, did not always agree in the sequence of events; but each one wrote as he thought was most appropriate for this particular purpose. For this reason each evangelist at times failed to observe always and in all places a painstaking exactness in the order and sequence of events. The evangelists, therefore, held that for the chief purpose of their Gospel the exact place of occurrence or order of narration was of little importance so long as what was told was true and designed to build up faith. The evangelists did not want to write annals nor a historical work constructed according to the rules of rhetoric but a simple narration of things that are true, profitable, and necessary.

At the present moment we do not know whether the reference to Chrysostom and Gerson, found in Chemnitz (Chapter 5 of the Prolegomena), can be found in Luther. This states that the differences between the evangelists' reports and the essential agreement between them prove that the evangelists have not spoken as a result of consultation with each other but as they were inspired by God. Chemnitz

says: "Gerson rightly says that it was possible for the Holy Ghost at one and the same inward connection of both words and events to transmit the saving history of the deeds and words of Christ. But not without a great mystery, as it pleased Him, under a certain most concordant dissonance (if it is possible to speak in this wise) to exercise the minds of the faithful in humility and careful investigation of the truth, from which it should be evident that the four evangelists have spoken not by common agreement but by divine inspiration."

- 139. W. 23, 642, 23ff.
- 140. W. Walther, *Die normale Stellung*, p. 108.
- 141. W. 42, 4, 26ff.
- 142. W. 42, 4, 11ff.
- 143. W. 24, 19.
- 144. W. 42, 20, 35ff.
- 145. W. 42, 430, 35ff.
- 146. W. 42, 431, 3ff.
- 147. W. 42, 459, 20ff.
- 148. W. 42, 459, 20ff.
- 149. W. 42, 459, 20-460, 18.
- 150. W. Walther, *Die normale Stellung*, p. 106.
- 151. W. 43, 332, 10ff.
- 152. W. 44, 327, 17ff.
- 153. W. 44, 328, 22ff.
- 154. W. 24, 621, 15ff.
- 155. W. 44, 563, 8ff.
- 156. W. 44, 643, 6ff.
- 157. W. 44, 644, 13ff.
- 158. W. 53, 90, 180.
- 159. W. 53, 24.
- 160. W. 53, 27.

161. W. *Tischreden* IV, 4638.

162. This passage from the *Table Talk* of 1539 reads as follows in Lauterbach's record: *De novo quodam astrologo fiebat mentio, qui probaret terram moveri et non coelum, solem et lunam, at si quia in curru aut navi moveretur, putaret se quiescere et terram et arbores moveri. Aber es gehet itzunder also: Wer do will klug sein, der sol ihme nichts lassen gefallen, das andere achten; er muss ihme etwas eigen machen, sicut facit, qui totam astrologiam in vertere vult. Etiam illa confusa tamen ego credo sacrae scripturae, nam Josua iussit solem stare, non terram.* (T. R. 4, No. 4638). When, on the basis of this statement and several other remarks, the opinion has arisen and become widely prevalent that Luther's theological authority had hindered the acceptance of the heliocentric view of the solar system, we dare not forget that this assertion originated with Roman Catholic scholars, who attempted to erase the bad impression made through the official condemnation of the Copernican theory by their own church by drawing attention to the Wittenberg theologians. W. Elert, who first thoroughly investigated this question in his *Morphologie des Luthertums* (Vol. I, pp. 366 *seq.*) comes to the conclusion that this whole widely accepted opinion is nothing more than an evident historical deception. As far as Luther himself is concerned, we must not forget (1) that this statement of Luther's was a chance remark made by him in the course of the conversation around the table and four years before the publication of Copernicus' work, *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*, so that at that time Luther had only a very imperfect knowledge of the ideas of Copernicus. The general public never heard of this statement of Luther's until 1566, when Aurifaber published his collection of the

Table Talks. (2) On other occasions Luther specifically recognized the fact that in such matters the language of Scripture was adapted to appearances, for in his explanation of Psalm 24:2, of the year 1530, he wrote: "Today the philosophers dispute as to upon what the earth rests. Scripture says the foundation is above the waters, and it speaks according to the visual appearance. For the earth is in the waters, just as it is said in Genesis: 'The dry land appeared,' that which we see with the eyes" (W. 31, I, p. 370, 1 15). (3) Where he deals more explicitly with the medieval conception of the universe (*Commentary on Genesis 1:6*, W. 42, 17 seq.) and with this "extra omnia" he has already transcended the medieval cosmology. (4) That with his explanation of the expression, "sitteth at the right hand of God," he actually had broken the medieval cosmology. For this reason we said in our *Apologetic Outlines*, of 1932: "The traditional geocentric cosmology was no strait jacket for Luther, he burst it with his Christology."

Recently Bornkamm and Oepke have written on this question. Heinrich Bornkamm, in his excellent pamphlet, *Luther und das Naturbild der Neuzeit* (Berlin, 1937), which we reprinted in *Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 1940, has shown that specifically in his utterances concerning the relation of God to nature Luther is not to be classed with medieval but with modern times. "If," he says, "we take all the essential traits of Luther's conception of nature and its relation to God we find that in the main he approached the new conception of nature in two ways. On the one hand he had a keener perception of reality, a consideration of and a marveling at the little and insignificant elements that go to make up the actual life of nature. On the other hand a profound feeling of the infinity of the world. It rests in

the immeasurable and penetrating presence of God who is so far off and yet so near." . . . "It is hardly possible to question the possibility of a fruitful contact between this view of God and the world and the cosmology of modern times." Here, too, Luther towers far above Melanchthon, who, as Elert proves in this connection, allowed and procured toleration in Wittenberg for the Copernican theory but who personally remained completely fettered within the limits of the Medieval-Aristotelian cosmology and so even in the teachings of Christology was unable to follow Luther's eagle flights. An unfortunate statement such as the one that, in a certain sense, God was a citizen of the world, (the last consequence of the geocentric view of the universe) could be written by Melanchthon but never by Luther. Oepke discussed these matters in his excellent article on the "*Ascension of Christ*," in *Luthertum*, 1938.

162.^a What but a *suggestio verbi* is implied when in his *In XV Psalmos Graduum*, of 1532-33, Luther writes: *Non solum enim vocabula, sed et phrasis est divina qua Spiritus sanctus et scriptura utitur?* (W. 40, III, 254). In his explanation of Joel, published by Veit Dietrich in 1547, he used a more general expression: "The Spirit of God governed heart and tongue of the prophets," (VI, 2169), but we do not know whether we here have Luther's or Dietrich's words.

- 163. W. *Deutsche Bibel*, 3, 121, 30f.
- 164. W. *Deutsche Bibel*, 3, 127, 10ff.
- 165. W. *Deutsche Bibel*, 3, 117, 7.
- 166. W. 40, III, 66, 8ff.; W. 53, 646, 32ff.
- 167. W. 53, 646, 19ff.
- 168. W. *Deutsche Bibel*, 3, 459, 6f.
- 169. W. *Deutsche Bibel*, 3, 502, 31.

170. W. *Deutsche Bibel*, 3, 514, 35.

170.^a W. 53, 646, 19: "Our Hebrew scholars should consider it their task and duty — and for God's sake I ask them to take it up — to cleanse the holy old Bible from the Jews' defilements and pollutions (*von der Juden Peres und Judas pisse*, compare W. 53, 636, 35ff.). They should, wherever possible, change the punctuation, distinction, conjugation, construction, signification and similar points belonging to grammar and turn them away from the Jewish understanding so that (the text) harmonizes with the New Testament; they should do it with courage and joy, as St. Paul teaches Rom. 13:7 that 'the prophecy be analogous, that is, in harmony with faith.' For thus they (the Jews) have now dealt with the Bible for fifteen hundred years. Where they, by changing punctuation, distinction, conjugation, etc., could turn away the Bible from our Messiah and faith and bring it into contradiction to the New Testament, there they did it with great and desperate diligence, as we have shown above in connection with the example of Genesis 49:10, Haggai 2:6ff., Daniel 9:24ff., Isaiah 7:14 and other passages. Take Isaiah 9:5. Here they changed the text '*Vayigra*' *Schemo, Pele*', etc. (the consonants, ויקרא can be punctuated *vayigra*' [imperfect Qal: he will call, *vocabit*] or *vayiqare*' [imperfect Niphal; he will be called, *vocabitur*]; the traditional punctuation was *vayigra*') and translated: 'The Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, the everlasting Father will call his (the Messiah's) name the Prince of Peace.' Here you see their malice. Therefore we are to reject their punctuation and construction and read as we read, because consonants and grammar permit this without difficulty, so that we read *vayiqare*' instead of *vayigra*' (the traditional punctuation) and construe

all nouns in the nominative (and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The eternal Father, The Prince of Peace). The Hebrew scholars will find more examples of this kind so that with honor we regain from the thieves what they in a disgraceful manner have stolen these fifteen hundred or more years." — Compare Luther's words in his *Enarratio Capitis Noni Esaiæ*, of 1543-44 (W. 40, III, 663, 20ff.): *Quod vero dicitur in Ebraeo legi 'vocabit' nomen eius, non: 'vocabitur' nomen eius inanis est cavillatio Rabinorum; constat enim saepe verbum activum accipi passive, seu potius impersonaliter ut: 'dabunt' mensuram, id est: 'dabitur.' Sic 'vocabit' pro 'vocabitur.' Ac prorsus usitatum est Impersonalia etiam efferi per activa. Videtur textus per punctatores corruptus, qui pro 'Variikare,' passivo, scripserunt 'Vaiikra.' Nam literae, sive cum punctis sive sine punctis leguntur, eadem sunt, et optime constat grammatica. Sed Judaei, homines pestilentissimi, saepe depravant Prophetarum sententias suis punctis et distinctionibus, et ipsorum puncta, quae tamen sunt recens inventum, plus volunt valere quam simplicem et germanam et recta cum grammatica consentientem sententiam. Quare ego non admodum moror superstitiones istas grammaticas, quanquam pro nobis state Grammatica, si recte punctetur. Et Judaei ipsi fatentur, sicut saepe Lyra dicit, sibi non licere discedere a Chaldaica interpretatione.*

171. In Isaiah 9:2 the Kethibh offers the form *lo'* (= non), the Qere *lo* (= to him). Here Luther decides for the Kethibh and emphatically rejects the Qere. In his *Enarratio Capitis Noni Esaiæ* he says: *Rabini non curant cohaerentiam illam aut consequentiam, sed lacerant eam et depravant Prophetarum dicta, ut hoc loco pro adverbio 'non' legunt pronomen 'ei,' ad hunc modum: 'Multiplicasti gen-*

tem, ei magnificasti laeticiam.' Sic violenter corrumpunt et depravant Prophetarum sententiam cum nec res nec consequentia consentiat (W. 40, III, 621, 41ff.). In W. 40, III, 634, 3ff. he even writes: *Haec est impia et scelerata audacia, in sacris literis e proprio cerebro pro libidine torquere verba et fingere sibi sententiam nostri capitis somnio congruentem.*

172. W. *Deutsche Bibel*, 3, 419, 8ff.

173. W. *Deutsche Bibel* 3, 415 footnote.

174. Facsimile edition, *Neues Testament*, XXXIVb.

175. W. *Deutsche Bibel* 3, 377, 20ff.

176. W. *Deutsche Bibel* 3, 402.

177. Preface to Joel, *Luther's Works*, Philadelphia, VI, 425.

178. Preface to Amos, *Luther's Works*, Philadelphia, VI, 426.

179. W. Walther, *Die normale Stellung*, p. 96f. In his commentary on Galatians, of 1531 (1535), he remarks in connection with Gal. 2:6: *Ecliptica est oratio; deest enim: Ego nihil accepi, Condonandum est autem Spiritui sancto in Paulo loquenti, si peccet aliquando in grammaticam. Ipse magno ardore loquitur; qui vero ardet, non potest adeo exacte in dicendo observare regulas grammaticas et praecepta rhetorica* (W. 40, I, 170, 25-28).

