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# Martin Luther—Cause or Cure of the Problem of Authority?

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In the confused and uncertain latter part of the twentieth century the loss of a sense of authority echoes from one writer to another and reverberates throughout the reflections of all thinking theologians. We read:

If future church historians choose to describe the last half of this century as a 'crisis', they might well choose to say there was a crisis of authority.<sup>1</sup>

Today we live in a world in which there is no generally accepted authority.<sup>2</sup>

What gives this question of authority its intensity is the suspicion that much of what passes for authority in religion today is but the echo of our own human voices.<sup>3</sup>

A crisis in authority exists. It is felt at home, the school, the city, and the nation.<sup>4</sup>

The question of authority is of universal human concern in the contemporary world. It is very centrally a concern in religion.<sup>5</sup>

Without further continuing to record additional examples, we note that it would be a sign of ignorance to assume that the problem of authority is novel. At the same time there is not much doubt that our pain is particularly acute. Peter Berger sums up the situation with his usual incisiveness:

*In pre-modern situations there is a world of religious certainty, occasionally ruptured by heretical deviations. By contrast, the modern situation is a world of religious uncertainty, staved off by more or less precarious constructions of religious affirmation.<sup>6</sup>*

Yet while "pluralization is today a worldwide phenomenon",<sup>7</sup> it does not follow that it has been universally acknowledged. Berger claims:

The orthodox mind is the one that has not yet perceived the character of the modern situation (or perhaps it would be more accurate

to say that the orthodox mind is not, in actual fact, within that situation). The neo-orthodox mind, by an act of will, denies the modern situation at least to the extent of denying the import of its cognitive challenges. Put differently, for the orthodox nothing has happened yet; the neo-orthodox acts *as if* nothing had happened.<sup>8</sup>

In the meantime, it has been aptly noted: "Almost everyone sets himself up as an expert in the areas in which he is actively engaged. Authority and discipline are topics on which everyone becomes an oracle..."<sup>9</sup> Without immediately adding to the plethora of oracles, we shall nevertheless want to note that the question of authority is a particularly neuralgic theme for Lutherans, as it points to the birth-pangs of the movement which bears the name of Martin Luther. Luther, as Lutheran readers in particular should be reminded, was one of the great revolutionaries in modern history. Although it can be debated just how much Luther was the cause or the effect of the late medieval disintegration of the one and holy Roman Catholic Church, the fact of Luther's frontline instrumentality remains clear.<sup>10</sup> Luther succeeded in legitimatizing his opposition to papal authority, and thereby he in effect established the movement which became the Lutheran Church, and now, inevitably, exercises its own understanding of authority.

Consequently, in regard to facing authority, it is literally impossible to follow in the footsteps of Martin Luther. While life with father may always have some problems, being a progeny of a revolutionary of Luther's magnitude brings with it many rather special problems. These emerge as soon as we attempt to gain some self-understanding. Traditionally Lutherans have often resorted to a posture of opposition and contrast: while Rome teaches this, we, Lutherans, against Rome, assert the following... In an age of ecumenicity a negative definition of mission is no longer adequate.

Even the accustomed immediate appeal to the Bible may cause some difficulties when pointing to the Bible as a solution. After all, today the solution itself has become a problem, due to the complexity of modern biblical scholarship. Whether we like it or not, the floods of modernity have torn our once secure understanding of authority from its traditional moorings.

The most tempting response to such a situation is to abandon all quest for authority. In regard to religion, this is indeed the position assumed by modern secularity. To believers such

an option is not viable. Hence we face the dilemma once formulated by St. Augustine: "So long as we cannot understand pure truth, it is indeed wretched to be deceived by authority. But surely it is more wretched to be unmoved by authority."<sup>11</sup>

## I

The first constructive step toward the solution of the problem of authority is to make an assessment of Luther's historic accomplishments. We shall do so by observing that Luther's reforming goal was to subject the Church to the authority of the Holy Bible. The attempt to realize it led to a radical breakup of the unity of the Church, since Luther's envisioned shape of Christendom was not compatible with Roman Catholicism of the sixteenth century. In fact, the split that Luther's reforming activities occasioned was so deep, that all the serious ecumenical activities of the twentieth century have not succeeded in restoring unity between Catholics and Lutherans. Of course, there have been positive accomplishments in mutual acceptance and thoughtful dialogue. There is also some convergence between the teachings of the two churches, which is certainly encouraging. It is preferable to be known as "separated brethren"<sup>12</sup> and sisters rather than as heretics and the enemies of truth! Nevertheless, it is a fact that Catholics and Lutherans are still far apart and will remain so for some time. Is there ever going to be an actual reunion? At the moment the Lutheran timetable for an organic union will necessarily have to be rather uncertain, e.g., at least until it will be possible by a popular vote to elect a married woman pastor to the papal office.

As we noted, the cause of the separation was Martin Luther's historical affirmation of the *sola Scriptura*. Having glanced over his early reforming activities, Luther stated in 1521:

This is my answer to those also who accuse me of rejecting all the holy teachers of the church. I do not reject them. But everyone, indeed, knows that at times they have erred, as men will; therefore I am ready to trust them only when they give me evidence for their opinions from Scripture, which has never erred. This St. Paul bids me to do in I Thess. 5:21, where he says, "Test everything; hold fast what is good."<sup>13</sup>

This positive insight had at least two negative consequences; in a somewhat typically German manner of a two-front war Luther criticized both Rome and the Anabaptists:

I have had this year and am still having, a sharp enough fight with those fanatics who subject the Scriptures to the interpretation of their own spirit. It is on this account also that I have hitherto attacked the pope, in whose kingdom nothing is more commonly stated or more generally accepted than the idea that the Scriptures are obscure and ambiguous, so that the spirit to interpret them must be sought from the Apostolic See of Rome. Nothing more pernicious could be said than this, for it has led ungodly men to set themselves above the Scriptures and to fabricate whatever they pleased, until the Scriptures have been completely trampled down and we have been believing and teaching nothing but the dreams of madmen.<sup>14</sup>

Gerhard O. Forde comments on this text: "In Luther's view, to say that Scripture in its basic intent and content is obscure or ambiguous to the extent that an authoritative teaching office must be placed above it to clarify it would itself be evidence that one has not been grasped by its content, or at least not thought through the implications of being grasped."<sup>15</sup>

The principle of Luther's approach was clear enough: he sought to avoid the subordination<sup>16</sup> of Scripture to either tradition or a present interpretative authority of the pope in Rome, or merely individual subjectivity. The actual practice was of course far more complex. As David W. Lotz has noted, Luther "never offered a comprehensive, systematic formulation of the concept of biblical authority."<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, Luther proceeded with an inner certainty that he had reached the correct understanding of the Bible! In such practice Luther was consistent. His particular attention was directed to the Gospel as a message of justification by grace through faith, and thereby to Jesus Christ who is the very centre of Scripture as well as of our faith.<sup>18</sup> While Luther took the entire Scriptures very seriously, at times even literally, his main attention was always directed to the living Lord, disclosed through the Scriptures as our ultimate authority.

