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Luther's Musical Legacy in the Preaching of His Students

Robert Kolb¹

Martin Luther's love of music and his gifts of singing and playing the lute are well-known. Less well-known are many of the aspects of the impact this love of music had on subsequent generations.² Joseph Herl begins his masterful analysis of the role of music, of choirs and congregations, in early modern Lutheranism with the observation that because "Martin Luther was venerated by his followers even during his lifetime" and over the following generations, a study of his subject has to begin with the reformer himself. Herl moves quickly into subsequent generations with his perceptive survey of the liturgical use of music over the next two centuries.³ Christopher Boyd Brown has traced the further development of this love and use of music in the specific cases of the Bohemian mining town of Joachimsthal and its pastor Johannes Mathesius (1504–1565) and cantor Nikolaus Herman (ca. 1480–1561):

Hymn-singing in Joachimsthal thus helped to form a Lutheran identity that transcended political borders even as a proud local tradition of Lutheran music flourished. This vital element of the Lutheran culture of the town extended into the life of its population even outside the worship service.⁴

In several ways the preaching of students and followers of the Wittenberg reformers reflects the appropriation of this love of music and appreciation of its role in the Christian life by the next generation. This essay focuses on several aspects of the mention and use of music in second-generation Lutheran preaching. The sermons 1) took Luther's use of music seriously, 2) repeated the admonitions to sing praise by Paul and David, 3) described the musical environment at David's royal court, out of which the psalms came, and 4) occasionally cited

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² See, e.g., Joseph Herl, *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism: Choir, Congregation, and Three Centuries of Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Joyce L. Irwin, *Neither Voice nor Heart Alone: German Lutheran Theology of Music in the Age of the Baroque* (New York: Lang, 1993); reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017); Ernst Koch, *Musik der Menschen, Musik der Engeln: Frömmigkeitsgeschichtliche Beiträge zur lutherischen Musikkultur*, ed. Stefan Michel and Johannes Schilling (Leipzig: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 2021); Konrad Küster, *Musik im Namen Luthers: Kulturtraditionen seit der Reformation* (Kassel: 2016); Robin Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical Music: Principles and Implications* (Lutheran Quarterly Books, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007, now available from Fortress Press, Minneapolis); Robin Leaver, *The Whole Church Sings: Congregational Singing in Luther's Wittenberg* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017); Mattias Lundberg, Mattias, Maria Schildt, and Jonas Lundblad, eds. *Lutheran Music Culture: Ideals and Practices* (Berlin/Boston: 2022); and Johannes Schilling and Brinja Bauer, *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied: 500 Jahre Evangelisches Gesangbuch* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagshaus, 2023).

³ Herl, *Worship Wars*, 3.

⁴ Christopher Boyd Brown, *Singing the Gospel: Lutheran Hymns and the Success of the Reformation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 82. Brown demonstrates the vital role of hymns and music in general in preserving the Lutheran faith in the Joachimsthal underground as the Habsburg government strictly reinforced its program of recatholicization in the early seventeenth century, *Singing the Gospel*, 130–66.

a familiar line from a hymn, for the most part either medieval hymns or those by Martin Luther or his contemporaries.

Luther as a Model for the Use of Music

Luther's role in this appreciation of the power of the sung word is clear. Many in the second generation of Wittenberg preachers discussed or cited hymns and musical practice, but one of the clearest indications of the significance for his students and others of the next generation of his followers appeared in the sermons on texts of his hymns of three of his adherents in the later sixteenth century.⁵ Wittenberg had abandoned non-biblical texts, such as the popular source for late medieval sermons the lives of the saints, the *Legenda aurea*. Almost without exception Wittenberg preachers turned to the Bible for the basis of their sermons. The fact that hymn texts could be substituted for biblical texts as the basis of a sermon surprises (although those preachers who preached such sermons always were interpreting directly or indirectly the biblical text behind the hymn). In his *Cithara Lutheri*, four quarto volumes of sermons on Luther's hymns, Luther's devoted student Cyriacus Spangenberg (1528–1604), pastor in Mansfeld, presented how he proclaimed the message of Luther's hymns to his congregation in Mansfeld around 1570.⁶ Simon Pauli, professor and pastor in Rostock (1534–1592), published a more modest collection of such sermons in 1587.⁷ A generation later a pastor in Gotha, Michael Julius (1558–1605), published separately six sermons that took hymns of Luther as their texts.⁸ Individual hymns could on occasion serve as texts, especially in the case of biblical "songs," such as Mary's "Magnificat," which Nikolaus Selnecker (1530–1592), pastor and professor in Leipzig, took as a text for a funeral sermon.⁹

Spangenberg made clear why he was using the texts of the hymns that he had employed as sermon texts for his congregation in Mansfeld. Spangenberg informed his hearers that one must admit that

among all the master singers since the apostolic times, Luther was the best, most talented, and it will remain so. In his hymns and songs, you cannot find a single wasted, unnecessary word. Words and music flowed from his pen in the most beautiful, artistic manner, full of the Spirit and Christian teaching, so that a single word is a sermon in itself. ... There is nothing forced or patched together or rough; the rhymes are well done, the words chosen carefully, the meaning clear and

⁵ For the larger context of this homiletical device, see Martin Rössler, *Die Liedpredigt: Geschichte einer Predigtgattung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976).

⁶ Spangenberg, *Cithara Lutheri. Die scho[e]nen/Christlichen/trostreichen Psalmen und Geistlichen Lieder/ des Hochwirdigen thewren lehrers und Diener Gottes D. Martini Luthers. Der Erste Theil* (Erfurt 1568); *Der Ander theil/ der Citharae Lutheri. ...* (Erfurt, 1569); *Der Dritte Theil der Citharae Lutheri. Die Heuptstu[e]cke des heiligen Catechismi ...* (Mühlhausen, 1572); *Der Vierde Theil/ der Citharae Lutheri. Etliche Andere Geistliche ...* (Erfurt, 1572).

⁷ *Ausslegung der Deutschen Geistlichen Lieder/ so von Herrn Doctore Martino Luthero, vnd andern Gottseligen Christen gemacht/ oder aus dem Latin ins Deutsch vbersetzt vnd gebracht sind. . . .* (Magdeburg: Ambrosius Kirchner the Younger, 1587).

⁸ E.g., Julius, *Sechs kurtze Predigten: In welchen das herrliche scho[e]ne Kinderlied: Erhalt vns HERR bey deinem Wort/ etc. erkleret vnd ausgeleget ist/ allen Christen/ in diesen fehrllichen vnd betru[e]bten Jharen/ nu[e]tzlich vnd tro[e]stlich zu lessen* (Erfurt: Otto Riswick, 1589).