180. W. 47, 545ff., 566.

181. W. *Tischreden* II, 234. Compare W. 25, 138.

182. W. *Briefe* IV, 158. — Compare Luther's Commentary on Genesis. Here we read W. 43, 54, 20ff.: "Although he took over some material either from the tradition and the usages of the fathers or from the customs of the neighboring nations and applied it to his people, the whole, nevertheless, is called the Law of Moses. The pas-

sage under consideration [Gen. 19:2, 3] shows that unleavened bread was in use before the Law . . . Moses, upon God's command, restricted this custom and ordered that unleavened bread is to be eaten during the passover week." — In his *Table Talks* this remark is recorded as an answer to a pertinent question: "It does not matter much (*nihil nocet*) if some say that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses; he, nevertheless, belongs to Moses" (W. *Tischreden* III, 2844^a and ^b). He himself, therefore, was not willing to give up Moses' authorship. It is different with regard to Genesis; here Moses acted more as a redactor than as an author. In this connection Luther said: "I believe that many things had been written before Moses. Adam, I assume, wrote the stories of the creation, the fall, the promise of the seed of the woman, etc., likewise the other fathers, especially Noah, wrote what happened at their time. Afterward Moses took this material and brought it into good order, took away and added what and how God commanded him" (W. *Ti.* I, 174, I, 291; IV, 4964). In spite of this concession concerning the authorship of Genesis it was, according to Luther, the Holy Ghost who arranged these stories and wrote them; they are his word: W. 43, 475, 14ff.; 43, 628, 6; 44, 584, 20.

182.^a Compare the excellent section in O. Ritschl, *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus* I, 1908, pp. 79ff.: *Dennoch bedarf es zur Aufklaerung dieser scheinbaren Widerspruiche keineswegs der beliebten Annahme, dass Luther nach seinen ersten reformatorischen Jahren halbwegs wieder in katholische Ansichten zurueckgefallen sei. Gewiss ist er seit seiner Rueckkehr von der Wartburg in allen praktischen kirchlichen und politischen Angelegenheiten, mit deren Ordnung er sich nun erst eigentlich*

berufsmaessig zu befassen hatte, weit konservativer gewesen, als manche frühere Äusserungen von ihm es hatten erwarten lassen mögen. Und doch folgt hieraus keineswegs, dass sich auch Luthers theologische Ueberzeugungen selbst wesentlich gewandelt hätten.” “Aber in seinem Kampf gegen Karlstadt und Zwingli, meint man, habe sich jedenfalls seine Auffassung von dem Abendmahl und den Sacramenten in einer anderen Richtung entwickelt, als wie es bis dahin der Fall gewesen war. Und weiterhin habe er auch den Glauben nicht mehr so vorwiegend, wie bisher, als Vertrauen des Herzens, sondern zugleich immer auch als Gehorsam des Verstandes gefasst und beschrieben. Dennoch sind gerade auch für diese scheinbaren Veränderungen in Luthers theologischer Gedankenbildung nicht etwa nur Keime und Ansätze in seinen Schriften aus den Jahren 1517-1522 [heute würde Ritschl schreiben 1513-22] nachweisbar. Sondern diese enthalten in deutlicher und fertiger Auspraegung schon ganz charakteristische Grundgedanken, in deren direkter Consequenz auch seine spätere entwickelte Auffassung vom christlichen Glauben und von den Sacramenten lag. Und nur wenn man hierauf achtet, ist es möglich, den Anschein unerträglicher Widersprüche in seinem theologischen Denken zu heben und namentlich auch seine Lehre von dem Glauben sowohl in sich selbst übereinstimmend, als auch im Zusammenhang mit seiner Ansicht von den Sacramenten nicht wieder halbwegs preisgegeben zu finden. Gelingt es nämlich, aus theologischen Grundvoraussetzungen, die Luther schon von seinem reformatorischen Auftreten an zweifellos vertreten hat, jene späteren Ansichten vom Glauben und von den Sacramenten als folgerichtig sich ergebende Consequenzen nachzuweisen, so darf eine solche Auffassung seiner Theologie auch den Anspruch

darauf machen, richtiger zu sein als andere Auffassungen, die jenen Schein unerträglicher Widersprüche in seinem Denken als eine letzt gegebene und höchstens aus psychologischen Gründen irgendwie zu erklärende Tatsache bestehen lassen. Die dogmengeschichtliche Würdigung Luthers ist noch immer zu sehr durch religiös dogmatische Voraussetzungen moderner Herkunft belastet. This holds true especially regarding Luther's view concerning the Scripture.

183. K. Holl, *Gesammelte Aufsätze, I. Luther*, 1923, p. 117.

184. Guenter Moldaenke, *Schriftverstaendnis und Schriftdeutung im Zeitalter der Reformation. Teil 1: Matthias Flacius Illyricus*, Stuttgart 1936, p. 310. It is one of the *scholia* to Psalm 44 (45): 2 (W. III, 256) and reads: *Igitur sicut qui rigat et plantat, nihil est, sed qui incrementum dat, deus: ita qui stilum habet vel est vel ponit eum ad tabulam, nihil est, sed qui scribit, scriba scilicet velociter scribens, Spiritus sanctus. Quare ructare et calammum esse tuum est, o propheta.*

185. Compare Karl Holzhey, *Die Inspiration der heiligen Schrift in der Anschauung des Mittelalters*, Muenchen, 1895; P. Dausch, *Die Schriftinspiration, eine biblisch-geschichtliche Studie*, Freiburg i. Br., 1891; Fr. Kropatschek, *Das Schriftprinzip der lutherischen Kirche. 1. Band: Das Erbe des Mittelalters*, Leipzig, 1904. We note only a few passages from Pierre D' Ailly and Gabriel Biel. P. D' Ailly: *Coelestis secretarius et divinus evangelista Johannes, qui supra pectus domini in coena recubuit, ubi de sacro dominici pectoris fonte coelestia divinaque secreta hausisse perhibetur (Sermo in die omnium sanctorum.)*. Gabriel Biel: *Scriptura autem canonica, utrumque videlicet*

testamentum, Spiritu sancto dictante et inspirante scripta creditur (Defensor. oboed. apostolica, VIII. veritas). And again: Veritates sacri canonis Bibliae, quae omnes immediate . . . scriptoribus eius sunt revelatae; ipsi enim fuere calamus scribae, id est, Spiritus sancti velociter scribentis. (Collectorium ex Occamo, liber IV, dist. 13, qu. II D).

186. This passage precedes: *Lingua mea . . . est enim calamus et instrumentum illius, qui intus velocissime docet,* and this follows: *Lingua mea . . . est enim calamus scribae, ego autem non scriba.* W. III, 256.

187. It is true, it was wrong when Luthardt wrote concerning the teaching of the dogmatists of the seventeenth century: *Das Verhaeltnis des heiligen Geistes zur Schrift ist (by these dogmatists) nicht durch die eigene geistige Aktivitaet der biblischen Schriftsteller, sondern nur aeusserlich durch die Hand der Schreibenden vermittelt gedacht (Kompendium der Dogmatik, Leipzig, 1893, p. 326; repeated by Jelke in the 14th edition, Leipzig, 1937, p. 115).* They really advocated more and emphasized the fact that the holy writers, instead of being dead, unknowing, and unwilling tools in the hand of the Holy Spirit, were knowing and willing instruments. In explanation of *φερόμενοι* in II Peter 1:21 Quenstedt wrote: *Dicuntur autem φερόμενοι, acti, moti, agitati a Spiritu sancto nequaquam, ac si mente fuerint alienati, uti prae se ferunt Enthusiastae et qualem ἐνθουσιασμόν in suis prophetis fingunt gentiles. Nequaquam etiam, ac si ipse quoque prophetae suas prophetias, antea quae scriberent, non intellexerint, qui Montanistarum, Phrygastarum aut Cataphrygarum et Priscillianistarum olim error fuit, and rejects the assumption ac si citra et contra voluntatem suam inscū ac inviti scripserint divini amanuenses, sponte enim, volentes scientesque scripserunt (Systema*

I pp. 82ff.). But it does not need to be proved that according to Luther the cooperation of the writers included much more. In *In the Interest of Lutheran Unity* we wrote (Columbus, 1940, p. 59): "If Church Fathers or some dogmaticians of our own church called the human authors *notarii, calami, amanuenses, instrumenta*, this is by no means to be considered wrong in every respect. It is wrong only, if one, by the use of these terms, degrades them to merely mechanical instruments or machines who wrote without participation of their soul life. It is correct and an expression of a Biblical truth if these terms are used merely to designate human instrumentality without any definition of the latter."

188. Adolf Harnack, *Wesen des Christentums*, 1900, p. 174, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* III, 2, pp. 715ff.; especially p. 728. 737; Julius Koestlin, *Luthers Theologie in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung und ihrem innern Zusammenhang*, Stuttgart 1883, II pp. 246ff; Fr. Loofs, *Leitfaden zum Studium der Dogmengeschichte*, Tuebingen, 1906, p. 362; Otto Ritschl, *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus*, 1. vol., Bonn 1908, pp. 69ff.; R. Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, IV, 1: *Die Lehre Luthers*, 4. edition, Leipzig, 1933, pp. 409ff; Wilhelm Walther, *Das Erbe der Reformation im Kampf der Gegenwart. 1. Heft: Der Glaube an das Wort Gottes*, Leipzig, 1903; revised edition under the title: *Die normale Stellung zur Heil. Schrift*, Leipzig, 1917.

189. A. Schleiff (in Luthers *Deutsche Bibel* IX, Weimar, 1939, p. XXXI): *Wenn Luther darauf draengt, dass nur der durch das geschriebene Wort an die Hand gegebene "Verstand" Berechtigung haben kann, so hat das auf keinen Fall mit der Verbalinspiration etwas zu tun. Wenn er in seiner spaeteren Zeit von der hebraeischen*

Sprache sagt, Gott habe "sie allein gesprochen und geschrieben, der soll sie auch allein deuten und auslegen, wo es not ist (W. 53, 644), so ist das nicht jenes Dogma der Verbalinspiration; jede Sprache traegt in ihrer besonderen Form die Inkarnation Gottes. Dass es Wort gibt, das "Wort Gottes" ist, macht nicht den Buchstaben des Wortes zum Herrn, gibt nicht ihm einen absoluten Wert. Es ist die Sprache, Rede und Stimme eine Gabe Gottes wie andere Gaben, als die Frucht von Baeumen" (W. 24, 4). Das Wort ist eine Frucht, die des Fruchtgebers, Gottes, Gabe enthaelt und ist; es ist nicht selbst Fruchttraeger und Geber. Die Lehre von der Verbalinspiration bis in die einzelnen Punkte des hebraeischen Textes hinein aber nahm erst die Orthodoxie wieder auf. Luther lehnt sie . . . ab.

