

# ANABAPTISTICA



SOUTHWESTERN  
JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

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## *Anabaptistica*

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This issue of the *Southwestern Journal of Theology* is devoted to the topic of “Anabaptistica,” a term that means “things about or pertaining to Anabaptism and Anabaptists.” The Anabaptists were one major branch of the sixteenth-century Radical Reformers.

“What is the essence of Anabaptism?” Questions like the latter one are sometimes difficult to answer because Anabaptism in the sixteenth century is quite complex. “However,” Anabaptist historian W. R. Estep wrote, “although it may not be possible to suggest a single concept by which ‘normative Anabaptism’ can be identified, if the Anabaptist concept of the church with all of its ramifications is properly understood, it may provide a clue to Anabaptism.”<sup>1</sup> In other words, Estep strongly suggested that the Anabaptists’ idea of church and the way they lived it out may be the singular most distinctive identification of this radical movement. I think he was correct. Rather than hold to the authority of the church, Anabaptists strongly held to the Bible’s authority, a conviction which clearly separated them from the Roman Catholics, but it was the putting into practice of their believer’s-church concept which noticeably distinguished them even from the Magisterial Reformers of the period, many of whom also held to biblical authority.<sup>2</sup> On deeply-held convictions like the authority of Scripture, Anabaptists found the principles for the church and Christian living solely in the New Testament; however, this belief was largely because they did not think that the Old Testament could ever be used to justify state churches or to persecute heretics, actions prominent in their day and viewed by them as absolutely un-Christian.<sup>3</sup> For Anabaptists, “the church was made up of committed disciples who bore witness to the new birth in believer’s baptism, which also constituted a pledge of discipleship”; discipleship encompassed the moral and ethical aspects of Christian living.<sup>4</sup> As a matter of fact, all of the Anabaptist ideas of “church, baptism, and discipleship” pointed to the biblical conviction that one’s supreme loyalty belonged to God and not to the government; and although they did recognize that governments were legitimately given by

<sup>1</sup>William R. Estep, *Renaissance & Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 219.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

God, they thought the state should stay out of religious matters. Indeed, they saw religious liberty as a biblical principle found in the gospel and viewed with considerable disdain a religion that coerced a response to the gospel.<sup>5</sup>

“What kind of people were the Anabaptists—at least some of them?” The sketch on the cover for this spring journal issue gives us a considerable hint. This exceptional drawing carries with it a well-known, inspirational story of an Anabaptist named Dirk Willems. Joseph Liechty tells the story of Willems this way:

Late in the winter of 1569, Dirk Willems of Holland was discovered as an Anabaptist, and a thief catcher came to arrest him at the village of Asperen. Running for his life, Dirk came to a body of water still coated with ice. After making his way across in great peril, he realised his pursuer had fallen through into the freezing water.

Turning back, Dirk ran to the struggling man and dragged him safely to shore. The thief catcher wanted to release Dirk, but a burgomaster—having appeared on the scene—reminded the man he was under oath to deliver criminals to justice. Dirk was bound off to prison, interrogated, and tortured in an unsuccessful effort to make him renounce his faith. He was tried and found guilty of having been rebaptised, of holding secret meetings in his home, and of allowing baptism there—all of which he freely confessed.

“Persisting obstinately in his opinion,” Dirk was sentenced to execution by fire. On the day of execution, a strong east wind blew the flames away from his upper body so that death was long delayed. The same wind carried his voice to the next town, where people heard him cry more than seventy times, “O my Lord; my God.” The judge present was “finally filled with sorrow and regret.” Wheeling his horse around so he saw no more, he ordered the executioner, “Dispatch the man with a quick death.”<sup>6</sup>

Whatever reason one ascribes to Willems for doing what he did in this account, one thing seems clear: this Anabaptist had the mind and heart of Christ characterized by, amongst other things, sacrificial love, love for one’s enemies, and the overwhelming desire not to see any lost soul perish and go into eternity without Jesus.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Joseph Liechty, “Why Did Dirk Willems Turn Back?” at <http://www.anabaptistnetwork.com/node/175>; accessed: 24 April 2014. This article was originally published in *Anabaptism Today*, Issue 6 (June 1994): 7-12. Liechty notes that the story of Dirk Willems comes from an Anabaptist martyrology published in 1660 compiled by Thieleman J. van Braght, translated as *Martyrs’ Mirror* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1950), 741-42. A text-version download of this document is available at <http://homecomers.org/mirror/downloads.htm>; accessed: 24 April 2014.

As mentioned earlier, this journal volume is devoted to “Anabaptistica” and features six insightful articles. The first article is presented by Michael Whitlock, assistant professor of Christian Studies at Truett-McConnell College. In his essay titled, “Balthasar Hubmaier’s Doctrine of Justification by Faith,” he explores the relationship between the leading Anabaptist theologian’s soteriology and the sixteenth-century Protestant understanding of *sola fide*. Nathan Finn, associate professor of Historical Theology and Baptist Studies at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, also contributes a paper called, “Curb Your Enthusiasm: Martin Luther’s Critique of Anabaptism.” He argues that despite imprecision and few works devoted expressly to the Anabaptists, Luther offered an extensive and wide-ranging critical appraisal of this major movement in the Radical Reformation. Ched Spellman, assistant professor of Bible at Cedarville University, provides an article titled, “I Wait upon My God: Exploring the Life and Letters of Michael Sattler,” in which he explores the nature of Sattler’s legacy and asks why his life and letters became so significant in the years after his death. Michael Wilkinson, dean of the College at Southwestern, furnishes an article called, “*Brüderliche Vereinigung*: A Brief Look at Unity in The Schleithem Confession.” In this thorough examination of unity in the confession, he clarifies that the confession does not try to explain the doctrines of God, Christology, pneumatology, or Scripture, but rather focuses just on ecclesiology, of which unity is understandably an important part. Jason Graffagnino, assistant professor of History and Christian Studies at Truett-McConnell College, contributes a brief introduction and then presents in German and English, “Leonhard Schiemer’s Anabaptist Catechism.” Schiemer’s catechism, which may show the influence of both Balthasar Hubmaier and Hans Hut, was the second Anabaptist catechism penned just one year after the first catechism that was written by Hubmaier. Lastly, Maël Disseau, a recent Southwestern PhD graduate who studied Italian Anabaptism, provides a “Translator’s Preface to Massimo Firpo’s ‘Religious Radicalism: From Anabaptism to Anti-Trinitarianism,’” in which he furnishes an updated translation from the Italian of Firpo’s tenth chapter in the book, *Riforma Protestante ed Eresie nell’Italia del Cinquecento*.<sup>7</sup> Firpo’s book is important because it presents a well-researched summary of the short-lived Italian reformation. This issue also contains for your perusal several book reviews and abstracts of recent doctoral dissertations completed at Southwestern.

We pray that these articles increase your knowledge and help equip you in your preparation for engagement in ministry. We aim to serve the church and are more than happy to assist you. Further, if God has called you into his service please consider allowing us the privilege of preparing you at Southwestern for a lifetime of ministry. These are exciting times at the seminary! God bless you.

<sup>7</sup>Massimo Firpo, *Riforma Protestante ed Eresie nell’Italia del Cinquecento* (San Donato Milanese: Editori Laterza, 2004), 143-60.





## *Balthasar Hubmaier's Doctrine of Justification by Faith<sup>1</sup>*

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### Introduction

The question concerning the relationship between Anabaptist soteriology and the sixteenth-century Protestant understanding of *sola fide* has been asked periodically. Four typical answers to that question have been offered. First, the Bender school of confessional Anabaptist scholars appearing in the first half of the twentieth century contended that there existed no substantial difference on orthodox doctrines, such as soteriology, between the evangelical Anabaptists (represented primarily by the Swiss Brethren and their influence) and the Magisterial Reformers. The evidence offered most often for that position points to the conspicuous absence of emphasis on those orthodox doctrines in Anabaptist writings. Further, the historical evidence indicates that the initial disruption between Zwingli and those that would become Anabaptists had nothing to do with particular foundational doctrines such as soteriology.

Harold Bender noted the rise of this assessment in his foundational essay "The Anabaptist Vision." Bender writes that there was a novel movement in his day that viewed the Anabaptists as "the fulfillment of the original vision of Luther and Zwingli, and thus [made] it a consistent evangelical Protestantism."<sup>2</sup> Another essay published in a volume along with Bender's by Fritz Blanke entitled "Anabaptism and the Reformation" indicates that position. In dealing with the Schleithem Confession, Blanke notes that it is "striking that these articles say nothing about God, Jesus Christ, and justification by faith." His explanation follows: "Because the men who adopted this confession were in agreement with Luther and Zwingli concerning all

<sup>1</sup>The information in this article is taken directly from this author's dissertation which contains a more complete assessment of early Anabaptist doctrines of justification, including those of Conrad Grebel, Michael Sattler, and Hans Denck in addition to that of Balthasar Hubmaier. Michael Wayne Whitlock, "Justification by Faith and Early Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism," (PhD diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2013).

<sup>2</sup>Harold S. Bender, "The Anabaptist Vision," in Guy F. Hershberger, *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision: A Sixtieth Anniversary Tribute to Harold S. Bender* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1957), 37.

of these central truths. . . . The Schleithem Confession deals only with those points in which Anabaptism and the Reformation differ.”<sup>3</sup>

The other three answers offered to the issue of Anabaptism and justification, however, reflect the more recent prevailing consensus contending that the Anabaptists did not reflect a *sola fide* understanding of justification. Typically, those positions are communicated in three different theses. First, some scholars note that Anabaptist anthropology centered on a freedom of the will in opposition to the Magisterial Reformers’ assertion that the human will was bound. In a recent article in *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, Matthew Eaton argues that for Balthasar Hubmaier anthropology is the key to understanding his soteriology.<sup>4</sup> Ultimately Eaton’s argument is that restoration of human freedom allows the believer to participate in the redemptive process by obedience. The argument offers an irreconcilable distinction in the respective anthropologies that preclude the Anabaptists from holding to a Protestant understanding of justification by faith.

The second offered thesis highlights the Anabaptist insistence on a required moral life as indicative of salvation. The argument contends that the Anabaptist position is in conflict with the purely forensic understanding of the Protestants. Hans-Jürgen Goertz advocates this position in his monograph *The Anabaptists*. He argues that Anabaptist soteriology amalgamates justification and sanctification. In his discussion of what he terms “moral improvement” which commingles both “justification and holiness,” he defines faith as “the expression of a better life.” He later notes in his discussion of Denck’s soteriology that “salvation was not merely awarded to man. In contrast to the reformers’ ideas, it was much more incumbent upon man to follow the path of salvation.”<sup>5</sup>

The third thesis notes the overt emphasis in Anabaptist writings on the changed nature of the believer. The argument points to what appears to be the Anabaptist support for an ontological change in the believer which directly conflicted with a forensic change in status as the basis of justification by faith. This thesis is most clearly argued by Alvin Beachy in his work *The Concept of Grace in the Radical Reformation*. Beachy states, “[G]race is for the Radical Reformers not so much a forensic change in status before God as it is an ontological change within the individual believer. Grace is God’s act whereby He renews the divine image in man through the Holy Spirit and makes the believer a participant in the divine nature.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Fritz Blanke, “Anabaptism and the Reformation” in Hershberger, *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision*, 65.

<sup>4</sup>Matthew Eaton, “Toward an Anabaptist Covenantal Soteriology: A Dialogue with Balthasar Hubmaier and Contemporary Pauline Scholarship,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 84, no. 1 (January 2010): 67-93.

<sup>5</sup>Hans-Jürgen Goertz, *The Anabaptists*, trans., Trevor Johnson, Christianity and Society in the Modern World (London: Routledge, 1996), 59-61.

<sup>6</sup>Alvin J. Beachy, *The Concept of Grace in the Radical Reformation*, Bibliotheca Humanistica & Reformatorica (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1977), 4, 5.

Assessing the sixteenth-century Anabaptist doctrine or doctrines on formal soteriology has proven difficult. The difficulty lies in the apparent lack of emphasis on soteriology among Anabaptist writings. Robert Friedmann claims that this elemental doctrine “is not and cannot be a major theme in Anabaptist thought.”<sup>7</sup> The troubling aspect in that notion is that while overt systematic statements concerning soteriology are not abundant in Anabaptist writings, the Anabaptist understanding of soteriology forms a foundation for primary Anabaptist emphases. Their teaching concerning believer’s baptism, perhaps the most significant aspect of Anabaptist doctrine, raises the unavoidable question of soteriology. The Anabaptist contention that the church is the gathered congregation of the saved also necessitates an assessment of soteriology. Thus, the question is unavoidable in examining Anabaptist doctrine.

Hubmaier, the most thoroughly trained Anabaptist theologian, presents researchers with more material for consideration than any of the other early Anabaptists. Hubmaier’s close contact with Zwingli and the Swiss Brethren as well as his theological acumen make him indispensable in any survey of Anabaptist theology. Although his number of writings pale in comparison to the voluminous offerings of other Reformers such as Luther or Calvin, Hubmaier nonetheless provides clear thought concerning his doctrine of justification. This article will argue that Hubmaier held to justification by faith in concert with the sixteenth-century Protestant position by indicating Hubmaier’s adherence to the definitive points of the Protestant position. However, Hubmaier’s doctrine provided a corrective to those sixteenth-century evangelicals that might have looked to justification by faith alone as a loophole in their obligation to live a life governed by God’s commands.

### **Four Protestant Tenets of Justification by Faith**

Four fundamental tenets can be stated that adequately represent the core of the sixteenth-century Protestant understanding of justification by faith alone.<sup>8</sup> First, human beings in their fallen state are incapable of effecting their own justification by any meritorious action. Second, justification of the individual is accomplished based on the righteousness of Christ alone, extrinsic to the believer. Third, faith denotes a subjective trust or confidence in Christ alone for justification. Fourth, justification and regeneration or sanctification are distinct aspects of soteriology and the former does not depend on the latter.<sup>9</sup> Each of these four requires brief discussion.

<sup>7</sup>Robert Friedmann, *The Theology of Anabaptism: An Interpretation*, Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1973), 78.

<sup>8</sup>For a more thorough discussion of these four tenets see Whitlock, “Justification by Faith and Early Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism,” 15-32.

<sup>9</sup>The wording of this fourth tenet does not mean to suggest that regeneration and sanctification are necessarily synonymous terms. Nonetheless they are often viewed closely within the discussion concerning justification. Certainly, regeneration has an instantaneous

The first tenet provides the ground on which to build. Louis Bouyer, the twentieth-century Catholic theologian, began his ministry as a Lutheran before converting to Catholicism in the 1930s. In his book *The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism*, Bouyer identifies what he considers the heart of Protestantism and argues for a commonality with Catholicism. For Bouyer the primary issue is soteriological.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, Bouyer correctly identifies the heart of the matter; however, Bouyer mistakenly identifies a one-to-one correspondence between the Catholic and Protestant understandings of grace. Correctly he considers the notion that all of man's activity is a matter of grace; however, soteriologically, Bouyer's understanding leaves the Scholastic notions of cooperative and operative grace on the table. The Protestant understanding of justification denies any ability of the sinner to cooperate actively with God's grace in any sort of meritorious way. That issue provides the *raison d'être* for the Magisterial Protestant rejection of free will.

One might contend that the Magisterial Reformers incorrectly identified free will as antithetical to justification by faith (as indeed this current author has contended<sup>11</sup>), but the Reformers believed it to be so. The point emphasizes that the free will debate was soteriological. The core issue was not whether God was sovereign over human choice but whether human beings were capable of meritorious activity. The Council of Trent addresses that issue within Protestant thought highlighting the import. Canon four of the sixth session on justification states:

If anyone says that man's free will moved and aroused by God, by assenting to God's call and action, in no way cooperates toward disposing and preparing itself to obtain the grace of justification, that it cannot refuse its assent if it wishes, but that, as something inanimate, it does nothing whatever and is merely passive, let him be anathema.<sup>12</sup>

aspect to it and sanctification contains a processional element in soteriology. However, the two terms can be said to be related in the sense that sanctification also has an instantaneous element to it. The believer is sanctified in Christ and is properly called a saint in New Testament terminology. While regeneration refers to the new birth, and sanctification might be said to refer to a conformity to the image of Christ, they share a fundamental common element, namely the notion of producing a new work intrinsic to the believer. The necessary element in this tenet is that whatever righteousness God begins to form within the believer whether be an instantaneous new birth or a developing holiness; neither can form the basis for the declaration of justification.

<sup>10</sup>Louis Bouyer, *The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism*, trans. A. V. Littledale (London: Harvill, 1956), 17.

<sup>11</sup>Whitlock, "Justification by Faith and Early Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism," 192-206.

<sup>12</sup>*The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, trans., Schroeder H. J. (Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1978), 42-43. The Council's statement on justification is definitively helpful in discussing these four tenets. The sixteenth-century Catholic response to the Reformation highlights the central distinctions between the Catholic and Protestant views of justification.

The sixteenth-century Catholic statement highlights two important factors. First, the statement relates the issue of cooperation of the will in justification to the free will debate, verifying the heart of the free will issue for sixteenth-century Protestants. Second, the statement notes the real issue in the Protestant doctrine, namely that the will of the human being remains passive, unable to move itself actively in cooperation with the grace of God thereby effecting justification. That remains the true heart of the matter and the substance of the first fundamental tenet, namely that human beings in their fallen state are incapable of effecting their own justification by any meritorious action.

That very condition of the sinner leaves him wanting for a righteousness that provides a right basis for justification. The second tenet of justification by faith addresses that need. Justification of the individual is accomplished based on the righteousness of Christ alone, extrinsic to the believer. The tenet emphasizes two important elements. First, the only justifying righteousness belongs to Christ. The basis for justification is provided only in Christ. His character and work alone make provision. The atoning work of Christ cannot be coupled with any other means in forming the basis for justification. Traditionally the terminology of “the imputation of the righteousness of Christ” communicates the point, meaning that God imputes, counts, or credits the righteousness belonging to Christ to the believer. God accepts the righteousness of Christ instead of the believer’s own righteousness, declaring the believer just on account of Christ.

The Council of Trent clarifies the distinction, thereby aiding definition. Trent states, “Hence, to those who work well *unto the end* and trust in God, eternal life is to be offered, both as a grace promised to the sons of God through Christ Jesus, and as a reward promised by God himself, to be faithfully given to their good works and merits.”<sup>13</sup> The statement suggests an insufficiency of Christ’s work on the cross alone requiring an added merit. Certainly the promise made is through Christ, and the statement continues to note that Christ merits eternal life, yet justification remains a reward for the individual’s good works which belong to them in Christ. Christ’s work on the cross to save the individual lacks the necessary continuing work of Christ in the individual to do righteous works which leads to the declaration of justification. With the statement the Council of Trent distinguishes its view from the Protestant principle that Christ’s righteousness alone forms the basis for justification.

The other important element in the second tenet is that the righteous basis for justification remains extrinsic to the believer. As noted above in considering the statement from the Council of Trent which suggests that justification occurs according to the promise of God through Christ and as a reward, the Council’s position indicates that Christ must continue to work righteousness in the believer. God infuses the righteousness of Christ

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 41.

in the believer, rendering the righteousness necessary for justification the actual internal possession of the believer. God declares the believer to be just precisely because the believer is just. Justification by faith alone rejects that idea. Justifying righteousness remains extrinsic to the believer. God considers the believer righteous for Christ's sake based on Christ's righteousness rather than imparting righteousness to the believer.

The Council of Trent responded to this core element in the Protestant doctrine by anathematizing those who held to the notion. Canon eleven states:

If anyone says that men are justified either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and *the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost*, and remains in them, or also that the grace by which we are justified is only the good will of God, let him be anathema.<sup>14</sup>

The canon points to "the sole imputation of the justice of Christ" as an inadequate basis for justification. The statement requires that "the grace and the charity" remain in the believer. Again, the important distinction here is that the basis for justification resides within the believer and is not found in the righteousness of Christ alone.

The Protestant terminology of "justification by faith alone" references the question as to why God counts that extraneous righteousness of Christ on the believer's behalf. God does so only in response to faith. The third tenet of justification by faith alone seeks to define faith. Faith denotes a subjective confidence in Christ alone for justification. The Protestant understanding of faith refers only to the confident assurance that God has made provision for sins through Christ for the sake of Christ alone. Only in response to the believer's personal confidence in the righteous atoning work of Christ does God justify the sinner.

The Council of Trent targeted the Protestant understanding of faith at a couple of points in its decree on justification. First, in chapter nine the Council stated, "It must not be said that sins are forgiven or have been forgiven to anyone who boasts of his confidence and certainty of the remission of sins, resting on that alone."<sup>15</sup> The sixteenth-century Protestants defined faith in exactly that way, namely that justification results from confidence that God forgives sins in Christ. The second statement targeting the element of faith in Protestant thought by the council appears in Canon twelve. The canon states, "If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ sake, or that it is this confidence alone that justifies us, let him be anathema."<sup>16</sup> Here Trent refers to

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 43.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 35.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 43.

the Protestant equation of justifying faith with “confidence in divine mercy.” The statement proves helpful in defining the meaning of this third tenet of justification by faith alone, namely that faith denotes a subjective confidence in Christ alone for justification.

Closely connected to the second tenet and in some sense flowing from the first three, the fourth fundamental tenet requires distinction between justification and regeneration. The sixteenth-century Protestant Reformers understood that justification is not a lone event. The new birth accompanies justification, and true faith will produce works that serve the sanctification of the believer. Yet, the Protestant doctrine adamantly maintains that while they are simultaneous, regeneration must remain distinct from justification. Alister McGrath refers to this central idea as “the most reliable *historical* characterisation of Protestant doctrines of justification.”<sup>17</sup> The imperative thought is that if God makes the sinner righteous and then declares him to be just based on the righteousness of God worked in the believer then justification by faith alone is meaningless. The doctrine becomes “justification by making righteous alone.”

The Council of Trent takes aim at that Protestant distinction between justification and regeneration or sanctification with a direct statement concerning the content of justification in chapter seven of their decree on justification. The council defines justification as “not only a remission of sins but also the sanctification and renewal of the inward man through the voluntary reception of grace.”<sup>18</sup> The terms “sanctification” and “inward renewal” both appear as being aspects of justification itself. No sense of one event containing both justification and renewal is present in the statement. The council draws no distinction between justification and sanctification or renewal.