⁹ Selnecker, *Christliche Leychpredigten So vom Jar 1576. bis fast an das 1590. Jar zu Leipzig* (Magdeburg: Ambrosius Kirchner, 1591), 2: 23a–25a.

understandable. ... The melodies are appealing and speak to the heart, in summary they are glorious and precious, and have vigor, warming the heart and giving comfort.

Spangenberg praised "Luther's little hymnal" as "something marvelous, for which we cannot thank him enough in all eternity." Luther's transforming certain psalms into German rhyme with melody had given the people a wonderful divine gift.¹⁰

Spangenberg contended that Luther's versification of the psalms had permitted "every house father, if he wishes, [to] have David's choir in his own house and to read, pray, and sing the psalms with his children and servants. ... Now a boy or girl of ten or twelve years, or more or fewer years, is better, more, and more humbly learned and grasps the articles of faith and matters of religion—and can talk about them and report on them—better than could the teachers in the schools of higher learning, together with all the monks, priests, and nuns." Spangenberg thought the hymns that presented parts of the catechism particularly useful, enabling "artisans in their workshops, peasants and shepherds in the field, charcoal-makers and woodcutters in the forest, seamen and fishermen on water, couriers and pilgrims on the road, servants and children in the home, if they want to live piously and have learned these dear hymns, [to] practice the catechism in a beneficial way and at the same time confess their faith and their Christianity to honor God and to teach others and give them a good example as an aid and a comfort."¹¹ As a summary of the catechism, Luther's hymns facilitate learning because a sung text remains fixed in the mind, as can be seen in the devil's use of the songs of the street.¹²

Pauli had come to Wittenberg to study shortly after Luther's death. He preached on Luther's hymns for similar reasons, so that his hearers could better understand and digest what they were singing from Luther's pen. Pauli marshaled Luther's help to follow the apostle Paul's admonition to praise God with spiritual songs (Col. 3:16), songs that, though not taken directly from Scripture, sing of God and his benefits. Such songs are spiritual rather than fleshly and present God's Word. They should speak comforting, gentle songs full of consolation to the whole person, bring joy to those who sing them, and give them a taste of the joy of eternal life.¹³ Pauli asserted that God had "raised up Dr. Martin Luther in these last times" to compose hymns in German that present the chief articles of the Christian faith, the parts of the catechism, and the entire narrative and teaching of "the Lord Christ, his heavenly Father, and the Holy Spirit with all their works and blessings, explaining them in carefully chosen, fitting words and with lovely melodies that fit together precisely with words and text ..." Others had followed his example and written hymns as well for the edification, comfort, and admonition of simple people.¹⁴

Even though he had never studied in Wittenberg, a preacher in Gotha, Michael Julius, counted himself a disciple of Luther. Julius brought the reformer to his defense against the ancient Greek playwright Euripides, who had contended that no music had ever been able to quiet a restless spirit or a guilty conscience, as he affirmed that singing God's praises brings

¹⁰ Spangenberg, *Cithara Lvtheri... Erste Theil*, A3a–b.

¹¹ *Dritte Theil der Citharae*, (2a–)(3b).

¹² Spangenberg, *Cithara Lvtheri*, B3a.

¹³ Simon Pauli, *Postilla/ Das ist/ Ausslegung der Episteln vnnd Euangelien/ an Sontagen vnd fürnemesten Festen/ ordentlich vnd richtig / nach der RHETORICA gefasset ... Das Erst Theil/ vom Aduent biß vff Ostern* (Frankfurt/M: Peter Schmidt, 1577), 129a.

¹⁴ Pauli, *Ausslegung der Deutschen Geistlichen ...*, b3b–b4a.

comfort, joy, and delight.¹⁵ This paean of music echoes two earlier generations of Luther's followers in their acclamation of this second gift of God.

In his second stay as a student in Wittenberg, this time a resident in the Black Cloister, Luther's student Johannes Mathesius reflected the influence of his mentor's love of music in his sermons that traced the life of Luther, preached to Mathesius's congregation in Joachimsthal. Mathesius himself worked closely together with his cantor, Nikolaus Herman, an accomplished composer of text and tune himself.¹⁶ Herman himself prepared collections of his hymns fitted for the pericopal readings in a kind of postil and a similar collection of hymns relating to other biblical texts, a tool for coordinating preaching and singing in worship.¹⁷

Mathesius, a personal friend of the composer Ludwig Senfl (ca. 1486–1543), recounted Luther's contact with Senfl as well as his own. He mused, "lovely music, along with and in conjunction with God's Word, can drive out the devil and his lazy louts, and arouse and comfort a troubled heart. Therefore, the ancient prophets paid most attention to clear and blessed music and gladly engaged spiritually attuned players and cantors and set forth God's teaching in psalms and hymns. ... Beautiful motets or well-crafted melodies that have their own soul, life, and good texts, are to be honored as precious gifts of God."¹⁸ From his stay in Wittenberg in 1540, Mathesius recalled Luther's singing during and after meals as he played the lute; the student had sung along. In the midst of his singing, the reformer once stated "Josquin [Des Prez] (ca. 1450–1521) is the master of notes," who shaped the notes as he wished, whereas other composers have let the notes shape their compositions.¹⁹

The Christian Calling to Make Music

The hymn texts that at least some early adherents of Luther, Melanchthon, and their colleagues used in preaching served as a significant codified expression of critical elements of their teaching. These students of Luther regarded the composition of hymn texts and music as a calling from God, a form of proclaiming his Word. They viewed the use of these texts and their melodies as part of the normal Christian life to which God calls all believers.

A student who had lived in the Black Cloister and also served as a deacon at the town church in Wittenberg, Joachim Mörlin (1514–1572), preached on the psalms to his congregation in Braunschweig in the 1550s. Several times he echoed Luther's enthusiastic endorsement of music as a gift of God. He turned to the biblical examples, such as Moses and Miriam (Ex. 15:1–20), Deborah (Judg. 5:1–31), Hanna (1 Sam. 2:1–10), Mary (Luke 1:41–55), and Zacharias (Luke 1:67–79), who all sang their thanks and praise to God. Human beings, since they are not rocks or blocks of wood, joyfully answer when God speaks to them in his

¹⁵ Julius, *Arma Ecclesiae militantis Das ist/ Einfeltiger Bericht/ wie man sich ru[e]sten vnd weren soll/ gegen allen feinden Gottes vnd seiner Kirchen/ Aus dem scho[e]nen kinderlied: Erhalt vnd HERR bey deinem WORT/ etc. ...* (Erfurt: Martin Wittel, 1589), A4b–A6a.

¹⁶ On the role of music in the congregation in Joachimsthal, in northern Bohemia, and the role Mathesius played in it, see Brown, *Singing the Gospel*, passim.