190. This slogan, I believe, was proclaimed by Charles Jacobs of the Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia, Pa.

191. In the preface to the reprint of this *Lehranweisung* edited by Adolf von Scheurl, Noerdlingen, 1888, p. V.

192. We quote the entire passage: "*Zum ersten sind sie (the bishops, pastors, and preachers) schuldig, dass sie die Unwissenden lehren nicht ein gering Ding, sondern die allergroesste und hoechste Weisheit, so je auf Erden gekommen ist, naemlich wie man Gott gefaellig, fromm und selig werden soll, welches viel taepfer und redliche Leute dieser Welt mit grossem Fleiss und Ernst gesucht, aber durch sich selbst noch nie erfunden haben, wie Paulus im 1. Brief an die Korinther bezeugt und spricht: Wir reden von der heimlichen, vorborgenen Weisheit Gottes, welche Gott verordnet hat vor der Welt zu unserer Herrlichkeit, welche keiner von den Obersten dieser Welt erkannt hat, uns aber hat es Gott geoffenbart durch seinen Geist. Und soll doch solche Lehre nicht zweifelhaft oder ungewiss,*

sondern gewiss sein; darum taugt es wahrlich nicht, wenn sie, die Gerechtigkeit vor Gott zu erlangen, ihr eignes oder anderer Menschen Gutduenken und Wohlgefallen, welches in goettlichen Sachen ungewiss und verfuehrerisch ist, vortragen und lehren wollten, wie doch bisher an vielen Orten lange Zeit mit grossem Schaden der Gewissen geschehen ist; sondern sie sollen allein das heilige lautere und reine Wort Gottes, das in der heiligen Schrift verfasst und gewiss ist, vortragen und lehren. Denn David spricht: alle Menschen sind Luegner, und Paulus: der natuerliche Mensch vernimmt nichts vom Geiste Gottes, und Jesaias: alles Fleisch ist Heu und alle seine Guete wie eine Blume auf dem Felde. Das Heu verdorrt, die Blume faellt ab, aber das Wort unseres Gottes bleibt ewiglich. So dann die Menschen Luegner sind, nichts verstehen und ihre Guete, darinnen ohne Zweifel auch ihre Weisheit begriffen ist, dahin faellt wie eine duerre Blume, wie moechte denn ihr eigen Gedicht und Gutduenken eine gewisse Lehre sein? Die Heilige Schrift aber ist gewiss; denn sie ist nicht von Menschen, sondern vom Heiligen Geist dargetan, wie der heilige Petrus bezeugt und spricht: Das sollt ihr fuer das erste wissen, dass keine Weissagung in der Schrift geschieht aus eigener Auslegung; denn es ist noch nie eine Weissagung aus menschlichem Willen hervorgebracht, sondern die heiligen Menschen Gottes haben geredet getrieben vom Heiligen Geist. Darum sind die ungewissen Menschenlehren vergeblich und schaedlich, wie der Herr Christus und die Propheten sagen; aber die gewisse heilige Schrift ist nuetzlich und heilsam, wie das auch Paulus bezeugt und spricht: Alle Schrift von Gott eingegeben ist nuetze zur Lehre, zur Strafe, zur Besserung, zur Zuechtigung in der

Gerechtigkeit, dass ein Mensch Gottes sei vollkommen, zu allen guten Werken geschickt."

The original edition of the *Kirchenordnung* is at the time of this writing not at hand, but the passage can be found in Richter, *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des 16. Jahrhunderts*, Weimar, 1846, I, 178, and in the above-mentioned reprint by A. von Scheurl, pp. 2-3. It is noteworthy that besides II Peter 1:21 we find also II Tim. 3:16 quoted here, the latter passage, however, not as proof for the inspiration of Scripture but for its profitableness. This is not strange, because in II Tim. 3:16 the emphasis, indeed, rests specifically upon this, and when Luther applied this passage he quoted it for the same purpose. Thus in *De seruo arbitrio*, in that remarkable section on the question of the clarity of Scripture (W. 18, 606ff; 607:6), or in the explanation of this passage in the Erlangen Edition of Luther's works, vol. 52, pp. 387-390, where we only at the end find these words: *Wenn wir glauben koennten, dass Gott selbst mit uns in der Schrift redet, so wuerden wir mit allem Fleiss darin lesen und sie fuer unsere selige Werkstatt halten.* Compare also Erl. Ed. 65, 247 and *Opera varii argumenti* 7, 125. Only later, regularly in connection with the dictation theory, this Scripture passage became a *locus classicus*. As far as I know, we find it used in that sense for the first time by Johann Brenz in his *Catechismus pia et utili explanatione illustratus*, of 1551. (The library of the Concordia Seminary at St. Louis, Mo., owns a copy; compare M. Reu, *Quellen zur Geschichte des kirchlichen Unterrichts*, I, 1904, pp. 293 and 329ff.; the German translation by F. A. Schuetz, Leipzig, 1852, is in my private library). In the beginning of his explanation of the Creed he speaks of the Scripture and says: "It is evident that nothing can be more

truthful and certain than these books. Therefore St. Peter says (II Peter 1:21): 'No prophecy of Scripture . . . moved by the Holy Ghost,' and Paul says (II Tim. 3:16): 'All Scripture given by inspiration, etc.' Thus there remains no doubt whatsoever concerning the trustworthiness and reliability of the prophetic writings." In the first part of his *Examen Concilii Tridentini*, of 1565, Chemnitz adduces II Tim. 3:16 as proof for the *perfectio* and *sufficiencia* of Scripture (edited by Preuss, 1861, p. 40f.), but afterward especially for its divine authority: *Habet igitur Scriptura canonica eminentem illam suam auctoritatem principaliter inde, quod divinitus est inspirata, II Tim. 3, hoc est, quod non hominum voluntate allata est, sed quod a Spiritu sancto impulsus homines Dei et locuti sunt et scripserunt, II Peter 1. Ut autem tota haec necessaria res contra omnes imposturas esset certissima, Deus certos quosdam homines ad scribendum elegit et illos multis miraculis et divinis testimoniis ornavit, ut nullum esset dubium, divinitus inspirata esse ea, quae scribebant* (p. 53). While Heerbrand, in his *Compendium Theologiae* of 1578, still quotes II Tim. 3:16 not as a proof for inspiration but for the *perfectio* and *sufficiencia* of Scripture, Leonard Hutter, in his *Compendium Locorum Theologicorum* of 1610, used it in the former sense when he answered the question: *Unde vero Scriptura canonica habet auctoritatem?* by saying: *Ut Scriptura canonica sit id, quod in se ipsa est, nempe coelestis veritas, non habet, nisi principaliter ex Deo ipso, eius autore, II Tim. 3:16; II Peter 1:21; yet the former application is not completely forgotten, for when Hutter has to answer the question: Estne Scriptura Canonica plena et sufficiens quoad informationem tum fidei tum morum, he quotes II Tim. 3:15-17 as proof* (ed. by Twisten, p. 2-3). From now on

it became more and more a *locus classicus* for the verbal inspiration in the sense of the dictation theory. Compare the *Aphodixis Articularum Fidei* by Abraham Calov, where we read (p. 30): *Observetur emphasis vocis θεόπνευστος, quae infert, quod per se non sint locuti, sed quod ex inspiratione et suggestione scripserint, idque nihil aliud est, quam quod divinitus dictata sit* (Our copy was published at Lueneburg, 1684). — Between 1560 and 1580 the *Loci Theologici* begin to preface their work by an article concerning the Holy Scripture as the basis for all the articles of Christian faith. This was, as it seems, occasioned by the Council of Trent. Already in the *Confessio Wuerttembergica*, of 1552, due to this Council, we find an article *De Sacra Scriptura* (H. Heppe, *Die Bekenntnisschriften der altprotestantischen Kirche Deutschlands*, 1854, p. 540-542) defining the canonical books, the nature of Scripture (*Hanc Scripturam credimus et confitemur esse oraculum Spiritus sancti, coelistibus testimoniis ita confirmatum, ut si angelus de coelo aliud praedicaverit, anathema sit. Quare detestamur omnem doctrinam, cultum et religionem pugnantem cum hac scriptura*) and emphasizing the *sufficientia* of Scripture. II Tim. 3:16 is quoted more as a proof for this sufficiency than for the definition of Scripture given. When Victorin Strigel lectured in 1563 (his *Loci Theologici* were published later, in 1581) he treated in his *Prolegomena* 1. *De certitudine doctrinae christianae*; 2. *De methodo et ratione docendi et discendi doctrinam ecclesiae propriam*, and the *locus De Deo* contained a section also *De patefactione Dei* (Ritschl I, 125). Ten years later (1573) Selnecker published his *Institutio christianae religionis*, and his *Prolegomena* contained sections on the authority and the study of Scripture; the necessity of revelation, and the

method of teaching the articles of faith. Heerbrand's *Compendium Theologiae*, of 1575, begins immediately with the locus *De Deo* and proves the existence of God from the book of nature and the book of Scripture whose author, according to II Peter 1:21, is God; the edition of 1578, however, opens with the section *De Sacrosancta Scriptura* (pp. 1-36). On page 18 the question regarding the author of Scripture is answered: *Deus, qui per Spiritum sanctum suum de salute generis humani per filium incarnatum voluntatem patefecit et dictavit Prophetis, Apostolis et Evangelistis*. As proof passages are given II Sam. 23:2; Acts 2:16ff.; 3:22ff.; II Peter 1:21. On the next page Scripture is referred to as an *epistola Dei ad genus humanum in qua se suamque voluntatem ei patefecit*. Concerning Aegidius Hunnius, who after 1594 published three writings on the nature and the absolute reliability of Scripture, compare Ritschl I, 160f. Here we again find the term *dictare*, and the Bible is called in a certain sense the holy book that was sent down to us by God.—Compare Notes 216-223.

193. Hans Emil Weber, *Reformation, Orthodoxie und Rationalismus. Erster Teil, erster Halbband*, Guetersloh 1937, p. 307.