In comparing Luther to his predecessors, we can say that almost all of his insights had been affirmed before. Luther was not even the first one to translate the Bible into German.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, since the process of translation is a cumulatively successful one in which later translators can profit from the work of earlier ones, Luther's accomplishment may be praised, and praised highly,<sup>20</sup> but ought not to be heralded as novel. That for his translation of the New Testament Luther used

the Greek original made available by Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam further indicates the degree to which Luther was an active participant in the scholarly activities that were already occurring in the Catholic Church before the Reformation. Even the very thoroughness of Luther's reliance on the Bible was not unique. Despite some of Luther's own outrageously onesided statements that the Bible<sup>21</sup> had not been valued and was not in use, both scholastic theology and popular writings indicate that Roman Catholic Christianity was biblical to the core.<sup>22</sup> Last but not least, it cannot be legitimately claimed that Luther would have introduced a totally fresh reading of the Bible, unknown since the days of the Apostle Paul or even Saint Augustine. Modern scholarship has explored Luther's medieval roots rather thoroughly and in many ways has succeeded in witnessing to the continuity rather than a sharp difference between traditional Catholicism and Martin Luther.<sup>23</sup>

Nevertheless, when the impressive continuity is observed, some differences also need to be acknowledged: Luther intended to deliver the Bible out of the hands of the papacy into the hands of every Christian. This meant that accordingly there would be no higher authority than the Bible itself: neither pope, nor council, nor tradition, but the biblical text itself would determine the correct interpretation!

From Luther's understanding of the *sola Scriptura* there soon enough grew other serious differences as well. Most notable among them were Luther's specific formulation of justification,<sup>24</sup> Luther's opposition to the seven sacraments, his critique of purgatory, the saints, the doctrine of the church and papacy, and church-state relations. Within the account of these and other issues, however, it was Luther's emerging view of authority as directed against the pope and ecclesial tradition which unified his piecemeal criticisms into a positive affirmation and hence led to a new understanding of Christianity.

Undeniably, as Luther sorted out the issues, he seldom minced his words. To modern ears, unaccustomed to churchly debates of the sixteenth century, they do sound outrageously rude. And such they indeed are. Attempts to defend Luther's abusive language, once a preoccupation among Lutherans, have died down.<sup>25</sup> After all, what do we say in an ecumenical age, for example, about Luther's apparently sincere prayer: "O

Christ, my Lord, look down; let the day of your judgment break down and destroy this nest of devils at Rome."<sup>26</sup> Yet the problem is not altogether onesided. It seems that some Roman Catholics continue to consider Luther's outbursts against the papacy as offensive—without at the same time lamenting that, if apprehended by his papal opponents, Martin Luther would have been cruelly put to death, i.e., burned at the stake as a heretic!<sup>27</sup>

In any case, when considering the problem of authority we must not overlook that at stake was, literally, Luther's own life and therefore also the life of the as yet unborn Lutheran Church. Hence for Lutherans it may well be rather difficult to abstract the more theoretical problem of authority from the actual historical situation in the sixteenth century. It may very well be that our Catholic friends can be far more objective. Lutheran readers of the ancient account will not be able to overlook the existential moment: in Luther's victory the Roman Catholic Church lost its monopoly, but not its life; in Luther's defeat, should it have occurred, he and his spiritual progeny would have disappeared into oblivion. Even if one cannot fully imagine one's own death, it is possible to feel a certain sense of anxiety about it! Hence if we do not feel a measure of apprehension when discussing the origins of Lutheranism, we either have failed to understand the degree of ultimate risk which Luther undertook, or are displaying our unconcern for Lutheran identity—or both.

It was the indulgence controversy which ignited the historic explosion. Whatever one may wish to say about Tetzl as a communicator of financial need, he was not proceeding arbitrarily. Albert of Brandenburg who desired to become the archbishop of Mainz had a negotiated plan. He would borrow ten thousand ducats from the Fugger banking house in Augsburg in order to secure his appointment. "Then," as Roland H. Bainton notes, "the pope, to enable Albert to reimburse himself, granted the privilege of dispensing an indulgence in his territories for the period of eight years. One half of the return, in addition to the ten thousand ducats already paid, should go to the pope for the building of the new St. Peter's; the other half should go to reimburse the Fuggers."<sup>28</sup> Tetzl's work was a financial success. His message was aptly summed up in a readily recalled jingle:

As soon as the coin in the coffer rings,  
The soul from purgatory springs.<sup>29</sup>

Whether this was outstanding poetry or not, the fact remains, as Heiko A. Oberman insists, that Tetzel faithfully repeated official church doctrine as stated in the instructions for dispensing indulgences, prepared by his archbishop, who in turn relied on the bull by Pope Leo X.<sup>30</sup>

Hence Luther's "thunderclap of 31 October 1517"<sup>31</sup> was not merely a denouncement of Tetzel's claims, but a critique of papal authority as well. While it may not be exactly certain just which dimensions of the papal authority are questioned and which rejected, the incendiary character of the *Ninety-five Theses* is certain. For example:

5. The pope neither desires nor is able to remit any penalties except those imposed by his own authority or that of the canons.<sup>32</sup>
32. Those who believe that they can be certain of their salvation because they have indulgence letters will be eternally damned, together with their teachers.<sup>33</sup>
45. Christians are to be taught that he who sees a needy man and passes him by, yet gives his money for indulgences, does not buy papal indulgences but God's wrath.<sup>34</sup>
52. It is vain to trust in salvation by indulgence letters, even though the indulgence commissary, or even the pope, were to offer his soul for security.<sup>35</sup>

With such statements, was Luther criticizing the person of the pope and his particular decisions, or was the critique extended to the office of the papacy as well? Particular actions of certain popes had been criticized throughout the middle ages. Even when more extreme conciliarists sought to subordinate pope to council, they did not necessarily intend to abolish the papacy. Just what was Luther's initial position?