These definitive tenets form the essential core of the sixteenth-century Protestant doctrine of justification by faith alone. If these elements can be shown to be present in sixteenth-century Anabaptist thought as well, then one can conclude that the Anabaptists also held to justification by faith alone. Balthasar Hubmaier provides an exemplar of Anabaptist thought that adheres clearly to those four tenets.

### **Balthasar Hubmaier’s Doctrine of Justification**

Hardly any general history of the Reformation exists without some reference to Hubmaier; however, Torsten Bergsten’s 1962 biography, which appeared in English in 1978, remains the definitive treatment of Hubmaier’s life.<sup>19</sup> The more substantial treatments of Hubmaier’s soteriology include Alvin Beachy’s 1977 monograph *The Concept of Grace in the Radical*

<sup>17</sup>Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 210.

<sup>18</sup>*The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, 33.

<sup>19</sup>Torsten Bergsten, *Balthasar Hubmaier: Anabaptist Theologian and Martyr* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1978).



*Reformation*, in which he dedicates a substantial amount of space considering Hubmaier's soteriology.<sup>20</sup> Beachy concludes that the Anabaptist view of grace requires an ontological change as opposed to mere change of status as in a forensic understanding of justification. A 1978 article by William Estep entitled "The Anabaptist View of Salvation" focuses on Hubmaier as well.<sup>21</sup> While the title indicates a general consideration of Anabaptist soteriology, Estep primarily confines his examination to Hubmaier, and concludes that Hubmaier emphasizes the new birth over faith alone, although Estep does not dismiss Hubmaier's understanding of justification as being by faith alone. Estep does, however, leave the question concerning the necessity of works in Hubmaier's thought unanswered. Eddie Mabry's 1998 monograph entitled *Balthasar Hubmaier's Understanding of Faith* dedicates a chapter to saving faith.<sup>22</sup> He notes that saving faith for Hubmaier consists in knowledge of justification, yet faith arises out of an initial turning toward God facilitated in human self capacity. Emir Caner wrote an article entitled "Balthasar Hubmaier and his Theological Participation in the Reformation: Ecclesiology and Soteriology" in 2003.<sup>23</sup> Uniquely, Caner overtly advocates the commonality between Hubmaier and the prevailing Protestant view of salvation in the Reformation. Although, Caner focuses on Hubmaier's view of the new birth over and above a view of forensic justification. Matthew Eaton contributes a more recent consideration in a 2010 article entitled "Toward an Anabaptist Covenantal Soteriology: A Dialogue with Balthasar Hubmaier and Contemporary Pauline Scholarship."<sup>24</sup> He concludes that Hubmaier's soteriology conflates grace and cooperation facilitated by human freedom. Each of these considerations of Hubmaier's soteriology adopts a different method of examination and intends a different purpose than the survey contained here. Most of them arrive at a different conclusion. None of them exhaust the topic.<sup>25</sup> The survey that follows does not exhaust the topic either; however, the attempt is offered as a fresh look at Hubmaier's understanding of justification specifically.

Hubmaier's doctrine of justification should be understood in terms of three words that repeat in his writings.<sup>26</sup> The three terms appear together

<sup>20</sup>Beachy, *The Concept of Grace in the Radical Reformation*.

<sup>21</sup>William Roscoe Estep, "The Anabaptist View of Salvation," *SWJT* 20, no. 2 (1978): 32-49.

<sup>22</sup>Eddie Mabry, *Balthasar Hubmaier's Understanding of Faith* (Lanham, MD: University of America Press, 1998).

<sup>23</sup>Emir Caner, "Balthasar Hubmaier and His Theological Participation in the Reformation: Ecclesiology and Soteriology," *Faith and Mission* 21, no. 1 (2003): 32-66.

<sup>24</sup>Eaton, "Toward an Anabaptist Covenantal Soteriology: A Dialogue with Balthasar Hubmaier and Contemporary Pauline Scholarship," 67-93.

<sup>25</sup>A more recent consideration has been offered by Changkyu Kim, *Balthasar Hubmaier's Doctrine of Salvation in Dynamic and Relational Perspective* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2013). Kim's work appeared too late to be included in this current survey.

<sup>26</sup>The core of the information included here on Balthasar Hubmaier was originally presented in an unpublished paper by this author to Dr. Paige Patterson and a PhD research seminar on the Radical Reformation at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in

in *On the Christian Baptism of Believers* forming a summary statement of his doctrine of justification. Hubmaier writes, “Accordingly, when he [the believer] recognizes [*erkenet*] this grace and kindness, he surrenders [*ergibt*] himself to God and commits [*verpflicht*] himself internally in his heart to live a new life according to the rule of Christ.”<sup>27</sup> These three terms convey the essence of Hubmaier’s doctrine of justification while also communicating the substance of the four fundamental tenets of justification by faith traced throughout this survey. Explicating Hubmaier’s meaning in each of the three terms provides adequate data to highlight his commitment to justification by faith alone.

Pipkin and Yoder translate *erkenet* as “recognizes.” This word provides the first essential aspect of Hubmaier’s understanding. Here Hubmaier focuses on the sinner’s recognition of his depravity before God. Hubmaier conveys the idea in *Summa of the Entire Christian Life*, his first published thoughts as an Anabaptist.<sup>28</sup> Hubmaier writes:

Now it belongs to a change of life that we look into our hearts, and that we remember our deeds and our omissions. . . . Yes there is no health in us but rather poison, wounds, and all impurity, which cling to us from the beginning because we are conceived and born in sin. . . . Furthermore, a person finds himself neither help, comfort, nor medicine with which he could help himself. Therefore he must despair of himself and lose heart like the man who had fallen among killers, such a miserable little thing is the person who ponders and recognizes [*erkenet*] himself.<sup>29</sup>

This thought provides the epicenter of justification in Hubmaier’s writing. The individual sinner’s right standing before God must begin with recognition. Eddie Mabry notes that this knowledge is an intimate or even “supernatural knowledge.”<sup>30</sup> The remaining aspects of justification grow from the soil of the sinner’s recognition of his own utter corruption and inability before God. This aspect is foundational for Hubmaier, because at this very point the curse of the Fall begins to diminish. As Hubmaier explains in his first treatise on *Freedom of the Will*, man suffers his lost condition in his ignorance, because “the soul, through eating of the forbidden tree lost the recognition of good and evil in the sight of God.”<sup>31</sup> Without regaining this recognition the sinner remains ignorant of his standing before God and what He requires, continuing in a lost condition incapacitated before God.

November 2008, and as noted above, more recently in this author’s dissertation.

<sup>27</sup>H. Wayne Pipkin and John H. Yoder, eds., *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism*, Classics of the Radical Reformation (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1989), 117.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>30</sup>Mabry, *Balthasar Hubmaier’s Understanding of Faith*, 38.

<sup>31</sup>Pipkin and Yoder, eds., *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism*, 443.

The ignorance of the human condition devastates the sinner and constitutes an arch-sinfulness, namely self-righteousness. Here the wisdom of God collides with the wisdom of the world. The world rejects this recognition because it “does not like this, because it does not want to be a fool or an evil-doer, but to be wise, clever, righteous, just, and spiritual in its own works . . . and consequently despises the unattractive, plain, and simple rule of Christ.”<sup>32</sup> Hubmaier further comments on this attitude before God in noting, “There is nothing that God’s grace cannot tolerate or observe less than presumptuous merits of our own.”<sup>33</sup> Here the reader might note the parallel in Luther’s thought concerning the justification of God. According to Luther, faith properly glorifies God because faith acknowledges God as truthful and in the sinner’s justification of God as true, the sinner himself is justified.<sup>34</sup> Hubmaier’s language bends toward that thought as well. The sinner’s corrupted nature leads to an ignorance that invokes the sinner to dependency on his own merit. God abhors the sinner’s self dependency. Man’s incapacity goes beyond an inability to do what is required; indeed even the attempt at merit is sin.

That ignorance of his own condition from God’s perspective ensures man’s complete inability to effect his own justification. In his catechism, Hubmaier responds to a comment concerning Scripture’s affirmation of human ability for doing good by contending that Scripture pictures man’s ability before the Fall and after regeneration, and he makes it clear that man forfeited his free ability as a creature in the *imago dei* to be righteous. In the Fall the image “has been dimmed, captured, and bound by Adam’s disobedience,” leaving the sinner “mired” in helplessness. The forfeiture was so devastating “that all our righteousness can be likened to the garment of a defiled woman.”<sup>35</sup> The only help comes from Christ who can awaken the sinner from slumber. The awakening comes in the sinner’s recognition of his own condition “through the Word of God.”<sup>36</sup>

The sinner’s recognition of his own corruption and inability to overcome his condition brings despair. The recognition of the sinner, however, is two-fold. Not only does he recognize his own desperation, he also recognizes that help must come from outside himself. He needs another righteousness:

From this it follows that the water baptism of John is nothing but a public testimony which the person receives and gives because he confesses and *recognizes* that he is a miserable sinner, who cannot help himself nor give himself counsel, who does nothing good but that all his righteousness is corrupt and reproachable. For that reason he despairs of himself. He must also be damned

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 146.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 361.

<sup>34</sup>Martin Luther, *Three Treatises*, 2nd rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970), 284–85.

<sup>35</sup>Pipkin and Yoder, eds., *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism*, 360.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 117.

eternally, *were not a foreign righteousness to come to his help*. [emphasis added].<sup>37</sup>

Satisfactory righteousness is not within the sinner's ability. The recognition leads to despair at the reality of condemnation; however, the despairing sinner finds the necessary righteousness in another. Hubmaier continues his illustration from John's baptism to note that the required righteousness belongs to Christ. "Now John is there and points him [the sinner] to Christ, that in him he will find discharge of his sins, rest, peace, and security so that he not remain in despair."<sup>38</sup> Help for the despairing sinner must come from outside of himself. The only hope the believer finds available is external to himself in Christ.

Toward the end of *On the Christian Baptism of Believers*, Hubmaier describes this turning to Christ as a critically wounded man turning to the physician for healing. Christ, the physician, offers healing to the man who has entrusted himself to the physician's care. Because the wounded man confesses his malady before God, he hopes by faith "that God will not hold him to account for such weakness and sickness to eternal damnation because he surrendered himself to the physician Jesus and has committed his sickness to him to be healed." God responds in mercy for the sake of Christ and "grants him his request and thus forgives [his] sin through Jesus Christ our Lord."<sup>39</sup> For Christ's sake God does not impute the corruption of the believer as sin. God's favor rests on Christ, and his mediatorial work secures the favor of God toward the sinner submitting for healing as well. The wounded man offers nothing acceptable to God; however, the believer submitted to Christ finds acceptance because of Christ alone.

The healing offered to the believer by Christ issues from Christ's death on the sinner's behalf. The justification of the sinner depends upon the substitutionary nature of Christ's death. In commenting on the Lord's Supper Hubmaier emphasizes that the Supper is in memoriam of Christ's suffering reminding the believer "that he shed his blood and distributed it on the cross to all believers for the washing away of our sins."<sup>40</sup> Hubmaier contends that the gospel heals because "the Law is now fulfilled in Christ, who has paid the debt of sin for us and has already vanquished death, devil, and hell."<sup>41</sup> Christ was delivered by God "to death for our sake, that sin might be paid for."<sup>42</sup> Hubmaier's terminology notes the satisfaction of righteous demands in Christ as well as the substitutionary nature of Christ's act for the believer. The sinner finds forgiveness in Christ alone, possessing no self merit before God. As noted above any attempt to offer merit before God is itself sinful.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 106.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 145.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 148.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 347.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 348.

The believer discovers in his *Erkennung* the absolute impossibility of self-righteousness, and recognizes that he must submit in his miserable condition to Christ in whom alone righteousness can be found. Man's saving response to his recognition is described in Hubmaier's second of the definitive terms.

After the sinner recognizes his desperation and where he might find healing, he must surrender himself to the physician. Pipkin and Yoder translate *ergeben* as "surrender." When the critically wounded man realizes that his self-made infirmary is undermined by his own poisoned nature, he has only one hope, namely to surrender to Christ for healing. That surrender or *Ergebung* carries the substance of the third tenet of justification by faith, namely faith as a confident trust.

For Hubmaier, faith believes what the Word has demonstrated. The Word of God confronts the sinner with his own condition and points him to Christ. Before the sinner responds in faith "all these teachings which reveal the sickness and point to the physician, are letter and they kill," yet, when believed they usher in life. "But by faith the Spirit makes them alive."<sup>43</sup> This is the point of justification for the believer. Hubmaier states the matter directly in what might be termed a core statement of justification by faith alone:

If now a person who has been brought through the Word of God to recognition of his sin confesses himself to be a sinner, and is further taught by the Word of God that he should call upon God the Father for the forgiveness of his sin for the sake of Christ, and if he does that in *faith and does not doubt anything, then God has cleansed his heart in this faith and trust and has remitted all his sin* [emphasis added].<sup>44</sup>

Hubmaier's thought is straightforward. The remission of sins and consequently right standing before God occur at the moment of faith. One might find it difficult to imagine a more direct statement describing justification occurring by faith alone.

Hubmaier indicates his clear understanding of faith's essence in his parallel associations of faith with the absence of doubt and with trust. In his catechism he offers further a direct definition of faith that seems finally to bar the door of possibility against any reading of Hubmaier which might contend that faith consists in anything other than confident trust:

Faith is the realization of the unspeakable mercy of God, his gracious favor and goodwill, which he bears to us through his most beloved Son Jesus Christ, whom he did not spare and delivered him to death for our sakes that sin might be paid for, and we might be reconciled to him with the assurance of our hearts cry

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 85.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 117.

to him: Abba, Father, our Father who art in heaven.<sup>45</sup>

Associating faith with “realization” and “assurance of heart” precludes an understanding of faith as something endemic to the believer preexisting before encountering the Word. Further, Hubmaier’s definition disallows a view of faith consisting in creedal content. Faith embraces the warmth of illumination from God’s Word; an embracing which consists in one’s entrusting oneself to God which manifests in complete surrender. Less than surrender belies complete trust or faith in Christ.

Hubmaier associates surrender to Christ with faith in his illustration of the wounded man. “All his sickness he commits, submits, and entrusts to him [the physician].”<sup>46</sup> Believing then, the sick man abandons himself to the physician, Christ. The ideas of belief and surrender are linked together. In describing the believer’s surrender to Christ, Hubmaier notes that the believer has “firm faith that God will not hold him to account . . . because he has surrendered himself to the physician Jesus and has committed his sickness to be healed.”<sup>47</sup> Faith consists as trusted assurance that God will deal mercifully with the sinner, because he is submitted under the care of the physician. The believer’s submission does not constitute the basis or the reason God forgives the sinner; rather, submission (or surrender) is an attribute of faith. Christ’s righteous work on the cross and his favor with the Father provide the only basis of forgiveness.

The believer’s surrender to Christ transitions into Hubmaier’s third definitive term, *verpflichten*, which Pipkin and Yoder translate “commit;” however, the word would seem more nuanced toward obligation. The nuance seems to be appropriate to Hubmaier’s usage of the term. The believer’s surrender to Christ also includes surrender “inwardly in his heart unto a new life according to the Rule of Christ, of this physician who has healed him, pleaded for him, and from whom he received life.”<sup>48</sup> The new life comes as a direct and immediate result of justification. The sick sinner surrenders to the will of the physician and immediately is reborn. As Estep notes, “It [the new birth] takes place in response to man’s faith commitment to Jesus Christ which is the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word.”<sup>49</sup> Justification of the sinner is distinct from the new birth, but it can never be extracted from it.

Reminiscent of Paul in Romans 4:25, on at least two occasions Hubmaier directly connects justification to the resurrection of Christ. Hubmaier writes in his *Summa*, “But at the same time he [the believer] fully believes that Christ through his death has forgiven him his sins and through his [Christ’s] resurrection has made him righteous before God.”<sup>50</sup> Again, in *On*

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 148.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 144.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 145.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Estep, “The Anabaptist View of Salvation,” 41.

<sup>50</sup>Pipkin and Yoder, eds., *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism*, 87.

*the Christian Baptism of Believers* he writes, "He died on account of our sins and rose again for the sake of our justification."<sup>51</sup> The connection for Hubmaier between the resurrection of Christ and the justification of the believer is a new life. Christ rose again to a life after death and that resurrection of Christ corresponds to the new life of the believer. J. Denny Weaver writes, "Resurrection as a part of the work of Christ served Hubmaier as a primary foundation for his stress on the fact that a reborn person must necessarily live a new, changed and righteous life."<sup>52</sup> In Christ's resurrection from the dead he can legitimately provide eternal life for all who trust in him. The death and resurrection of Christ counteract the terminal illness of the debilitated sinner who trusts wholly in Christ alone.

The believer commits in surrender to an obligation or duty to the new life. In his surrender the believer is obligated to follow the will of the physician in his healing. Here is Hubmaier's corrective to those finding a loophole for holy living in justification by faith alone. The sinner believing that he is hopelessly ill and wholly incapable of effecting his own healing resigns himself to the physician's orders in treating his sickness. The sinner believes the physician's diagnosis, understands the severity of the prognosis, and dutifully follows the prescribed treatment. However, in following the prescribed treatment, the believer is not left to struggle in his own impotent weakness. Rather, "he calls upon him [the physician] for healing so that what the wounded is not able to do out of his own capacity, the physician counsels, helps, and promotes him so that he can follow his Word and commandment."<sup>53</sup> Christ accomplishes the new life in the believer so that the believer identifies with "Paul who confesses publicly that he does not live but Christ lives in him, is life for him, and outside of Christ he knows that he is empty, worthless, dead, and a lost sinner."<sup>54</sup> Justification of the sinner is distinct from the new birth, but it can never be extracted from it.

The new birth is immediate, but it is not the basis of justification. Three points of thought in Hubmaier's writings affirm that clearly. First, Hubmaier's understanding of baptism testifies to a distinction between justification and the new life. The core value in believers-only baptism is just that: only believers should be baptized. In *On Christian Baptism*, Hubmaier contends that "faith must precede baptism." He furthers the thought noting, "That nobody can be so blind and helpless, but that he must see and grasp that no one should be baptized with water unless beforehand he confesses faith and knows how he stands with God," because "baptism signifies . . . the certain knowledge of a good conscience toward God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."<sup>55</sup> The proper candidate for baptism testifies in the

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., 115.

<sup>52</sup>J. Denny Weaver, "Hubmaier Versus Hut on the Work of Christ: The Fifth Nicolsburg Article," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 82, (1991): 176.

<sup>53</sup>Pipkin and Yoder, eds., *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism*, 85.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 145.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., 117.

baptismal waters to his sure confidence in God's favor bestowed upon him for Christ's sake. The believer ought not to submit to baptism without sure knowledge of forgiveness in Christ. Yet, Hubmaier nowhere advocates that the believer wait until he certainly knows that he has merited a declaration of justification before God. At the core of the distinction between Catholic and Protestant justification lies the difference between a merited declaration of justice which can only be made when the believer finally perseveres and the immediate declaration of justification based on an alien righteousness belonging to Christ alone. The believer who must persevere in order to merit justification could never be certain of his honesty in the baptismal pool. Consequently, justification must be a sure event which does not depend upon the righteousness of the believer.

Second, Hubmaier contends that the believer has not achieved sinless perfection in his submission to Christ:

He [the believer] calls upon him [Christ] daily for healing and purification, so that what the wounded is not able to do out of his own capacity—as in fact he can do nothing—the physician counsels and helps him or does not blame him for his sickness or take it for evil, since he would gladly walk according to the word and will of the physician. But that he does not act accordingly is the fault of his sickness.<sup>56</sup>

The sinner, at the point of his recognition, may choose either submission to the physician or obstinate refusal to the contrary. If the sinner believes and submits to the healing of the physician then the physician's promise of health to the believer becomes his healing, yet the physician sets about the healing prescription in order that the promise might be fulfilled. Here Hubmaier's thought is reminiscent of Luther's thought in his Romans lectures. Luther's first usage of *simul justus et peccator* appears in the same context which Hubmaier uses in his discussion of justification, namely the Good Samaritan.<sup>57</sup> Luther's and Hubmaier's terminology communicate similar ideas. Hubmaier also indicates that the sick person does not experience immediate healing; rather, God does not impute his illness as sin.

Any indication of the believer being both just and sinful precludes an understanding of justification occurring upon the basis of regeneration. The Council of Trent made the Catholic opinion abundantly clear in noting that security could not be had in faith alone and that sin forfeits justification and can be recovered only in penance.<sup>58</sup> In Hubmaier's thought one cannot find any sense of the individual forfeiting justification and then later reacquiring it. Consequently, one would be hard pressed to indicate how Hubmaier might be said to view the new birth as forming the basis for justification. If

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 145.

<sup>57</sup>Hilton C. Oswald ed. *Luther's Works*, vol. 25 (St. Louis: Concordia, 1972), 260.

<sup>58</sup>*The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, 37, 39.



Hubmaier understands an instantaneous justification in which the believer can express confidence in his standing before God, then how could it be said that righteousness formed in the new birth can be the basis for the declaration? If Hubmaier expressed such an idea then he could not very well have any basis for confidence in reference to justification. Justification and regeneration must be kept distinct while inseparable if the believer does not experience sinful perfection in the flesh and yet maintains a justified status.