194. The title is: *HARMONIÆ//EVANGELICÆ LIBRI IIII//GRÆCE ET LATINE, //In quibus Evangelica historia ex quatuor Evangelistis//ita in unum est contexta, ut nullius uerbum ullum omis//sum, nihil alienum immixtum, nullius ordo turbatus, nihil non suo loco positum: omnia uero literis et notis//ita distincta sint, ut quid cuiusque euangelistae proprium, //quid cum aliis, et cum quibus commune sit, primo statim aspectu deprehendere queas. // Item // ANNOTATIONUM LIBER UNUS //ELENCHUS HARMONIÆ//AUTORE ANDREA*

OSIANDRO//Emblem of the printer//*BASILEÆ ANNO MDXXXVII.*//*Cum privilegio Imp. Rom. ad annos IIII.*//Osiander's biographer, W. Moeller (*Andreas Osiander, Leben und ausgewählte Schriften*, Elberfeld, 1870), mentions three editions of the work. The original edition of 1537 in folio was printed by Frobenius at Basel. This is extant in the Congressional Library at Washington and in the Krauth Memorial Library at Philadelphia. In 1540 the book was reprinted at Antwerp by Math. Crommius, in octavo (Moeller, p. 537). I did not see this edition and do not know whether it has the Greek text on the left hand page and the Latin on the right hand page, as does the original edition of 1537. Moeller (p. 537) mentions also an edition of 1545 printed at Lutetia (that is, Paris); it is a duodecimo volume in extraordinarily small type and has only the Latin text and entirely omits the important *annotations*. The Library of the Union Theological Seminary at New York is in possession of a copy. The year 1561 brought a new edition by Frobenius at Basel; it is a folio edition and, as I suppose, a reprint of the original edition. Moeller mentions also a German translation by J. Schweintzer (*Die gantze Evangelien Histori, das ist heilig Evangelium . . . durch Andreas Osiander, Frankfurt am Main, bei Cyriacus Jacobi, 1541*). We have to thank Osiander's biographer, W. Moeller, that this rare and important book has again become better known (pp. 205-207). Emmanuel Hirsch (*Die Theologie des Andreas Osiander und ihre geschichtlichen Voraussetzungen*, Goettingen, 1919, p. 7-9) then once more called attention to this work. O. Ritschl, in his *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus*, devotes a whole chapter to the introduction of the doctor's oath at Wittenberg and Osiander's sharp opposition to it (pp. 212ff.), but

he does not even mention Osiander's *Gospel Harmony*, although Moeller and again Th. Zahn, in his article *Evangelienharmonie* in Hauck's *Realencyclopaedie* (vol. 5 pp. 659f.), should have told him of the importance of Osiander's work for the history of the doctrine of inspiration. H. E. Weber, however, recognizes its importance for the question of inspiration (p. 307) although his reference is brief.

The book consists of two parts: the Graeco-Latin Gospel harmony itself, filling 145 numbered leaves in folio, and Osiander's *Annotationes*, filling the leaves aa 1-ff 4, in which he explains and justifies the preceding harmony, at the same time adding much strange material that is in no way called for by the purpose of the book. In a measure the second part is of greater value for us than the first, because, besides the preface to the whole, these *Annotationes* reveal Osiander's conception of inspiration to us. Since the book is so rare and yet so important for the question as to whether Luther's contemporaries were already on the road to the dictation theory of inspiration, we quote more freely below than we should otherwise do.

195. The short *Gospel Harmony* of Ottomar Luscinus, published in 1523 at Vienna, was based on Tatian's *Diatessaron* and, although in 1544 it was freely republished by Caspar Brusch for the Latin school at Arnstadt, it cannot be called a work by a Lutheran theologian. Compare Reu, *Quellen zur Geschichte des kirchlichen Unterrichts in evangelischen Deutschland*, II, Guetersloh 1906, pp. XLIIIff., and Theo. Zahn, *Evangelienharmonie*, Hauck's *Realencyclopaedie*, Vol. 5, p. 657. There is a copy at Berlin (Staatsbibliothek Bq 204).

196. *Annotationes* cc 5: *Porro si errores in Evangelistarum scriptis agnoscimus, iam eorum autorem Spiritum sanctum esse nemo credet, sicque totius Novi Testamenti labascet autoritas. Quo quid horribilius cogitari potest?*

197. Compare above, pp. 79ff.

198. All the more so since Osiander even says, every word written by the Biblical writers was predestined from eternity: *verbum nullum non a Spiritu suppeditatum et in aeterno Dei consilio ab aeterno praedestinatum* (cc5).

199. We here give the pertinent sections of the preface and the *Annotationes* in full.

In the preface we read: *Et quanquam de sacris utriusque Testamenti libris in universum, nunquam non praeclarissime senserim, hodieque sentiam, quod omnes coelestis sapientiae thesauros in eisdem consignatos et reconditos esse firmissime credam: semper tamen quattuor Evangelistarum historica scripta, occulto quodam fidei afflatu reliquis omnibus longe praestantiora esse iudicavi. Quid enim per Deum immortalem vel iucundius vel admirabilius vel magis etiam salutare animis nostris esse potest, qui quidem Christianae fidei mysteriis initiati et imbuti sumus, quam aeterni veri Dei propter nos nostramque salutem incarnati prima incunabula, pueritiam, adultam aetatem iam doctrina miraculisque inclarescentem, denique passionem, mortem, resurrectionem, ascensionem, spiritusque sancti missionem, qui pignus est salutis et immortalitatis nostrae: fidelibus literarum monumentis comprehensa et ob oculos posita, haud aliter atque si gerendis rebus intersis, intueri et contemplari? Quae cuncta, nisi nobis essent notissima, non modo vetus Testamentum cum suis umbris maneret obscurum, verum etiam ne reliquae quidem apostolorum literae satis a quoquam intelligi possent. Porro quid praestantius? quid augustius? quid denique*

divinius? quam quum lex quantumvis sancta, iusta et bona, ministerium tamen sit mortis et condemnationis, quod Evangelium contra, licet Iudaeis offendiculo, Graecisque sit contemptui, ministerium tamen est vitae, spiritus ac iustitiae? ut iam Evangelicae literae, Mosaicis omni laudis ac dignitatis genere tanto sint excellentiores, quanta iustitia peccato est laudabilior, vita morte optabilior, gratia Dei quam ira iucundior: denique quanto Christus unicus Dei filius, haeres et dominus universorum, Mose servo est potentior ac sublimior.

Quum igitur Moses spiritu prophetico imbutus, legem praeceunte Deo, tanta solertia conscripserit, ut in ea non modo verba rebus, verum etiam res ipsas aliis rebus iisdemque longe sublimioribus, insinuandis ac significandis adaptarit: idque tanta industria, ut Christus dominus et magister noster nullam literam atque adeo apicem nullum in ea otiosum esse aut excidere posse affirmarit: quis non idem ac multo locupletius etiam de scriptis Evangelistarum sentiat? Equidem quid alii iudicent, non laboro: de me hoc possum quamvis sancte affirmare, ex quo tempore sacris me literis penitus dedidi, semper in hac fuisse sententia, Quatuor evangelistas tantum non modo suae diligentiae industriam, verum etiam spiritus sancti ἐνέργειαν ad scribendum attulisse, ut verbum nullum ac ne literam quidem ullam, nisi certissima historiae veritatis invitante, ac spiritu sancto approbante, libris suis inseruerint. Itaque quamvis prima facie tam in rebus ipsis quam in ordine rerum alicubi discrepare viderentur, nunquam tamen dubitavi, quin sub tali specie perturbatae dissensionis, ordinatissimus et perfectissimus lateret omnium rerum consensus, quem quisquis explicare et in lucem producere posset, praeclarum nescio quid et humana industria maius effecisset. A qua sententia semel suscepta, neque

magnorum theologorum aliter sententium autoritas neque sanctissimorum virorum eius modi consensum indagare cupientium frustra suscepti labores neque mea ipsius idem conantis, sed aliquandiu nihil agentis experientia me unquam depellere potuerunt. Non est autem obscurum plerosque magni nominis theologos de apostolis et evangelistis adeo exiliter sentire, ut eos interdum vel ignorantia vel negligentia vel denique oblivione lapsos esse, non modo fateantur, verum etiam propemodum incusent: a quorum opinione quum optimus quisque maxime abhorreat, nonnulli qui inter illos paulo sunt civiliores aut verecundiores, hoc tantum agunt, ne ob tales lapsus sacrae scripturae auctoritatem infirmari et vacillare existimemus: quorum sedulitatem ut non damno, ita eos omnino actum (quod aiunt) agere, neutiquam dubito. Caeterum qui nam viri quanta eruditione, quo spiritu Evangelistas conciliare et in unum redigere conati sint, quis vel mediocriter doctus ignorat? . . .

In the *Annotationes* we read (cc 4b): *Quo tempore nuptiae in Cana Galilaeae fuerunt, non longe abfuit festum Paschalis, ad quod Christum Hierosolymam profectum fuisse, scribit Ioannes. Nihil autem eorum, quae in aliis Evangelistis sequuntur, hanc ad festum profectionem praecessisse capite vigesimo sexto ostendetur. Recte igitur hoc loco, quae Hierosolymis et in Iudaea et in Samaria fecerit Christus, antequam in Galilaeam rediret, ex Ioanne recensentur. Nam reliqui Evangelistae nihil eorum, quae reditum ante cesserunt, attingunt. Admonendus est autem hoc loco diligens lector, ut quod Ioannes de vendentibus et ementibus e templo eiectis recenset, exacte contempletur. Nam cum Matthaeus atque Lucas eiectionem huic quam simillimam, paucis diebus antea pascha, quod fuit a baptisate Christi quartum et eidem in terris ultimum, Marcus*

autem, postridie eius diei aliam, utrique horum non minus similem, factam esse, describant: in quaestionem venit, an de eadem eiectione, quae unica tantum facta sit, omnes intelligi debeant, ita ut, quod ad tempora eiectionis attinet, aliqui ex eis erraverint an vero non semel tantum sed ter illos eiectos fuisse, idque diversis temporibus, quem admodum scribunt Evangelistae, credi oporteat. Quam quidem quaestionem non modo non movissem, verum etiam nullam omnino esse posse iudicassem, nisi magni nominis viri, unicam tantum eiectionem factam, iam, olim et credidissent et alii etiam persuadere conati fuissent. Quorum opinionem si reciperemus, immane, quantum de Evangelistarum auctoritate amitteremus. Tum enim, non solum pleraque oblitos illos fuisse, verum etiam incerta pro certis perscripsisse fateri cogeremur. Quod quomodo excusare possimus, quominus pro mendacio habeatur, equidem videre non valeo, sed ut possimus, certe manifestarium errorem esse nemo auderet negare? Porro si errores in Evangelistarum scriptis agnoscimus, iam eorum autorem spiritum sanctum esse nemo credet, sicque totius novi testamenti labascet auctoritas. Quo quid horribilius cogitari potest? Verum absit ab homine non modo Christiano, verum etiam, iuxta carnem probo, atque honesto, ut tam male de Evangelistis sentiat, aut suspicetur. Quis enim est tam perditae mentis, ut, siquid in publicum scribere velit de rebus non vetustis, sed quorum memoria sit recentissima quasque maxima pars lectorum suis conspexerit oculis, et auribus audierit, ea inserere velit, et admiscere, quae cum ad rem nihil faciant, narrationem tamen falsam, et ab omnibus explodendam efficiant, autori fidem derogent, et causam, propter quam scribantur laedant? Atqui tales fuisse oporteret Evangelistas, si rebus a Christo gestis, quarum circumstantias ipsi obliti essent, alia loca, alia tempora,