¹⁷ Brown, *Singing the Gospel*, 152–55.

¹⁸ Mathesius, *Historien/ Von des Ehrwiridgen ... Mans Gottes, Doctoris Martini Luthers/ anfang/lehr/leben/ vnd Sterben ...* (Nürnberg: Johann vom Berg and Ulrich Neuber, 1566) CVIb.

¹⁹ Mathesius, *Historien*, CLIIa–b.

Word. Mörlin treasured music as a special gift of God, for it fends off Satan's temptation to despair.²⁰

In commenting on Psalm 28:6–7, recalling Paul's words from Colossians 3:16, Mörlin stated, "Music is a particular gift of God that moves the heart to godliness and the Holy Spirit delights to be there along with it." He rehearsed the story from 2 Kings 3 in which the Holy Spirit came to Elisha through the playing of the harp, commenting "the devil does not like to remain when a person makes music in godliness with beautiful psalms and hymns." Luther had said as much. Mörlin continued, "a beautiful song, and beautiful music on the organ or from other instruments, creates good thoughts, a tender, soft heart, arousing desire for worship, and some, when they hear a psalm sung, can express an idea better than ten sermons. Beautiful music on the organ can give a preacher more desire and material than if he had meditated and read several hours." Luther himself embodied this love of music, Mörlin observed. In every tongue and with every musical instrument, God's people recognize God's grace and respond to him with thanks through music.²¹

Such use of language or musical instruments does not merit God's grace but expresses our thanks and awakens God's grace, Mörlin told his hearers, so that hearts may grow in devotion to God. They should not indulge in "huffing and puffing" that only shows contempt for God's gifts.²² Similar celebration of musical gifts in his exposition of Psalm 33:1–2 accompanied a condemnation of "whore's songs," with a reference to Isaiah 5:12, and of papal chant with its invocation of the saints.²³ Mörlin's colleague and friend, Martin Chemnitz (1522–1586), reflected the vital role that hymns and music in general played in the piety the two pastors were cultivating in Braunschweig. He commented in a funeral sermon in 1578 that singing was a standard part of Lutheran funeral liturgies, along with readings, prayers, sermons, and other ceremonies. He cited the hymn appointed for the Festival of the Holy Innocents in preaching on that day.²⁴

Nikolaus Selnecker's talents enabled him to play the organ for worship services at age twelve. On the basis of Psalm 37, and the psalms in general, he praised music, both "figural and choral," played on the organ or other instruments, as a means of giving hearts joy and encouragement. Only coarse Stoics, blocks of wood and stones, are not moved by good Christian music, a beautiful melody and comforting text. The harmony of the sound reinforces the message of the words, as was true in David's time, when trumpets, psalters,²⁵

²⁰ *Erster Theil Aller predigten Vnd Außlegung vber die Psalmen deß Könighen Propheten Dauids, In welchem viel Stück vnd Artickel Christlicher Lehr, auß Gottes Wort vnd Heiliger Schrift nottürlichlich erkläret werden*, ed. Hieronymus Mörlin (Erfurt: Esaias Mechler, 1580), 354–55a.

²¹ Mörlin, *Der erste Teil der Predigten vber die Psalmen Dauids* ... (Königsberg: Georg Osterberger, 1576), 354a–355a

²² Mörlin, *Erster Theil Aller predigten*, 166b–167a.

²³ Mörlin, *Ander Theil Aller predigten* ..., ed. Hieronymus Mörlin (Erfurt: Esaias Mechler, 1580), 1b–2a.

²⁴ Chemnitz, *Eine Christliche vnd tro[e]stliche Predigt/ Vber das Siebendte Capitel/ der Offenbarung Johannis/ Von wunbarlicher erhaltung der fromen Christen/ in diesem leben*. ... (Eisleben: Andreas Petri, 1589): on the change from hymns of sorrow to hymns of joy and resurrection in Wittenberg funerals, see Robert Kolb, "'[...] da jr nicht trawrig seid wie die anderen, die keine hoffnung haben.'" Der Gebrauch der Heiligen Schrift in Leichenpredigten der Wittenberger Reformation (1560–1600)," in *Leichenpredigten als Medien der Erinnerungskultur im europäischen Kontext*, ed. Eva-Maria Dickhaut (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2014), 1–25.

²⁵ The "psalter" or "psaltery" was a stringed instrument similar to a harp or zither, found in various forms in the Middle Ages and early modern period; see Nelly van Ree Bernard and Mary Remnant, "Psaltery (2)," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (New York: Macmillan, 2002), 20:522–23.

and harps joined with drums, string and wind instruments, organs, and cymbals to aid the singing of praise to God. The devil opposes such music. Under the papacy Satan introduced worldly somber tunes and racy love tunes into worship services or placed bad texts under good notes. The Sacramentarians drove good music out of the church by obscuring good music or eliminating it from worship, Selnecker charged. Augustine had noted how hymns and sermons convey God's teaching to his people. For what the worshippers hear may be hard to retain, but they can repeat what they have sung at home as well as in public worship. This will facilitate learning what God says to them in the sermon. Basil, Chrysostom, and other church fathers had also voiced the observation that a good melody and well-wrought text refreshes both body and soul and is an instrument of the Holy Spirit, through which he comforts and instructs his people. They are better able to remember the benefits of Christ when they have learned "Christian music, a beautiful song, a good composition and melody." Such music is truly a foretaste of eternal life, in which angels and the blessed will join in perfect harmony, singing and playing instruments to the glory of God.²⁶

Selnecker continued with the observation that even the heathen had in ancient times enjoyed beautiful music, for instance, through Aristotle's treatment of music, for three reasons. First, music quickens the spirit when a person becomes tired from working and feels weak and weary. Second, music calms the mood and moves a person to gentleness; it stills the desire for revenge, anger, and the like, as can be seen from the example of Alexander the Great, who laid aside his weapons to listen to good music. Warriors, soldiers, and hunters have nothing to do with music, for where no kind, genial disposition exists, there is no harmony. Such people prefer crude music from the streets. As the mythical King Antaeus was said to have said, he would rather hear his hunting dogs barking and howling and his horses braying than listen to symphony. Selnecker cited the ancient Athenian Cleinias, who had praised music for making him calm and gentle. This can be seen also with the example of Saul (1 Sam. 16: 22–23). Augustine had echoed this view, as did other ancient figures who used the "Guidonian hand" (a medieval method of teaching sight-reading of music) to construct their harmonies. Third, music reinforces instruction. Therefore, Selnecker urged the parents in his congregation to see to it that their children were taught singing, counting, and the writing of verse, along with the catechism and grammar. Their children should also learn to play an instrument, Selnecker recommended.²⁷

Selnecker viewed Psalm 98 as an admonition to use "all instruments and music, harps, organs, trumpets, horns to praise God and his salvation for the deliverance given through Christ. For this purpose all composers, musicians, organists help make beautiful music in pleasant fashion, and thereby give thanks to God the Lord and rejoice in him with heart, mouth, and voice."²⁸

Spangenberg urged hymn singing in homes and at work because the patriarchs and prophets had done so; because God urges such singing in Psalms 33 and 96, Syrach 40, Isaiah 42, and Ephesians 2; and because God "has made our hearts and minds joyful through his beloved Son, whom he gave for us to deliver us from sin, death, and the devil." Faith in him

²⁶ Nikolaus Selnecker, *Der gantze Psalter Davids aussgelegt ...* (Leipzig: Jacob Erwaldt's heirs, 1582), 328a–b.