Third, Hubmaier adamantly insists that the new birth must manifest in good works. He also notes in his catechism that God rewards the good works of the believer. Nonetheless, Hubmaier cautiously warns that no merit exists in the believer's works. He writes:

That [God's promise of reward] is due to his gracious kindness. He ascribes these [works] to us as if we had done him a great favor out of ourselves and our own (strength), whereas he, of course, has no need whatever of us and does not wish our service except for our own benefit. Then let God call it a reward, but woe to you if you should consider it a payment. Consider all God's dealing with you as pure grace.<sup>59</sup>

The believer must humbly attribute any goodness in his works to the grace of God in the new birth. God desires good works for the believer's benefit and in grace God provides for the believer to accomplish good works in order that the believer might benefit. However, the believer that wrongly attributes any meritorious value to his own good works assaults the grace of God and mocks God with self-righteous presumption. Matthew Eaton characterizes this quote as "ambiguous." He contends that Hubmaier could well have the reward of salvation in mind, and that correctly understanding Hubmaier's meaning depends upon contextual examination of good works in the *Catechism* in which the above passage appears. Eaton's examination of Hubmaier's context and words concerning final judgment leads to the conclusion that good works "lead plainly to eternal life."<sup>60</sup> Eaton's argument can be called into question at two points. First, Hubmaier does not leave his meaning in the above quotation ambiguous. After warning believers to avoid considering good works as payment he further explains himself in noting that servants work for payment, but sons work from love and do not consider wages. Hubmaier considers the believer's works as the works of a son motivated from love, not the works of a servant receiving what he earns. The second point to make concerns Eaton's assessment of Hubmaier's words about final judgment. While Hubmaier connects final judgment with good works, the discussion is set in the context of belief and unbelief. Those who

<sup>59</sup>Pipkin and Yoder, eds., *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism*, 361.

<sup>60</sup>Eaton, "Toward an Anabaptist Covenantal Soteriology: A Dialogue with Balthasar Hubmaier and Contemporary Pauline Scholarship," 75-76.

believe obey and those who do not believe obstinately refuse to obey.<sup>61</sup> Here, Hubmaier remains consistent in his insistence that the true believer will do good works.

### Conclusion

Hubmaier's writings evidence the four tenets of justification by faith presented in the introduction. His usage of "recognition," "surrender," and "obligation" contain the four fundamental elements. The sinner must recognize his own inability to be right before God. The sinner realizes that he possesses only sickness and death before God and cannot rely upon his own merit for healing. When that recognition comes, the sinner also recognizes that another must come to his aid. Here the sinner becomes the believer looking to Christ, in whom he finds the physician for healing. Trusting the healing of Christ, the believer surrenders himself to the physician and the prescription for healing. The believer finds in Christ the promise of healing and knows that while he heals God does not count his illness against him. The first three tenets of justification by faith are evident here. The sinner's inability to effect justification, the necessity of the righteousness of Christ which remains external to the believer for justification, and the understanding of faith as a confident trust in God's promise are all overtly present.

The justified sinner is born again according to Hubmaier. The new birth accompanies the sinner's surrender in faith. That new birth means that the sick person submits to the prescription of the physician; however, Hubmaier does not view the new birth as causal for forgiveness. Hubmaier emphasizes that the believer is under obligation to obedience, yet the believer is not completely healed. Instead, his surrender comes in trusting the promise of healing in Christ. The sense of finding the promise of healing in Christ without being completely healed, in other words justified and not perfect, precludes a cause and effect relationship between the new birth and justification. The believer cannot be declared just based on an intrinsic righteousness if the believer remains imperfect. That thought, which is similar to Luther's *simul justus et peccator*, highlights a necessary distinction between justification and regeneration or sanctification, which is the fourth tenet of justification by faith.

The argument in this article indicates real adherence on Hubmaier's part to a sixteenth-century evangelical understanding of justification by faith alone. That conclusion is important for twenty-first-century Baptist theology. Baptists holding to a believer's-only baptism and the same soteriological emphases concerning free will and good works as Hubmaier and other early Anabaptists, yet who are careful to maintain an emphasis on justification by faith alone, can look with confidence to sixteenth-century Anabaptists as theological predecessors. And, Baptists should consider sixteenth-century Anabaptist theology in formulating and articulating their own theology.

<sup>61</sup>Pipkin and Yoder, eds., *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism*, 363.

This survey of Hubmaier's thought also illustrates that while the traditional Reformation terminology concerning justification by faith alone has been helpful, the true test of the evangelical doctrine is found in the core concerns expressed by the terminology. The Magisterial Reformers use certain terminology that is absent in Anabaptist writings; however, the core thought in those essential common elements are found in the Anabaptist thought as well. To speak of justification in terms of a "forensic declaration" or an "imputation of righteousness" expresses particular truths about justification by faith alone. However, the foregoing discussion indicates that an absence of such language does not indicate an absence of such truths. Justification terminology is important because it represents meaningful concepts. Those concepts, however, contain the true essential elements to be expressed.

Doctrines of justification have eternal consequences and do not represent mere academic exercises. Because they are eternally consequential they are important to understand. Even in the face of scant references to justification, Anabaptist scholars are compelled to assess Anabaptist soteriology continually and this brief survey seeks only to have a small part in that necessary conversation.

## *Curb Your Enthusiasm: Martin Luther's Critique of Anabaptism*

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### **Introduction**

Following the events of 1517, reform-minded Christians all over Europe looked to Martin Luther as a source of inspiration in their own efforts to renovate thoroughly sixteenth-century Christianity. While it is true that most sixteenth-century Protestant leaders considered Luther to be the catalyst for religious renewal, the Reformation was anything but a unified attack on late medieval Catholicism. Evangelical movements appeared all over Europe, many of them as different from each other as they were from the Roman Church.<sup>1</sup> Some groups were part of the so-called Magisterial Reformation, which rejected many of the tenets of Catholicism while maintaining a close relationship between church and state. The Magisterial Reformation included Lutherans and their Reformed counterparts, each of which essentially exchanged the universal/visible church of Catholicism for a territorial/visible church that varied from region to region. Other sects took their critique of Catholicism even further, rejecting both medieval Catholic theology and the very notion of a territorial church. These groups were part of the so-called Radical Reformation, a movement that included considerably more diversity than the Magisterial Reformation.

Though Radicals and Magisterial reformers shared a common disdain for the Roman Church, they were often as critical of each other as they were Catholicism. This is illustrated in Martin Luther's interactions with the Radicals and other non-Lutheran movements. This article will examine Luther's critique of one major branch of the Radical Reformation, the Anabaptist movement. It will argue that, despite a lack of precision and a paucity of works devoted specifically to the Anabaptists, Luther did present

<sup>1</sup>This multiplicity of diverse reform movements has led many modern Reformation scholars to suggest that the period is characterized by a variety of "reformations" rather than a single "Reformation." See Carter S. Lindberg, *The European Reformations*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), and James R. Payton Jr., *Getting the Reformation Wrong: Correcting Some Misunderstandings* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010).

an extensive critique of Anabaptism. It will be shown that Luther's appraisal was quite wide-ranging, if not systematic.

The article is divided into two major sections, the first of which will attempt to define Anabaptism as one distinct faction among many in the Radical Reformation (something Luther never attempted to do himself). The second section will outline the various types of criticisms Luther lodged against Anabaptism, which can be grouped into at least five broad categories: a deficient soteriology, a deficient ecclesiology, miscellaneous theological errors, a misunderstanding of the Christian's role in society, and a general spirit of fanaticism (or "enthusiasm," as Luther preferred). Because of Luther's minimal efforts at distinguishing different sects among the Radicals, it will be apparent that many of Luther's criticisms were based upon a misunderstanding of what Anabaptists actually believed. It will be equally clear that even when Luther did understand Anabaptist beliefs and practices, he rejected them.

### Anabaptism Defined

In the past, few historians made the effort to distinguish between the various sects associated with the Radical Reformation. As a result, Anabaptists were often grouped with other movements with which they bore little resemblance other than a rejection of both Catholicism and the Magisterial Reformation. Historian William Estep suggests, "no group within Christian history ... has been judged as unfairly as the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century."<sup>2</sup> The reasons Estep cites for these alleged unfair judgments include anti-Anabaptist polemics written by their contemporaries, the unavailability of primary sources, a lack of interest by European scholars, and unwillingness on the part of American scholars to utilize the primary sources that were available.<sup>3</sup> This lack of specificity in defining Anabaptism understandably led to widespread confusion at both the scholarly and popular levels.

### Rethinking Anabaptism

For most of the last five centuries, the Anabaptists were compared to, rather than distinguished from, other Radical movements. Especially common was the tendency to lump Anabaptists together with those Radicals possessing more violent proclivities.<sup>4</sup> For example, historians regularly considered the Anabaptists to be connected closely to the Peasants War of 1525, claiming Thomas Müntzer to be the principle founder of Anabaptism.<sup>5</sup> This

<sup>2</sup>William R. Estep, *The Anabaptist Story: An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism*, 3d ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, 1–2.

<sup>4</sup>Arnold Koelpin notes that Luther himself made this same assumption. See Arnold Koelpin, "Luther Battles the Fanatics," *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* 5.3 (Holy Trinity 1996): 24. See also Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, 4.

<sup>5</sup>Harold Bender notes that this misconception began with the Lutheran reformers themselves. See Harold S. Bender, "The Zwickau Prophets, Thomas Müntzer, and the

often led to the conclusion that Anabaptists were revolutionary by nature.<sup>6</sup> Leonard Verduin notes that, while Conrad Grebel and other Anabaptists did have contact with Müntzer, they made it clear that “cooperation between [Müntzer] and them was contingent upon abandonment of revolutionary tactics.”<sup>7</sup> Though some post-1525 Anabaptists did show revolutionary tendencies, they were an aberration uncharacteristic of the entire movement.<sup>8</sup>

In light of these misunderstandings, a massive scholarly reassessment of the Radical Reformation was undertaken by a variety of religious historians during the middle decades of the twentieth century. Many of these historians were themselves Anabaptists (often Mennonites) or other church historians in Free Church traditions. Others were not confessional church historians, but rather social historians writing from either secular or ecumenical perspectives. The leading historian of this scholarly renaissance was George Huntston Williams, longtime professor at the Harvard University Divinity School. Beginning in the 1950s, Williams began to redefine the terms of debate utilized in Anabaptist studies. With the publication of the first edition of his massive tome *The Radical Reformation* in 1962, Williams popularized a new paradigm for distinguishing the different subgroups that constituted the Radical Reformation.

Williams called the first category of Radicals the “Spiritualists,” which included such mystics and/or revolutionaries as Müntzer, Caspar Schwenckfeld, and the various libertine groups. The second subgroup Williams designated the “Evangelical Rationalists,” whose primary characteristics were individualism and anti-Trinitarianism. The third group was the Anabaptists, who were evangelical in their theology and restorationist in their objectives.<sup>9</sup> To this third group belonged the Swiss Brethren like Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and Michael Sattler, the scholastic theologian-turned-Anabap-

Anabaptists,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 27.1 (January 1953): 9.

<sup>6</sup>Though somewhat nuanced, this line of argument is still put forth by some modern historians. See C. Scott Dixon, *The Reformation in Germany*, Historical Association Studies (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 87–96; Paul P. Kuenning, “Sources of Lutheran Pietism’s Ethical Activism in Anabaptism by Way of Thomas Müntzer,” *The Covenant Quarterly* 47.2 (May 1989): 7; Harry Loewen, *Luther and the Radicals: Another Look at Some Aspects of the Struggle between Luther and the Radical Reformers* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University, 1974), 73–79. Claus-Peter Clasen argues that there were some revolutionary Anabaptists, but there were more differences than similarities between the anarchic peasants and mainstream Anabaptism. He concludes there was no link between the Peasant War and Anabaptism. See Claus-Peter Clasen, *Anabaptism: A Social History, 1525–1618* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972), 152–57.

<sup>7</sup>Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers and their Stepchildren* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 238.

<sup>8</sup>A notable example is the revolutionary Anabaptist “Kingdom” established at Munster in 1533, later destroyed in 1535. Verduin notes, “By making Munster typical of the movement, men were likewise able to blame Anabaptism for the Peasant Revolt.” See *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup>Williams traces out these three categories of Radicals in the introduction to *The Radical Reformation*. See George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 3rd ed., Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, vol. XV (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2000), xxvii–xxxvi.

tist apologist Balthasar Hubmaier, and the Anabaptist theologian Pilgram Marpeck. According to Estep, these men and their compatriots “constituted normative Anabaptism, by which all forms of the movement [are] to be judged.”<sup>10</sup>

### Normative Anabaptism

What Estep refers to as “normative Anabaptism” began on January 21, 1525, when George Blaurock asked Conrad Grebel to baptize him based upon Blaurock’s profession of faith. Following his baptism, Blaurock proceeded to baptize the other dozen or so men who were present.<sup>11</sup> These Anabaptists were not revolutionaries like Müntzer or self-proclaimed prophets like Nicholas Störch and the Zwickau Prophets, but rather were evangelicals who rejected not only medieval scholasticism but also the medieval concept of Christendom. This rejection of Christendom aside, Hans-Jürgen Goertz notes that Anabaptists did not set out to establish autonomous churches; the Swiss Brethren took this step only after Zwingli rejected their program for reform.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, Anabaptism arose as an evangelical restorationist movement distinct from the Lutheran and Reformed churches, as well as other Radical sects.

In his book *The Reformers and their Stepchildren*, Verduin argues that the Anabaptist rejection of Christendom was not novel, but rather was the latest manifestation of a dissenting impulse that had always existed alongside the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>13</sup> Verduin claims that authentic Anabaptism was marked by several distinctives, the sum of which he structures his book around. Among these Anabaptist distinctives were a rejection of christening, a separation of church and state, voluntary faith, a rejection of sacerdotalism, nonviolence, and an emphasis on personal holiness. Interestingly, though credobaptism is often considered a fundamental Anabaptist distinctive, Verduin contends that a rejection of christening may or may not entail a rejection

<sup>10</sup>Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, xi. After accepting William’s threefold division of Radicals, Harry Loewen further subdivides the Anabaptists into three groups. The revolutionary Anabaptists, exemplified by the Münsterites, wanted to apply Old Testament practices to the contemporary setting, often by means of force. The contemplative Anabaptists trusted in mystical experiences for their direction. The evangelical Anabaptists were those who looked to the New Testament for their faith and practice. This latter category is roughly synonymous with what Estep calls “normative Anabaptism.” See Loewen, *Luther and the Radicals*, 23. Estep’s thesis has remained influential among Southern Baptist interpreters of Anabaptism. Note the repeated references to Estep’s legacy among Southern Baptists in Malcolm Yarnell, ed., *The Anabaptists and Contemporary Baptists: Restoring New Testament Christianity* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2013).

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 12–13; see also Hans J. Hillerbrand, *Christendom Divided: The Protestant Reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 72.

<sup>12</sup>Hans-Jürgen Goertz, “Radical Religiosity in the German Reformation,” in *A Companion to the Reformation World*, Blackwell Companions to European History, ed. Po-chia Hsia (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 79.

<sup>13</sup>Verduin, *The Reformers and their Stepchildren*, 14.

of paedobaptism itself.<sup>14</sup> Early Anabaptist distinctives were expounded in the Schleithem Confession (1527) and other statements of faith, as well as the apologetic writings of evangelical Anabaptists. Williams notes that the Schleithem Confession in particular, though not a comprehensive statement of faith, became the theological norm for many segments of nonviolent Anabaptism.<sup>15</sup> These distinctives distinguished Anabaptists from other Radicals, making it apparent “that there were fundamental differences between parties and movements within the Radical Reformation.”<sup>16</sup>

Luther himself never made an effort to delineate carefully between the various types of Radicals.<sup>17</sup> He frankly admitted in his 1528 treatise *Concerning Rebaptism* that, “Since there has not been much occasion here for it, I have not, for my part, given much thought to these baptizers.”<sup>18</sup> John Oyer observes that, despite the fact Luther wrote or spoke on many occasions against the Anabaptists, most of what he said was limited to passing comments; *Concerning Rebaptism* is the only “tract which was devoted exclusively to a discussion and refutation of Anabaptism.”<sup>19</sup> Luther’s favorite designation for all Radicals, including Anabaptists, was *Schwärmer*, translated as either “enthusiast” or “fanatic.”<sup>20</sup> Though there were clear differences between Anabaptists and other fanatics, Oyer notes “Luther never had sufficient contact with Anabaptists to induce him to question the transfer of his picture of the *Schwärmer* to Anabaptists.”<sup>21</sup>

In practice, Luther treated all his evangelical opponents with contempt, even though, as Mark Edwards observes, “The only actual connection binding all these opponents was Luther’s view that they were all ‘false brethren,’ minions of Satan, bent on subverting the Reformation from within.”<sup>22</sup>

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 197.

<sup>15</sup>Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 294.

<sup>16</sup>Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, 23.

<sup>17</sup>The same could be said of other reformers, including Calvin. See Benjamin Wirt Farley’s introduction to John Calvin, *Treatises against the Anabaptists and against the Libertines*, ed. and trans. Benjamin Wirt Farley (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 20.

<sup>18</sup>Martin Luther, “Concerning Rebaptism,” in *Luther’s Works*, vol 40: *Church and Ministry II*, ed. Conrad Bergendoff (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1958), 230.

<sup>19</sup>John S. Oyer, *Lutheran Reformers against Anabaptists: Luther, Melancthon and Menius and the Anabaptists of Central Germany* (The Hague, the Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), 116.

<sup>20</sup>George Williams divides the *Schwärmer* into four different groups. The *revolutionary spiritualists* were roughly equivalent to William’s *spiritualist* category of Radicals, represented by Müntzer, Karlstadt, and the Zwickau Prophets. The *commemorationists* were those whose rejection of Catholicism also entailed a rejection of the real presence in the Eucharist, including Zwingli and Ocoelampadius. The *Täufer* were those who practiced credobaptism, particularly the Anabaptists. The evangelical spiritualizers were the less revolutionary version of the first group, especially Schwenckfeld. See George Huntston Williams, “Sanctification in the Testimony of Several So-called Schwärmer,” *Menmonite Quarterly Review* 42.1 (January 1968): 7–8.

<sup>21</sup>Oyer, *Lutheran Reformers against Anabaptists*, 230.

<sup>22</sup>Mark U. Edwards, Jr., “Luther’s Own Fanatics,” in *Seven-headed Luther: Essays in Commemoration of a Quincentenary, 1483–1983*, ed. Peter Newman Brooks (Oxford: Oxford



Arnold Koeplin notes that Luther considered the fanatics to be comprised of a very diverse group, including Karlstadt, Müntzer, Zwingli, the Anabaptists, Caspar Schwenckfeld, and Erasmus.<sup>23</sup> According to Estep, Luther tended to lump the Anabaptists in with Spiritualists like Müntzer and the Zwickau Prophets.<sup>24</sup> Luther's lack of definitional precision, coupled with his admitted unfamiliarity with normative Anabaptism, led the reformer frequently to criticize Anabaptists for the faults of other Radicals.

### Luther's Critique of Anabaptism

Though the evangelical Anabaptists were only one segment of the Radical Reformation, Luther made little effort to make the fine distinctions among the various Radicals that modern historians do. This led to a variety of criticisms of Anabaptism, some of which could legitimately be applied to normative Anabaptism, others of which were more applicable to other types of Radicals. In respect to classifying Luther's criticisms, Oyer notes that "[Luther's] declarations on the subject of Anabaptism were frequent, but always short; they consisted primarily of miscellaneous comments on baptism, the Christian's relation to the state or how to treat those poor deluded souls."<sup>25</sup> True as this statement is, it fails to take into account the genuine variety present in Luther's various salvos against Anabaptism. Though Luther critiqued many aspects of Anabaptism, most of the reformer's opprobrium was focused upon four broad categories, each of which includes any number of specific criticisms.

#### A Deficient Soteriology

Luther was critical of what he understood to be Anabaptist soteriology. Specifically, he believed that all fanatics adhered to some form of works righteousness, a charge that permeates almost every aspect of Luther's critique of Anabaptism. This accusation is best understood in light of Luther's defense of justification by faith alone. According to Bernhard Lohse, "There is no doubt that the heart and soul of Luther's Reformation theology is the article on justification."<sup>26</sup> Luther's understanding of justification evolved over time,

University Press, 1983), 124.

<sup>23</sup>Arnold J. Koelplin, "Luther Battles the Fanatics," 24. Williams notes that all of Luther's opponents were either dubbed Papists or *Schwärmer*, the latter of which included such diverse individuals as Müntzer, Zwingli, and Ocoelampadius. See George Huntston Williams, "The Radical Reformation Revisited," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 34.1 and 34.2 (1984): 1.

<sup>24</sup>Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, 4. In a similar vein, John Oyer claims that for Luther, the term "Anabaptist" thus becomes a broad and almost meaningless appellation which attempts to include all deviants from the Lutheran movement." See John S. Oyer, "The Writings of Luther Against the Anabaptists," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 27.2 (April 1953): 103.

<sup>25</sup>John S. Oyer, "Luther and the Anabaptists," *Baptist Quarterly* 30.4 (October 1983): 166.

<sup>26</sup>Berhard Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology: Its Historical and Systematic Development*, trans. and ed. Roy A. Harrisville (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 258.

resulting in an ongoing scholarly debate over when Luther arrived at his so-called “Reformation breakthrough.”<sup>27</sup> But regardless of when Luther reached his mature understanding of justification, by 1517 he was denouncing what he understood to be the works righteousness associated with the nominalist tradition in which he had been educated.<sup>28</sup>

In numerous places Luther made clear that, in his interpretation, justification was not dependent upon good works. In *The Disputation Concerning Justification* (1536), Luther clearly stated, “Faith without works justifies. Therefore, justification takes place without works.”<sup>29</sup> In his lecture on Galatians 3:6, Luther claimed, “But the doctrine of justification is this, that we are pronounced righteous and are saved solely by faith in Christ, and without works.”<sup>30</sup> Luther criticized the Jews for rejecting justification by faith.

They understand nothing about grace and justification by faith . . . but they wish to be holy by nature and by blood, as the heathen try to be by the will of the flesh. However, the papists look for a middle way. They wish to be righteous neither by the will of the flesh nor by blood but by the will of man. But all these ways are rejected, and John says that we must be born of God.<sup>31</sup>

Luther was even aware that his doctrine of justification set him apart from Augustine. In a tabletalk recorded by Veit Deitrich, Luther claimed, “Ever since I came to an understanding of Paul, I have not been able to think well of any doctor [of the church]. They have become of little value to me. At first I devoured, not merely read, Augustine. But when the door was opened for me in Paul, so that I understood what justification by faith is, it was all over with Augustine.”<sup>32</sup> In Luther’s theology, justification *by* faith was foundational to *the* faith. As Lohse notes, “For Luther, then, everything depended on holding fast to justification by faith alone against ‘works- righteousness.’”<sup>33</sup>

As far as Luther was concerned, Anabaptists and other Radicals rejected justification by faith in favor of justification by works.<sup>34</sup> The first fa-

<sup>27</sup>For a summary of this debate, see *Ibid.*, 85–88.