aliasque personas affinxissent. Poterant enim maiore fide, autoritate et utilitate, circumstantias temporum, locorum, personarum, si obliti fuissent, prorsus omittere, quam vel falsa vel certe incerta affingere, siquidem hoc tantum agebant, ut doctrina Christi atque miracula ex suis scriptis vel discerentur vel recogniscerentur. Porro, si omnino tales fuissent, quod tamen nemo vir bonus, de quoquam, nisi flagitiis aperto suspicatur, an non periculi magnitudo potuit ac debuit eos coercere, quo minus ista fingendi libertate vel audacia potius, in suam ipsorum perniciem abuterentur? Cum enim propter doctrinam Christi essent Iudaeis ac gentibus invidi ac variis persecutionibus atque periculis obnoxii, dubium non est, si eiusmodi errores, mendacii speciem prae se ferentes in ipsorum scriptis deprehendi potuissent ab iis, quibus gesta Christi erant notissima; dubium, inquam, non est, quin eo nomine tum atrociter fuissent tractati, ut vel invitati, ad emendationem talium errorum adigerentur. Quod nisi fecissent, si eorum scripta non funditus extirpata fuissent, certe redarguta et confutata, fidem apud omnes amisissent. Verum cum impii Philosophi, vaesani heretici et desperati apostatae extiterint, qui scripta apostolica calumniis impetierint, quas hodieque non ignoramus, quis unquam audivit, a quoquam Christi contemporaneo, fidem historicam in Evangelistarum scriptis esse desideratam? quam nisi summam praestitissent, non modo dictis, verum etiam scriptis ad posteritatem derivandis traducti fuissent. Quin potius tanta fuit iam tum ab initio Euangelicae historiae certitudo, ut Iudaei in sua perfidia obstinati omnibus ingenii viribus in hoc incumbere coacti sint, quo excogitarent aliquid, quam obrem, Iesus, non deberet verus Christus agnosci, quantumvis, quae de ipso praedicarentur, essent verissima: adeo non potuerunt Evangelistas ullius vel mendacii vel erroris, in historiae con-

textu accusare. Et hactenus quidem ea diximus, quae etiam apud eos, qui a fide Christi alieni sunt, valere, et Euangelistis auctoritatem conciliare debent. Nunc autem Christianos, eorum quae proprie ad ipsos pertinent, admonere volo, ut cogitent quam impium sit, si quis Euangelistas, in conscribenda Euangelica historia, a spiritu sancto sic destitutos fuisse sentiat, ut non modo, quae humana fragilitate circumdati, obliti essent, in memoriam non reduceret, verum etiam incerta pro certis et falsa pro veris inexcusabili temeritate, narrare permetteret, cum alioqui in subitis concionibus semper tam praesens fuerit, ut non solum eis docentibus cogitationes ac linguas temperaret, verum etiam auditores, qui illis credebant, manifesta aliqua ac conspicua specia afflaret. Et si Paulus, de seipso, deque aliis apostolis recte dicit: non sumus idonei ex nobis ipsis cogitare quicquam tanquam ex nobis ipsis, sed si ad aliquid idonei sumus, id ex deo est, qui et idoneos nos fecit ministros novi testamenti: quanto rectius Euangelistae dixissent, si ad scribendum idonei sumus (sicut certe fuerunt) id ex deo est, et non ex nobis? Et si Christus vere dixit: vos non estis qui loquimini, sed spiritus patris vestri loquitur in vobis, Cur non multo magis cum scribebant spiritus sanctus temperasset eorum cogitationes et consilia, ut quam verissime narrarent, rectissime digererent et sapientissime docerent, praesertim cum scriptura latius spargi, diutius retineri et diligentius excuti possit, quam conciones, quantumvis populosae ac publicae? Quid alii iudicent ipsi viderint; ego certe nihil dubito, cum lex Mosis, quod est ministerium mortis, ab uno tam exacta, secundum voluntatem dei, diligentia scripta sit, ut iota unum aut apex unus ex ea perire non possit: multo magis Evangelium Christi, quod est ministerium spiritus ac vitae, a pluribus, usque spiritu sancto afflatis, tanta diligentia, tanta cura, tanta rerum scribendarum cog-

nitione, tantaque spiritus sancti interne moderantis, ac consilium suppeditantis, luce conscriptum esse: ut non modo apex ullus sit in eo carpendus, verum etiam verbum nullum non a spiritu suppeditatum, et in aeterno dei consilio ab aeterno praedestinatum. Nam cum Christus a se ipso nihil sit loquutus, sed omnia et dixerit et fecerit, sicut ei pater mandatum dederat, et Euangelistae, quae ab eo audierunt ac viderunt, nobis conscripta tradiderint, non possumus non ab aeterno ea omnia praedestinata credere, nisi Christum velimus mendacem facere. Quippe qui inter cetera de suis apostolis et euangelistis dixerit 'qui vos audit, me audit'. Haec cum ita sint, non potest non esse certissimum, Evangelistas, cum diversa tempora, diversa loca, diversas personas rebus narrandis admiscerent, etiam de diversis rebus gestis et sentire et loqui, utcunque nobis inter se tam similia videantur, ut eadem esse suspicemur. Itaque cum Ioannes Christum proximo post nuptias in Cana Galilaeae paschate, hoc est, a baptistate ipsius primo, ementes ac vendentes e templo eiecisse scribat et paulo post, eum a Galilaeis exceptum, quod ea omnia, quae Hierosolymis in die festa fecerat, vidissent: satis manifestum esse arbitror, hanc eiectionem diversam esse ab ea, quam Matthaeus et Lucas paschate ultimo, quo die Christus asinae insidens urbem Hierosolymam est invecus, factam esse memorant. Sicut ab utraque diversa est, quam Marcus postridie eius diei, cum Christus a Bethania rediens ficui maledixisset, factam esse confirmat. Harum enim trium eiectionum, unaquaeque suis propriis circumstantiis tam arcte tamque circumspecte est inclusa, ut nisi aliquos Evangelistas oblivionis et erroris accusare velimus, nullam cum alia confundere possimus. Quod ideo tam diligenter admonere et inculcare volui, quia quod hactenus euangelistae et inter sese discordare et genuinum rerum ordinem

negligere visi sunt, non ex alio fonte manavit: quam quod diversas aliquot res, interse quidem longe simillimas, sed tamen circumstantiarum expressione satis distinctas, si animadvertere voluissemus, magna nostra culpa pro iisdem habuimus et in unum confudimus. Quas ubi rursus pro diversis, ut sunt, acceperimus, et unamquamque suo loco, suo tempore suoque ordini restituerimus, tum admirabilem illam, et hactenus nemini satis notam Euangelistarum concordiam intelligemus et ordinem rerum gestarum, a nullo ipsorum perturbatum aut neglectum fuisse apertissime deprehendemus.

200. The work appeared for the first time in 1567, but this edition is so rare that even Moldaenke had to work with the edition of 1674. The edition of 1674 is in my possession. The complete title is: *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae, seu De Sermone Sacrarum literarum, in duas partes divisae, quarum prior Singularum Vocum, atque Locutionum Sacrae Scripturae Usus ac Rationem ordine alphabetico explicat, posterior De Sermone Sacrarum Literarum Plurimas Generales Regulas tradit, Authore Matthia Flacio Illyrico. Editio Nova . . . Jenae . . . MDCLXXIV.* This edition was made public by the well-known Iohannes Musaeus who also wrote a long preface to the book. This voluminous work of two parts — the first part has 1,372 columns and an index filling the leaves mmm 2 to rrr 4 in folio; the second, 840 columns with a tremendous index filling a 1 to r 4 in folio — is a Bible dictionary and a course in hermeneutics. K. Holl characterized it as “incredibly formless”; he failed to recognize that it is not and does not pretend to be a homogeneous treatise, but it is, as G. Moldaenke has pointed out, a collection of essays written at different times, the oldest being written as early as 1546. Compare W.

Preger, *Matthias Flacius Illyricus und seine Zeit*. Erlangen 1859-61. W. Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Leipzig-Berlin, 1922ff. (Vols. II, III, V, some of the here collected writings go back to the nineteenth century, 1883); O. Ritschl, *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus*, Bonn, 1908, pp. 142ff.; K. Holl, *Gesammelte Aufsätze I. Luther*, Tuebingen, 1923; H. Echternach, *Studien zur Ontologie des Wortes*, Guetersloh 1931; Guenter Moldaenke, *Schriftverstaendnis und Schriftdeutung im Zeitalter der Reformation, Teil 1: Matthias Flacius Illyricus*, Stuttgart, 1936; H. E. Weber, *Reformation, Orthodoxie und Rationalismus I, 1*, Guetersloh, 1937.

201. In 1544 Flacius began to function as professor of Hebrew at the University at Wittenberg, but his promotion to the master's degree took place two years later. The lecture delivered on this occasion, February 25, 1546, one week after Luther's death, is contained in the second part of the *Clavis*, column 644ff. It tried to prove the originality of the vocalization of the Hebrew text: *Quod Puncta Hebraeorum aut Vocales, inde ab initio fuerint* (cf. Moldaenke, p. 133f.)

202. *Quod quicquid dixerunt aut docuerunt, scripseruntve, Moses, Prophetae et Apostoli, id sit a Deo, et sit verissimum: quandoquidem (teste Epist. ad Hebr. 1, v. 1 et 2, v. 3, 4 totaque Scriptura) Deus per os eorum locutus sit: non ipsi suo arbitrio, aut voluntate, prophetiam attulerint. Inde vero etiam porro certissima sequitur: quod cum Deus ista locutus sit, necessario sint verissima. Haec est irrefutabilis demonstratio, et veluti fundamentum ac basis totius sacrae doctrinae, superquam ea, tamquam immobilem petram collocata est; quaeque passim a Prophetis et Apostolis, atque adeo Christo ipso docetur et omnibus commendatur.*

Super hanc Dei viventis veritatem ac demonstrationem jactum est fundamentum Prophetarum et Apostolorum: cui porro ipsorum fundamento substructa est Ecclesia aut domus Dei, contra quam non praevallebunt portae inferorum: teste Christo Matth. 16:18 et Apostolo ipsius Paulo ad Ephes. 2:20. Haec demonstratio certior ac firmiter est, quam qualem possit totum genus humanum atque adeo omnes angeli et daemones, reperire: ut nequaquam Scriptura careat suis demonstrationibus longe verissimis ac evidentissimis. Possunt tamen etiam aliae aliquo recenserentur, quae alibi forte adscribentur: quae nequaquam contemnendae sint: sed super hanc proprie demonstrationem, Scriptura exstructa est (II, 65). — Unicus est author omnium sacrorum librorum, non plures ac diversi: nempe ipsemet Deus. Nec refert, quod per diversa organa aut homines, diversoque sermonis ac docendi genere, locutus sit imo id etiam ad majorem certitudinem facit: quod, cum multifariam, multisque modis, ac per multos, locutus sit humano generi Deus; omnes tamen illae locutiones, . . . optime sibi invicem consentiant (II, 62). More passages are quoted by Ritschl, I, 142.