²⁷ Selnecker, *Der gantze Psalter*, 328a–b.

²⁸ Selnecker, *Der Ander Theil*, 468a–b.

causes the heart to sing and speak. Those who do not sing and speak of him show that they have not received the joyous inheritance he gives.²⁹

Spangenberg, too, had a sense that singing had promoted the faith throughout the history of God's people on earth. He conceded that the art of music and playing stringed instruments began with the descendants of godless Cain (Gen. 4:21), who did not use this gift to praise God. But as time passed, the God-fearing also began to use stringed instruments and to create songs of praise to honor God. It is clear that, at the latest, from the time of Moses the Israelites sang their praise, for instance as they traversed the Red Sea. The Israelites continued to praise God as they went through the wilderness, then under the judges, and finally at David's court, where the advice of the prophets Nathan and Gad supported the true master of song, King David, accompanied by cymbals, harps, and psalter. The practice continued with the support of Nehemiah, Christ, Philo, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Basil, Tertullian; all urged believers to sing hymns. The power of song moved the emperor Julian to forbid singing of Christian hymns in his attempt to eliminate the church, and the Arians had developed their own hymnody. Pope Gregory the Great had turned singing into a source of merit, but Luther had restored proper use of music to the church.³⁰

Selnecker put his own musical training to use in conveying to his hearers the significance of the way a psalm was presented. His comments on Psalm 6:1 included his interpretation of the word "sheminith" (the lowest note sung by male voices) in the psalm's title or introductory line. "The title of this psalm indicates a bad, miserable mood, a forced, sorrowful, melancholy song, to be played and sung on the eighth string, that is in the octave, as the musicians call it. ... Playing with ten strings called a 'decachorda' is happier, as we see in other psalms."³¹

Christoph Vischer (Fischer) (1518–1598), who served as superintendent of the churches of the duchy of Braunschweig-Lüneburg after occupying the same office in Schmalkladen for the county of Henneberg, used the angels' singing in Luke 2 to emphasize the importance of sung praise of God for his hearers and readers. Their song of praise, a song of triumph, presented a "wonderful, choice symphony, with heart-lifting melody, a beautiful motet by the dear angels, who are a heavenly choir." Vischer urged his congregation to join them, paying attention to the cantor as they sang along with clear, melodious voices, joining the angels' lovely harmony. He expressed the hope that princes and kings would model their choirs after the example of the angel choirs and no longer turn their ears to the sounds of their hunting hounds and hunting horns. David had driven the evil spirit from Saul (1 Sam. 16:14–23 and 18:10) and set up his own choir (1 Chron 25). God's Spirit guided Elisha as the harp was played (2 Kings 3:14–19). Thus, when Christ came as the prince of peace, Lord of life, and mighty king, the emperor of heaven, he arranged for his composers and choir directors to come not from Italy or France but from heaven itself. Vischer concluded his sermon by drawing the parallel between the promotion of pupils at the end of a school year being advanced to a new class and the movement of his hearers from the songs of this earth to singing with the heavenly choir, giving eternal praise and thanks with many hundreds of thousands of voices. In a kind of postscript, the preacher added the warning that the devil, who is "God's monkey," that is, the imitator of what God does, tries to sing his own song, a

²⁹ *Cithara Lytheri*, B4b–C1a.

³⁰ *Cithara Lytheri*, C2a–C3a.

³¹ Selnecker, *Der gantze Psalter Davids*, 20a.

hellish howling like a hound, the song of an owl, composed by frogs or toads. The murderous cry of the devil's choir broadcasts only eternal quaking and the howl of misery.³²

Johannes Gigas (1514–1581), who had studied with Luther and Melanchthon and after service as a cantor and school rector became pastor, finally in Schweidnitz in Silesia, used the angel's song in Luke 2 as the occasion to urge the congregation to continue to teach and learn God's Word and make use of "other Christian songs" as he preached at Christmas 1570 in Freystadt in Silesia. Fear of an Osman resurgence caused Gigas to remind his hearers that the people of Constantinople and Thrace had been able to sing such praise until one hundred seventeen years earlier, and the people in Ofen in Hungary until forty-seven years earlier, allusions to the suppression of Christian worship by the Osman Turks when they conquered these areas in 1453 and 1529. Gigas was appealing to the people to preserve their faith in the memory bank of their hymn repertoire. He emphasized the children's singing of Christ's birth.³³

Two passages from the epistles of Paul exhorting readers to sing, Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19–20, offered preachers the opportunity to speak of the role of music in the Christian life. Simon Pauli told his Rostock congregation that the teaching of God's Word does not occur only in public preaching and in private conversations among friends in their homes but also in psalm singing, songs of praise, and spiritual songs. Paul understood "psalms" as a designation of David's psalms, which cannot be sufficiently praised. Not only do they give us images of Christ and his rule but also of the Christian church. All Christians can find themselves and their own situations depicted in the psalms and find comfort under their own crosses, as if the psalm was written just for them. Without the psalms many a troubled heart would suffer and despair. That gives grounds to read them diligently, not as priests, monks, and nuns had done, without understanding, but reading and singing them with attention to each word. By "songs of praise" Paul understood, according to Pauli, the thanksgivings found in Scripture outside the psalms, for example in Exodus 14, Moses's song of thanks at deliverance from Egypt, or the Benedictus of Zacharias and the Magnificat of Mary in Luke 1. Others include songs of thanks sung by Deborah (Judg. 5:1–31), Solomon (1 Kings 8:22–53), and Simon (Luke 2:29–32). The term "spiritual songs" should be understood as other hymns apart from those in Scripture that sing of God and his blessings, for instance the hymns written by the master of hymns, Martin Luther. These distinguish themselves from the songs of the flesh; Pauli offered the examples of contemporary popular songs, such as "Es reit der Herr vom Falkenstein," "Danhäuser," or "Der Störtebecher ist Unser Herr," all popular ballads composed in the early sixteenth century. The spiritual songs or hymns by Luther and others bring comfort and joy to those who sing them as they convey a taste of eternal life. Therefore, the apostle wanted his readers not to be quiet and simply sing in their hearts, but to open their mouths and sing their praises. Pauli found it shameful when people refused to sing along, "out of coarse peasant pride or lack of understanding," for the text called for singing with heart and mouth to praise God. Contrary behaviors indicated hearts far from God (Isa. 29:13–14).³⁴

³² Christoph Vischer, *Ausslegung der Euangelien/ so man auff die Sontage in der Christlichen Kirchen zu handeln pfliget/ Vom Aduient biss auff Ostern ...* (Leipzig: Hans Steinmann, 1576), V4a–X6a.