<sup>28</sup>For a brief description of the nominalist understanding of justification, see Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers* (Nashville: Broadman, 1988), 63–66.

<sup>29</sup>Martin Luther, “The Disputation Concerning Justification,” in *Luther’s Works, vol. 34: Career of the Reformer IV*, ed. Lewis W. Spitz (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1960), 193.

<sup>30</sup>Martin Luther, “Galatians 3:6,” in *Luther’s Works, vol. 26: Lectures on Galatians, 1535, Chapters 1–4*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1963), 232.

<sup>31</sup>Tabletalk No. 4493: Jews Seek Salvation in their Observances, April 12, 1539,” in *Luther’s Works, vol. 54: Table Talk*, ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 348.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>33</sup>Lohse, *Martin Luther’s Theology*, 265.

<sup>34</sup>Egil Grisliis argues that most Anabaptists were in essential agreement with Luther on the proper place of works, but chose to emphasize experience over doctrinal formulations. For their part, Anabaptists accused Luther of rejecting good works as unimportant in the Christian life. See Egil Grisliis, “The Meaning of Good Works: Luther and the Anabaptists,” *Word and World* 6.2 (Spring 1986): 175–77.

natic Luther criticized for works righteousness was his erstwhile colleague, Karlstadt. In his 1528 treatise *Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matters of Images and the Sacraments*, Luther took Karlstadt to task over his rejection of images.

For where the heart is instructed that one pleases God alone through faith, and that in the matter of images nothing that is pleasing to him takes place, but is a fruitless service and effort, the people themselves willingly drop it, despise images, and have none made. But where one neglects such instruction and forces the issue, it follows that those blaspheme who do not understand and who act only because of the coercion of the law and not with a free conscience. Their idea that they can please God with works becomes a real idol and a false assurance in the heart. Such legalism results in putting away outward images while filling the heart with idols. I say this so that every one may see the kind of a spirit that is lodged in Karlstadt.<sup>35</sup>

Luther claimed Karlstadt's rejection of externals, like images, is essentially a manifestation of works righteousness.<sup>36</sup>

For Luther, the Anabaptists were just as guilty of works righteousness as Karlstadt. In *That a Christian Should Bear His Cross with Patience* (1530), Luther claimed that suffering should always be imposed on the believer from the outside, not self-imposed; Anabaptists and other promoters of works righteousness seek out suffering.<sup>37</sup> In the last sermon he ever preached, Luther compared the Anabaptists to Pelagians in their alleged efforts to earn their own righteousness.

Everything that God does they must improve, so that there is no poorer, more insignificant and despised disciple on earth than God; he must be everybody's pupil, everybody wants to be his teacher and preceptor. This may be seen in all heretics from the beginning of the world, in Arius and Pelagius, and now in our time the Anabaptists and antisacramentarians, and all fanatics and rebels; they are not satisfied with what God has done and instituted, they cannot let things be as they were ordained to be. They think they have to do something too, in order that they may be a bit better than other people and be able to boast: This is what I have done; what God has done is too poor and insignificant,

<sup>35</sup>Martin Luther, "Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and the Sacrament," in *LW* 40: 84–85.

<sup>36</sup>Oyer, *Lutheran Reformers against Anabaptists*, 36.

<sup>37</sup>Martin Luther, "That a Christian Should Bear His Cross with Patience," in *Luther's Works*, vol. 43: *Devotional Writings II*, ed. Gustav K. Wienke (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 183.

even childish and foolish; I must add something to it.<sup>38</sup>

Luther also compared Anabaptists with Pelagians (and Jews, Muslims, and pagans) in his 1530 treatise on *The Keys*.<sup>39</sup> As far as Luther was concerned, Anabaptists were no better than Catholics in regard to works. In a lecture on Psalm 45, Luther argued the Anabaptists rejected Roman Catholic works righteousness while promoting a new form of works righteousness, claiming, "Thus the Anabaptists and others reject the heretics under one guise of works and then bring them back under another."<sup>40</sup>

An essential element of Luther's doctrine of justification was his understanding of the distinction between law and gospel. Lohse observes that law and gospel were equivalent neither to the Old and New Testament nor to particular biblical passages; rather, both are present throughout Scripture. The law functions through its civic and theological uses, which uphold justice and convict one of his sins, respectively. The gospel brings salvation to the individual under conviction.<sup>41</sup> In light of the centrality to the law-gospel distinction in Luther's soteriology, it comes as no surprise Luther criticized the Anabaptists for allegedly confusing the two categories. In a lecture on Galatians 2, Luther accused Anabaptists, Catholics, and Zwingli of blurring the lines between law and gospel.

Therefore it is inevitable that the papists, the Zwinglians, the Anabaptists, and all those who either do not know about the righteousness of Christ or who do not believe correctly about it should change Christ into Moses and the Law and change the Law into Christ ... Here immediately Christ is denied and faith is abolished, because what belongs to Christ alone is attributed to the Commandments of God or to the Law. For Christ is, by definition, the Justifier and the Redeemer from sins. If I attribute this to the Law, then the Law is my justifier, which delivers me from my sins before I do its works. And so the Law has now become Christ; and Christ completely loses His name, His work, and His glory, and is nothing else than an agent of the Law, who accuses, terrifies, directs, and sends the sinner to someone else to be justified. This is really the work of the Law.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup>Martin Luther, "The Last Sermon, Preached in Eisleben, Matt. 11:25–30, February 15, 1546," in *Luther's Works*, vol. 51: *Sermons I*, ed. John W. Doberstein (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959), 384. See also Luther's comments on Isaiah 55:8, in Martin Luther, "Isaiah 55:8," in *Luther's Works*, vol. 17: *Lectures on Isaiah, Chapters 40–66*, ed. Hilton C. Oswald (St. Louis: Concordia, 1972), 256.

<sup>39</sup>Martin Luther, "The Keys," in *LW* 40: 364.

<sup>40</sup>Martin Luther, "Psalm 45," in *Luther's Works*, vol. 12: *Selected Psalms I* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1955), 273.

<sup>41</sup>For a summary of Luther's distinction between law and gospel, see Lohse, *Martin Luther's Theology*, 267–76.

<sup>42</sup>Martin Luther, "Galatians 2:17," in *LW* 26: 142.

This grouping together of such diverse groups is essentially the same as saying that anyone who is not in agreement with Luther's reformation agenda is guilty of confusing law and gospel.

The alleged deficiencies in Anabaptist soteriology understandably led to Luther's questioning whether or not members of the group would be saved. In a tabletalk conversation with Peter Weller, the question was posed regarding the salvation of Anabaptists. Luther responded that the movement was surely in error and their only hope for salvation was for God to act outside his prescribed rules.<sup>43</sup> Because the Anabaptists supposedly rejected justification by faith, and because they supposedly blurred the line between law and gospel, Luther called their very salvation into question.

### A Deficient Ecclesiology

Luther was convinced the Anabaptists misunderstood salvation. But Anabaptism was fraught with errors, and Luther also heartily criticized the Anabaptists for their allegedly deficient ecclesiology. John Oyer claims that neither Luther nor the Anabaptists ever discussed the differences in their respective understandings of the nature of the church.<sup>44</sup> While it is true no major treatises were written on the topic, Oyer is overstating his case. In fact, the majority of Luther's complaints against Anabaptism were related to the doctrine of the church. Luther was critical of the Anabaptist understanding of ecclesiology, especially the sacraments. Luther also castigated the Anabaptist tendency toward sectarianism. All of this resulted in Luther's accusing the Anabaptists of not being a true church.

The aspect of Anabaptism that Luther spilled the most ink criticizing was credobaptism. In fact, the only major work that Luther devoted exclusively to Anabaptists was his 1528 treatise *Concerning Rebaptism*, a short tract originally written as a letter to two pastors in response to Balthasar Hubmaier's teachings on the practice.<sup>45</sup> Space precludes an extended discussion of Luther's doctrine of baptism, but several key elements should be noted about his mature understanding of baptism. First, baptism is closely connected with the Word, which for Luther was the truest sacrament. Second, baptism is essential to salvation, provided that faith is present in either the baptismal candidate or his sponsors. Third, baptism symbolizes the death

<sup>43</sup>"Tabletalk No. 1444: Whether Anabaptists May be Saved, Between April 7 and May 1, 1532," in *LW* 54: 152. Oyer notes that Luther's preface to Justus Menius's 1530 treatise *The Doctrine and Mystery of the Anabaptists* would seem to confirm Luther held out slim hope for the salvation of Anabaptists. In the preface, Luther argued that the source of Anabaptism was the devil, as evidenced by four of the movement's traits: 1) their refusal to preach in open areas, 2) their concern with temporal things at the expense of heavenly things, 3) their revolutionary tendency to see themselves as the executors of God's judgment, and, 4) the fact they accuse Luther of Antinomianism. See John S. Oyer, "The Writings of Luther Against the Anabaptists," 101–02.

<sup>44</sup>Oyer, "Luther and the Anabaptists," 169.

<sup>45</sup>Oyer argues that baptism was the only theological issue Luther ever addressed concerning the Anabaptists. It will be evident below that Oyer is again overstating his case. See Oyer, *Lutheran Reformers against Anabaptists*, 132.

and resurrection of both Christ and the believer (spiritually, in the case of the latter). Fourth, the proper candidates for baptism are infants, who are capable of exercising some form of faith. Finally, baptism must be present in order for the church truly to be present.<sup>46</sup> Anabaptists rejected most of Luther's understanding of baptism, making it a voluntary ceremony to be administered following the profession of one's personal faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>47</sup>

Not surprisingly, Luther's critique of credobaptism was most clearly articulated in *Concerning Rebaptism*.<sup>48</sup> In that work, Luther equated Anabaptist credobaptism with rebaptism, which is really a *rejection* of true (infant) baptism.<sup>49</sup> He accused Anabaptists of rejecting infant baptism as part and parcel of Popery, which Luther compared to rejecting the Temple rather than the Antichrist who is seated in the Temple.<sup>50</sup> Luther argued that all Christendom testifies to the validity of infant baptism, and that those who reject paedobaptism reject God himself.<sup>51</sup> He chastised the Anabaptists for arguing that faith must precede baptism, because no man can know for sure whether or not another man believes. If surety of faith is necessary before one can be baptized, then no one would ever be baptized; faith comes and goes.<sup>52</sup> Luther also contended it is possible that some infants do possess faith.<sup>53</sup>

Anabaptism's implications for the very concept of Christendom were even more important than its actual baptismal convictions. Because Luther assumed that proper baptism is a mark of the true church, if Anabaptists were right in their rejection of infant baptism, then Luther claimed the church could not have existed during the Middle Ages.<sup>54</sup> In other words, Christendom was an invalid expression of the church. But this could not be; Trigg contends that Luther could not bring himself to believe that the church had been practicing heresy for so long.<sup>55</sup> To Luther, credobaptism

<sup>46</sup>For a more extensive discussion of Luther's baptismal theology, from which the information in this paragraph is drawn, see Jonathan D. Trigg, *Baptism in the Theology of Martin Luther*, Studies in the History of Christian Thought, vol. 26 (Leiden; New York: Brill, 1994), 61–106.

<sup>47</sup>See Verduin, *The Reformers and their Stepchildren*, 189–220.

<sup>48</sup>Ironically, with *Concerning Rebaptism*, Luther penned his most comprehensive critique of Anabaptist baptism, despite the fact that he admitted being unsure of what Anabaptists actually believe. See Luther, "Concerning Rebaptism," in *LW* 40: 260.

<sup>49</sup>Luther, "Concerning Rebaptism," in *LW* 40: 229. Paul Zietlow helpfully outlines sixteen different biblical, theological, and historical arguments Luther marshaled in defense of infant baptism. See Paul H. Zietlow, "Martin Luther's Arguments for Infant Baptism," *Concordia Journal* 20.2 (April 1994): 147–71.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 232.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid.*, 237, 240.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, 239–40, 247.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid.*, 240–45. Timothy George observes that this belief was unique to Luther. George summarizes Luther's view of infant baptism by noting that, "Faith, so to speak, is imputed to the infant in baptism even though he is not aware of it. This is all the more a confirmation of God's gratuitous mercy since the infant is helpless to effect his own baptism." See George, *Theology of the Reformers*, 94–95.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>55</sup>Trigg, *Baptism in the Theology of Martin Luther*, 101.

seemed too novel to be accurate.

Anabaptist ecclesiological errors were intricately connected to their soteriological errors. In a scathing indictment, Luther claimed that by placing so much emphasis on correct baptism, the Anabaptists were exchanging righteousness through faith for works righteousness.<sup>56</sup> As Trigg notes, “The error of the Anabaptists with regard to baptism is that they regard it as nothing unless a person believes, thus making the work of God dependent on the worthiness of man.”<sup>57</sup> Luther could not get past his suspicion that the Anabaptists considered believer’s baptism to be essential to one’s salvation.

*Concerning Rebaptism* was not all Luther had to say on the topic; he also frequently criticized Anabaptist credobaptism in his lectures, sermons, and other writings. In his lecture on Genesis 3, Luther accused the Anabaptists of making baptism a purely physical act, thus undercutting its true spiritual significance.<sup>58</sup> In a lecture on Psalm 118, he argued the Anabaptists teach that sanctification must precede baptism.<sup>59</sup> In his sermons on John’s Gospel, Luther claimed the Anabaptists do not possess authentic baptism because they are heretics.<sup>60</sup> In *On the Councils and the Church*, Luther accused the Anabaptists of rejecting non-Anabaptists as worthy administrators of the sacraments, comparing their belief to Cyprian’s belief that heretics do not possess the true sacraments.<sup>61</sup> In a tabletalk recorded by Veit Dietrich, Luther reiterated the charge that the Anabaptist understanding of baptism amounts to works righteousness.<sup>62</sup>

Luther was convinced that the Anabaptists were as incorrect as Catholics, simply in different respects. Luther believed he represented a middle (correct) way in approaching the sacraments, including baptism.<sup>63</sup> Ironically, with their emphasis on personal holiness and Christian discipleship, the Anabaptists considered their interpretation of baptism to be the best representation of Luther’s idea of baptism as a lifelong dying and rising in Christ.<sup>64</sup> Luther also critiqued the Anabaptist interpretation of the Eucharist, though because his criticisms were not unique to Anabaptists or other Radicals, the subject will not be discussed in this article. Typically, Luther simply grouped Anabaptists in with other *Schwärmer*—both Magisterial and

<sup>56</sup>Luther, “Concerning Rebaptism,” in *LW* 40: 247.

<sup>57</sup>Trigg, *Baptism in the Theology of Martin Luther*, 84.

<sup>58</sup>Martin Luther, “Genesis 3:6,” in *Luther’s Works, vol. 1: Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 1–5*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1958), 160.

<sup>59</sup>Martin Luther, “Psalm 118,” in *Luther’s Works, vol. 14: Selected Psalms III*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1958), 38.

<sup>60</sup>Martin Luther, “John 7:44,” in *Luther’s Works, vol. 23: Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 6–8*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1958), 285.

<sup>61</sup>Martin Luther, “On the Councils and the Churches,” in *Luther’s Works, vol. 41: Church and Ministry III*, ed. Eric W. Gritsch (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 46.

<sup>62</sup>“Tabletalk No. 650: A Defense of the Baptism of Infants, Fall, 1533,” in *LW* 54: 113.

<sup>63</sup>Trigg, *Baptism in the Theology of Martin Luther*, 220.

<sup>64</sup>George Huntston Williams, “‘Congregationalist’ Luther and the Free Churches,” *The Lutheran Quarterly* 19.3 (August 1967): 287–88.

not—who denied the real physical presence of Christ in the sacrament.<sup>65</sup>

Luther did not limit his ecclesiological criticisms to the sacraments, but also disparaged the Anabaptists for sectarianism. In his lectures on Genesis, Luther grouped the Anabaptists in with a hodgepodge of heretical sects.

Our times will also bring this punishment upon Germany. We see how Satan is making haste, how restless he is, and how he tries every means to obstruct the Word of God. How many sects he has stirred up in our lifetime while we exerted ourselves with all diligence to maintain purity of doctrine! What will happen when we are dead? He will surely lead forth whole packs of sacramentarians, Anabaptists, antinomians, followers of Servetus and Campanus, and other heretics, who now are in hiding after being routed for the moment by the purity of the Word and the diligence of godly teachers, but who are eagerly waiting for any opportunity to establish their doctrines.<sup>66</sup>

To Luther, a sectarian was the same as a heretic, and all were more or less the same. In a lecture on Psalm 23, Luther twice accused the Anabaptists of being “schismatic spirits.”<sup>67</sup> In a sermon on John 3:20, Luther claimed Anabaptists were “sectaries” and “schismatics,” and again included them in a list of offenders, this time including the Turks.<sup>68</sup> He criticized Anabaptist ministers in 1532 for preaching without proper credentials from the territorial church.<sup>69</sup> In a tabletalk recorded by Veit Dietrich, Luther complained that one of his problems with sects is that they promote rebaptism.<sup>70</sup> Because of their common belief in credobaptism, in his *Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper*, Luther equated Anabaptists with the Donatists, a movement considered schismatic by territorial church advocates.<sup>71</sup> In noting a perception that must have irritated Luther immensely, in his lecture on Titus 1:6, Luther criticized Rome for accusing him of being responsible for the proliferation of sects like the Anabaptists!<sup>72</sup>

Interestingly enough, the early Luther argued for an understanding of

<sup>65</sup>See, for example, Luther’s blanket condemnation of how Radicals misinterpret the Lord’s Supper in Martin Luther, “Brief Confession of the Holy Sacrament,” in *Luther’s Works 38: Word and Sacrament IV*, ed. Martin Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 287–318.

<sup>66</sup>Martin Luther, “Genesis 6:3,” in *Luther’s Works, vol. 2: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 6–14*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1960), 17.

<sup>67</sup>Martin Luther, “Psalm 23,” in *LW 12*: 164, 168.

<sup>68</sup>Martin Luther, “John 3:20,” in *Luther’s Works, vol. 22: Sermons on the Gospel of St. John, Chapters 1–4*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1957), 383.

<sup>69</sup>Martin Luther, “Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers,” in *LW 40*: 384, 389.

<sup>70</sup>“Tabletalk No. 515: Easy to Have Doubts about the Lord’s Supper, Spring, 1533,” in *LW 54*: 91.

<sup>71</sup>Martin Luther, “Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper,” in *Luther’s Works vol. 37, Word and Sacrament III*, ed. Robert H. Fischer (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1961), 365.

<sup>72</sup>Martin Luther, “Titus 1:6,” in *Luther’s Works, vol. 29: Lectures on Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1968), 8.



the church not unlike that eventually espoused by Anabaptists and other Free Church evangelicals. In his preface to *The German Mass and Order of Service* (1526), Luther argued for covenanted assemblies of believers, meeting in small house churches where they could preach the word, observe the sacraments, and practice church discipline. He admitted that in the early church, individuals were baptized only after they were converted and catechized. But Luther did not follow through with this vision, noting that Germans were “a rough, rude, and reckless people, with whom it is hard to do anything, except in cases of dire need.”<sup>73</sup> David Dunbar notes that, “The Anabaptists, for their part, could only be disappointed with Luther’s shift away from the principle of voluntary association to that of the territorial church.”<sup>74</sup>

It is clear that in Luther’s thinking, the Anabaptists were not a true church, but rather a heretical sect. And heretics were deserving of the strictest punishment possible. When Elector John asked the Wittenberg theologians how to punish the Anabaptists in 1531, Melancthon wrote a statement that called for the death penalty. Luther signed the statement, signifying his agreement.<sup>75</sup> Luther was a man of his era, and like Zwingli, Calvin, and the Catholics, he was not above mandating death for those in theological error.

### **A Misunderstanding of the Christian’s Role in Society**

A fourth category of criticisms pertained to various countercultural practices associated with Anabaptism. The Anabaptist rejection of Christendom entailed a re-envisioning of how the Christian participates in the wider culture. It is clear Luther believed Anabaptists gravely misunderstood the Christian’s role in society. He accused them of several practices, all of which were true of many Radicals, including some Anabaptists. Each of these distinctives called into question accepted practice, thus tearing at the fabric of both church and society.

The first charge was that Anabaptists opposed private property. In his lecture on Genesis 13:3, Luther compared the Anabaptists to monks, noting “The Anabaptists, too, think that those who have any possessions of their own are not Christians.”<sup>76</sup> Some Anabaptists did believe that there should be a community of goods which all could draw upon, the most notable example being the Hutterite communities in Moravia.<sup>77</sup> But not all Anabaptists practiced the community of goods. Verduin notes that most Anabaptists were not opposed to private property, but rather emphasized the obligation to share possessions with the needy. He attributes the assumption that all Anabap-

<sup>73</sup>Martin Luther, “The German Mass and Order of Service,” in *Luther’s Works*, vol. 53: *Liturgy and Hymns* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965), 63–64.

<sup>74</sup>David Dunbar, “Martin Luther and the Early Free Church Tradition,” *Explor: A Journal of Theology* 8 (Spring 1986): 55.

<sup>75</sup>Oyer, *Lutheran Reformers against Anabaptists*, 138; Clasen, *Anabaptism: A Social History*, 381.

<sup>76</sup>Luther, “Genesis 13:2,” in *LW* 2: 325.

<sup>77</sup>For a brief introduction to the Hutterites and the community of goods, see Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, 127–50.

tists practiced the community of goods to the fact this was the practice in the Anabaptist kingdom of Münster.<sup>78</sup> As in so many other cases, the sins of Münster became the sins of all Anabaptism.

Closely connected was the charge that Anabaptists rejected their surrounding culture in favor of ecclesial isolationism. Luther criticized the Anabaptists for forsaking money, goods, marriage, houses, and every other created thing or human institution in their desire to mortify the flesh.<sup>79</sup> Luther accused Anabaptists of establishing a new monasticism in their separatist zeal.