203. *Nulla omnino usquam est vera contradictio Scripturarum, sicut Quintilianus de legibus dicit, sed quae pugnare videntur, nostra culpa et ignorantia talia esse existimantur (II, 30). — Quos tum ita instruxit et confirmavit, ut non nisi vera de se dicere possent (II, 64). Sciamus, quisnam eorum (sc. librorum) autor sit: num Deus aut personae, per quas ipsemet Deus locutus est, quaeque errare non possunt, ac quibus vult Deus simpliciter fidem haberi, ut sunt Prophetiae et Apostoli: aut vero homines, qui fallere et falli possunt (II, 92).*

204. Flacius recognized both the peculiarity of one Gospel in comparison with the other and the nearly verbal

agreement of some sections, as, for instance, sections in Matthew with sections in Mark. The first factor is in his judgment a proof for the fact that our Gospels are not the product of a counseling together of the writers — he even uses the term conspiracy — and therefore a proof for their reliability; the second is the result of the activity of the Holy Ghost who gave them not only the thoughts but also the words. Moldaenke quotes (p. 302) the following passage from Flacius' preface to the new edition of Erasmus' Greek New Testament, published by Flacius in 1570 with many explanatory glosses: *Omnino in Evangelistis quattuor atque adeo etiam in omnibus sacrarum literarum scriptoribus apparet, verissimum esse id quod Paulus dicit, eundem Spiritum esse qui dividat unicuique prout velit. Ita enim mirabili Dei sapientia . . . divisae sunt illis operae ac materiae, utcum alius aliud, alioque modo magis narret, in summa tamen conveniant, et verum . . . corpus plenae tractationis aut Evangelici operis conficiant. Quod . . . facit . . . etiam ad faciendam eis fidem non parum. Inde enim apparet omnino eos spiritu Dei rectos esse, qui non tantum sententias, sed et verba consonantia eis suggessit: alioque vix accidit, ut quisquam paulo longius opus conscribat, nec tamen imprudens contradicat, non dico aliis, sed etiam sibi-met ipsi.*

205. *Mea est sententia: Vocales seu (ut vocant) puncta, una cum consonantibus jam olim (fortasse adhuc ab ipsomet Adamo) inventa, omnesque sacrarum Literarum scriptores integre dilucideque scripsisse, non solum consonantibus, sed et vocalibus: eosque, qui contraria sentiunt, non solum falsa sentire, sed et conscientius Ecclesiaeque, quae tantum certitudine verbi Dei aedificatur, perniciose (II, 644).*

Thus not Johann Gerhard but Matthias Flacius introduced this idea. We know that Luther kept himself free from such exaggerations, compare above p. 104ff. The two Buxtorfs, reformed theologians of the seventeenth century, revived and defended this assumption; by means of the *Formula Consensus Helvetici* of 1676 it became a part of the Helvetian confession. Bucer and Calvin laid the foundation for the doctrine of inspiration in the Reformed churches. As early as 1536 Bucer called God the real author of the Scriptures and the writers mere *amanuenses*. When in 1538 Bullinger wrote: *De Scripturae sanctae auctoritate, certitudine, firmitate et absoluta perfectione*, his starting point was II Peter 1:21 and II Tim. 3:16 but he refrained as yet from identifying *inspiratio* with *dictatio*. Calvin, however, used the term *dictare* and considered the Scripture the result of the dictation of the Holy Ghost. Thus in his *Institutio religionis Christianae*, of 1543: Even the historical parts of Scripture came into existence *dictante Spiritu sancto* (Compare O. Ritschl, I, 62-68).

206. *Scriptores suo consilio propositoque ea quae initio constituerunt, digerunt . . . At Paulus sicut et alii sacri Scriptores saepissime praeter opinionem ac propositum suum impelluntur ad proferendas aliquas amplissimas doctrinas mysteriaque, tunc primum illis a Spiritu sancto suggestas inspiratasque aut certe declaratas illustratasque. Saepè igitur spiritus Dei eos incitat, ut ea dicant, quae magis ad posteros futurosque casus hominesque quam ad praesentes faciant, quaeque etiam ipsimet scriptores non semper satis intelligunt, sicut Petrus testatur veteres prophetas cupivisse habere ulteriorem suarum propheticarum cognitionem: sed responsum eis esse, ipsos illa non tam sibi quam posteris praevidere ac proponere.* Quoted by Moldaenke (p. 298) from the *Glossa*

Compendiaria with which in 1570 Flacius accompanied a new edition of Erasmus' Greek New Testament.

207. According to Preger, Flacius robbed the Biblical writers of *alle eigene produktive Geistestätigkeit* (II 494ff.). He was followed by Kawerau in his article on Flacius in Hauck's *Realencyklopaedie* VI, 91; O. Ritschl (I, 142ff.), Wach (*Das Verstehen* II, 50), Elert (*Morphologie des Luthertums* (I, 193, 171) and others.

207.^a *Quidam hoc tempore disputant, tres priores Evangelistas non vidisse aliorum scripta. At mihi contra verissimile est, quod Veteres scribunt, Mattheum circiter 8. annis post resurrectionem Domini suum Evangelium conscripsisse, ut Athanasius et Eusebius scribunt: cuius Evangelium a Marco lectum esse inde mihi probabile est, quod quaedam studio . . . abbreviavit eodem ordine ea recitans, et alicubi etiam verba sequens: nec tamen propterea iuste eius abbreviator dici potest* (Preface to the edition of Erasmus' Greek text of the N. T. with glossis xxx 4). At the same place he speaks of the use made of Matthew and Mark by Luke. Concerning John he says: *Censuit ea potissimum esse adiicienda, quae ab aliis plane praetermissa forent aut tenuius justo tractata* (eodem loco p. 325).

208. *Necessario illae Epistolae non tantum doctrinam . . . sed etiam ipsius Pauli ingenium . . . referunt.* (II, 104). — *Quod enim conqueritur Origenes de hyperbatis, hiatibus et imperfectis orationibus, eo nomine potest excusari: quod non frigide Apostolus egerit, sed ex animo tam ardenti scripserit, ut quandoque extra se ipsum videri possit raptus atque relicto omni alio studio et cura, tantum id anniti, ut audientes ad Christum rapiat, de verborum compositione non admodum sollicitus, dum pectoribus nostris incitandis et permovendis quam potentissimas adhibeat machinas. Utque*

torrentes, quando intumescunt, quaecunque habent obviam, ad se rapiunt: non observata rerum dispositione: ita in hoc Apostolo Spiritus Domini quandoque scribendi et dicendi impetum excitavit: in quo haec, quae videntur vitia esse in dicendo et scribendo, summae virtutes erant. (II. 526).

209. *Quos . . . ita instruxit et confirmavit, ut non nise vera de se dicere ac docere possent* (II, 64)).

210. *Qui non tantum sententias, sed et verba consonantia eis suggessit* (Preface, etc. xxxx 4).

210.^a Moldaenke: *Von den 54 Zeilen der Glosse zu II Tim. 3:16 gehen knapp 5 auf das θεόπνευστος ein* (p. 309).

210.^b The New Testament section of the *Syntagma* appeared for the first time in 1558 under the title: *Σύνταγμα seu corpus doctrinae Christi ex Novo Testamento tantum, methodica ratione, singulari fide et diligentia congestum*. Here we find no trace of the dictation theory and yet, as Ritschl showed, these sections were taken over into the *Magdeburg Centuries* nearly without change. If Flacius had been an exponent of the dictation theory he certainly would have seen to it that these sections had been more or less revised in that direction. Compare pp. 128ff. and Notes 216ff.

210.^c Ritschl refuses to accept the statement by Heppe (*Die Entstehung und Fortbildung des Luthertums und die kirchlichen Bekenntnisschriften desselben von 1548-1576*, pp. 39. 222) that Justus Menius was the author of this Confession, but G. L. Schmidt, in his biography of Justus Menius (cf. Note 211), proved that from the sources already in 1867.

211. The title is: *Konfession und Bekenntnis des Glaubens der durchleuchten Hochgebornen Fuersten und Herrn, Herrn Johans Friedrichen des Mittlern, Herrn*

Johans Wilhelm, und Johans Fridrichen des juengeren, Hertzogen zu Sachsen Landgrauen zu Dueringen und Marggrauen zu Meissen etc., landschaft zu Dueringen uebergeben auffm landtage zu Weimar. Anno MDXXX-XIX. Gedruckt zu Koenigsberg in Preussen. — This Confession later became a part of the *Corpus Doctrinae Thuringicum* that appeared in 1570 and again in 1571. In *Justus Menius, der Reformator Thueringens. Nach archivalischen und anderen gleichzeitigen Quellen von Dr. Gustav Lebrecht Schmidt, Gotha, F. A. Perthes, 1867, 2 vols*, we find the opinion of Menius upon which the confession is based, and the principal parts of the confession are reproduced (II, 75-93; 93-105).

212. The immediately following second part of the section on the Scripture, occasioned by the Roman teaching that the Scripture is so often not clear and needs the authoritative explanation by the church, reads as follows: *Wiewohl es wahr ist, dass in der heiligen Propheten und Apostel Schriften hin und wieder etliche Stuecke gefunden werden, die der Grammatik oder Historie halben, auch von wegen der eigenen und sonderlichen Weise, so die Apostel in Reden nach ihrer Art fuehren, uns aber fremd und ungewoehnlich sind, dunkel scheinen, da denn der rechte Verstand von einem jeden nicht sobald erschen werden kann, derwegen auch die Ausleger oftmals sehr wunderliche und bisweilen auch ungereimte Deutungen machen, wie aus ihren Schriften zu sehen, also dass, wer da meint, er wolle durch ihre Auslegung die Schrift bessser verstehen, derselbe dadurch oftmals mehr irre und geblendet wird, dass er nicht wissen kann, was er annehmen und lassen soll; so ist doch dieses dagegen auch wahr, dass die heilige Schrift der Propheten und Apostel in den Artikeln und Stuecken, darin die wahr-*

haftige Gotteserkenntnis steht, so zum Glauben und unserer Seligkeit uns armen Menschen von noeten sind, gar nicht dunkel, sondern aufs allerhellste und lichteste ist, also dass, wer dieselben Artikel und Hauptstuecke in rechter Ordnung und Verstand wohl fasst und dasjenige, so sonst dunkel scheint, dagegen haelt, derselbe ein grosses Licht davon empfaengt und sich darein wohl richten kann. Denn obgleich etliche Sprueche und Reden so gar hellen, klaren und gewissen Verstand nicht bald geben wollen, so muessen wir dem Heiligen Geist die Ehre geben, dass er Meister und wir Schueler sind, und denken, dass es nicht an dem Meister, sondern an uns groben Schuelern mangelt, dass wir alles nicht koennen gruendlich verstehen; ja, wir sollen dem lieben Gott von Herzen darum danken, wenn wir soweit kommen, dass wir die Hauptstuecke und Summa der Lehre, so in der heiligen Propheten und Apostel Schriften verfasst ist, begreifen und ziemlicher Massen verstehen moegen. (Here follow several proof passages from the Old and from the New Testament I Peter 1:10f. and II Peter 1:20f.); then the confession adds: *Dies bekennt auch die ganze heilige Christliche Kirche im Symbolo Niceno, da sie von Gott dem Heil. Geist singen — Welcher geredet hat durch die Propheten*). Das endliche Ziel, darauf die ganze heilige Schrift des Alten und Neuen Testaments gerichtet ist, ist dieses, dass man den Herrn Christum daraus erkennen, an ihm glauben und durch ihn ewiges Leben und Seligkeit erlangen soll.