Without seeking to discover Luther's precise stand, the church almost immediately attempted to silence Luther. Offers were made to Luther's prince Frederick the Wise to grant him the distinguished decoration known as the Golden Rose of Virtue, as well as to provide two additional indulgences for the castle church. Had the plan succeeded, notes Heiko A. Oberman, within a year Luther would have found himself in a Roman prison.<sup>36</sup>

Luther's emerging understanding of authority was clarified in an interview with Cardinal Cajetan (Thomas de Vio, 1469–1534).<sup>37</sup> Now Cajetan was an immensely learned cardinal, a



fact which Lutherans have sometimes been inclined to overlook. His specialty was the philosophical theology of St. Thomas Aquinas and his immediate calling the field of papal diplomacy. Cultured and wise, older than Luther, he need not be criticized for having failed to see Luther's potential stature and success. Cajetan recognized quickly wherein Luther had erred. This emerges even from Luther's account in the *Proceedings at Augsburg*, 1518. Luther recalls the events as follows:

Then, in contradiction to what I had said, he began to extol the authority of the pope, stating that it was above church councils, Scripture, and the entire church. With the purpose of persuading me to accept this point of view, he called attention to the rejection and dissolution of the council of Basel and was of the opinion that the Gersonists as well as Gerson should be condemned. Since this was something new to me, I denied that the pope was superior to the council and Scripture...<sup>38</sup>

In subsequent negotiations, Luther stated even more precisely: "For the pope is not above, but under the word of God, according to Gal 1[:8]."<sup>39</sup> Later, in reflecting on what had been said, Luther even expanded: "There are also those who brazenly state in public that the pope cannot err and is above Scripture. If these monstrous claims were admitted, Scripture would perish and consequently the church also, and nothing would remain in the church but the word of man."<sup>40</sup> Luther's observation that Cajetan was not competent in handling this case was radicalized by the rude comparison to a donkey playing the harp, which in turn was further radicalized by the cartoonist who drew the pope as a donkey playing the harp.<sup>41</sup> Packaged in anger and ridicule, the subordination of papal authority to the Scripture could not be expected to represent Luther's final position. Cajetan did not press for that; irritated, he dismissed Luther from his presence. Luther reported: "Meanwhile he insisted that I retract, threatening me with the punishments which had been recommended to him, and said that if I did not retract I should leave him and stay out of his sight."<sup>42</sup>

The disagreement was no mere conflict of personalities or a quarrel over a minor point. Each of the participants in the interview possessed a totally different understanding of the relationship between the Bible and the Church. According to Cardinal Cajetan, the Church was prior to the Bible. In this,

Cajetan appears to have anticipated the insights of many contemporary Bible scholars. Illustrative may be the precise summary by James Barr:

The Bible, then, is the product of tradition, editing, revision of the part of the community. But this means that the argument traditionally considered to be 'Catholic', namely that the Bible derived from the church, is in many ways generally valid as against the position esteemed as 'Protestant', which was reluctant to see the Bible as deriving from the church and which therefore sought to give the scripture priority over the church in the order of revelation.<sup>43</sup>

At the same time, Luther may nevertheless have had a valid point. Was there not some far-reaching evidence, that in the early sixteenth century the Roman Catholic Church had problems in reforming itself?<sup>44</sup> There were noted scholars like Desiderius Erasmus and saints like Thomas More, and many notable efforts at reform can be documented, but by and large truly creative efforts were absent. In fact it must be stated as a matter of serious regret that among Luther's immediate opponents there was not even one theologian of a major and prophetic stature. There was sincerity, diligence, voluminous productivity—but not brilliance and no popular bestsellers. When the indulgence affair erupted, the best that Rome could offer were Sylvester Prierias' claims that the church cannot err, can do what it does, and consequently any criticism is an act of heresy.<sup>45</sup> That was not a good enough response to solve the problem. Hence Luther's argument that the Bible is prior to the Church, namely that it is through the proclamation of the Gospel that the Church is born, was an accurate portrait of the situation in his own day. While in error in regard to the mode of Christian origins, Luther was correct in describing the manner in which the Protestant Reformation came into being! It is therefore not surprising that Lutherans have traditionally affirmed precisely such a sequence of events, in which the proclamation of the Gospel is the cause of the emerging Church.<sup>46</sup> Gerhard O. Forde has spoken well for the Lutheran tradition: "The Church is established by the gospel and not *vice versa*."<sup>47</sup>

The fiercest battles are often fought between two—limitedly right perspectives, rather than only between right and wrong. Hence it is not surprising that the accurate Catholic vision as to the origins of the Early Church now clashed with Luther's

existential awareness of his own situation, in which the Bible was a successful means to reform the Church, to reconstitute it, and to instill it with authentic life.<sup>48</sup>

What had been an initial skirmish, already indicative of the seriousness of the situation, soon erupted into a major battle during the debate with Johann Eck at Leipzig in 1519. Without a doubt, Eck succeeded in having "driven a wedge between Luther and the church."<sup>49</sup> More precisely, Eck won the traditional arguments, while Luther happened to be right—at least from the point of view of Lutheranism. Eck challenged Luther to reflect on the role of the tradition in general and church councils with papacy in particular. In other words, when discussing the church, Eck made it certain that they were not conversing merely about the present administrative structure, but a divinely inspired and sustained institution with a glorious past.<sup>50</sup> Luther thought that it was a rather shady past and flatly denied that either church tradition, the councils, or the pope were necessarily infallible:

In rebuttal I brought up the Greek Christians during the past thousand years, and also the ancient church fathers, who had not been under the authority of the Roman pontiff, although I did not deny the primacy of honor due the pope. Finally we also debated the authority of a council. I publicly acknowledged that some articles had been wrongly condemned [by the Council of Constance], articles which had been taught in plain and clear words by Paul, Augustine, and even Christ himself. At this point the adder swelled up, exaggerated my crime, and nearly went insane in his adulation of the Leipzig audience.<sup>51</sup>

Whether Luther was guilty of the crime of heresy or not, modern Luther scholarship has recognized this as Luther's decisive point of departure from a Roman Catholic understanding of authority. Bernhard Lohse has noted: "At the Leipzig Debate in the summer of 1519 the central issue was the problem of the church's authority. Here Luther stated publicly for the first time that pope and council may err and that several of Hus' articles were genuinely evangelical."<sup>52</sup>

Luther's argument was, then and subsequently, that a church which introduces doctrinal abuses and persecutes its critics who appeal to the authority of the Bible, has departed from the apostolic tradition and Christ's truth. It was in the Bible that Luther had found the necessary corrective: the Word

of God was the ultimate authority, and it was so clear as well as certain that it needed no authority above it to serve as an interpreter. The best interpreter of Scripture was Scripture itself, i.e., *sola Scriptura*, Scripture alone.