Do not choose separation or the cloister or any other innovation voluntarily ... Years ago, under the papacy, servants deserted the service of their masters, and wives ran from the household of their husbands and from submission to them, went on pilgrimages, and became monks and nuns. Those were real Donatists. The Anabaptists are reviving this practice.<sup>80</sup>

Luther was convinced the Anabaptists wanted to disperse with all the trappings of normal human society, claiming, “They forsake wife and child, house and home; they surrender everything; they act as though they were senseless and mad.”<sup>81</sup> In a 1544 sermon on Luke 14, Luther criticized the Anabaptists for hiding in secret places, out of the public’s view.<sup>82</sup> In a 1532 tabletalk, Luther charged the Anabaptists with teaching those who truly know Christ must separate from society.<sup>83</sup>

Luther’s accusation of separatism was somewhat true of Anabaptists, though it is too simplistic.<sup>84</sup> Some Anabaptists did separate from society because of what they perceived to be wickedness. The Schleitheim Confession of 1527 admonished Anabaptists to separate from the evil and wickedness in their society, comparing their contemporary culture to Babylon.<sup>85</sup> Bruce

<sup>78</sup>Verduin, *Reformers and their Stepchildren*, 237.

<sup>79</sup>Luther, “John 6:39,” in *LW* 23: 66.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, 205.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*, 355.

<sup>82</sup>Martin Luther, “Sermon at the Dedication of the Castle Church in Torgau, Luke 14:1–11, October 5, 1544,” in *LW* 51: 337.

<sup>83</sup>Luther, “Tabletalk No. 1329: Not Solitude but Social Intercourse Advised Between January 8 and March 23, 1532,” in *LW* 54: 140.

<sup>84</sup>The Anabaptist understanding of how the Christian should relate to society was actually quite diverse. The Anabaptists had an entirely different understanding of the so-called doctrine of the Two Kingdoms than Luther did. Luther claimed God ruled everyone in the world by either Law or Gospel. This application of the Law-Gospel issue was seen as a compromise by the Anabaptists, leading them to emphasize greater conflict between Christians and culture. As Clarence Bauman notes, “The Anabaptists could not comprehend how one person could be in both kingdoms at the same time and in the same way without suffering unbearable conflict.” See Clarence Bauman, “The Theology of ‘The Two Kingdoms.’ A Comparison of Luther and the Anabaptists,” *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 38.1 (January 1964): 48.

<sup>85</sup>“The Schleitheim Confession,” in *The Reformation: Luther and the Anabaptists*, ed.

Gordon argues that, “The crucial tenet of *Schleitheim* was separation,” which presented a healthy middle way between the Magisterial Reformation on the one hand and the Peasant’s Revolt on the other.<sup>86</sup> But spiritual purity was only one reason Anabaptists withdrew from society. Many Anabaptists separated from society to avoid persecution at the hands of both state-church Protestants and the Catholic Church.<sup>87</sup> In the index to *The Radical Reformation*, George Huntston Williams lists dozens of Anabaptist martyrs.<sup>88</sup> The possibility of death was a reality that Anabaptists lived with continually. Separation was never merely for spiritual purposes, but also for the purpose of survival.

A third criticism was that Anabaptists rejected the magistracy. Luther claimed that Anabaptists had little regard for earthly rulers. One form this took was the Anabaptist refusal to take oaths. In his lecture on Genesis 21:25, Luther observed, “For here the authority of the civil government must not be lowered in our estimation, as the foolish mob of the Anabaptists raves. Therefore an oath which is imposed by the government is in agreement with the command of God, who has commanded us to obey the government.”<sup>89</sup> Another form was in the anarchic rejection of civil authority. In a lecture on Psalm 2:12, Luther claimed that Anabaptists wanted to do away with all kings and kingdoms.<sup>90</sup> In the Marburg Articles, Luther and the other participants berated Anabaptists for believing that Christians should not be magistrates.<sup>91</sup> Though he did not call them by name, it seems likely that Luther was referring to the Anabaptists when he claimed “the wicked under the name of Christian abuse evangelical freedom, carry on their rascality, and insist that they were Christians subject neither to law nor sword, as some are already raving and ranting.”<sup>92</sup> To Luther and the other Magisterial reformers, religion was connected closely enough with government that a rejection of the latter constituted a repudiation of the former.<sup>93</sup>

Luther’s criticism regarding oath taking was true of many Anabaptists. Estep argues that the Anabaptist hesitancy with oaths was due to both a literal reading of Christ’s injunction against swearing and the belief that oaths were ultimately unnecessary; one was always obliged to tell the truth.<sup>94</sup> As with the issue of separation, the *Schleitheim* Confession again emerges as a

William R. Estep (Nashville: Broadman, 1979), 326.

<sup>86</sup>Bruce Gordon, *The Swiss Reformation*, New Frontiers in History (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press; and New York: Palgrave, 2002), 202.

<sup>87</sup>Clasen, *Anabaptism: A Social History*, 399.

<sup>88</sup>Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 1471.

<sup>89</sup>Luther, “Genesis 21:24,” in *Luther’s Works*, vol. 4: *Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 21–25*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1964), 78.

<sup>90</sup>Martin Luther, “Psalm 2,” in *LW* 12: 74.

<sup>91</sup>“The Marburg Colloquy and the Marburg Articles,” in *LW* 38: 88.

<sup>92</sup>Martin Luther, “Temporal Authority: To What Extent Should it Be Obeyed?” In *Luther’s Works*, vol. 45: *The Christian in Society II*, ed. Walther I. Brandt (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1962), 91.

<sup>93</sup>See Clasen, *Anabaptists: A Social History*, 179–80.

<sup>94</sup>Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, 261.

useful representation of what many Anabaptists believed. Schleithem made it clear that it was inappropriate for Christians to take oaths, for the two reasons indicated by Estep above.<sup>95</sup>

As for the claim that Anabaptists were opposed to all magistracy, most Anabaptists were not interested in political revolution. Luther believed that Anabaptists were anarchists for two reasons. The first was the belief that Anabaptists were cut from the same cloth as the peasants who had instigated the Peasant's Revolt in 1525. Luther considered Anabaptists to be just one more type of *Schwärmer*, another manifestation of the spirit of Thomas Müntzer.<sup>96</sup> But, as noted above, numerous scholars have made the case that there is no real connection between the Peasant's War and Anabaptism.<sup>97</sup>

A second reason Luther assumed that Anabaptists were anarchists is that some were. In 1533, a group of Anabaptists occupied the city of Münster, expelled all Catholic families, and declared it to be the New Jerusalem. Jan of Leiden set himself up as the Davidic king of Münster and, after claiming to receive divine revelation, instituted polygamy. In 1535, Münster was forcibly retaken by a Catholic and Protestant alliance; Jan of Leiden and his lieutenants were tortured and executed.<sup>98</sup> The Münster incident resulted in the widespread association of Anabaptism with revolution, especially in Germany.<sup>99</sup> This was the case for Luther himself. Harry Loewen notes, "The Münster tragedy confirmed Luther's suspicion he had had concerning the whole Anabaptist movement."<sup>100</sup> In reality, Münster was atypical of Anabaptism; the incident is the only example of otherwise evangelical Anabaptists taking such revolutionary measures. Münster represents an anomaly, what Verduin calls "the lunatic fringe of Anabaptism."<sup>101</sup>

Luther himself recognized that not all Anabaptists were revolutionaries; most, like the Swiss Brethren who affirmed the Schleithem Confession, were actually pacifists. Luther was apparently aware of this, and in his lecture

<sup>95</sup>"The Schleithem Confession," in *The Reformation: Luther and the Anabaptists*, 329–31.

<sup>96</sup>See Oyer, *Lutheran Reformers against Anabaptists*, 116, 122–23; Clasen, *Anabaptism: A Social History*, 153.

<sup>97</sup>See Clasen, *Anabaptism: A Social History*, 152–57; Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, 41. Williams argues that there is no organic connection between the revolutionary peasants and the Anabaptists, though the former did prefigure the latter in some respects. "Anabaptism would be in part the reaction to the failure of the evangelical socio-constitutional movement of the peasants." See Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 138.

<sup>98</sup>For a brief overview of the Munster incident, see R. Po-Chia Hisa, "Munster and the Anabaptists," in *The German People and the Reformation*, ed. R. Po-Chia Hisa (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), 51–57.

<sup>99</sup>Sigrun Haude, *In the Shadow of "Savage Wolves": Anabaptist Munster and the German Reformation during the 1530s* (Boston and Leiden: Humanities Press, 2000), 150.

<sup>100</sup>Loewen, *Luther and the Radicals*, 100.

<sup>101</sup>Verduin, *The Reformers and their Stepchildren*, 237. Even Loewen, who is generally quite sympathetic to Luther's criticisms of Radicals, concedes that Luther was incorrect to attribute revolutionary tendencies to most evangelical Anabaptists. See Loewen, *Luther and the Radicals*, 100.

on Psalm 8:1 he castigated the Anabaptists for their refusal to bear arms.<sup>102</sup> As far as Luther was concerned, pacifism was almost as reprehensible as revolution. Though not always consistent in his criticisms, Luther was convinced the Anabaptists misunderstood the Christian's proper role in "Christian" society. Their Radical theology resulted in an inappropriate rejection of mainstream culture.

### General Fanaticism and Troublemaking

The final criticism Luther lodged against the Anabaptists was a general spirit of fanaticism and a tendency toward troublemaking. In this criticism more than any other, Luther made no real effort to distinguish between the various types of Radicals. What was true of Karlstadt was true of Müntzer was true of pacifistic Anabaptists. In fact, the accusation of fanaticism was rarely a freestanding criticism, but often accompanied the other types of criticisms discussed above.

In discussing Genesis 47:27, Luther criticized the fanatics (*Schwärmer*) who despise the Word and the sacraments, particularly the Anabaptists and sacramentarians.<sup>103</sup> In his comments on Isaiah 60:21, Luther accused the Anabaptists of works righteousness, labeled them enthusiasts, and compared them to Roman Catholics.<sup>104</sup> In his 1535 preface to Galatians, Luther charged the Anabaptists with causing great dissension, calling them "monstrosities" and "wolves," and accusing them of being the agents of Satan himself.<sup>105</sup> In 1532, Luther wrote a letter entitled *Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers*, directed against the Anabaptists near Eisenach. In that work, Luther charged the Anabaptists with teaching false doctrine and inciting violence and revolt.<sup>106</sup> In *Against the Antinomians*, Luther traced a line of satanically-inspired troublemakers from Müntzer to Karlstadt to the Anabaptists, accusing the latter of using force, presumable in reference to Münster.<sup>107</sup> Luther claimed that the gospel had been persecuted in Germany, leading to the proliferation of all manners of Anabaptists, fanatics, and sectarians.<sup>108</sup> One presumes that by "gospel," Luther meant his particular pattern of reform.

Closely connected with the charge of fanaticism is Luther's criticism that the Anabaptists did not agree with him. In his comments on Genesis 15:4, Luther criticized the Anabaptists and Müntzer for opposing him. Lu-

<sup>102</sup>Luther, "Psalm 8," in *LW* 12: 87.

<sup>103</sup>Martin Luther, "Genesis 47:26," in *Luther's Works, vol. 8: Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 45–50*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Concordia, 1966), 133. Sacramentarians were those who rejected the real presence in the Eucharist, including Zwingli and Oecolampadius.

<sup>104</sup>Luther, "Isaiah 60:21," in *LW* 17: 391.

<sup>105</sup>Martin Luther, "Luther's Preface of 1535," in *Luther's Works, vol. 27: Lectures on Galatians, 1535, Chapters 5–6, Lectures on Galatians 1519, Chapters 1–6*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1964), 147.

<sup>106</sup>Martin Luther, "Infiltrating and Clandestine Preachers," in *LW* 40: 385.

<sup>107</sup>Martin Luther, "Against the Antinomians," in *Luther's Works, vol. 47: The Christian in Society IV*, ed. Franklin Sherman (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 116, 119.

<sup>108</sup>Luther, "Matthew 7:7," in *LW* 21: 227.

ther lamented, "Müntzer, the Anabaptists, and others similarly opposed us with great zeal, savagely defamed our character, and heaped every kind of abuse upon us."<sup>109</sup> In his remarks on Genesis 41:8, he railed against Catholics, sacramentarians, heretics, and Anabaptists for "harassing" him.<sup>110</sup> Luther accused the Anabaptists and other "enthusiasts" of being "haughty" in their opposition to him.<sup>111</sup> In his lecture on Galatians 4:30, Luther claimed that of all the "fanatical spirits," the Anabaptists oppose him the most harshly, judging him to be worse than the papists.<sup>112</sup>

The Anabaptists could take some comfort in the fact that they were not alone in this particular criticism. When it came to those who differed with him, Luther did not limit his criticism to Radicals. As is apparent throughout his works (and is observable even in the limited number of quotations utilized in this article), Luther criticized everyone who differed with his program for reform. Luther had no patience for competition, whether from his fellow Magisterial reformers or from the Radicals.

### Conclusion

The sixteenth century was a time of religious upheaval, with numerous sects claiming to be the best representation of the true faith. Of these factions, the Anabaptists were perhaps the most misunderstood, in both their time and ours. This article has argued that Luther had a relatively comprehensive critique of Anabaptism, despite both a lack of works devoted primarily to the Anabaptists or any real effort at evenhandedness on the part of Luther. Like his contemporaries, Luther often made no effort at understanding Anabaptism as a distinct movement within the Radical Reformation. Not that his lack of nuance mattered; even when Luther did seem to grasp the teachings of Anabaptism, he roundly denounced the movement.

Luther criticized the Anabaptists for their distinctive ecclesiology, their discipleship-oriented soteriology, their social ethics, and nearly every other practice that set Anabaptists apart from the Lutheran movement. Luther was always convinced that the Anabaptist vision was another manifestation of works righteousness, albeit one quite different than late medieval Catholicism. He was also quite positive that Anabaptism inevitably led to revolution; unfortunately, there were just enough Anabaptists with rebellious tendencies to cement Luther's opinion. It is clear from his criticisms that Luther ultimately misunderstood much about Anabaptism. In this way as in so many others, Luther was simply a product of his age.

<sup>109</sup>Luther, "Genesis 15:4," in *LW* 3: 15.

<sup>110</sup>Luther, "Genesis 41:8," in *Luther's Works, vol. 7: Lectures in Genesis, Chapters 38–44*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia, 1965), 131.

<sup>111</sup>Luther, "Isaiah 41:8," in *LW* 17: 39.

<sup>112</sup>Luther, "Galatians 4:30," in *LW* 26: 454.



## *I Wait Upon My God: Exploring the Life and Letters of Michael Sattler*

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### Introduction

The Swiss Anabaptists of the sixteenth century played a pivotal role in the Radical Reformation and the beginning of the Anabaptist movement as a whole. They were not radicals in the sense of seeking social change solely for economic or revolutionary ends. Rather, they sought to be devoted radically to the simple teaching of the New Testament regarding what a true church should look like. Though his career as an Anabaptist was abruptly cut short, Michael Sattler was one of the most memorable and influential Anabaptist of the Swiss Brethren. In many ways, Sattler can be understood as the “actual founder of the Swiss Brethren movement.”<sup>1</sup> The testimony of his life and death proved instrumental in holding together the diverse Anabaptist movement at a critical time. He served as a “bridge” between the precarious beginnings of the movement and its structured consolidation years later.<sup>2</sup>

In studying Sattler, it is difficult to escape the interplay between his theological underpinnings and his dramatic life and death. Exploring this intimate link provides a window into this turbulent historical period and also into the theological pulse of a particularly significant group of Anabaptists.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>C. Arnold Snyder, “Revolution and the Swiss Brethren: The Case of Michael Sattler,” *Church History* 50, no. 3 (September 1981): 278.

<sup>2</sup>See John H. Yoder, *The Legacy of Michael Sattler* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1973), 7: “That Anabaptism survived as a viable movement with visible structures from the naïve beginnings in Zurich in the mid 1520s to the time of the synthesizers of the 1540s, was the work of Michael Sattler more than any other one person.” For Yoder, it was the “literary and organizational leadership” of the second generation of Anabaptists such as Menno Simons, Pilgram Marpeck, and Peter Riedemann who solidified the movement. “Between these two stages,” Yoder observes, “there needed to be a bridge” (7).

<sup>3</sup>There has been considerable debate regarding the origins of the Anabaptist movement. Some argue that there is a single “Anabaptist vision” from which the entire movement springs, while others see a much more disparate picture of the origins of Anabaptism. For the former approach, see the essays in *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision: A Sixtieth Anniversary Tribute to Harold S. Bender*, ed. Guy F. Hershberger (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1957). The latter approach emphasizes the broad spectrum of Anabaptist groups and highlights social issues of the time period. For example, see Hans Jürgen-Goertz, *The Anabaptists* (New York: Routledge,



Though Sattler was not the only Anabaptist to be put to death cruelly, his execution was certainly the most memorable, as the words he wrote and the martyrdom he endured have strengthened and edified many since his time. As one historian notes, “The impact of Sattler’s superlative witness is felt to this day.”<sup>4</sup> The purpose of the following study is to explore the nature of Sattler’s legacy and to explain why his life and letters in particular gained the significance they did in the years after his death. If Sattler was a “bridge,” what did this structure look like and how was it able to withstand the turbulent floodwaters of the post-Reformation era?

### Sattler’s Early Years

Around 1490, future Swiss Anabaptist leader Michael Sattler was born in the town of Staufen in the Breisgau region of Germany. Not much is known about his early life except that he began his religious career as a Benedictine monk at St. Peter’s monastery of the Black Forest at a young age.<sup>5</sup> Though the nature and extent of Sattler’s education is unclear, he does demonstrate proficiency in Latin and offers to discuss the Scriptures “in whatever language they might be” during his trial later in life.<sup>6</sup> These sources have led biographers to categorize Sattler as a “learned” man familiar with humanist modes of thought and capable of exegeting the Scriptures in their original languages.<sup>7</sup> While it is clear that Sattler was literate and had some form of

1996); and James M. Stayer, Werner Packull, and Klaus Deppermann, “From Monogenesis to Polygenesis: The Historical Discussion of Anabaptist Origins,” *MQR* 49, no. 2 (1975): 83-121. For a discussion of the interaction between the early Anabaptists and the mainline reformers (especially Zwingli), see Abraham Friesen, “Anabaptist Origins and the Early Writings of the Reformers,” in *Reformers, Radicals, Revolutionaries: Anabaptism in the Context of the Reformation Conflict* (Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2012), 115-25; and Abraham Friesen, “Erasmus, the Reformers, and the Birth of Swiss Anabaptism,” in *The Anabaptists and Contemporary Baptists*, ed. Malcolm Yarnell (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2013), 183-214. For the purpose of the present article, the “Swiss Brethren” refer to the group of Anabaptists that stem from Zurich and whose main concern was theological rather than political (e.g., Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, and George Blaurock). While there is debate about whether this group is the sole stream from which Anabaptism flows, they certainly represent a particularly significant undercurrent.

<sup>4</sup>William Estep, *The Anabaptist Story* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1963), 44.

<sup>5</sup>See the comments of Jacob Ottelin about Sattler in one of his letters to Martin Bucer: “Especially prominent in this movement is that Michael who was formerly a monk at St. Peter’s” (“Ottelin to Bucer,” in Yoder, *Legacy*, 19). The exact date of Sattler’s birth and entry into the monastery are not known. See Gustav Bossert, “Sattler, Michael,” in *The Mennonite Encyclopedia [ME]*, ed. Harold Bender and C. Henry Smith (Scottsdale, PA: The Mennonite Publishing House, 1959), 4:427; Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, 37; and C. Arnold Snyder *The Life and Thought of Michael Sattler* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1984), 24.

<sup>6</sup>Klaus von Graveneck, “The Trial and Martyrdom of Michael Sattler” in Yoder, *Legacy*, 73. Graveneck did not understand Latin but recognized that Sattler was able to converse with the *Stadtschreiber* of Ensisheim in the language (74). Sattler also seems to have been familiar with the legal procedures of the court (See Yoder’s comment in *Legacy*, 83 n. 32).

<sup>7</sup>See for instance Bossert, “Sattler,” *ME*, 4:427: “The Hutterite chronicle relates that he was a learned man. All of his writings show that this was a fact.” Cf. Estep, *The Anabaptist*

elevated education, the source of this training still eludes historians. Some posit that Sattler was able to attend lectures at the University of Freiburg near his hometown. Here he would have gained exposure to a broad range of subjects and languages, including perhaps “Lutheran and Zwinglian ideas.”<sup>8</sup> Though this scenario is plausible, the precise source of Sattler’s educational training remains uncertain.<sup>9</sup>

Wherever Sattler received his formal education, his stay at St. Peter’s monastery plays an important role in the interpretation of Sattler’s pre-Anabaptist life. While at St. Peter’s, Sattler rose to the elevated position of prior.<sup>10</sup> According to earlier biographers, Reformation teachings swept through the Breisgau region where St. Peter’s was located. As evangelical preachers spread Reformation doctrine around the countryside, Sattler began closely studying and meditating on the Pauline epistles.<sup>11</sup> As a result of this examination, Sattler came to realize the hypocrisy of his fellow monks and the inability of the monastic life to produce the personal righteousness that God desires. The intensity of Sattler’s convictions continued to grow until he experienced a “crisis,” which could only be resolved by his renunciation of Roman Catholicism and his departure from the ways of monasticism.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Sattler’s primary reason for leaving the monastery and eventually joining the Anabaptists was theological.

Another line of interpretation emphasizes the social and economic factors surrounding Sattler’s departure from St. Peter’s and his eventual conversion to Anabaptism.<sup>13</sup> According to this approach, the Reformation in Freiburg and surrounding areas was “an event that failed to arrive.”<sup>14</sup> Contrary to the more lenient atmospheres of Zurich and Strasbourg, the authorities in Freiburg and in the Breisgau were hostile to Reformation teaching and quickly shut down any attempts to preach or spread reformed thinking.<sup>15</sup>

*Story*, 37.

<sup>8</sup>Yoder, *Legacy*, 10. Most of the traditional biographers of Sattler’s life agree with this interpretation. Bossert, “Sattler,” *ME*, 4: 427; Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, 37.

<sup>9</sup>On this issue, see Snyder, *Life and Thought of Michael Sattler*, 23–25. Citing (among other things) the absence of Sattler’s name on university matriculation lists and in scholarly correspondence of the day, Snyder questions the conclusions of Yoder, Bossert, and Estep regarding the nature and extent of Sattler’s formal education.