213. The complete title is: *DE ORIGENE ET AUTORITATE uerbi DEI, et quae Pontificum, Patrum & conciliorum sit autoritas, admonitio hoc tempore, quo de Concilio congregando agitur, ualde necessaria. ADDITUS EST CATALOGUS Doctorum Ecclesiae DEI, mundi*

initio usque ad haec tempora. AUTORE GEORGIO MAIORE. WITEMBERGÆ EX Officina Iohannis Lufft. ANNO M.D.L. The book was dedicated to Archbishop Cranmer at Canterbury whose example should urge other leaders of the church to be instrumental in either having a Christian synod called for the purpose of cleansing the doctrine and removing all superstitious cults or themselves introducing the correct doctrine in their dominions and doing away with all superstition. It must be a synod in which not the majority of the electors but alone the divine truth on the basis of Scripture is to decide. Since now (at Mantua) the council is again to meet and to decide about doctrine and cult, Major wants to show that Scripture alone is authoritative and upon what its authority is based. When Kawerau (Hauck's *Realencyclopaedie* 3. 12, 87) called the book "the first attempt dogmatically to develop the doctrine of Scripture," this is hardly correct. It is rather one of the many writings that endeavored to present the right position toward the forthcoming decisions of the council called by the pope and the emperor. Its principal part, therefore, is the section that mentions nine reasons why the Scripture alone is authoritative (B4-C2). First, it contains so many things which could be made known to us alone by divine revelation; secondly, Scripture has such an effect that this cannot be explained, if it were not of divine origin; thirdly, the admirable harmony and perpetuity of its doctrine. *Nihil in hac doctrina discrepat; necesse est ergo, ex uno fonte et autore Dei hanc religionem et doctrinam manasse*; fourthly, all its prophecies have been fulfilled; in this connection the term *infallibilis* is applied to Scripture. In contradistinction to the heathen it can be said of the church: *Ecclesia Dei certa vaticinia et infallibilia de rebus maximis, de voluntate*

Dei, de venturo liberatore, de mutatione et ordine imperiorum, de extremo iudicio habet; fifthly, the preaching of this word is accompanied by miracles; sixthly, its doctrine has been preserved in spite of so many enemies; seventhly, its doctrine has so many witnesses since the time of Adam; eighthly, many have given their blood for the doctrine contained therein; and finally, God has at several times directly interfered in order to punish those who mutilated it and, on the other hand, given the Holy Ghost to those who heard and believed it. The whole section closes with these words: Sciamus igitur Verbum esse audiendum, et cum hoc, quod voce et scripto Prophetarum et Apostolorum nobis divinitus traditum est, audimus, reverenter et gratis animis tamquam mandatum et vocem Dei de coelo sonantem accipiamus, et iuxta illius praeceptum et praescriptum vitam instituamus et regamus. Then follow the *testimonia scripturae*: Exod. 4:15, 16; Jer. 1:9; Luke 10:16; Mark 13:11; Luke 21:15; II Peter 1:21; I Thess. 2:13; John 12:48; Rom. 1:16. The passage II Tim. 3:16 is not even mentioned. Concerning inspiration Major says nothing at all, although Kawerau maintains that he does. He states only the fact that Scripture is *vox Dei* and bases that contention on the nine reasons mentioned above and the Scripture passages just quoted.

214. *Magna igitur insania, immo summa impietas quorundam est, qui coelesti doctrinae, cuius autor filius Dei et Spiritus sanctus est, patrum scripta, Pontificum et conciliorum decreta vel aequant vel praeferunt. Nam Prophetarum et Apostolorum vocatio immediate a Dei ipso est, et ut supra ex Petro ostensum est, ipsorum doctrina non est humana voluntate allata, sed Spiritu sancto impulsu locuti sunt Dei homines. Quare certe sumus non posse errare. (C4b).*

215. The entire purpose of the book is summed up in these words: *Cum itaque certum sit Prophetarum et Apostolorum doctrinam Dei vocem et mandatum esse, primum necesse est, omnes homines ad hoc obligari, ut huic coelesti voci obtemperent, neque licere ulli hominum, quod a Deo praeceptum est, mutare vel addere vel tollere. Deinde non posse alibi certius cognosci Deum, et eius erga nos voluntatem patefecit. Tertio, non licere alios cultus Dei fingere, quam quos ipse Deus in hoc verbo tradidit, quibus coli velit, et omnes alios cultus esse inanes, sicuti inquit Christus. Frustra me colunt mandatis hominum etc. Quarto, nullam aliam vocem aut doctrinam in Ecclesia esse audiendam quam ipsius Dei, iuxta illud: Si quis aliud Evangelisaverit, etiamsi angelus e coelo sit, anathema esto. Postremo, nullam interpretationem Scripturae recipiendam esse, quae cum scriptis Apostolorum et Prophetarum non consentiat, quae non sit analogia fidei. Sicuti enim autor, ita et interpres suae doctrinae solus est Spiritus sanctus. Non valeat contra hoc verbum ullius hominis autoritas, sanctitas aut dignitas. Cedant hic Patres, Pontifices, Episcopi, Concilia, principes, reges, caesares, imo angeli ipsi, Quia mandatum et verbum Dei praeferendum est omnibus creaturis (C4).*

216. Otto Ritschl I, 139 compared the *Syntagma* of Wigand and Judex with the first volume of the *Magdeburg Centuries* and found them nearly identical: *Die beiden Abschnitte De Doctrina im ersten und zweiten Buch der ersten Centurie stimmen bis auf wenige Stücke, die sie nicht reproducieren, woertlich mit dem Syntagma überein.* Ritschl compared the edition of 1560 of the *Syntagma* which was *summa diligentia iam recognitum*; the first edition may have been still less different . . . from the form printed in the first volume of the *Centuries*. This first edition appeared in 1558,

because in the Latin edition of his *Methodus* of 1559 Wigand refers to it and says, he together with Judex collected and published it *superiori anno*. Ritschl did not compare the *Methodus* and hardly knew of its existence, because that volume of my *Quellen* which made it available and brought all the necessary information about it, had not been published when the first volume of his *Dogmengeschichte des Protestantismus* appeared. So he also could not show that the sequence of the *Capita* in the *Methodus* and of the *Loci* in the *Syntagma* are closely related. Ritschl did not find the first edition of the *Syntagma* and even the *Auskunftsbureau der deutschen Bibliotheken* could not trace it for him. But already in 1906 I had an undated copy in my hands (*Universitätsbibliothek at Goettingen*: 8. Theol. thet. I 69a). Since it does not have the notation on the title pages *summa diligentia iam recognitum*, it must be the first edition of 1558. It is printed by Operinus at Basel where also the *Magdeburg Centuries* were printed. Compare M. Reu, *Quellen zur Geschichte des kirchlichen Unterrichts*, etc., I 3, 1 erste Hälfte *Gütersloh*, 1927, p. 445*. The first part of the *Syntagma* based upon the New Testament was followed a few years later (1563) by a second part based upon the Old Testament. When both parts were bound together, the sequence was changed: first Old Testament, second New Testament. Thus in the edition of 1585 (Basel, Operinus) which is in the library of Wartburg Seminary.

217. The dedication preface to the edition of the Old Testament part of 1563 mentions also Rostock, the Sund territory, Wismar and Brunswick. Lübeck, Hamburg, Bremen, Rostock, Wismar, Braunschweig, Lüneburg, and Magdeburg formed the territory of "Lower Saxony." These cities had 1561 publicly declared that they would not accept

the *Variata*, but would recognize in their territories only the "unaltered" edition of the Augsburg Confession (Reu, *Quellen*, I 3, 1 *zweite Hälfte*, p. 867*), and it is wellknown what important role they (with the exception of Bremen) played in the work of consolidation of sound Lutheranism in the following two decades. We can understand that Wigand and Judex wished the *Syntagma* might take the place of a confession of the Madgeburg church, at that time so far and wide defamed by the followers of Melanchthon (*Postremo voluimus etiam hoc totum doctrinae σύνταγμα seu corpus, confessionis loco esse, qualem nostra Ecclesia doctrinam amplecteretur et sonaret. Incredibilis iam est licentia fingendi opinionum quasi portenta, nec ab iis abstrahi ulla se ratione homines sinunt*, p. 6, edition of 1585). Perhaps they also hoped that the *Syntagma* might become a bond of union between the territories of Lower Saxony.

218. Compare this sequence of material: *De Homine ante lapsum, De Lapsu hominis, De Homine post lapsum ante conversionem seu de homine veteri, De Homine in et post conversionem, seu de homine novo et renato*. It became a preparation for the second article of the Formula of Concord.

219. The *locus* on Christ has the following subdivisions: *Filium Dei esse personam; Esse distinctam personam a patre et spiritu sancto; Esse coessentialem, coaeternam; Jesum Christum vere esse filium illum Dei, seu verum Deum; Esse verum hominem; Filii Dei et hominis esse unam personam non plures; De unione duarum naturarum; Proprietates et actiones post assumptionem carnis humanae; Quod semper retenturus sit illam copulationem duarum naturarum. Proprietates et actiones post glorificationem et in aeternum*. Then it is followed by the article *De Messia* with these subdivisions: *Quod sit promissus aliquis Messias; Qualis; Quae*

ipsius opera; Quis finis; Quod Christus sit ille Messias; Quae eius substantia et quare talis copulatio sit facta; Quae eius actiones fuerint et in aeternum futurae sint; De Appellationibus secundae personae divinitatis, quae in historia Evangelii ei tribuuntur. In the second part nearly the same subdivisions are used and treated on the basis of Acts and the Letters of the Apostles.

220. It should not be overlooked that Wigand and Judex follows Luther's view concerning the New Testament *antilegomena*; only Revelation they recognized as apostolic and canonical, written by John the author of the fourth Gospel.