The ancient argument has had its modern counterparts. Thus on January 10, 1975 Hans Küng argued: "Even according to Vatican II the teaching office does not stand above the Word of God; it must serve the Word...You ask me: By what authority do you profess your opinions? My reply would have to be: By the authority of the Word of God, which I as a theologian must serve."<sup>53</sup> That was some four years before the Vatican finally announced that Hans Küng had ceased to be a Catholic theologian! In the meantime, also in 1975, the German Bishop's Conference issued a statement in which it declared:

... the theologian can never alone finally make a judgment about the ecclesial tradition, if the unity of the faith is not to be lost in favor of subjectively measured decisions...The Church, and more precisely the Pope and the Bishops as the successors of Peter and the rest of the apostles, has been given the task by the Lord of the Church and has been promised the grace which with careful listening to the revelation to lay out in full power and, therefore with obligation, the word of God. The "infallibility" of a universal church, of the college of Bishops, and of the Pope serves no other goal. It is not grounded other than in the promise of Jesus Christ and in the working of his Spirit.<sup>54</sup>

Facing a similar opposition, Luther had rejected the claims of the traditional meaning of authority. The positive meaning of his decision was complex and therefore not as clear as has been sometimes suggested. Erich Fromm has offered, for example, a familiar caricature: [Luther] "gave man independence in religious matters;... he deprived the Church of her authority and gave it to the individual..."<sup>55</sup> What Luther claimed instead was that it is the Word of God which directly, without the dependence on an earthly authority, convinces the hearer of its truth.<sup>56</sup> And Luther assumed that he had understood the Word of God correctly, but did not extend the same understanding to others.<sup>57</sup>

## II

Therefore Lutherans owe an immense debt of gratitude to the Zwinglians and the Anabaptists, as well as to many others

within Protestantism, who soon enough began to disagree with Luther—and relied on the Bible in the process. We may note that in the initial struggle with Roman Catholicism a deadlock had been reached. The Catholic celebration of “Bible, tradition, and papacy” was countered by Luther and his followers with “Scripture only”. Within this deadlock phase, Luther’s position, while intentionally positive, could be quickly oversimplified and perceived as primarily negative: against the pope and tradition! Now simplistic formulations have their own charm and hence appeal. Over the centuries many Lutherans have found the vocal opposition against Rome as a kind of unsophisticated beer-hall *credo*, that has been employed to establish a Lutheran identity. *For Luther, against Rome*—such was the posture and the book title of a virulently self-righteous expression of Lutheranism. Of course, the word of Martin Luther could be readily quoted in full support, e.g.: “I have truly despised your see, the Roman Curia, which, however, neither you nor anyone else can deny is more corrupt than any Babylon or Sodom ever was, and which, as far as I can see, is characterized by a completely depraved, hopeless, and notorious godlessness.”<sup>58</sup>

To erect safeguards against such heretical outbursts of depravity, on the Catholic side, as it has been noted by Yves Congar, O.P., “a certain absolutist sense [was] given to authority and obedience.” Indeed, “obedience [became] the fundamental issue.”<sup>59</sup> Observed R.A. Markus: “Obedience had become the fundamental ecclesiastical virtue—*fons et origo omnium virtutum*—as the bull in which Leo X excommunicated Luther put it.”<sup>60</sup>

These days the situation has changed. Within an authoritative Lutheran perspective the following could be said: “In the Catholic Church there is a renewed appreciation of the privileged authority of Scripture. Scripture is the fount and virtually all we know of the founding Tradition, and is moreover the primary witness to the gospel. Catholic theologians now generally agree that there is no second source alongside Scripture which witnesses to the original revelation.”<sup>61</sup>

But in the sixteenth century it was the interpretation of the Bible by other Protestants which quickly challenged Luther’s monopoly on *sola Scriptura*. Hence it was first in an inner-

Protestant setting that Luther needed to devote specific attention to the further definition of the meaning of authority. Of course, Luther never distanced himself from the earlier affirmations of *sola Scriptura*. Yet he found it necessary to expand his original vision. The following outline may indicate some of the salient contours of this process.

First, in searching for the clearest ways to express the real presence of Jesus Christ in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Luther initially proceeded with biblical data which he presented with the assistance of theological terminology that had been developed in late nominalism.<sup>62</sup> Subsequently Luther sought to make use of exclusively biblical language only, but came to recognize that his affirmations of real presence were mistaken for a mere capernaitic (i.e., cannibalistic) form of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ. In the end Luther made use not only of various prepositions, such as "in, under, and with"—an approach already used by St. Thomas Aquinas—but also of more technical late nominalist vocabulary, e.g., when Luther spoke of the "repletive" presence of Jesus Christ! In this way Luther exemplified that the *sola Scriptura* norm applies to the content, but not necessarily to the theological form of expression. And while primarily a student of the Bible, Luther recognized the value of systematic theology. In subsequent generations Lutherans have been diligent at the recording of their faith in coherent structures. Indeed, there has been sufficient experience even to affirm that the study of the Bible was intensified and deepened precisely on account of systematic concerns.