<sup>10</sup>Bossert, “Sattler,” *ME*, 4:427. Sattler would later say of his position in the monastery, “According to the flesh I would be a lord but it is better as it is” (Graveneck, “Trial and Martyrdom,” in Yoder, *Legacy*, 73).

<sup>11</sup>Bossert, “Sattler,” *ME*, 4:427.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, 37: “Sattler’s new-found evangelical faith finally precipitated a crisis which was only resolved with a severance of all ties with the monastery and the Church of Rome.” See also Yoder, *Legacy*, 10; Bossert, “Sattler,” *ME*, 4:427.

<sup>13</sup>For a strong articulation of this line of interpretation, see Snyder, “Revolution and the Swiss Brethren,” 276–87. Snyder argues that the Sattler story “cannot be told adequately outside of the framework of the sixteenth-century peasant unrest and its demise” (278). Much of Snyder’s historiographical work in this area is devoted to re-casting the events of the reformation period (and their traditional interpretation) in light social and political factors.

<sup>14</sup>Snyder, “Revolution and the Swiss Brethren,” 279.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

In this context, St. Peter's would have probably reflected a similar policy toward Reformation ideas. The effect of this suppression of theological dialogue was that the Reformation spread in the Breisgau primarily in the rural areas among the peasantry. This development intersected with St. Peter's on May 12, 1525, when the Black Forest peasant troop overtook the monastery as they prepared to lay siege to the nearby city of Freiburg during the Peasant's War. This event is seen as the probable catalyst in Sattler's departure from the monastery. In the Black Forest peasant troop were volunteers from Waldshut and Hallau, two towns that were heavily influenced by Anabaptism as a result of the preaching of Wilhelm Reublin and Hans Brotli.<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, Sattler likely became exposed to Reformation ideas through the lens of the revolutionary peasants rather than through the ideas of Luther or Zwingli.<sup>17</sup>

While this rendering of the events is compelling and avoids glossing over Sattler's time at St. Peter's, the connections and associations made are still circumstantial and rely on reconstructive history just as much as the earlier biographies.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, this interpretation allows for a more nuanced view of the beginning of Sattler's journey toward Anabaptism. However small a role it played, the revolutionary unrest of the common people during this period had some impact on his life. Sattler's time at St. Peter's was thus a period of significant social and theological reform that laid the groundwork for his later life and ministry.

### Sattler's Anabaptist Ministry

Sometime after leaving the monastery, Sattler met and married a former nun named Margaretha. Together, they traveled south as Sattler began interacting with Anabaptists around the area of Zurich in Switzerland. Though he was found in the company of many Anabaptist leaders during this time period, Sattler was not completely convinced of the Anabaptist position. He had not yet reached the point of conviction that would mark his later phase of ministry.<sup>19</sup> The first direct evidence of Sattler's presence in

<sup>16</sup>See James M. Stayer, "Reublin and Brotli: The Revolutionary Beginnings of Swiss Anabaptism," in *The Origins and Characteristics of Anabaptism*, ed. Marc Lienhard (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977), 83-104.

<sup>17</sup>Snyder, "Revolution and the Swiss Brethren," 282-83. Snyder asserts, "The evidence indicates that the Protestantism available to Sattler at Saint Peter's must have been the egalitarian gospel according to the common people. This, it seems to me, is a key factor in explaining how Sattler came to be an Anabaptist rather than a mainline Reformer" (283).

<sup>18</sup>Cf. Dennis Martin, "Monks, Mendicants and Anabaptists: Michael Sattler and the Benedictines Reconsidered," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* [MQR] 60.2 (April 1986): 139-64. Martin attempts "to interject a note of caution into the discussion" by arguing that "the impact of traditional, contemplative monastic spirituality on Anabaptism was minimal and that such linkages between Anabaptists and monasticism as did exist involved primarily the mendicant orders" (139). He posits further that "to speak of Benedictine roots for Sattler and Schleithem is misleading" (139-40).

<sup>19</sup>The main documents used to demonstrate that Sattler was convinced of Anabaptism

Zurich is found in official prison records in November of 1525. These indicate that after the third Disputation in Zurich, Sattler was imprisoned and only released after he abjured of any Anabaptist teaching and swore never to return to Zurich. After his expulsion from the region, Sattler traveled north and engaged in missionary activity north of Zurich, gaining and baptizing new Anabaptist converts.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps due to persecution from archduke Ferdinand, Austrian ruler of the Breisgau, Sattler continued his journey north to the town of Strasbourg, where the political situation was more tolerant of reformation ideas.

During this year, Sattler's Anabaptist convictions began to solidify as he continued to rise in prominence among the Swiss and German Anabaptists. In Strasbourg, Sattler came into contact with mainline reformers like Martin Bucer and Wolfgang Capito and also Anabaptist leaders such as Hans Denck and Ludwig Hatzer. At this point, Sattler was closer to the Reformers' position than Denck, but further than Hatzer. Thus, Sattler was able to stay in Strasbourg when Denck was forced to flee the city, but later decided to leave while Hatzer was able to remain.<sup>21</sup> Further, in Sattler's farewell letter to Bucer and Capito, it appears that Sattler's departure was due to his conscience rather than his jeopardized security. He calls these Reformers his "beloved brothers in God."<sup>22</sup> During his stay at Strasbourg, Sattler dialogued seriously with these Reformers and Anabaptist leaders and explored the nature of the connection between Anabaptism and the broader Reformation movement.<sup>23</sup> As Sattler writes, the group of leaders spoke "in brotherly moderation and friendliness on several points, which I together with my brothers and sisters have understood out of Scripture, namely out of the New Testament."<sup>24</sup> In particular, Sattler engaged Bucer and Capito regarding their disagreements about "baptism, the Lord's Supper, force or

early in 1525 are two references to a "brother Michael" in a "white coat" found in the Zurich archival material. However, both of these references record that this person was "ready to desist from re-baptism," confess that he had done wrong, and finally to "recant his doctrine, which he preached concerning baptism" (translated in Yoder, *Legacy*, 15-16n1). There is considerable debate as to whether these refer to Michael Sattler at all. Snyder's assertion regarding this evidence is instructive: "Thus although Sattler is demonstrably in Anabaptist company in November 1525, his actions do not demonstrate strong Anabaptist convictions, in marked contrast to his later heroism in the face of incredible torture." See C. Arnold Snyder, "The Life of Michael Sattler Reconsidered," *MQR* 52.4 (October 1978): 331.

<sup>20</sup>There is evidence of Sattler's missionary activity north of Zurich in the summer of 1526. Snyder notes in this regard that "Hanns Meyger, who was baptized in late June 1526, identifies Michael Sattler as having been one of his teachers." C. Arnold Snyder, "Rottenburg Revisited: New Evidence Concerning the Trial of Michael Sattler," *MQR* 54.3 (1980): 210n10.

<sup>21</sup>Yoder makes this connection in *Legacy*, 18-19.

<sup>22</sup>See Michael Sattler, "Letter to Martin Bucer and Wolfgang Capito" in Yoder, *Legacy*, 21. This letter to the Strasbourg Reformers and his letter to the congregation at Horb are the only extant epistles that are indisputably from Sattler's hand.

<sup>23</sup>See Hans-Werner Musing, "The Anabaptist Movement in Strasbourg from Early 1526 to July 1527," *MQR* 51.2 (April 1977): 91-126.

<sup>24</sup>Sattler, "Letter to Bucer and Capito," 21-22.

the sword, the oath, the ban, and all the commandments of God.”<sup>25</sup>

Late in 1526, Sattler decided to leave the company of Bucer and Capito out of conscience, realizing that his position was irreconcilable with the mainline Reformers.<sup>26</sup> After Sattler left Strasbourg, he spent some time in the town of Lahr, making his presence felt as a prominent Anabaptist leader.<sup>27</sup> He then traveled to the Wurttemberg along with Wilhelm Reublin and began spreading the teaching that he had come to accept in the previous year. Reublin concentrated his missionary efforts in the South, and Sattler focused on the North, where he began pastoring an Anabaptist congregation at Horb.<sup>28</sup> In this atmosphere, Sattler became one of the most important leaders of the South-German and Swiss Brethren. Thus, when the Anabaptists of the region decided to hold a conference at Schleithem on February 24, 1527, Sattler was the natural figure to take the lead.

At this conference, a group of Anabaptists drafted and produced the Schleithem Confession, which outlined the Anabaptist position on several key issues. In these discussions, Sattler played a critical role and lent his hand to the articulation of their Anabaptist distinctives.<sup>29</sup> Because of the volatile nature of the movement and the tense political situation, the confession dealt with practical issues pertaining to the existence of the church rather than formal theological categories. The Confession dealt with issues brought on by attacks from without and also from false teaching within the movement.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>25</sup>Sattler, “Letter to Bucer and Capito,” 22.

<sup>26</sup>After listing a series of exegetical observations, Sattler comments, “Such considerations, and still much more of the same kind . . . hinder me, dear brothers, from understanding your general assertion on every subject which you advocate with the words of Paul cited above. . . . Herewith I commend you to the Lord, for as I understand it, I can no longer remain here without doing a special dishonor to God; therefore I must for the sake of my conscience leave the field to the opposition” (“Letter to Bucer and Capito,” 23). He adds, “I beg you herein, that you understand this as an act of Christian humility on my part. The Lord will ultimately dispose” (23).

<sup>27</sup>See Jacob Ottelin’s comment that Sattler was “especially prominent” among the Anabaptists at Lahr in “Ottelin to Bucer,” in Yoder, *Legacy*, 19. Ottelin’s letter paints a mostly negative portrait of Sattler, though it is the only “clearly negative statement on record concerning Sattler’s character” (19).

<sup>28</sup>Bossert, “Sattler,” *ME* 4:429. Sattler’s letter to Horb seems to indicate that he was well acquainted with the congregation that he writes to from prison.

<sup>29</sup>Though there is some debate about the final production of the document, the general consensus is that Sattler was the primary author. Cf. Leland Harder, “Zwingli’s Reaction to the Schleithem Confession of Faith of the Anabaptists,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 11, no. 4 (Winter 1980): 51n1: “Little is known of the secret meeting of Anabaptist in this northern hinterland village except that Michael Sattler (1490?-1527) was the leading spirit and without doubt the author of the Confession of Faith.” Yoder comments that “the tradition according to which Michael Sattler was the leading spirit in the meeting, and the author of the document . . . is so widespread as to be worthy of belief, even though none of the early traditions to that effect are eyewitness reports” (*Legacy*, 30). He observes further that “this tradition is confirmed by obvious parallels in thought and phrasing between the Schleithem text and the other writings known genuinely to be from Sattler’s hand.”

<sup>30</sup>The cover letter of the *Confession* states that “a very great offense has been introduced by some false brothers among us, whereby several have turned away from the faith” (Yoder,

It set forth Anabaptist distinctives and clarified various issues related to baptism, the ban, the breaking of bread, separation from the world, pastors, the sword, and the oath.<sup>31</sup> The Confession was readily accepted as truth by many Anabaptists and heavily criticized by most mainline Reformers. Zwingli attests to this widespread influence of the Confession, when he writes, "There is almost no one among you who does not have a copy of your so well founded commandments."<sup>32</sup> Risking the very real danger of being discovered, Sattler and the members of this convention produced an influential document that solidified Anabaptist teaching at a pivotal time in the movement.

### Sattler's Trial and Death

While Sattler was away at Schleithem, the authorities of Rottenburg became aware of Anabaptist activity around Horb. Accordingly, not long after Sattler and his wife returned to Horb they were arrested along with some other Anabaptists by Count Joachim von Zollern, regent of Ferdinand of Austria who was "militantly Catholic."<sup>33</sup> A trial date was quickly set for April 12, but had to be delayed because of the strong Anabaptist presence in Horb and because finding judges willing to preside over a case that was a sure death sentence proved difficult.<sup>34</sup> The authorities therefore transferred the heavily guarded prisoners to the tower of the distant town of Binsdorf and set a new trial date for May in Rottenburg further up the Neckar River.<sup>35</sup>

Going into his trial, Sattler was not in a favorable position. Ferdinand thought Sattler did not even merit the semblance of a trial but should be immediately drowned in the Neckar, thus effecting the cruel irony of a "third baptism."<sup>36</sup> Because Sattler was formerly a monk, Ferdinand deemed that "it was less fitting for him to have dared the rebaptism than for a simple lay

*Legacy*, 35). For a discussion of the possible identity of these "false brothers," see H.W. Meihuizen, "Who Were the False Brethren mentioned in the Schleithem Articles?" *MQR* 41, no. 3 (July 1967): 200-22.

<sup>31</sup>See *The Schleithem Confession*, in *Anabaptist Beginnings (1523-1533)*, ed. William Estep (Nieuwkoop: B. De Graaf, 1976), 100-105; and John C. Wenger, "The Schleithem Confession of Faith," *MQR* 19, no. 4 (October 1945): 243-53. For a contemporary exposition of the Confession, see Daniel L. Akin, "An Expository Analysis of the Schleithem Confession," *Criswell Theological Review* 2, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 345-70.

<sup>32</sup>See Yoder, *Legacy*, 33. Cf. Harder, "Zwingli's Reaction to the Schleithem Confession," 51-66.

<sup>33</sup>Snyder, "Rottenburg Revisited," 210.

<sup>34</sup>For details concerning this process, see Yoder, *Legacy*, 66-67. Yoder states that "the chief difficulty was in finding judges for such an *ad hoc* proceeding in which it was taken for granted that the result would be a death penalty" (66).

<sup>35</sup>Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, 39. Bossert notes that the prisoners were escorted by "the foremost officials, with fourteen horses" (*ME*, 4:429).

<sup>36</sup>See "C.F. Sattler's Account of the Rottenburg Trial," translated in Snyder, "Rottenburg Revisited," 215: "In the meantime the monk from Staufen in the Breisgau, found among the presumed culprits, should be drowned by the head executioner without delay and without degradation or legal process . . . it was less fitting for him to have dared the rebaptism than for a simple lay person."

person.<sup>37</sup> However, the authorities in Rottenburg wanted to go through the motions of a trial in order to preserve the appearance of justice.<sup>38</sup> On May 17, 1525, after being interrogated in a preliminary hearing, Sattler's trial began.<sup>39</sup> Representing his fellow Anabaptists who were on trial with him, Sattler declined the offer of a defense attorney. Addressing the judges as "servants of God" and appealing to God's Word, Sattler questioned the validity of the court by arguing that the present trial did not have jurisdiction in matters of faith.<sup>40</sup> He and his comrades would defend themselves armed only with the Scriptures.

The charges against the accused Anabaptists were then read. The first seven of these charges applied to everyone present, and the last two were directed specifically against Sattler. The Anabaptists were charged with 1) acting against imperial mandate, 2) teaching against transubstantiation, 3) teaching against infant baptism, 4) rejecting the sacrament of unction, 5) despising Mary and the saints, 6) rejecting oaths to the government, and 7) initiating a corrupt version of the Lord's Supper.<sup>41</sup> In addition to these, Sattler was charged with forsaking the monastic order by taking a wife and saying that the Ottoman Turks should not be resisted if they were to come into the land.<sup>42</sup> This last accusation was particularly explosive due to the widespread fear of Turkish invasion.<sup>43</sup> After briefly consulting with his "brothers and sisters," Sattler responded "fearlessly" to each of these charges by appealing to the logic of Scripture.<sup>44</sup> The Anabaptists did not act contrary to imperial mandate, because they had only adhered to God's Word. Christ is not in the Supper, because he has ascended into heaven. Infant baptism is invalid, because salvation comes through faith. The sacrament of unction is wrong, because the Pope's oil cannot make anything good. The Anabaptists *do* honor Mary and the saints but deny that they are advocates and redeemers. Swearing allegiance to government is misguided, because Jesus forbids swearing in the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>45</sup>

In defense of leaving the monastery and marrying, Sattler recounts how he had come to despise the "pomp, pride, usury, and great fornication of the monks and priests" after reading the letters of Paul and hearing God's

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, 40. C.F. Sattler indicates in his trial record that Ferdinand's letter containing his intentions came after the trial had taken place. Sattler, "Sattler's Account of the Rottenburg Trial," 216.

<sup>39</sup>See "The Hearing of Michael Sattler," in Snyder, "Rottenburg Revisited," 211-13. Snyder argues that this hearing occurs before the trial.

<sup>40</sup>Cf. Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, 41.

<sup>41</sup>Graveneck, "Trial and Martyrdom," in Yoder, *Legacy*, 70.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 70-71.

<sup>43</sup>See Estep's comment in *The Anabaptist Story*, 42: "No other power on earth struck fear in the hearts of Austrians like that of the Turks. . . . the authorities intended to use this as a final blow to condemn [Sattler] before the world."

<sup>44</sup>Graveneck, "Trial and Martyrdom," in Yoder, *Legacy*, 71.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 71-72.

call to “testify to His Word.”<sup>46</sup> Contending that he “took a wife according to the command of God,” Sattler views marriage as one of the things “God has created” to be “enjoyed with thanksgiving.”<sup>47</sup> Sattler further maintains that “if the Turk comes, he should not be resisted,” but rather the people “should implore God that He might be our defense and our resistance.”<sup>48</sup> Sattler would rather “take the field” against those who claim to be Christians but who “persecute, take captive, and kill true Christians,” because the Turk is “a Turk according to the flesh” but the Christians who “persecute the faithful witnesses of Christ . . . are Turks according to the Spirit.”<sup>49</sup> Sattler concludes his defense by admonishing his accusers to consider what they were doing, because the Anabaptists had “done nothing counter to God and the gospel” nor had they “acted against any government in words or deeds.”<sup>50</sup>

Just in case the judges had not “heard or read the Word of God,” Sattler offered to discuss the issues under consideration in light of the Scriptures. If someone could demonstrate that the Anabaptist position was in error *from the Scripture*, then Sattler and his comrades would “gladly retract and recant” and “gladly suffer condemnation and the punishment for [their] offense.” Sattler’s “hope to God” was that the judges would “repent” and “let [themselves] be taught.”<sup>51</sup> Sattler’s hope was not to be realized in this courtroom, for as soon as Sattler uttered these last words, most of the “judges laughed and shook their heads” as the *Stadtschreiber* of Ensisheim began to taunt and ridicule Sattler verbally. Calling him a “disreputable, desperate, and mischievous monk,” the *Stadtschreiber* told Sattler that the hangman would be the one to debate him. Sattler responded by assuring him that “what God wills, that will come to pass.”<sup>52</sup> The heated exchange continued as the *Stadtschreiber* maintained that if he himself hanged this “evil doer and arch heretic,” then he would be “serving God thereby.”<sup>53</sup> Sattler’s response to this particular barb typifies his mentality throughout the trial. He responded boldly, “God will judge rightly.”<sup>54</sup>

After the *Stadtschreiber* rested his case, Sattler responded by saying that he had “not been sent to defend the Word of God in court,” but rather to “testify thereto.”<sup>55</sup> Sattler then reiterated that the Anabaptists would suffer for their faith in Christ Jesus “as long as we have in us a breath of life, unless we should be convinced otherwise with Scripture.”<sup>56</sup> By rejecting any legal process and demonstrating that his appeal was to Scripture alone, Sattler

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 72.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 72-73.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 73.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.



rested his case.<sup>57</sup> While the judges left the courtroom to deliberate over their decision, Sattler was again mocked and verbally attacked.<sup>58</sup> Over an hour later, the judges returned to the courtroom, and Sattler's grim verdict was read:

Michael Sattler shall be committed to the executioner. The latter shall take him to the square and there first cut out his tongue, and then forge him fast to a wagon and there with glowing iron tongs twice tear pieces from his body, then on the way to the site of execution five times more as above and then burn his body to powder as an arch-heretic.<sup>59</sup>

Before being led back to prison, Sattler told the head judge that he and his fellow judges had "condemned [him] contrary to justice and without proof," which for Sattler meant that they needed to "look out and repent" or else they would face eternal condemnation before "the judgment of God to eternal fire."<sup>60</sup> Not far from his own fiery death, Sattler remained concerned about the souls of his enemies.

Two days later, on May 20, 1525, Sattler was brought into the marketplace where the judgment he had received at the hands of his enemies was carried out to the letter. His tongue was cut out, and he was bound by chains to a cart where two pieces of his flesh were torn from his body with red-hot tongs. He was then driven to the place of execution by the gate where five more times the glowing iron tongs were applied to his body. Eyewitnesses recount that during these procedures, Sattler continually prayed for those persecuting him and urged others to do the same. Just before he was plunged into the fire, Sattler echoed the testimony of martyrs throughout Christian history as he cried out, "Almighty eternal God, Thou who art the way and the truth, since I have not been taught otherwise by anyone, so by Thy help I will testify this day to the truth and seal it with my blood."<sup>61</sup> After he was thrown into the fire with a small sack of gunpowder tied around his neck and "one despaired of his still being alive," Sattler would cry out "with a clear voice often and constantly to God in heaven."<sup>62</sup> When the ropes that bound Sattler's arms were burned up, he lifted them both with the first two fingers on each hand outstretched. This dramatic gesture was the symbol that he and his brothers had prearranged so that Sattler could signal to them that he was

<sup>57</sup>After the *Stadtschreiber* said, "The hangman will prove it to you, he can debate with you, arch heretic," Sattler replied, "I appeal to Scripture" (*ibid.*).

<sup>58</sup>Gravenek comments that Sattler "bore like the apostles all the mockery of his person" (Yoder, *Legacy*, 83n37).

<sup>59</sup>Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, 37. Cf. Gustav Bossert, "Michael Sattler's Trial and Martyrdom in 1527," *MQR* 25.3 (1951): 201-18.

<sup>60</sup>Gravenek, "Trial and Martyrdom," in Yoder, *Legacy*, 75

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup>Wilhelm Reublin, "Report of Sattler's Trial and Death" in Yoder, *Legacy*, 78. Yoder explains that the "sack of gunpowder was intended by its exploding to hasten mercifully the death of the martyr" (*Legacy*, 84n48).

faithful even unto death.<sup>63</sup>

In these gruesome actions, one can see the tragic irony of Sattler's final moments. They cut out his tongue, but they could not stop Sattler's voice from crying out to God on behalf of his executioners. They seared his flesh with a red-hot iron, but they could not deface the brand of Sattler's baptism that marked him as a member of Christ's true church. They forged his body to a wagon, but they could not stop his hands from reaching toward heaven with the signal to his Anabaptist companions that the grace of God was sufficient even for the fires of martyrdom.