³³ Gigas, *Postilla der Sontags Euangelien/ vnd der Festen durchs gantze Jar ...* (Frankfurt an der Oder: Andreas Eichorn, 1584), 74a–b.

³⁴ Pauli, *Postilla ... Das Erst Theil*, 128b–129a.

In his sermon on Ephesians 5:19-20, the epistle lesson for the twenty-second Sunday after Trinity, Pauli praised

dear music, which, when rightly put to use, is a special gift of God, useful and good in many ways. First, God gave it so that his Word could be learned, retained, and practiced more intensively. Human nature is created in such a way that it wants to sing and is deeply moved by music. Because of this people praise and honor God by singing songs that are spiritual. People who daily praise and honor him with singing are like the angels. With its very sound singing awakens hearts to reach toward God. It drives out the devil; calls the dear, holy angels to us; drives away sorrow, worries, and anxiousness of heart; makes work easy—whatever a person has to do in his calling; adorns worship, etc.³⁵

The first verse of Psalm 92 gave Mörlin occasion to comment that Sunday offered not only the chance to stop working and put on a new piece of clothing but was really for celebrating what God has done, praising him and giving him thanks. Therefore, he urged critical examination of hymns so that they truly cultivated devotion; Luther was a master at composing such hymns, Mörlin opined. Hymns should be sung slowly, not with the tempo of those howled in the streets and whore-song. The wording of hymns should not be changed, and there should be no flippant rushing through them. Mörlin concluded that the hymns of Luther serve to instruct in the entire catechism, the summary of the faith, and to praise the Lord.³⁶

Music at King David's Court

Luther loved the psalms, and he treasured David as one who composed these songs of praise.³⁷ The psalms offered a model for the use of music in praise of God. Introducing Psalm 39, Mörlin noted that “Jeduthun, the director of music” served as a cantor, leading the congregation in singing. He noted that three “*Capellenmeister oder Sengermeister*,” Asaph, Heeran, and Jeduthun, led a choir of 288 members, who sang and played harps, psalter, and cymbals, parallel to the organ of his own day. These three cantors had also composed psalms and led the choir in its schedule of twelve of the 288 providing music in each day of one week in turn, rotating every twenty-four weeks.³⁸

Selnecker took the mention of Asaph in Psalm 37 as the opportunity to compose a similar encomium to music and its role in nurturing faith in Christ. On the basis of 1 Chronicles 16 and 2 Chronicles 5, he constructed a picture of the court of “pious, God-fearing, talented musician” King David. David, who composed psalms himself, engaged “Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun” and other singers, and arranged for cymbals, psalter, and harps along with one hundred twenty priests playing trumpets to praise the goodness and mercy of God. From

³⁵ Pauli, *Postilla/ Das ist/ Auslegung der Episteln vnnnd Euangelien ... Ander Theil/ von Ostern/ biß auff den Aduent* (Frankfurt/M: Peter Schmidt, 1577), 340b.

³⁶ Mörlin, *Dritter Theil Aller predigten*, 188–89, cf. 190.

³⁷ Among the studies on Luther and the Psalms are Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther and the Old Testament*, trans. Eric W. and Ruth C. Gritsch (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 9–13; Dennis Ngien, *Fruit for the Soul: Luther on the Lament Psalms* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015); Michael Parsons, *Martin Luther's Interpretation of the Royal Psalms: The Spiritual Kingdom in a Pastoral Context* (Lewiston NY: Mellon, 2009).

³⁸ Mörlin, *Ander Theil Aller predigten*, 72a.

1 Chronicles 25, Selnecker reported that twenty-four lead singers or choir masters, including Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman, made music for the Lord.³⁹

Selnecker agreed with Luther's judgment that Asaph had the harsh style of Persius or Horace, but David's style was Attic and elegant.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, the Leipzig professor praised Asaph along with Jeduthun and Heman, citing Wenceslaus Linck, the colleague of Luther who became pastor in Nürnberg, as identifying them allegorically with the Trinity. Asaph means "one who gathers," the preacher explained; he prophesied at David's court, pointing, as did God the Father, to the Son of God. Jeduthun also prophesied with thanks and praise, so he performed a similar service to that of God's Son, leading people to the Father by coming into human flesh and delivering people from their sins. Jeduthun means "one who leaps," and he resembles Christ in that he leaps like a hero to overcome the devil and sin. He leapt into the womb of the Virgin, into hell itself, and then to heaven as the victorious prince. Christ sprang over mountains, according to Song of Solomon 2:8. Heman lifted the horn of God's Word (1 Chron. 25:5), the task of the Holy Spirit. The horn symbolizes ruling, and the Holy Spirit rules his people so that they do not stray. Thus, with Psalm 37 and its parallel, Psalm 39, the Holy Spirit rules and comforts his people through God's Word.⁴¹

Citations of Hymns in Sermons

As reflected in texts of printed sermons, certain familiar medieval hymn texts and some new hymns written by Luther and others could serve as summaries of a larger complex of ideas. Thus, preachers put them to use as one of their rhetorical tools for proclaiming the gospel.⁴² Certain hymns claimed a place in at least some liturgies during the course of the sixteenth century. Cyriacus Spangenberg reported in a sermon on 1 Timothy 2:1–4 that "many places" in Mansfeld county began the day with a morning service that featured each day Luther's "Erhalt uns Herr, bei deinem Wort" ("Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word.")⁴³ The catechetical sermons of Johann Mathesius used hymn verses, particularly Luther's catechetical hymns, to hammer home his homiletical instruction.⁴⁴ Late sixteenth-century preachers could also presume that their hearers knew some hymns well enough so that their words could be blended into their exposition of a Bible text. Some citations borrowed words from hymn writers of the Wittenberg circle, first and foremost Luther himself, while others tapped the hearer's memory of medieval antiphons or sequences.