Second, Luther experienced that for some central doctrines the Bible did not provide a clear enough foundation. A case in point was infant baptism. It was flatly rejected by the Anabaptists, who demanded nothing less than a clear text which would command infant baptism!<sup>63</sup> It is here that Luther, having bravely appealed to all conceivably applicable texts, came to value the infallibility of the church.<sup>64</sup>

Admittedly, this kind of infallibility was conceived rather narrowly, without an intent to apply it to councils, popes, and all tradition. Nevertheless, in essential matters for the survival of the Church, Luther was prepared to assume the guidance by the Holy Spirit, whether or not there was a specific scriptural text on hand to certify such guidance. Carl E. Braaten

has noted that such an approach had also been very useful for retaining the doctrines of the Trinity and Christology—"so necessary to believe for salvation, as stated by the Athanasian Creed" and yet "not found in the Bible as such."<sup>65</sup>

Third, Luther at times sought to rely on a modified version of the ancient argument for the *consensus gentium* as the proof of truth. Vincent of Lerins (d.c. 450) had adapted the Stoic insight for the Early Church with a dash of insight and unforgettable exuberance: "Moreover, in the Catholic Church itself, all possible care must be taken, that we hold that faith which has been believed everywhere, always, by all. For that is truly and in the strictest sense 'Catholic,' which as the name itself and the reason of the thing declare, comprehends all universality."<sup>66</sup> Later conciliarists pursued in more depth the process of a consensus gathering by way of ecclesial councils.<sup>67</sup> Luther's own earlier hopes for a conciliar solution having been frustrated, he rejected the validity of any gathering which would be presided over by the pope.<sup>68</sup> The matter was quite otherwise in Wittenberg. Here divergent opinions could be probed, discussed, and finally evaluated. Luther's best friend and co-worker Philipp Melancthon formulated the concept of a "consensus of the prophets."<sup>69</sup> It is not inappropriate to regard the *Book of Concord* as the fruition of such consensual thinking.<sup>70</sup>

Yet, while the broad-brushstroke guidance of the *Book of Concord* may be at times of the greatest importance, it cannot be assumed that in the numerous instances where the Confessions interpret the Bible with exemplary accuracy,<sup>71</sup> nothing has happened in the last 400 years, and additional insights are not needed. More precisely, while the Confessions may serve as a guide for many past issues,<sup>72</sup> they do not always provide the best answers for several contemporary problems. To treat the Confessions with an attitude of expectation that they *would* necessarily answer all modern problems is to sadly mistreat them!

Fourth, Luther himself very clearly recognized that his own wrestling with the truth often was not done in a highly systematic manner.<sup>73</sup> He noted: "They are trying to make me into a fixed star. I am an irregular planet."<sup>74</sup> The reference may not so much suggest disorder as a selectivity of coverage. And at the root of this observation may be found Luther's view of

himself as a prophet called by God to speak to specific situations rather than to carve out a solid system of total theology. He wrote in 1521:

And even if it were true that I had set myself up all alone, that would be no excuse for their conduct. Who knows? God may have called me and raised me up [to be everybody's teacher]. They ought to be afraid lest they despise God in me. Do we not read in the Old Testament that God generally raised up only one prophet at a time? Moses was alone during the exodus from Egypt. Elijah was alone in King Ahab's day. After him, Elisha stood alone. Isaiah was alone in Jerusalem, Hosea alone in Israel, Jeremiah alone in Judea, Ezekiel alone in Babylon, and so it went.<sup>75</sup>

Even in his old age Luther did not hesitate to underscore the insight that at times God supplies specially gifted people, the so-called *Wundermänner*, who speak to the specific needs of the time, and with extraordinary gifts of insight accomplish God's purposes through ways and means not envisioned by the majority.<sup>76</sup> In seeing himself as God's special envoy, prophet<sup>77</sup> and *Wundermann* in one, Luther at times simply assumed an authority in decision-making,<sup>78</sup> yet never claimed to have received any new revelations. Luther's prophetic insight was, strictly speaking, the clarity and certainty<sup>79</sup> with which he proceeded to interpret the Holy Scriptures. At the same time, the theology of the cross in general<sup>80</sup> and personal tribulations, the so-called *Anfechtungen*<sup>81</sup> in particular, guarded, warned, and guided the prophet. While the prophet continues to remain human and fallible, his faith is a daily matter of courageous risk. Although he hopes to proclaim the true will of God discussed in the Holy Scriptures, he can err, and in erring lead others into damnation.<sup>82</sup> Hence the prophetic responsibility is awesome and weighty. Yet when God calls, the person of faith cannot and will not refuse!

In summary it may be stated that Luther's understanding of authority may be presented in terms of concentric circles of intensity. In the very centre itself is indeed the Bible; in the second place, the traditional dogmas of the Early Church; thirdly, Luther's interpretation; and finally, the consensual theology of the University of Wittenberg.<sup>83</sup>

Transposed to the level of laity, this often meant a far more limited definition of authority, viz. the obedience to the Lutheran tradition. Melanchthon's summary of its key ingre-



dients is memorable: a Christian is a person who has been baptized, who believes the creed, who comes to the Lord's Supper, and who obeys the pastor!<sup>84</sup>

### III

It should not be overlooked that in the early Lutheran understanding of authority Luther's own role was significant in at least two regards: Luther, the founder of the tradition, had now significantly contributed to the direction of its further development. With Luther's departure from the scene there was a definite need to re-shape the Lutheran understanding of authority. Had Luther been aware of such an eventual necessity?

We may note that in regard to the future, Luther expressed profound worries as well as recorded his continuous reliance on God. Luther was aware of the insecurity of all life. On one occasion Luther commented: "The world is like a drunken peasant. If you lift him into the saddle on one side, he will fall off on the other side. One can't help him, no matter how one tries. He wants to be the devil's."<sup>85</sup> Similarly, Luther's numerous statements about the devil and the demons,<sup>86</sup> as well as about the Antichrist and papacy,<sup>87</sup> when demythologized, suggest Luther's vision of a certainly collapsing world in which evil runs rampant. We read in the *Table Talk* the following characteristic statement:

Luther and Melancthon had supped together in the former's home after a deposition. They spoke at length and sorrowfully about future times, when there would be many teachers. "There will be great confusion [said Luther]. Nobody will conform with another man's opinions or submit to his authority. Everybody will want to be his own rabbi, as Osiander and Agricola do now, and the greatest offenses and divisions will arise from this."<sup>88</sup>

Yet if Luther was aware of what might happen, why did he not make more of an effort further to develop the doctrine of authority? The answer must be that Luther also recognized some very positive signs which reassured him.

Namely, Luther really looked toward the future with profound confidence. He was sincerely convinced that the end of the world was very near at hand.<sup>89</sup> Then all the earthly forms of government and the structures of ecclesial administration would immediately become obsolete. In the New Jerusalem there would be no need for them—and therefore no need for a

doctrine of authority. Hence all formulations of the doctrine of authority done at the present time were distinctively temporary, something like a scaffolding which is indispensable while the building is in progress, and totally useless once the edifice is completed.

Consequently Luther's contribution for a world that has lasted much longer than he ever expected has some limitations. At least two of them are major. First, while initially encouraging every Christian to become a Bible reader and interpreter, Luther soon enough subordinated the individual's understanding to the authority of the emerging Lutheran Church. This Church, while freed from subjection to the papacy, became subjected to or at least enmeshed in the structures of the secular authority. While Luther defended the principle of the primary loyalty to God and recognized the possibility for the need of disobedience to secular powers, he had not thought out nor suggested any structures within which such a disobedience could take place.