Eight days after Sattler's grisly execution, his wife Margaretha was put to death by drowning, experiencing her "third baptism" in the Neckar river.<sup>64</sup> This former Beguine nun followed her husband's lead and refused to recant her faith. When she was offered her freedom by the wife of the imperial regent, Margaretha "persisted in saying that the crown she wanted was the one her Lord Jesus would give" and that "she would rather have gone into the fire with her husband."<sup>65</sup> Wilhelm Reublin recounts that she "accepted and suffered death" with "great joy and strong faith."<sup>66</sup> Thus, Michael and Margaretha Sattler remained faithful to each other and to their God until death parted them, first through fire and then through water.

### A Literary Snapshot of Sattler's Theological Convictions

After Sattler's death, the Schleithem Confession circulated along with an account of his dramatic martyrdom. Because this was the first Anabaptist confession and due to the dramatic nature of Sattler's death, these writings were quickly dispersed and widely read. As noted above, Zwingli attests to this widespread influence of the Confession, lamenting that "there is almost no one among you who does not have a copy of your so well founded commandments."<sup>67</sup> Indeed, the "strategic significance of the achievement of Schleithem is well demonstrated" by its "rapid and wide circulation."<sup>68</sup> Be-

<sup>63</sup>Yoder provides this explanation in *Legacy*, 83n42.

<sup>64</sup>Margaretha is named as Sattler's wife in the "Charges Read Against the Rottenburg Defendants" translated in Snyder, "Rottenburg Revisited," 213n34: "and Margaretha, wife of Michael Sattler, of Staufen . . ." Snyder notes that "this is the only known reference to Sattler's wife by name."

<sup>65</sup>Valerius Anshelm, "Report on Michael Sattler's Death," in Yoder, *Legacy*, 80.

<sup>66</sup>Reublin, "Report of Sattler's Trial and Death," in Yoder, *Legacy*, 77.

<sup>67</sup>See Yoder, *Legacy*, 33. George R. Potter, *Zwingli* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 193, notes that there was "in circulation at the same time a version of the Schleithem confession in print written in the Zurich dialect, all copies of which have disappeared." According to Potter, it was this "anonymous 'libellus' *Von der Kindertaufe* which Zwingli set out to refute" (194) in his own arguments against the Anabaptist position (*In Catabaptistarum Strophas Elenchus*, "Refutation of the Tricks of the Anabaptists"). Cf. Herder, "Zwingli's Reaction to the Schleithem Confession," 53: "Neither Oecolampad nor Zwingli had known anything about a meeting in Schleithem earlier in the year, but now in April they were not only hearing about a corporate Anabaptist confession of faith but also reading it directly from handwritten copies that were being confiscated by clergy and magistrates."

<sup>68</sup>Yoder makes this comment about the text of the Confession in *Legacy*, 32.

cause of their outlaw status, the Anabaptists could only rarely gain access to printing presses and thus the Confession was often reproduced by hand and passed along at great personal risk.<sup>69</sup>

The importance of the doctrinal affirmations and ecclesial guidelines of the Confession are well known, but sometimes overlooked is the strategic role that the account of Sattler's trial and death played in these early years of the movement. Some of the earliest manuscripts of the Confession circulated along with an account of Sattler's martyrdom. The legacy of Michael Sattler is wrapped up in these two documents. Subsequent generations of Anabaptists could scarcely consider Sattler's confession without thinking of the death by which he sealed it. When Calvin argues against the Anabaptist positions outlined in the Confession, for instance, he mentions an account of "the martyrdom of some Michael."<sup>70</sup> Accordingly, Sattler's testimony perhaps impacted the burgeoning movement as much as his leadership.

As noted above, the Confession circulated along with an account of Sattler's death. Two early pamphlets in particular included these documents as well as Sattler's last letter to his church members.<sup>71</sup> This epistle that Sattler penned to his congregation at Horb from his cell in the tower of Binsdorf as he awaited his trial provides insight into the specific theological truths that sustained him during his ministry and martyrdom. The nature and tone of this letter gives a glimpse of what Sattler's ministry was like and why he became so influential in the Anabaptist movement.<sup>72</sup> It also demonstrates the conviction that would enable him to remain faithful until his life was taken from him.<sup>73</sup> The content of this correspondence echoes some of the themes

<sup>69</sup>Cf. Herder, "Zwingli's Reaction to the Schleithem Confession," 54. Herder notes that Zwingli observed that many Anabaptists had personal copies of the Confession and wrote, "Why pray, do *you* not publish what are so divine and so salutary?" Herder explains, "It was a taunting comment in view of the way the Anabaptists were denied access to the printing presses, not to mention the constant confiscation of their documents, whether printed or not" (54).

<sup>70</sup>See Yoder, *Legacy*, 14. Yoder concludes from Calvin's comment that "we know that in addition to the *Seven Articles* at least the martyrdom account was in the translation." Cf. Robert Friedmann, "The Schleithem Confession (1527) and other Doctrinal Writings of the Swiss Brethren in a Hitherto Unknown Edition," *MQR* 16, no. 2 (April 1942): 82-98.

<sup>71</sup>See Yoder, *Legacy*, 13. There are two extant pamphlets that contain these texts. One of them contains the Schleithem Confession, Sattler's letter to the congregation at Horb, and a "somewhat briefer account of the martyrdom." The second pamphlet contains these three documents as well as a "tract on divorce." These two small collections thus demonstrate the organic connection between these three writings (or at least their shared reception history). They should be ground zero for Sattler studies and are the focus of the present study.

<sup>72</sup>Yoder notes that this letter is the "best source of insight into the kind of ministry he exercised in South Germany between his departure from Strasbourg and the Schleithem meeting. It includes as well clear indications of the significance which he ascribed to the Schleithem decisions" (*Legacy*, 55).

<sup>73</sup>For an overview and interaction with the main contours of Sattler's thinking, see Malcolm B. Yarnell, "The Anabaptists and Theological Method: 'For What They Were Concerned with Was Not Luther's, but Rather God's Word,'" in *The Anabaptists and Contemporary Baptists*, ed. Malcolm Yarnell (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2013), 27-48. Yarnell's main contention is that "an inductive approach to Sattler's corpus indicates that the

from the Schleitheim Confession he helped draft and also anticipates the statements he would utter during his trial and execution. Thus, the letter stands at the intersection of the two most important events in his Anabaptist ministry. In this prison epistle, Sattler exhorts his congregation to love their enemies and to persevere under persecution. He roots these admonitions in theology and eschatology.

Sattler begins his letter to his “beloved companions in the Lord” by praying that they would receive mercy “from God the heavenly Father through Jesus Christ our Lord, and the power of Their Spirit.”<sup>74</sup> By beginning with this blessing, Sattler demonstrates that the God he serves is the Trinity and that his faith in God is one that coheres with centuries of Christian orthodoxy. Throughout his letter, Sattler gives his exhortations in light of the members of the Trinity. When he urges his readers to live righteously so that they might be “recognized in the midst of this adulterous generation of godless men,” he likens them to “bright and shining lights which God the heavenly Father had kindled with the knowledge of Him and the light of the Spirit.”<sup>75</sup> For Sattler, those who knew the Father were led to this belief by the light of the Spirit. Further, the only way that they could hope to persevere in blamelessness would be to “walk the surefooted and living way of Christ” and be “purified through His blood.”<sup>76</sup> Persecution should not ultimately trouble them because these temporary trials are like a father chastising a son in whom he delights.<sup>77</sup> Sattler ends his letter by reminding his readers that their ability to exist depends upon the work of all three members of the triune God that they serve. Sattler makes it clear that it will be the “peace of Jesus Christ,” the “love of the heavenly Father and the grace of Their Spirit” that will enable the believers at Horb to persevere to the end. This understanding of the Trinity forms a foundational aspect of Sattler’s theological framework.<sup>78</sup>

Sattler also undergirds his call to perseverance in eschatological realities. He urges his readers to endure all things in the hope of “the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>79</sup> Throughout the letter, Sattler sternly warns his congregation about “the wolves” among “the sheep of God” who threaten the church of Christ either by false teaching within or by merciless attacks from without.<sup>80</sup> He urges, “Let no one shift your goal . . . which is sealed by the

early Anabaptists developed their theological concerns out of a gracious personal encounter with God in Christ mediated through Scripture externally and the Spirit internally, realized in the yielded human conscience in the midst of the covenantal community and manifested in a transformed life following the way of Christ’s cross, beginning with baptism, continuing with disciplined communion, and ending with a successful testimony” (28).

<sup>74</sup>Michael Sattler, “Letter to the Church at Horb,” in Yoder, *Legacy*, 56.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid. In this statement, Sattler alludes to Mark 8:28 and Phil 2:15ff.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 58.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid. This section of Sattler’s comments draws heavily on Heb 12:3–11.

<sup>78</sup>Cf. Yarnell, “Anabaptists and Theological Method,” 36–38.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 63.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 58, 60.

blood of Christ and of many witnesses of Jesus” so that they might “be found to be the humble, fruitful, and obedient children of God.”<sup>81</sup> The primary reason to follow this exhortation is because “the day of the Lord draws nearer.”<sup>82</sup> Indeed, Sattler’s call to perseverance is not without an underlying context. His vision of the future realities of God’s judgment and reward undergirds his call to persevere and enables himself to do the same.

In exhorting his congregation at Horb, Sattler betrays an awareness of his own impending death. Already in the Binsdorf tower, Sattler and the other prisoners “underwent all sorts of attacks from the adversaries.” He recounts that his attackers “menaced us once with a cord, then with fire, then with the sword.” Sattler sought to respond to this physical threat by completely abandoning himself to the Lord and by readying himself “for death for the sake of His testimony.” Realizing that his time was near, Sattler prepared himself to be “released” and “with Christ to await the hope of the blessed.”<sup>83</sup> He describes the opposition he has seen by asserting that “the world has arisen against those who are redeemed from its error.” In this situation, “the day of the Lord must no longer tarry.”<sup>84</sup> For Sattler, the coming kingdom is the primary incentive for remaining faithful to the end, for the end is near.

Sattler’s own boldness under persecution that he would soon demonstrate to the world came from an eschatological vision that included a Good Shepherd who would give eternal rest to those who would faithfully devote themselves to the kingdom and its purposes in this world.<sup>85</sup> At the close of his letter, Sattler again warns his congregation of the “false brothers” who would rob them of their future inheritance as those who kept the faith till the end. He reminds them that if he is in fact martyred, it is because the Lord had called him home: “for the Lord will perhaps call me.”<sup>86</sup> For Sattler, persecution for faith in Christ and commitment to the church was bearable through “[treasuring] the jewel which the calling of God holds out . . . for

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 60.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 62.

<sup>83</sup>The preceding quotations in this paragraph are found in *ibid.*, 60. Sattler viewed the persecution he and his companions endured in prison as “God’s combat.”

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., 61.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., 62. Sattler draws this specific imagery from the apocryphal text of *4 Esdras* 2.34-37. Sattler uses it as an illustration of truths he sees deeply rooted in the Scripture. This entire letter, much like his other letter and trial responses, is imbued with Scriptural language and imagery. All other allusions, quotations, and paraphrases of Scripture are unmarked in the letter, but the passage from *4 Esdras* is both quoted at length and clearly marked out as a quotation. This might indicate that Sattler viewed this source differently than he did the biblical passages. For a further glimpse into the type of biblical engagement that characterized the Swiss Brethren, see the Anabaptist pamphlet, “How Scripture Should Be Discerningly Exposed,” in Yoder, *Legacy*, 150-77. As Yoder notes, “The bulk of the pamphlet is a simple series of New Testament texts, cited in full, with subtitles and glosses serving to point up the sequence of statements” (150).

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., 63.

those who conquer.”<sup>87</sup> Indeed, the ultimate explanation of Sattler’s endurance in the midst of literal trial and tribulation can be traced to Sattler’s final words of his letter to his church: “I wait upon my God.”<sup>88</sup>

### **A Concluding Reflection: Sattler’s Lasting Contribution to Baptist Heritage**

Oftentimes in contemporary Baptist life, the Anabaptists are used in the debate over Baptist origins as a piece of evidence rather than a source of inspiration. On the one hand, there are those who seek to draw a straight line from contemporary Baptists to the Anabaptists and defend an organic succession from then until now. On the other hand, there are those who reject this kinship with the Anabaptists and argue that Baptists began in seventeenth-century England from Puritan and Separatist roots. The former sometimes argue that Baptists should renounce any ties to Reformation teaching in favor of Anabaptist principles. The latter sometimes focus solely on the influences of the Reformation and Separatism to the exclusion of the Anabaptist influence. In this polemical context, the leaders of Anabaptism are oftentimes overshadowed by rhetoric, as they are either vilified or romanticized by participants in the origins debate.

Despite the reality of this situation, there is perhaps a more nuanced way forward. Because the primary Baptist distinctives are based on a close reading of the New Testament, it is no surprise that throughout church history different groups have independently reached similar conclusions. Viewed in this light, the Anabaptists can be appreciated as believers who submitted to the authority of the Bible and were willing to hold fast to their confession of faith even unto death. Further, the substance of their confessed beliefs resonate with the contemporary Baptist distinctives of a believers’ church, believer’s baptism, and religious liberty. Whether or not there is a direct historical link to these Radical Reformers, the lives of the Anabaptists can still serve as powerful examples of how a bold commitment to Scripture and a passion for the purity of the churches can greatly impact one’s life and confession. However one construes the nature and extent of Anabaptist kinship, any Baptist heritage devoid of the testimony of Sattler’s life, death, and theological conviction is an unnecessarily impoverished one.

Many have noted that Sattler served as a “bridge” connecting the early phase of the Anabaptist movement to its later development. Together, the Schleithem Confession, Sattler’s prison epistle, and the account of his trial and death form the main planks of this bridge. They represent the paper trail that later Anabaptists picked up on as they sought to remain faithful to the radical teachings of the New Testament. Because the literary core of Sattler’s brief but substantive corpus has endured, the path of his theological legacy can still be followed.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, 63.



## *Brüderliche Vereinigung: A Brief Look at Unity in The Schleithem Confession*

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A number of Swiss Anabaptists recognized the need for consensus. Increasing persecution required them to articulate their position. More importantly, false teaching among their ranks demanded that they meet, address the problems, and arrive at a consensus of core convictions. Though there was general agreement on many issues, some of the differences alarmed them. They gathered in Schleithem on February 24, 1527 on the Swiss German border to hammer out the seven articles of the Schleithem Confession.<sup>1</sup> These early Anabaptists sought true Christian unity according to God's nature and the revelation of Jesus Christ in Scripture rather than according to the whims and ideas of men.

### **Introduction**

According to the introduction of the confession, the teachings and practices of the "false brethren among us" caused alarm. Those present at the meeting in Schleithem felt these people had abused the freedom of the Spirit, being "given over to the lasciviousness and license of the flesh."<sup>2</sup> As a result, they led many people away from the faith. H. W. Meihuizen posits several likely candidates as the false brothers. Hans Denck exhibited an excessive spiritualism which "attached hardly any significance to the church, and . . . underestimated the significance of the sacraments."<sup>3</sup> Another pos-

<sup>1</sup>It is beyond the scope of this article to examine the possible origins, influence, and historiography of the Schleithem Confession. It is a very significant document in the study of early Anabaptism and has been heavily examined. For a treatment of the influence and historiography of the Schleithem Confession, see Arnold Snyder, "The Influence of the Schleithem Articles on the Anabaptist Movement: an Historical Evaluation," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 63: (1989), 323-44 and Gerald Biesecker-Mast, "Anabaptist Separation and Arguments against the Sword in the Schleithem *Brotherly Union*," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 74: (2000), 381-402.

<sup>2</sup>John Howard Yoder, transl. and ed., *The Schleithem Confession* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1973), 9.

<sup>3</sup>H. W. Meihuizen, "Who Were the 'False Brethren' Mentioned in the Schleithem Articles," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 19 (1967): 209.



sibility is Hans Hut. Hut had taught his people that swearing oaths was not against God's will. His apocalypticism was viewed with suspicion. Furthermore, his view on the sword caused him to appear as an "extension of Müntzer's views."<sup>4</sup> Hut may fit part of the profile; however, he did not appear to show libertine tendencies; apocalypticism does not necessarily imply lasciviousness. Meihuizen mentions a third candidate: Balthasar Hubmaier. He indicates that Hubmaier's accomplishment at the church in Waldshut under protection of worldly authorities may have concerned these Swiss Brethren. His baptism of Leonhard von Liechtenstein, a magistrate in Nikolsburg, could also have been unsettling to Sattler and the others.<sup>5</sup> However, "the lasciviousness and license of the flesh" hardly describes Hubmaier. In addition, Hubmaier could surely not be accused of causing others to turn from the faith.

Others are mentioned as possibilities: Bucer and Capito in Strasbourg and Thomas Hätzer in Switzerland. The problem with equating Bucer and Capito with the "false brothers" is that they were not counted as "among us," that is, they were not among the Anabaptist circle. Also, they do not appear to be guilty of libertine tendencies. The difficulty with Meihuizen's argument is that there are sufficient reasons to doubt many of his candidates. John Howard Yoder tempers Meihuizen's view somewhat by stating that one may agree with Meihuizen's descriptions of the positions "without being convinced that the meeting was this clearly directed against a few particular men who were specifically not invited."<sup>6</sup> Yoder adds that if one person is meant, Thomas Hätzer would be the most likely candidate since he could be accused of libertine tendencies. The truth is that we do not know specifically who is meant since they are not named. Whoever the false brothers may be, the Anabaptists meeting in Schleithem felt that organization and self-discipline in the church was needed in order to confront "antinomian and charismatic excess on its fringes."<sup>7</sup>

The concerns raised by the false brothers demanded serious attention. The meeting in Schleithem sought to delineate the correct position on these issues. Because of its occasion, the document is not a typical confession of faith. It does not attempt to explain the doctrines of God, Christology, pneumatology, or Scripture. Rather, it focuses exclusively on ecclesiology. These core doctrines form the foundation for the ecclesiology described in the confession. If Michael Sattler, regarded as the primary author of The Schleithem Confession, is considered typical of those gathered in Schleithem, then their theology is orthodox. As will be demonstrated later, they accepted the doctrine of the Trinity as a true description of God's nature. Regarding Christ's person and work, Sattler affirms that "Christ came to save all of

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 213-14.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 216-17.

<sup>6</sup>Yoder, *The Schleithem Confession*, 22-23, n. 9.

<sup>7</sup>George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation*, 3rd ed., Sixteenth Century Essays & Studies, vol. 15 (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2000), 288.

those who would believe in Him alone.”<sup>8</sup> He adds, “Faith in Jesus Christ reconciles us with the Father and gives us access to Him.”<sup>9</sup> In the account of his martyrdom, Sattler affirms “that Christ is our only mediator and advocate before God.”<sup>10</sup> Regarding the Holy Spirit, Sattler not only believed the Spirit to be one of the Persons of the Trinity, but also affirms the Spirit’s role as the revealer of divine truth. Addressing Bucer and Capito, Sattler tells them of his prayer that God will “teach us in all truth by His Spirit” and ends the letter by requesting that “God give us His Spirit to lead us in the way.”<sup>11</sup>

Though the above survey is brief, it serves to illustrate that those gathered in Schleithem generally agreed with the Reformers on theology proper, Christology, salvation, and the other major doctrines. The primary disagreements occurred over the church: its composition, ordinances, and governance. For this reason the Schleithem Confession only deals with the issues in which these Swiss and South German brethren differed with other Reformers.<sup>12</sup> William R. Estep observes,

The term “confession” is somewhat misleading, because the articles contain no strictly doctrinal statements other than a general affirmation of commonly held Christian concepts about God. The confession is concerned with order and discipline within the small, widely scattered congregations.<sup>13</sup>

Though orthodox theology is implied throughout, the Schleithem Confession addressed what they believed to be the core essentials of proper ecclesiology: baptism, the ban, the Lord’s Supper, separation, pastors, the sword, and the oath.

Many of the confession’s elements have attracted quite a bit of attention: the teaching on the ordinances, the view of pacifism, church discipline, discipleship, separation, and the concept of a pure church, just to name a few. One theme often acknowledged, but not given extensive treatment, is the underlying theme of unity. Unity, according to the Schleithem Confession, finds its basis in God’s nature and requires all the church’s members to be of one mind in belief and practice so that the church functions properly. This article will examine the use of three word groups which appear throughout the confession—*vereinigen*, *alle*, and *ein*—to demonstrate that unity serves as the theme which underlies the Schleithem Confession and binds its seven

<sup>8</sup>Michael Sattler, “Parting with the Strasbourg Reformers,” in *The Legacy of Michael Sattler*, transl. and ed. John Howard Yoder, Classics of the Radical Reformation, vol. 1 (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1973), 22.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>“Martyrdom,” in *The Legacy of Michael Sattler*, 72.

<sup>11</sup>“Parting with the Strasbourg Reformers,” 23.

<sup>12</sup>Daniel Akin, “An Expository Analysis of the Schleithem Confession,” *Criswell Theological Review* 2 (1988): 347.

<sup>13</sup>William R. Estep, Jr., *Renaissance and Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 200.

articles together.

### *Vereinigung*

Unity is especially prominent in the introduction and the first three articles. The use of three word groups—*vereinigen*, *ein*, and *alle*—describes the unity of those who convened at Schleithem. In the German text *Vereinigung* appears twice, in the title and in the opening sentence.<sup>14</sup> The usual translation is “union,” bringing people or things together to form a unity. In the title of the document, *Brüderliche Vereinigung etzlicher Kinder Gottes sieben Artikel betreffend*, *Vereinigung* indicated that a united body of believers had come together to determine the key issues which distinguished the Anabaptist movement and defined the true church.