Cyriacus Spangenberg's father, Johann, had constructed a collection of funeral sermons in a volume designed to aid pastors who had to write such sermons on short notice. In it he included an exposition of the hymn "*In media vitae*."⁴⁵ Pauli knew the "hymns,

³⁹ Selnecker, *Das Erst Theil des Psalter Davids ...* (Nürnberg: Christoff Heußler, 1565), CIXa.

⁴⁰ Luther and his committee, while working on the translation of the Bible into German, had made similar observations, see *Martin Luthers Werke*, Deutsche Bibel (Weimar:Böhlau, 1911), 3: 84, 87.

⁴¹ Selnecker, *Der gantze Psalter*, 328b–329a. Selnecker elaborated on Jeduthun also on Psalm 39:1, 190b, and Psalm 77: 2: 349b.

⁴² Brown, *Singing the Gospel*, 101–3; Robert Kolb, "Preaching on Luther's Hymn Texts in the Late Reformation," *Lutheran Quarterly* 34 (2020): 1–23.

⁴³ Spangenberg, *Die erste Epistel Paulj an Timotheum ...* (Strassburg: Samuel Emmel, 1564), 30b.

⁴⁴ Brown, *Singing the Gospel*, 91–101. See Markus Jenny, *Luthers Geistliche Lieder und Kirchengesänge: Vollständige Neuedition in Ergänzung zu Band 35 der Weimarer Ausgabe* (Köln: Böhlau, 1985). 118–19, 304–5).

⁴⁵ Johann Spangenberg, *Funffzehen Leichprediget/ So man bey dem Begrebnis der verstorbnen/ inn Christlicher Gemein thun mag. . .* (Wittenberg 1545), A2a–A6a. Luther had composed his own version of this medieval hymn, WA 35: 453, 20–454, 35.

sequences, and responses” of Ambrose (ca. 339–397), Augustine (354–430), Caelius Sedulius (d. ca. 450), Venantius Fortunatus (ca. 540–ca. 600), Aurelius Prudentius (348–413), Lactantius (ca. 250–ca. 325), and others.⁴⁶ Among the familiar sequences was “*Veni, Sancte Spiritus*,” from which Selnecker cited the line “*Sine tuo numine, nihil est in homine, nihil est innoxium*” in his sermon on Psalm 1,⁴⁷ as did Simon Musäus as he preached on Acts 3 on Pentecost.⁴⁸ Johannes Gigas graced his Epiphany sermon with lines from Sedulius’s nativity hymn “*A solis ortus cardine*,” celebrating the gifts of the Wise Men.⁴⁹ Fortunatus’s “*Agnoscit omne saeculum*” reinforced his treatment of the baptism of Jesus, as he also urged the congregation to remember Luther’s “spiritually-rich, beautiful hymn,” which provides the entire account of Jesus’s baptism.⁵⁰ Michael Julius preached on Luther’s translation of the sequence for Pentecost, “We Now Implore the Holy Spirit,” providing an interpretation of each strophe.⁵¹ Preaching on Isaiah 45 for the first week in Advent, Mathesius cited Ambrose’s “*Veni, Redemptor Gentium*” and also incorporated the Advent versicle, “*Rorate coeli desuper*” into his sermon. Three weeks later the fifteenth-century German hymn, “*Ein Kindlein so löblich*,” aided his exposition of Isaiah 9; it also reinforced his sermon on Christmas Day.⁵²

Psalm 109 provided Selnecker with the opportunity to cite the hymn “*Crux fidelis*” by Venantius Fortunatus in the preacher’s own German translation, identified with the Latin title to explain his source to his hearers.⁵³ On Psalm 89:5 Mörlin cited two lines from the Easter sequence “*Victimae paschali laudes*” ascribed to the eleventh-century poet Wipo of Burgundy (ca. 995–ca. 1050), with Luther’s translation in his “Christ Lag in Todes Banden” (“Christ Lay in Death’s Strong Bands”).⁵⁴ The antiphon for the festival of the circumcision of Jesus, “*O admirabile commercium*,” enriched his interpretation of the next verse of the psalm.⁵⁵ A hymn by Caelius Sedulius, “*Beatus author seculi*,” celebrated Christ’s incarnation, Mörlin told his hearers as he explained Psalm 93.⁵⁶ A series of Mathesius’s Lenten sermons contain three such references to medieval sequences or hymns.⁵⁷ In preaching on Christ before the high priest, Mathesius cited a line from the Vespers liturgy, describing the exalted Christ as “*homo iudicatus denuo iudex*.” The sequence on the repentant thief on the cross, “*Qui latroni sero poenitentia paradisi ianuas aperuisti*,” fit nicely into Mathesius’s comments on

⁴⁶Pauli, *Ausslegung der Deutschen Geistlichen Lieder*, b2b–b3a.

⁴⁷Selnecker, *Der ganze Psalter Davids*, 6a.

⁴⁸Musäus, *Postilla/ Das ist: Auflegung der Episteln vnd Euanglien so vber alle Sontage von Ostern biß auff Das Aduent/ in der Kirchen gebräuchlich sind ...* (Frankfurt/M: Nicolaus Bassaeus, 1579), 49a.

⁴⁹Gigas, *Postilla*, 100b.

⁵⁰Gigas *Postilla*, 143b–144a. Luther’s hymn, “Christ, unser Herr, zum Jordan kam,” Jenny, *Luther’s Geistliche Lieder*, 117, 299–301.

⁵¹Julius, *Pfingst Sequentz oder Prosa Von dem Teuwren Mann Gottes D. Martino Luthero in Deutsche Reimen bracht/ Nun bitten wir den heiligen Geist ...* (reprint of 1594 original, Erfurt: Johann Beck, 1603).

⁵²Mathesius, *Postilla prophetica, Oder/ Spruchpostill des Alten Testaments ...* (Leipzig: Johann Beyer, 1589), 7a–b, 31b, 40a–b.

⁵³Selnecker, *Das dritte Theil*, 547a–b.

⁵⁴Jenny, *Luthers Geistliche Lieder*, 71, 194–97.

⁵⁵Mörlin, *Dritter Theil Aller predigten*, 146, 149.

⁵⁶Mörlin, *Dritter Theil Aller predigten*, 196.