Second, Luther's initial and continuing opposition to Roman Catholicism as he knew it in his own time has often left the impression that the problem of authority can be solved and indeed has been solved by a mere opposition to Rome. "The Bible versus the pope" has consequently been regarded by all too many Lutherans as the essential ingredient for a successful Lutheran understanding of the meaning of authority. While the Lutheran Church of later generations has also at times needed to secure its identity by opposition, the deepest convictions of the Christian faith need to be based on a positive rather than onesidedly negative understanding of authority. This task was not accomplished in the sixteenth century and has been left for the Lutherans of later ages.

At the same time, it can be stated with confidence that Luther's main point was both powerful and clear. On the day before he died, Luther had jotted down a characteristic comment: "We are beggars. That is true."<sup>90</sup> With sincere faith and deep religious insight, Luther perceived that in the final analysis we were always without merit, and hence receivers. Grace as the decisive step from God to humankind in the incarnation and salvific work of Jesus Christ is the very source of our existence and the ground of all authority. Now Christ's definition of authority differed remarkably from the authority

as defined in the world: it was to be expressed by service, and not by superiority. We read in John 13:12-15:

When he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you."

The example, of course, cannot be limited to a liturgical form, but refers to life's very substance. Nor was Luther suggesting that we should give up our several occupations and literally become beggars. Luther was, however, referring to humility as the life-style of the believer, because only in authentic humility as receivers do we recognize that ultimately all authority belongs to God, and that by his unmerited grace we are no more than his servants.

## Notes

- 1 Walter A. Elwell, "Belief and the Bible: A Crisis of Authority?" *Christianity Today*, 24/6 (21 March 1980) 20.
- 2 Clyde L. Manschreck, "Presuppositional Directions For The Problem of Authority," *Review and Expositor*, 75/2 (Spring 1978) 181.
- 3 Daniel Day Williams, "Authority and Ministry," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, 14/1 (November 1958) 18.
- 4 E.M. Adams in R. Baine Harris, ed., *Authority: A Philosophical Analysis* (University, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1976) 3.
- 5 Leonard Swidler and Piet F. Fransen, eds., *Authority in the Church and the Schillebeeckx Case* (New York: Crossroads, 1982) 1.
- 6 Peter L. Berger, *The Heretical Imperative: Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmation* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press Doubleday, 1979) 28.
- 7 *Ibid.* 59.
- 8 *Ibid.* 97.
- 9 Jack Dominian, *Authority: A Christian Interpretation of the Psychological Evolution of Authority* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1976), p. i.
- 10 Cf. C. Ullmann, *Reformers Before the Reformation Principally in Germany and the Netherlands*, trans. by Robert Menzies (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1855, 2 vols.); Heiko A. Oberman, *Forerunners of the Reformation: The Shape of Late Medieval Thought Illustrated by Key Documents* (New York, Chicago, San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966).

- 11 *The Advantage of Believing*, ch. 16 (34), *The Writings of St. Augustine*, 2:436, [The Fathers of the Church, vol. 4] (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1947).
- 12 Walter M. Abbott, S.J., ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Guild Press, America Press, Association Press, 1966) 356, 409.
- 13 *Luther's Works* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press [formerly Muhlenberg Press] and St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955–1986), subsequently referred to as *LW*, *Defense and Explanation of All the Articles*, 1521, 32:11.
- 14 *LW* 33:90.
- 15 Gerhard O. Forde, "Infallibility Language and the Early Lutheran Tradition," in Paul C. Empie, T. Austin Murphy, and Joseph A. Burgess, eds., *Teaching Authority and Infallibility in the Church*, [Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue, VI] (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1978) 126.
- 16 Cf. note 58 below.
- 17 "Sola Scriptura: Luther on Biblical Authority," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 35/3 (July 1981) 259.
- 18 Kent S. Knutson has noted: "... the Bible, this written word of God, is heresy apart from the second or kerygmatic form. The Bible is heresy without the Gospel. The Bible without interpretation, the Bible without being what it is, is the Bible without Christ and therefore not His Word in the proper sense at all. Whatever information or interest the Bible may have outside its witness to Jesus Christ is of no more use to men than Shakespeare or the Koran. It may be of great interest and some help, but it is not what it wants to be; without the Gospel it is not what it is." *Concordia Theological Monthly* 40 (March 1969) 158. Similarly, cf. Carl E. Braaten: "What was so different in Luther's approach? Luther's departure consisted of deriving the authority of Scripture from its gospel content—the gospel of free grace and justification through faith alone. This gospel provided the canon by which the Bible as a whole and all its parts could be judged." "Can we Still Hold The Principle of 'Sola Scriptura'?" *Dialog* 20/3 (Summer 1981) 190.
- 19 Walter Eichenberger und Henning Wendland, *Deutsche Bibeln vor Luther* (Hamburg: Friedrich Wittig Verlag, 1977).
- 20 Hans Volz, *Martin Luthers deutsche Bibel* (Hamburg: Friedrich Wittig, 1978); Heimo Reinitzer, *Biblia deutsch: Luthers Bibelübersetzung und ihre Tradition* (Wolfenbüttel: Herzog August Bibliothek, 1983); Heinz Bluhm, *Martin Luther: Creative Translator* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965).
- 21 E.g., *LW* 31:238; *LW* 54:127–128, 352.
- 22 Beryl Smalley, *The Study of The Bible in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964).
- 23 Otto Hermann Pesch, *Ketzerfürst und Kirchenlehrer: Wege katholischer Begegnung mit Martin Luther* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1971);