221. Ritschl I, 135: *Damit nun, so wird weiter die Entstehung des Neuen Testaments beschrieben (Syntagma p. 424), die Erinnerung an die Lehre und die wunderbaren Werke Jesu Christi bewahrt und der Nachwelt empfohlen würde, schien es Gott, Christus und dem heiligen Geist nützlich und notwendig, durch ihre Organe diejenigen Kapitel der evangelischen Geschichte in einfachem Stile aufschreiben zu lassen, welche fundamental und zu wissen hoechst notwendig sind. So erweckte Gott die vier Evangelisten, die Geschichte Christi schriftlich aufzuzeichnen. Die von ihm verfassten Evangelien aber hielten die Apostel und ihre Schüler für eine wahre und heilige Darstellung der im Neuen Testament von Christus vollbrachten Dinge und empfahlen sie der Kirche. Ebenso müssen alle Christen diese Buecher deshalb fuer ueberaus wertvoll und altertuemlich halten, weil sie in ihnen den himmlischen Lehrer, den Gottes- und Menschensohn, unsern Herrn Jesum Christum hoeren, der den geheimen Heilsratschluss Gottes offenbart und das ganze Werk der Erloesung vollbringt. So werden auch die Evangelien [so wenig wie das Alte Testament, die Apostelgeschichte und die Briefe], ohne dass für ihre Abfassung*

eine göttliche Inspiration in Anspruch genommen würde, nur als eine wegen des Zeugnisses der Apostel glaubwürdige und allein um ihres Inhalts willen zu verehrende Geschichts-darstellung gewürdigt." — This is untenable, but so much perhaps is true: Wigand and Judex in their view of the origin of Scripture let the human factor come more to its own than Osiander and Flacius, and especially more than that Gnesio-Lutheran confession of 1549 (comp. p. 125) which the human writers degraded to dead instruments.

222. *Syntagma* Old Testament part, *Epistola Nuncupatoria*, p. 6 (the preface is dated 1563, but we quote the edition of 1585): *Atqui hoc Corpus sparsim in libris sacris traditum est, quia historicam narrationem continent. Prout enim quaelibet gesta sunt, ita etiam singulari Dei inspiratione et bonitate in libros consignata et relata sunt, pro quo quidem beneficio aeternas Deo gratias debemus.* — Page 71: *Est autem Scriptura sacra in veteri Testamento Scriptura quae singulari Dei vel iussu vel instinctu descripta et in libros redacta.* — Page 97: *Singulari Dei consilio et scripti et conservati sunt libri sacri, tot aliis monumentis de perditis. Voluit enim Deus certa capita doctrinae coelestis omnibus aetatibus nota esse in Ecclesia sua et propagari ad posteritatem. Nam per verbum Deus vult esse efficax in hominibus, sibi que Ecclesiam sanctam colligit et docet, quis sit Deus, quomodo cognoscenda peccata, quare coram Deo simus iusti, quomodo Deus sit invocandus et colendus; denique quomodo omnes vitae actiones sint instituendae. Est igitur sacra Scriptura norma, iuxta quam omnes doctrinae sunt dijudicandae, et est regula vitae; ut Psalmus inquit: Lucerna pedibus meis verbum tuum.* — In the New Testament part in *Pars Prima* we read p. 29: *Ea quae in approbatis libris Veteris Testamenti continentur, non esse fictitia, qualia in ethnicorum libris non pauca habentur, sed a Deo ipso prolata, plurima historiae*

Evangelicae argumenta evidenter demonstrant: in primis vero haec duo, quod Iesus Christus, filius Dei, luculenter illas veteres scripturas commendat atque in suis concionibus crebro usurpat; deinde, quod asserit, omnia quae a Mose et Prophetis divino consilio tradita sunt, Messiam adumbrasse, seque iam singula exequi et in actum producere. Matthaei 22 affirmat Christus, Davidem in spiritu se vocasse Dominum, indicans, Spiritum sanctum per Davidem de Messiae substantia et officio prophetasse. — Page 390: Ut memoria doctrinae et mirandorum operum Domini nostri Iesu Christi conservaretur et tot vivorum testimonio auctoritate Ecclesiae et posteritati commendaretur utile et necessarium visum est Deo et Domino nostro Iesu Christo et Spiritui sancto, per sua organa ea de Evangelica historia simplici stylo consignare capita, quae rei totius praecipua essent fundamenta et scitu summe necessaria. Excitavit itaque Evangelistas quattuor, qui sigillatim literis historiam Christi sunt complexi. — Page 32: The question De convenientia veteris and novi Testamenti is answered thus: Iam convenientia quaedam utraque Testamenta habere ex concionibus Christi non obscure perspici potest. Unus namque Deus est, utriusque autor. And on page 402: Sic etiam supervacuum esse censemus hoc loco demonstrare, quod doctrina in probatis libris novi Testamenti in singulis capitibus exactissime sibi consentiat et revera nihil discordiae aut contrarietatis admittat. — And concerning the convenientia scriptorum novi et veteris Testamenti we read page 403: Si cum Scriptura veteris Testamenti scripta Evangelistarum et Apostolorum conferantur, nemini non obvium est, utrisque communem esse autorem Deum et idem subjectum.

223. Compare M. Reu, *Quellen*, I 2, 1, pages 299-305* and I 3, 1, pages 445*f. Here is found all that is known concerning the *Methodus* of Wigand. The first chapter treats *De Verbo Dei*; the first question is: *Verbum*

Dei quid est? And this answer is given: *Verbum Dei est doctrina a Deo patefacta et tradita hominibus de essentia et voluntate Dei, comprehensa certis et indubitatis Prophetarum et Apostolorum monumentis, quam doctrinam per ministerium doctorum in Ecclesia sua Deus conservat ac proponit, ac per eam efficax est, donat Spiritum sanctum, accendit in cordibus hominum veram et illustrem Dei noticiam, peccati ac depravationis humanae cognitionem, fidem in Christum, impertit remissionem peccatorum, instituit de veris cultibus Deo praestandis, deque vita aeterna. Haec omnia Christus Johannis decimoseptimo paucis verbis complexus est, inquit: Santifica eos in veritate, sermo tuus est veritas.* — Among the nine reasons for the trustworthiness of Scripture also this one is mentioned: *Haec sola doctrina sibi perpetuo, in veteri et novo Testamento, in omnibus articulis fidei est consentiens ac conformis.* — II Tim. 3:16 is quoted, but, besides Rom. 1:16; 10:14-17 and Luke 10:16, only in the answer to the question: *Rectene docet Schwenckfeldius, verbum Dei seu sacram scripturam esse mortuam literam et operari Deum sine verbo.* — In 1564 Judex published his *Das Kleine Corpus Doctrinae*; also here was a section on the Word of God. Wigand published in 1575 likewise his *Corpusculum* and also here we find a section on the Word of God, both, however, don't contain a statement concerning inspiration. The section in Wigand's *Corpusculum* reads thus: *Was ist Gottes Wort? — Gottes Wort ist eine Lehre von Gott selbst den Menschen geoffenbart und gegeben von seinem Wesen und Willen, welche Lehre in den Schriften der Propheten und Apostel begriffen ist, und ist Gott durch dieselbe Lehre kräftig, gibt den Heiligen Geist, wiedergebirt die Menschen und macht sie selig. John 17: Heilige sie in der Wahrheit, dein Wort ist die Wahrheit.* — *Die fürnehmsten Hauptstück christ-*

licher Lehre sind zwei, nämlich das Gesetz und Evangelium, Lucae 24. — Was ist der Unterschied zwischen der Kirchen und der Heidnischen Lehre? — Der Heiden Lehre ist nur ein Stücklein vom Gesetz, von Gott und aeußerlichen Tugenden, so viel in der verderbten Natur noch ist verblieben. Aber menschliche Vernunft weiss die Lehre nicht von Gottes wahrhaftigem Wesen und vom Evangelio. Aber Gottes Wort lehrt gründlich von Gott, von der Sünde, von der Gerechtigkeit vor Gott, von guten Werken, von der Anrufung Gottes und ewigem Leben. — Es werdern auch billig alle Enthusiasten, so ausser Gottes Wort Erleuchtung suchen, verworfen. Compare Reu, Quellen I 3, 1 pp. 31*-35*; I 3, 2 pp. 2-21; 349-364; I, 3, 1 pp. 434*-472?*

89a. Kahnis, *Lutherische Dogmatik, III, Leipzig* 1868, pages 142ff: Den Standpunkt der Freiheit vertrat Luther. Est ist ebenso unhistorisch als ungerecht, Luthers allerdings oft kühne Aussprüche fuer wilde Schösslinge seines Genius zu halten. Nur ein Mann, der sich in die Schrift so tief eingelebt hatte, dass er in den Erfahrungen seines Lebens einen Masstab hatte für die verschiedenen Geistesstandpunkte, die uns in der Schrift entgegentreten, hatte Recht und Beruf zu einem so durch und durch lebensvollen, wahren, man möchte sagen ebenbürtigen Urteil. Wie bei Origenes liegt allen seinen Ausprüchen die Ueberzeugung zu Grunde, dass der heilige Geist den heiligen Schriftstellern nicht mechanisch Inhalt und Worte eingegeben habe, sondern vielmehr ihren menschlichen Individualitäten sich als freier Organe bedient habe. Luther hat daher die Schriften der Propheten und Apostel nicht losgelöst von ihren Reden, sondern dafür gehalten, dass dieselben so geschrieben wie sie gesprochen haben. In dieser Unterscheidung der göttlichen und menschlichen Seite liegt der Grund seiner doppelten Art

von der Schrift zu reden. Während er die Bücher Moses Schriften des heiligen Geistes nennt, meint er, dass Moses die Gesetze wesentlichen Theils aus den Bräuchen der Väter entlehnt habe. Von den Propheten sagt er, dass dieselben Moses und ihre Vorgänger studiert und nicht immer Gold und Silber, sondern auch Heu, Stroh und Holz darauf gebaut haben. Die Geschichtsschreibung beaureilt er so, dass er sich die Möglichkeit von geschichtlichen Ungenauigkeiten und Widersprüchen offen gehalten hat. Von dem Evangelium des Johannes, das er das zarte Hauptevangelium nennt, urteilt er, dass es die Reden Christi wohl nicht immer nach der Ordnung gebe und auch geschichtliche Tatsachen, z. B. die Verleugnung des Petrus im Hause des Kaiphas, ungenau darstelle. Von den Reden Christi über die letzten Dinge bei Matthaeus meint er, dass sie gegen die Ordnung, wie sie Lukas einhalte, durch einander geworfen seien. In den Reden des Stephanus sah er geschichtliche Irrtümer. Aber auch in den apostolischen Briefen findet er Menschliches. Von der allegorischen Deutung des Namens der Hagar (Gal. 4, 25) meint er, dass sie zum Stich zu schwach sei, und von I Petri 3, 19 urteilt er, dass Petrus hier etwas unter den apostolischen Geist herabgehe. Im Alten Testament fand er das Buch Esther des Kanons unwürdig und meint von den Büchern Esra und Nehemia, dass sie estherten (estherissant). Im Neuen Testament vermisst er im Hebräerbrief . . . Apostolischen Geist, und in die Apokalypse konnte sich sein Geist so wenig finden, dass er sie weder für apostolisch noch prophetisch hielt. Von Jacobus aber, den er mit Paulus nicht vereinen konnte, wagte er zu sagen: Male concludit — delirat. In seinem Urteil über diesen Brief sprach er auch den Masstab aus, der ihn dabei leite. Was Christum nicht lehret, das ist auch nicht apostolisch, wenn es gleich St. Petrus und

St. Paulus lehret. Berufen sich die Gegner auf die Schrift gegen Christus, so berufen wir uns auf Christum gegen die Schrift. Luthers an der heiligen Schrift genährter Geist, welcher den ewigen Kern der Schrift in sein Bewusstsein aufgenommen hatte, verhielt sich eben deshalb frei zur Schrift."

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