⁵⁷Mathesius, *Fastenpredigten/ Darin die gantze Historien des leidens vnd sterbens vnseres Herrn Jesu Christ ...* (Nürnberg: Katharina Gerlauch and Johann von Berg’s heirs, 1577), 58b.

that man.⁵⁸ He commented on the mystery of the words, “my God, why have you forsaken me?” with a mention that such things are hidden “*in mento diuino*,” “as the church sings.”⁵⁹

Paul Eber (1511–1569), who became Melancthon’s colleague and Bugenhagen’s colleague and successor as pastor of Wittenberg’s town church, began a sermon on the first Sunday after Epiphany, on the text of Christ’s baptism, asking his hearers to “sing with one another at the outset of this sermon” the “wonderful and sweet hymn written by Dr. Martin Luther” on “the use and fruit of our baptism of Christ [sic] ... So sing with hearts and mouth, ‘Christ our Lord Came to Jordan’”. He admonished parents to sing this hymn at home with children and servants so that they know from the text what baptism is, its usefulness, what it accomplishes in Christians.⁶⁰ Eber ended his sermon on Jesus’ mourning over the sins of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41–48) by diverting from his normal conclusion for a sermon and bidding his hearers “Therefore, instead of the prayer for the forgiveness of our sins, we want to sing to the praise and honor of God the psalm of comfort, ‘From depths of woe I cry to you’ (Psalm 130),” most likely in Luther’s setting as well.⁶¹

Although in later centuries “A Mighty Fortress is Our God” is regarded as Luther’s most important hymn, it received only modest attention in the sermons or commentaries of his students and followers, for instance, in treating Psalm 46, the source of Luther’s hymn. However, in his chronicle of the “state of religion and the republic,” published in 1556, in the wake of the Evangelical princes’ defeat in the Smalcald War, the municipal official of Strassburg, Johannes Sleidan (1506–1556), offered a brief overview of Luther’s life, reflecting on his death as war clouds were gathering in early 1546. Sleidan reminded readers that Luther had taught that God provided the safety of a castle for his followers, with reference to Psalm 46 and the hymn. “The old enemy of the human race,” Sleidan observed, could try all the tricks he wished. Jesus Christ remains the victor, triumphant over the devil.⁶²

Not all commentaries on the Psalms by disciples of Luther mentioned his hymn in their expositions of Psalm 46. In his treatment of Psalm 98:2, Joachim Mörlin repeated the hymn’s second stanza to drive home the point that in the face of enemies of all kinds, “the right man” is fighting for his people, and God will not let go of his victory.⁶³ Mörlin’s sermon on Psalm 46 was introduced with a marginal note that called attention to Luther’s hymn version of the psalm. The sermon itself referred to “A Mighty Fortress” as “a joyous song,” “a truly beautiful thanksgiving, in which we praise God’s great goodness and his gracious protection which preserves his church at all times.” For God retains the power over all the earth and serves as the highest head of the family, emperor, or mayor, protecting the young so that they blossom, not on the basis of their own strength and power but out of his.⁶⁴

Another student of Luther, Hieronymus Mentzel (1517–1590), superintendent of the churches in the county Mansfeld, recalled for readers of his Psalms commentary that “from this Psalm the man of God Dr. Martin Luther [wrote] the wonderful hymn ‘A mighty fortress

⁵⁸ Mathesius, *Fastenpredigten*, 171g.

⁵⁹ Mathesius, *Fastenpredigten*, 183b.

⁶⁰ Eber, *Postilla/ Das ist/ Außlegung der Sonntags vnd fu[er]nembsten Fest Euangelien ...*, ed. Johann Cellarius (Frankfurt am Main: Franz Basse, 1578), 1:58a–b.

⁶¹ Eber, *Postilla* 2:152b.

⁶² Johannes Sleidanus, *De statu religionis et reipublicae, Carolo quinto, Caesare, Commentariorum libri XXVI* (Strassburg: Johannes Rihel, 1556), 289b.

⁶³ Mörlin, *Dritter Theil Aller predigten*, 233.

⁶⁴ Mörlin, *Ander Theil Aller predigten*, 72a, 73a.

is our God, a fine shield and weapon,” mistakenly adding that the hymn was written “in 1530 as the Augsburg Confession was produced.”⁶⁵

Cyriacus Spangenberg preached a series of sermons on Paul's epistle to the Romans. Treating Romans 8, he explained how nothing could condemn or threaten Christ's people, not even sin and death, so that in faith they say “let them take the body, goods, fame, child, and wife, they have won nothing, the kingdom remains ours” from “A Mighty Fortress” without mentioning the source, simply presuming the hearers and readers would understand.⁶⁶ A sermon on Romans 10 urged steadfast confession of the faith, supporting his admonition with the observation that even in the face of physical danger, when life is on the line, believers do not doubt, “as we sing, ‘A mighty fortress is our God, a trusty shield and weapon,’” with the following lines from Luther's hymn: “For he holds the field against Satan forever.”⁶⁷

Few of Luther's other hymns proved useful to preachers, apart from those who preached on their texts. Mathesius repeated the fourth stanza of Luther's “Gelobt seist du, Jesu Christ” (“All Praise to Thee, O Jesus Christ”), in preaching on John 1:4: “In him the eternal light breaks through, Gives the world a glory new, A great light shines amid the night, and makes us children of the light.”⁶⁸ Spangenberg based one sermon on a hymn that, according to Spangenberg, Luther had composed in Latin, “Wär Gott nicht mi tuns diese Zeit” (“If God Had Not Been at our Side”). Spangenberg expressed the belief that this hymn had been translated by Justus Jonas, Luther's colleague on the Wittenberg theological faculty, into German, when preaching on Psalm 124 and the text of this hymn. Spangenberg praised Jonas for his German translation of Luther's *De servo arbitrio*, a text dear to Spangenberg's heart.⁶⁹ He also noted that, in the dispute over adiaphora in the years following 1548, when the Wittenberg school divided over the compromise with the imperial plan for religious reform, the Augsburg Interim, by proposing what Spangenberg and his like-minded critics had dubbed “the Leipzig Interim,” a plan for bringing Saxon practice into line with many of the imperial demands, Jonas had remained steadfast in opposing any compromise with the Roman Catholic party.⁷⁰

Several preachers who had studied in Wittenberg made similar use of hymns from others in Luther's immediate circle in their preaching. For instance, Mathesius cited the hymn by Elisabeth Cruciger (1500–1535), the wife of Luther's colleague, Caspar Cruciger (1504–1548), whom Mathesius knew from his study in Wittenberg. In a sermon on Numbers

⁶⁵ Hieronymus Mentzel, *Psalterium Davidis. Auslegung aller Psalmen deß Ko[e]niglichen Propheten Davids ...* (Leipzig: Henning Gross, 1594), 302a.

⁶⁶ Spangenberg, *Auslegung der Ersten Acht Capitel der Episteln S. Pauli an die Ro[e]mer* (Strassburg: Samuel Emmel, 1566), ccxcjb.

⁶⁷ Spangenberg, *Auslegung der Letzten Acht Capitel der Episteln S. PAVLI an die Ro[e]mer* (Strassburg, 1569), C5b.