- cf. Steven E. Ozment, ed., *The Reformation in Medieval Perspective* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971).
- 24 The issue is by no means settled. Ecumenical search for agreement is expressed in H. George Anderson, T. Austin Murphy, and Joseph A. Burgess, eds. *Justification by Faith* [Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue, VII] (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985). Ancient divergences are noted by Johann Heinz, *Justification and Merit: Luther vs. Catholicism* [Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, VIII] (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981); an overview is offered by Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification* (Cambridge, London, New York, New Rochelle, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
- 25 Cf. Wilhelm Walther, *Für Luther wider Rom: Handbuch der Apologetik Luthers und der Reformation den römischen Anklagen gegenüber* (Halle an der Saale: Max Niemeyer, 1906). Of course, Luther was not the only sixteenth century divine that needed defending! Cf. The Yale Edition of The Complete Works of St. Thomas More, vol. 5, *Responsio ad Lutherum*, Part I, Latin and English Texts, ed. by John M. Headley (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969).
- 26 *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, 1520, LW 44:194.
- 27 This has been noted by the ecumenically minded participants in the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue: "Should not Lutherans be ready to acknowledge that the polemical language traditionally used to describe the papal office is inappropriate and offensive in the context of Catholic-Lutheran relationships today?" Empie, *op.cit.* 37; cf. also Harry McSorley, "Luther: Exemplar of Reform—or Doctor of the Church?" 30, in Egil Grislis, ed., *The Theology of Martin Luther: Five Contemporary Canadian Interpretations* (Winfield, B.C.: Wood Lake Books, 1985). At the same time there have been Catholic statements which have approached Luther's precarious situation with a good deal of sympathy, e.g., the Dominican scholar Daniel Olivier, *The Trial of Luther*, trans. by John Tonkin (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978).
- 28 Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1950) 76.
- 29 *Ibid.* 78.
- 30 Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Mensch zwischen Gott und Teufel* (Berlin: Severin & Siedler, 1981) 200–201.
- 31 Yves Congar, O.P., in John M. Todd, ed., *Problems of Authority: The Papers Read at Anglo-French Symposium Held at the Abbey of Notre-Dame du Bec*, in April 1961 (Baltimore: The Helicon Press and London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1962) 143.
- 32 LW 31:26.
- 33 LW 31:28.
- 34 LW 31:29.
- 35 LW 31:30.

- 36 Oberman, *Luther* 208.
- 37 Cf. *Proceedings at Augsburg*, 1518, *LW* 31:274-275; Gerhard Henning, *Cajetan und Luther: Ein historischer Beitrag zur Begegnung von Thomismus und Reformation* [Arbeiten zur Theologie, II:7] (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1966); Denis R. Janz, *Luther and Late Medieval Thomism: A Study in Theological Anthropology* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1983).
- 38 *Proceedings at Augsburg*, 1518, *LW* 31:262.
- 39 *Ibid.* *LW* 31:266-267.
- 40 *Ibid.* *LW* 31:285.
- 41 Bainton, *Here I Stand* 96 in addition supplies an illustration of this.
- 42 *Proceedings at Augsburg*, 1518, *LW* 31:275.
- 43 *Holy Scripture: Canon, Authority, Criticism* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983) 28.
- 44 John C. Olin, *The Catholic Reformation: Savonarola to Ignatius Loyola* (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1969); John W. O'Malley, *Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome: Rhetoric, Doctrine, and Reform in the Sacred Orators of the Papal Court, c. 1450-1521* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1979).
- 45 Bainton has summarized, 89: "Prierias declared that the universal Church is virtually the Roman Church. The Roman Church consists representatively in the cardinals, but virtually in the pope. Just as the universal Church cannot err on faith and morals, nor can a true council, neither can the Roman Church nor the pope when speaking in his official capacity. Whoever does not accept the doctrine of the Roman Church and of the Roman pontiff as the infallible rule of faith from which sacred Scripture derives strength and authority is a heretic, and he who declares that in the manner of indulgences the Roman Church cannot do what actually it does is a heretic." Cf. Hallmut Diwald, *Luther: Eine Biographie* (Bergisch Gladbach: Gustav Lübbe Verlag, 1982) 111-112.
- 46 *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*, 25, p. 324; *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, VII, 23 and 28, pp. 172-173, in Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), subsequently referred to as *The Book of Concord*. Gustaf Aulén, *The Faith of the Christian Church*, trans. by Eric H. Wahlstrom and G. Everett Arden (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1948) 353, sums up as follows: "The activity of the Holy Spirit which creates the church takes place through the 'means of grace.' These constitutive factors of the Christian church are God's holy Word, the sacraments, and prayer."
- 47 Empie, et al, *Teaching Authority* 134.
- 48 That the two perspectives may be seen as dialectical, has been suggested by Carl E. Braaten: "The Bible forms the church, and the church has the Bible. The church is in the Bible and the Bible is in the church. The

church produced the Bible and the Bible produces the church. Scriptures witness to the church, and the church witnesses to the Scriptures. In this dialectical relationship, the church makes room for the Bible as a norm of its ongoing life", "Can We Still Hold The Principle of 'Sola Scriptura'?" *Dialog* 20/3 (Summer 1981) 193.

- 49 Lowell C. Green, "Erasmus, Luther, and Melancthon on the *Magnus Consensus*: The Problem of the Old and the New in the Reformation and Today," *The Lutheran Quarterly* 27 (November 1975) 371.
- 50 "The next week Eck debated with me, at first very acrimoniously, concerning the primacy of the pope...he rested his case entirely on the Council of Constance which had condemned Huss's article alleging that papal authority derived from the emperor instead from God. Then Eck stamped about with much ado as though he were in an arena, holding up the Bohemians before me and publicly accusing me of the heresy and support of the Bohemian heretics, for he is a sophist, no less impudent than rash." *The Leipzig Debate*, 1519, *LW* 31:321-322.
- 51 *Ibid.* *LW* 31:322.
- 52 Bernhard Lohse, "Conscience and Authority in Luther," 171, in Heiko A. Oberman, ed., *Luther and the Dawn of the Modern Era: Papers for the Fourth International Congress for Luther Research* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974); cf. Diwald, 144.
- 53 Hans Küng's reply to The Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, 10 January 1975, in Leonard Swidler, ed. and trans., *Küng in Conflict* (Garden City, NY: Image Books of Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1981) 160.
- 54 Declaration of the German Bishops' Conference in 1975, in Swidler, *Küng in Conflict* 169-171.
- 55 *Escape from Freedom* (New York and Toronto: Rinehart & Company, 1941) 74.
- 56 Bernhard Lohse in Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther and the Dawn of the Modern Era* 177.
- 57 Bernhard Lohse has stated with precision: "Accordingly, one cannot speak of actual freedom of conscience in connection with Luther. Beyond this, it must be asserted that Luther, who repeatedly appealed so emphatically to his conscience, did not grant the same rights to others." *Ibid.* 182; Roland H. Bainton, *The Travail of Religious Liberty: Nine Biographical Studies* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1951) 59-64.
- 58 *The Freedom of a Christian*, 1520, *LW* 31:336; *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*, *The Book of Concord* 320-335; *Für Luther—wider Rom* is identified in note 25 above.
- 59 Congar refers to the bull *Ersurge Domine*, with which Leo X condemned Luther: "Nervum ecclesiasticae disciplinae, obedientiam scilicet, quae fons est et origo omnium virtutum", Mansi, vol. 32, col. 1053 [The nerve of ecclesial discipline, namely obedience, which is the fountain and origin of all virtues.], Todd, ed., *Problems of Authority* 145.

- 60 "The Crisis of Authority in the Church: The Historical Roots," *Modern Churchman* 10 (July 1967) 289.
- 61 Empie, et al, *Teaching Authority* 33.
- 62 Hartmut Hilgenfeld, *Mittelalterlich-traditionelle Elemente in Luthers Abendmahlsschriften* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1971); Egil Gris-lis, "The Manner of Christ's Eucharistic Presence According to Martin Luther," *Consensus: A Canadian Lutheran Journal of Theology* 7/1 (January 1981) 3-15.
- 63 "... we cannot prove that children do believe with any Scripture verse that clearly and expressly declares in so many words, or the like, 'You are to baptize children because they also believe.' Whoever compels us to produce such a statement has the upper hand and wins, for we cannot find such words. But sincere and sensible Christians do not require such proof. The quarrelsome, obstinate rebellious spirits do in order to seem to be clever. But on their side they can produce no statement which says, 'You are to baptize adults but no children.' " *LW* 40:254; Paul Althaus, *Was ist die Taufe?* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1950); Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. by Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966) 353-374; Karl Brinkel, *Luthers Lehre von der fides infantium bei der Kindertaufe* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1958); Jaroslav J. Pelikan, "Luther's Defense of Infant Baptism" 200-218, in Carl S. Meyer, ed., *Luther for an Ecumenical Age: Essays in Commemoration of the 450th Anniversary of the Reformation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967).
- 64 Empie, *op.cit.* 103; cf. *LW* 40:255-256.
- 65 "Can We Still Hold the Principle of 'Sola Scriptura'?" *Dialog* 20/3 (Summer 1981) 191.
- 66 English trans. from *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, 2nd series, 11:132; "In ipsa item Catholica Ecclesia magnopere curandum est ut id teneamus quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est. Hoc est etenim vere proprieque catholicum, quod ipsa vis nominis ratioque declarat, quae omnia fere universaliter comprehendit" *Commonitorium Primum*, ch. 2, Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 50:640.
- 67 Brian Tierney, *Foundation of the Conciliar Theory* [Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, New Series, 4], 1955.
- 68 Christa Tecklenburg Johns, *Luthers Konzilsidee in ihrer historischen Bedingtheit und ihrem reformatorischen Neuanatz* (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1966).
- 69 *The Book of Concord, Apology of the Augsburg Confession* 191:66.
- 70 Willard Dow Allbeck, *Studies in the Lutheran Confessions* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968) 258-261; Friedrich Brunstäd, *Theologie der Lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1951) 51; Friedrich Mildenerger, *Theologie der Lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften* (Stuttgart, Berlin, Köln, Mainz: W. Kohlhammer, 1983) 22; *The Book of Concord* 464-465, 503-506.



- 71 Carl E. Braaten, "The Quest for True Authority," *The Lutheran Quarterly* 17 (February 1965) 13.
- 72 E.C. Fendt, *What Lutherans Are Thinking: A Symposium on Lutheran Faith and Life* (Columbia, OH: The Wartburg Press, 1947) 355-356, and for factual and doctrinal errors, cf. 356-357.
- 73 *Authority in Protestant Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959) 22, reference to Barth's *Kirchliche Dogmatik* I:1, 292; English trans. I:1, 316.
- 74 Bainton, *Here I Stand* 296.
- 75 *Defense and Explanation of All the Articles*, 1521, LW 32:8.
- 76 E.g., LW 3:260-261; 4:129; 7:144; 13:154-158, 199-202.
- 77 Hans Preusz, *Martin Luther: Der Prophet* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1933).
- 78 Ruth Götze, *Wie Luther Kirchengründung übte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, [1958]).
- 79 Friedrich Beisser, *Claritas Scripturae bei Martin Luther* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966); Dietrich Kerlen, *Assertio: Die Entwicklung von Luthers theologischem Anspruch und der Streit mit Erasmus von Rotterdam* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1976); Günter Bader, *Assertio: Drei fortlaufende Lektüren zu Skepsis, Narrheit und Sünde bei Erasmus und Luther* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1985).
- 80 Walther von Loewenich, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, trans. Herbert J.A. Bouman (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976); Pierre Bühler, *Kreuz und Eschatologie* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1981); Alister E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985).
- 81 Helmut Appel, *Anfechtung und Trost im Spätmittelalter und bei Luther* (Leipzig: M. Heinsius, 1936); Horst Beintker, *Die Ueberwindung der Anfechtung bei Luther* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1954); Paul Bühler, *Die Anfechtung bei Martin Luther* (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1942); Egil Grislis, "The Experience of the Anfechtungen and the Formulation of Pure Doctrine in Martin Luther's Commentary on Genesis," *Consensus: A Canadian Lutheran Journal of Theology* 8/2 (April 1982) 19-31.
- 82 Egil Grislis, "Luther's Courage of Faith", 104 in Egil Grislis, ed., *The Theology of Martin Luther: Five Contemporary Canadian Interpretations* (Winfield: Wood Lake Books, 1985).
- 83 Reinhold Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, 4th ed. (Basel: Benno Schwabe, 1954) 4:2:435.
- 84 "Credo symbolum et utor sacramentis, sum baptisatus et obedio ministerio", *Corpus Reformatorum*, 24:402, quoted by Seeberg, *Lehrbuch*, 4:2:454.
- 85 LW 54:111.
- 86 Harmannus Obendiek, *Der Teufel bei Martin Luther* (Berlin: Furche Verlag, 1931); Hans-Martin Barth, *Der Teufel und Jesus Christus in*

*der Theologie Martin Luthers* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967).

- 87 Scott H. Hendrix, *Luther and the Papacy: Stages in Reformation Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981).
- 88 *LW* 54:209.
- 89 John M. Headley, *Luther's View of Church History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963); Ulrich Asendorf, *Eschatologie bei Luther* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967); Hans-Ulrich Hoffmann, *Luther und die Johannes Apokalypse* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1982).