⁶⁸ Mathesius, *Christliche vnd asß Gottes Wort wolgegru[e]ndete Erklerung vnd Auslegung in das erste Capitel des Euangelisten S. Johanni. Von der Menschwerdung Jesu Christi* (Leipzig: Johann Beyer, 1589), 34b. Jenny, *Luthers Geistliche Lieder*, 60, 165–67.

⁶⁹ Jonas had in fact composed his own hymn based on Psalm 124. On Spangenberg's active defense of Luther's *De servo arbitrio*, see Robert Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method: From Martin Luther to the Formula of Concord* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 205–20. Jonas's hymn is found in Philipp Wackernagel, ed., *Das deutsche Kirchenlied von der ältesten Zeit bis zu Anfang des XVII. Jahrhunderts*, 5 vols (Leipzig: Teubner, 1864–1877), 3: 42–43.

⁷⁰ Spangenberg, *Der Ander Theil der Citharae*, 75.

24: 17–19 he found a line, “There Is a Morning Star,” from her hymn “Herr Christ der einge Gotts Sohn” a helpful interpretation of the text, bringing the same clarity that the prophets sought through references to the heavens. The prophets used astronomy, also to express clarity, and Elisabeth Cruciger had followed them in doing so.⁷¹ Mathesius combined a verse from Selnecker, “Ach bleib’ bei uns, Herr Jesu Christ, Weil es nu Abend worden ist, das Wort O Herr, das ewig’ Licht, Laß ja bei uns verleschen nicht,” with the translation of the first verse of the medieval hymn by the nearby Bohemian Brethren pastor Michael Weisse (ca. 1488–1534), “*Christe, du bist Tag und Liecht*.”⁷² Johannes Gigas repeated as a prayer the words of Philip Melancthon’s hymn, “*Ich armer mensch gar nichts bin*,” in concluding his Christmas Day sermon in his postil.⁷³

Selnecker’s sermons on the psalms provide a rare form of hymn citation. With his musical gifts, Selnecker composed 175 hymn texts, a majority of them summaries of psalm summaries, according to the collection of Philipp Wackernagel.⁷⁴ Selnecker began the written commentary on Psalm 51 (whether he recited this from the pulpit is not clear) with three folio pages of poetry, Selnecker’s own versification of the psalm.⁷⁵ In the sermon he preached for the burial of his son, Daniel, Selnecker reported that his family had often sung the hymn “*HERR Jhesu Christ du Gottes Son/ der du sitzt in dem hof[e]chsten thron ...*” together.⁷⁶ He was, however, not the only one of his contemporaries in the Wittenberg circle to compose a hymn for a sermon. Mathesius penned a funeral hymn, “God Created Adam out of Dust and Earth,” and placed it at the end of a postil-like collection of model funeral sermons that he published in 1561.⁷⁷ His *Sarepta*, a collection of twenty sermons employing biblical metaphors related to mining, fitted for the circumstances of the mining town in which he served, concluded with a hymn that he composed, the nine stanzas of which present elements of the biblical message in such metaphors as well.⁷⁸

In converting his sermons on Luther’s hymns into a printed postil that could be used by pastors for their own preaching and by parents for devotions in their homes, Spangenberg turned to a pedagogical device that he used also in biblical commentaries,⁷⁹ a chart that offers a visual summary of a text. In his exposition of Luther’s “Dear Christians One and All Rejoice” for preaching in the Passion week, Spangenberg presented charts that divided the verses into brief sections and broke passages in each verse into parts so that readers could

⁷¹ Mathesius, *Postilla prophetica*, 73a. On this hymn, see Mary Jane Haemig, “Elizabeth Cruciger (1500?–1535): The Case of the Disappearing Hymn Writer,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 22 (2001): 21–44. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2671393>.

⁷² Mathesius, *Christliche ... Erklerung ... Johannis*, 37a. Jenny, *Luthers Geistliche Lieder*, 6870, 188–93.

⁷³ Gigas, *Postilla*, 75a. Jenny, *Luthers Geistliche Lieder*, 100–1, 247–49.

⁷⁴ Selnecker published his psalm hymns in *Christliche Psalmen, Lieder und Kirchengesänge* (Leipzig: Johann Beyer, 1587). See Wackernagel, ed., *Das deutsche Kirchenlied*, 4: 211–338.

⁷⁵ *Ander Theil des Psalters*, 223a–224a; Wackernagel, *Kirchenlied*, 218–20, Nr. 315.

⁷⁶ Selnecker, *Leychenpredigten*, 164a–b.

⁷⁷ Mathesius, *Leychpredigten Auß dem fünfftzehenden Capitel der I. Epistel S. Pauli zun Corinthiern. Von der Aufferstehung der Todten vnd ewigem leben ...* (Nürnberg: Johann vom Berg and Ulrich Neuber, 1561), Dddd2b.–Dddd3a.

⁷⁸ Mathesius, *Sarepta Oder Bergpostill Sampt der Jochimßthaligschen kurtzen Chroniken* (Nürnberg: Johann vom Berg and Ulrich Neuber, 1562), Gg6b.

⁷⁹ Spangenberg also used the chart form for two commentaries, *In sacri Mosis Pentateuchum, sive quinque Libros, Genesim, Exodum, Leuiticum, Numeros, Deuteronomium, Tabulae CCVI* (Basel: Johannes Oporinus, 1563); *In sacros bibliorum Veteris Testamenti Libros, praecipuè Historicos, Tabularum* (Basel: Johannes Oporinus, 1567/1569).

see the flow of the argument. Verses 9 and 10 were not included in the sermon for Passion week but in that for the Ascension.⁸⁰

Conclusion

Luther's love of music shaped Lutheran piety and ritual in many ways. Christopher Boyd Brown has observed that "for Luther, music had its highest purpose, when it was joined with God's Word for the proclamation of the gospel. ... This conception of the hymns as containing and conveying the Word of God was definitive of Lutheran understanding and use of Evangelical hymnody in all contexts. ... Lutherans continued to acclaim the hymns as among the most important of the means by which the gospel had been proclaimed in the wake of Luther's reformation."⁸¹ In addition to his contributions through his own hymns and liturgical treatises, his love of music infected the next generation of his adherents as they read Scripture and commented on it in their sermons. Sermons became a display case for the developing hymnic tradition, and the hymns enriched the proclamation of God's Word from the pulpit. Music and the poetic texts it carried shaped their thinking as they conveyed the faith to the next generation of those who claimed Luther's name.

⁸⁰ *Cithara Lytheri*, for Passion week, on 101b, 109b, 110a, 123a, 132a, 139a, 147b, 158b, for Ascension 218a and 227a.

⁸¹ Christopher Boyd Brown, "Devotional Life in Hymns, Liturgy, Music, and Prayer," in *Lutheran Ecclesiastical Culture, 1550–1675* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 214–215.