### *Vereinigung* Grounded in the Cross

From the outset the Schleithem Confession grounds its understanding of unity in God’s Trinitarian nature and his work in redemption. The opening sentence begins, “May joy, peace, and mercy from our Father through the atonement [*Vereinigung*] of the blood of Jesus Christ, together with the gifts of the Spirit . . . be to all those who love God.”<sup>15</sup> John H. Yoder, John C. Wenger, and William R. Estep all translate *Vereinigung* as atonement. Yoder notes,

A most significant concept in the thought of Michael Sattler is that of *Vereinigung*, which, according to the context, must be translated in many different ways. In the title we render it “Union”; here in the salutation it can most naturally be translated “reconciliation” or “atonement”; later in the text, in the passive participle form, it will mean “to be brought to unity.” The same word can be used for the reconciling work of Jesus Christ, for the procedure whereby brothers come to a common mind, for the state of agreement in which they find themselves, and for the document which states the agreement to which they have come.<sup>16</sup>

Based on the phrase “through the blood of Christ Jesus” the opening statement could be an allusion to one of three verses in the New Testament. Romans 3:25 refers to Christ as the one “whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith.” “Propitiation” translates ἰλαστήριον, which Luther translates *Sühnopfer*. Ephesians 1:7 says, “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses

<sup>14</sup>Beatrice Jenny, “Das Schleithemer Täuferbekenntnis 1527,” in *Schaffhauser Beiträge zur Vaterländische Geschichte*, vol. 28 (Thayngen: Historischen Verein des Kantons Schaffhausen, 1951), 9-18.

<sup>15</sup>Yoder, *The Schleithem Confession*, 7.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 20, n. 1.

according to the riches of his grace.”<sup>17</sup> The word translated “redemption” is the Greek word ἀπολύτρωσις, which Luther translates *Erlösung*. In 1 Corinthians 10:16 Paul writes, “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?” “Participation” is the translation of κοινωνία, which can also be translated “fellowship.” The Luther Bible translates κοινωνία as *Gemeinschaft*. This verse would be the closest in meaning since *Gemeinschaft* refers to a union or community, the very thing the authors of the Confession were concerned to define.<sup>18</sup> Atonement and reconciliation fall well within the semantic range of *Vereinigung*; yet, undoubtedly, the idea of unity is strongly present as well. Sattler and the others may have intended the double meaning here. Their *Vereinigung* represented not simply a gathered group of similarly-minded people, but a united community; a community formed out of the work of Christ who has redeemed them from sin in order to bring them into union with God. The unity of this synod, and ultimately of the church, was grounded in the unifying, reconciling work of Christ.

This group of Swiss Anabaptists provides an indispensable insight into the meaning of unity: it is Christ’s cross which makes unity possible. However, it is worth noting how this group of Swiss Anabaptists treated Christ’s atoning work: they gave very little attention to developing a systematic theology of the atonement. Instead, they concentrated almost entirely on the effects of Christ’s cross on the believer. In the article on baptism, the authors state that baptism is intended for the repentant who believe “that their sins are taken away through Christ, and to all who desire to walk in the resurrection of Christ . . . .”<sup>19</sup> Likewise in the fourth article, on separation from evil, these Anabaptist believers not only affirmed that separation from the world’s evil is by Christ’s command, but it is based on the work of Christ who “has freed us from the servitude of the flesh and fitted us for the service of God and the Spirit whom he has given us.”<sup>20</sup> In the conclusion of the document, the confession stresses the need for “agreement,” or unity (*Vereinigt*) in the Lord. This involves confession of sin and forgiveness “through the gracious forgiveness of God and through the blood of Jesus Christ.”<sup>21</sup> Finally, the confession concludes by quoting Titus 2:11-14, admonishing believers to live pure lives while waiting for the hope and “the appearing of the glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all unrighteousness and to purify unto himself a people of his own, that would be zealous of good works.”<sup>22</sup>

What is interesting in these citations is the orientation that these Swiss

<sup>17</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are according to the *English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2001).

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Yoder, *The Schleithelm Confession*, 10.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 12-13.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 19.

believers held about how the work of Christ related to the idea of unity. It is tempting to think that they disregarded, or downplayed, the objectivity of the cross, the truth that Christ died “for us.” However, this conclusion seems too hasty. Based on the way that they referred to Christ’s work, they certainly affirmed the “for us” truth of Christ’s atoning work; there does not seem to be any denial of it. Yet, unlike some of the Protestant Reformers, for these Swiss Anabaptists this was not the end of Christ’s work, but rather the beginning. They stressed, instead, the effect of the cross on the lives of believers. The work which Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross took away sins so that one could walk in Christ’s resurrection; it frees the believer from fleshly servitude and fits one for serving God; finally, Christ’s shed blood brings forgiveness of sin, redeems from unrighteousness, and purifies a people for God himself. For these Swiss believers, the theology of the cross was not the problem; rather, the consequences of the cross, or the practice of the cross, is what was lacking among the “false brothers among us”; but it was also lacking among many of their Roman Catholic and Protestant antagonists, whose theology of the atonement was well-developed, but without transforming effect on their lives. The work of Christ has a present effect in that it separates the believer from sin and empowers him to obey the commands of Christ in holy living.<sup>23</sup> The focus on the transforming effect of Christ’s work represents the primary emphasis of the majority of sixteenth-century Anabaptists.<sup>24</sup> For this group of Swiss Anabaptists, the atoning work of Christ was not an abstract doctrine, but a transforming reality. In essence, Christ’s atoning work reconciles an individual to God so that he lives a life of holiness, obedience, and service to God.

One other note needs to be added: these Swiss brethren did not view Christ’s work apart from its effect on the community of faith. Reconciliation was not solely between the individual and God, but is also communal in nature. Ephesians 2:11-22 declares that Christ’s death not only brought about reconciliation with God, but it also accomplished human reconciliation and unity.

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace,

<sup>23</sup>Though this is beyond the scope of this study, most Anabaptists also understood the cross of Christ as entailing suffering with Christ. Some who were more influenced by medieval German mysticism placed very heavy stress on the importance of Christ suffering “in” the believer. A good example of this is Leonhard Schiemer’s treatment of God’s three-fold grace; the second grace, the suffering of the cross, must be experienced inwardly to purge sin from the believer in order to love God truly, as well as to produce a tested faith. Indeed, one cannot experience the comfort of the Spirit (the third grace) apart from suffering Christ’s cross inwardly. See Leonhard Schiemer, “Letter to the Church of God at Rattenberg, Written in 1527: Found in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the Three-fold Grace (as it is called),” in *Sources of South German/Austrian Anabaptism*, ed. and trans. Walter Klaassen, Frank Friessen, and Werner O. Packull (Kitchenor, Ontario: Pandora Press, 2001), 67-80.

<sup>24</sup>For a sampling of this, see Walter Klaassen, ed., *Anabaptism in Outline*, Classics of the Radical Reformation, vol. 3 (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1981), 85-100.

who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (Eph 2:13-16).

Christ's death has destroyed hostilities between people. By Christ's death our alienations have ended. Reconciliation to God through Christ's blood brings Jews and Gentiles near to God and also near to each other since all people must approach God through the same Spirit based on the one work of Christ's shed blood. In doing so, he creates a new people, a people whose former differences have been nullified, and who have been united into one body. These seven articles sought to establish a "Brotherly Union of a Number of Children of God," as the title of the document indicates. Any discussion of unity among believers and churches must be grounded in Christ's atonement, which alone accomplishes union with Christ and with one another.

### ***Vereinigung* Founded in the Trinity**

Not only does the reconciling work of Christ provide a basis for unity, so does God's Trinitarian nature. Thomas Finger observes, "The Schleithem Confession, written to forge unity (*vereinigung*) among Anabaptists, found this unity being created by the divine persons. It wished the readers the Father's peace through the "unification" (*vereinigung*) of Jesus' blood and the gifts of the Spirit sent by the Father."<sup>25</sup> Later in the introduction, the doctrine of the Trinity again undergirds the Confession: "Herein we have sensed the unity of the Father and of our common Christ as present with us in their Spirit."<sup>26</sup> In reference to the false brothers, Sattler and the others express concern that these false teachers were abusing "the freedom of the Spirit and of Christ." A few sentences later the confession states, "Note well, you members of God in Christ Jesus, that faith in the Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ is not thus formed."<sup>27</sup> Only the Father, Son, and Spirit can give true freedom; it is not something man can create for himself. Likewise, the proper practice of this freedom originates in God's Triune nature.

Robert Friedmann observes that the Anabaptists in general "were Trinitarians beyond doubt, in fact they were quite sensitive when confronted with anti-Trinitarian ideas."<sup>28</sup> William Estep agrees, "From Conrad Grebel to Menno Simons there is an abundance of evidence which suggests that

<sup>25</sup>Thomas N. Finger, *A Contemporary Anabaptist Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 423.

<sup>26</sup>Yoder, *Schleithem Confession*, 9.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Robert Friedmann, *The Theology of Anabaptism*, Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History, vol. 15 (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1973; reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1998), 53.

the Anabaptists found the Triune God an inescapable reality.”<sup>29</sup> The Swiss Brethren held the same view on the doctrine of the Trinity as Zwingli, under whom they had previously studied and whose Trinitarian theology was thoroughly orthodox.<sup>30</sup> Michael Sattler in particular, as the primary author of the Schleithem Confession, assumed the truth of God’s Triune nature. In his letter to the church in Horb, he reminded them of his admonition to shine like heavenly lights “which the Father has kindled with the knowledge of Him and the light of the Spirit.”<sup>31</sup> Later in the same letter, Sattler closes, “May the peace of Jesus Christ, and the love of the heavenly Father and the grace of Their Spirit keep you flawless . . . that you might be found among the number of the called ones at the supper of the one-essential true God and Savior Jesus Christ.”<sup>32</sup> Yoder comments that the word “one-essential” is the technical term *eingewesen*, the word used to translate ὁμοουσιᾶς in the Nicene Creed.<sup>33</sup> While not expounding the meaning of the Trinity, the Anabaptists in general, and Michael Sattler in particular, accepted its truth without qualification.

The doctrine of the Trinity provides the foundation for unity in several of the articles in the Schleithem Confession. The article on baptism lists Matthew 28 as one of the Scriptures supporting its position on baptism. Baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is assumed as the norm. The doctrine of the Trinity provides the underlying basis for the Lord’s Supper. The emphasis on one calling of God, one Spirit, and one body of Christ is assumed for the proper teaching and practice of the Lord’s Supper. Even the article on separation has a Trinitarian basis. Separation from the world and its evil practices is only possible in Christ, “who has freed us from the servitude of the flesh and fitted us for the service of God and the Spirit whom He has given us.”<sup>34</sup> God’s Trinitarian nature makes the *Vereinigung* of the Swiss and south German Anabaptists possible.

### ***Vereinigung* Established by the Holy Spirit**

The particular role of the Third Person of the Trinity should not be overlooked. In the fourth paragraph of the introduction, the confession implies that the Holy Spirit guided the discussion of the articles and asserts that he produced the necessary oneness of mind. The article on the ban teaches that the Spirit should regulate church discipline. The fourth article states that separation is necessary and possible not only because Christ has freed the believer from slavery to sin, but also because the Holy Spirit has fitted the believer to serve God.<sup>35</sup> The Confession closes by declaring that

<sup>29</sup>William R. Estep, Jr., *The Anabaptist Story*, rev. ed. (Nashville: Broadman, 1975), 134.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>“Letter to the Church of God at Horb,” in *The Legacy of Michael Sattler*, 56.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 63.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., n. 41.

<sup>34</sup>Yoder, *Schleithem Confession*, 12-13.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

they had to “be brought to agreement [*vereynigt seint worden*] in the Lord” to correct the problems caused by the false brothers, namely the damage done to those with weak consciences which caused God’s name to be slandered.<sup>36</sup> Unity was essential because these seven articles represented “the will of God as revealed through us at this time.”<sup>37</sup> Snyder explains, “The clear implication is that the synod at Schleithem has been acted upon by the Holy Spirit, who Himself has brought the meeting into unity. . . . The achievement of unanimity and peace is considered a sign and seal of the presence and leading of the Spirit of God.”<sup>38</sup> The confession described God’s will revealed by the Holy Spirit, thus, oneness in belief and practice was obligatory.

Returning to the specific use of the *vereinigen* word group, six of the seven articles begin with the present perfect passive of *vereinigen* (*sind vereynigt worden*). Only the first article on baptism does not include this verb, possibly because the authors had just used it in listing the articles to be discussed. Yoder translates the verb expression “we have been united” in all but one instance.<sup>39</sup> Wenger and Estep both translate it as “we are agreed” or “we agree,” and once as “we were of one mind.”<sup>40</sup> *Vereinigen* basically means “to unite, to make one.” The Confession begins its discussion of the seven articles by affirming that all those who had gathered “have been united.” The third article, on the Lord’s Supper, mentions twice that they are in agreement on this issue. The fourth article, dealing with the need for separation, contains three uses of *vereinigen*. The first instance occurs at the beginning of the article to state that they are united on the need for separation from the world and its evil practices. The second use of *vereinigen* declares that those who do not walk in obedience are not united to God. In the final reference, the authors state that whatever is not united “with our God and Christ is nothing but an abomination which we should shun.”<sup>41</sup> Sattler uses *vereinigen* emphatically, if not artistically: they are united in separating from those who have not united themselves to God and from anything that is not united with God.

### *Alle*

The second word group stressing unity in the German text is *alle*. The word appears mostly in the introduction and first three articles. Each use further emphasizes the idea of unity. In the introduction, the authors mention that the Holy Spirit is given “to all believers to [give] strength and consola-

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>C. Arnold Snyder, *The Life and Thought of Michael Sattler*, Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History, vol. 26 (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1984), 122.

<sup>39</sup>Yoder, *Schleithem Confession*, 7-19.

<sup>40</sup>John C. Wenger, “The Schleithem Confession of Faith,” *The Mennonite Quarterly Review* 19 (1945): 243-53. William R. Estep, Jr., ed. “The Schleithem Confession,” in *Anabaptist Beginnings 1523-1533: A Source Book*, ed. William R. Estep, Jr., Bibliotheca Humanistica et Reformatiorica, vol. 16 (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1976), 100-05.

<sup>41</sup>Yoder, *Schleithem Confession*, 12.



tion and constance in all tribulation to the end.”<sup>42</sup> The greeting is addressed to all the children of light, that is, all those who love God. All who are believers in Christ have received the Spirit, no exceptions. All who love God are made children of light, no exceptions. Their common identity as God’s children and their common reception of the Spirit create unity among them.

*Alle* in the article on baptism emphasizes unity.

Baptism shall be given to all those who have been taught repentance and amendment of life and [who] believe truly that their sins are taken away through Christ, and to all those who desire to walk in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and be buried with Him in death, so that we might rise with Him; to all those who with such an understanding themselves desire and request it from us.<sup>43</sup>

Baptism is for a limited group of people, namely those who have placed faith in Jesus Christ. Only believers have experienced the forgiveness of sin and expressed the desire to walk in the new resurrected life which Christ gives. Sattler and the others stress unity because baptism is common to all of them. Furthermore, the pledge offered in baptism, to walk in the resurrection, was pledged by all of them. Every one of the members of the church had made the same commitment to follow Christ as his disciple. Hence, they are united in baptism.

The unity of baptism and discipleship carries over into unity for church discipline. The article on the ban uses *alle* three times to underscore the theme of unity. “The ban shall be employed with all those who have given themselves over to the Lord, to walk after [Him] in His commandments; to [*alle*] those who have been baptized into the one body of Christ.”<sup>44</sup> Baptism and discipleship allow the church to discipline her members; and discipline applies to every member of the church, without exception. The article concludes by stating that discipline and the ban must be exercised before the Lord’s Supper “so that we may all in one spirit and in one love break and eat from one bread and drink from one cup.”<sup>45</sup> The interplay of “all” and “one” places a heavy emphasis on the need for oneness of mind regarding discipline in order to observe the Lord’s Supper correctly.

The interplay of “all” and “one” continues in the third article on the Lord’s Supper. Concerning the Lord’s Supper,

all those who desire to break the one bread in remembrance of the broken body of Christ and all those who wish to drink of one drink in remembrance of the shed blood of Christ, must beforehand be united in the one body of Christ, that is the congrega-

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 7.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 10.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 11.

tion of God, whose head is Christ, and that by baptism.<sup>46</sup>

Here all three words stressing unity appear together: *vereinigen*, *ein* and *alle*. Once again, the unity established in baptism is foundational for the unity of the Lord's Supper. Unity also separates. Whoever has not been united with Christ through faith and the church through baptism is an unbeliever. Unbelievers have no part in the Lord's Supper. All of those who practice the "dead works of darkness" have no participation in the light. One cannot sit at the devil's table and the Lord's table; the two are mutually exclusive. Therefore, all those who are united in unbelief can have nothing in common with those who are united to Christ in faith, who walk in obedience to his commands. The Lord's Supper is exclusively for those who have separated from the world and become one in Christ.

The article concludes by stating that unbelievers are excluded from the table because they do not share what believers have in common, "the calling of the one God to one faith, to one baptism, to one spirit, to one body together with all the children of God."<sup>47</sup> Again, the doctrine of the Trinity is alluded to here—one God, one Spirit, one body of Christ—which grounds unity in God's nature. Believers experienced the same call of God to salvation, received the same Spirit from the Father, were united to the same body of Christ, and experienced the same baptism. The Lord's Supper is an expression of true oneness. The authors of the Schleithem Confession stated emphatically that unity had to exist in order to observe the Lord's Supper as Christ commanded.

### *Ein*

*Ein* represents the third word group promoting the theme of unity. Though used often as an indefinite article, *ein* in the Schleithem Confession is used most frequently to mean "one." Toward the end of the first paragraph the authors stress unity as they wish God's blessing to all God's scattered children whenever they gather together "in unity of spirit [*einmütiglich*] in one [*einem*] God and Father of us all."<sup>48</sup> *Einmütiglich* can also be translated as "full accord, of one mind, or unanimity." This word further emphasizes the unity which they had stated in the opening sentence. Just before mentioning the problem of the false brothers, the authors acknowledged that their meeting was characterized by "the unity of the Spirit of the Father and of our common Christ as present with us in Spirit."<sup>49</sup> Because they felt that the articles discussed were under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, difference of opinion on any of these articles was not an option; unanimity in belief and practice was critical.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 9.

Oneness of spirit was especially important for the Lord's Supper. A form of *ein* is used eleven times in reference to the Lord's Supper. At the end of the article on the ban, the confession teaches that the church must exercise discipline prior to observing the Lord's Supper "so that we may all in one spirit and in one love break and eat from one bread and drink from one cup."<sup>50</sup> Discipline was exercised to maintain the purity and the unity of the church. As Daniel Akin concludes, the ban "was to be practiced according to Scripture (Matt 18) and the Spirit (Matt 5) prior to the observance of the Lord's Supper, so that the Lord's table might be observed in unity (one mind) and love."<sup>51</sup>

Oneness regarding the Lord's Supper is heavily emphasized in the third article.

Concerning the breaking of bread, we have become one [*eins*] and agree thus: all those who desire to break the one [*ein*] bread in remembrance of the broken body of Christ and all those who wish to drink of one [*einem*] drink in remembrance of the shed blood of Christ, they must beforehand be united [*vereiniget syn*] in the one [*einem*] body of Christ, whose head is Christ, and that by baptism.<sup>52</sup>

Only those who have truly been regenerated through faith in Christ and baptized by believer's baptism can partake of the Lord's Supper. Because the true church is comprised of believers, unbelievers could not partake of it. Those who are not truly believers in Christ are partakers of evil and have no part in Christ; therefore, allowing unbelievers to sit at the Lord's table would profane the Supper.

The article concludes,

So it shall and must be, that whoever does not share the calling of the one God to one faith, to one baptism, to one spirit, to one body together with all the children of God, may not be made one loaf together with them, as must be true if one wishes to break bread according to the command of Christ.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to baptism and a blameless life, unity is also a necessary component for properly partaking of the Lord's Supper. Snyder observes that "unity is the all-important consideration with regard to the Lord's Supper."<sup>54</sup> There is only one Lord's Supper and it is reserved for those who have been united to Christ in faith and united to his body through baptism. Many people have

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>51</sup>Akin, "An Expository Analysis," 357.

<sup>52</sup>Yoder, *Schleitheim Confession*, 11.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

<sup>54</sup>Snyder, *Michael Sattler*, 117.

rightly admired the confession's emphasis on the purity of the church; yet it should not be overlooked that unity provides an underlying foundation for the church's purity.

### Conclusion

Unity runs through the Schleithem Confession binding everything together. Each article expressed something in direct conflict with the teachings of Roman Catholicism as well as most of the Protestant Reformers. Identifying these distinctions was critical. More importantly, they had to address the problems created by other Anabaptists whose errors they felt were damaging lives. For these Swiss and South German Anabaptists, the articles discussed in the Schleithem Confession represented the defining characteristics of the true church. These Anabaptists understood how critical unity would be for each of these issues.

No church can function without unity. The church is a union, a community, made up of believers who have been united to Christ through faith and to each other through baptism. Neither common human goals nor man-made effort can produce unity; oneness finds its basis in God's Trinitarian nature and his redemptive work. Restoring the true church to its apostolic purity requires believers to be of one accord. Jesus prayed specifically for unity among his people in John 17:20-23:

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

Though twenty-first century churches may not fully agree with every one of the articles of the Schleithem Confession, there are at least two important lessons to be learned from the Swiss Anabaptists who gathered at Schleithem. First, true unity must be grounded in God's Trinitarian being and redemptive work. Based in God's very nature and accomplished through Christ's cross, unity is what God creates, or establishes, among his people. Ephesians 4:4-6 spells out the nature of this unity: "There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all . . ." Verse three states our responsibility in unity—we are to be "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Unity is the Spirit's creation (τοῦ πνεύματος as a subjective genitive means unity is "produced by the Spirit"). In these verses unity's source is the triune God: one Spirit, one Lord, one God and Father of all.

Unity which derives from God's being also has content; it cannot be reduced to emotional affections, some kind of ineffable experience, or simply the lowest common denominator. "One faith, one hope, and one baptism" imply doctrinal content and confessional affirmation of that content. If there is no common faith, unity cannot exist. Many calls for ecumenism today seek to establish unity by jettisoning any theological truths which are not held in common. However, unity by the least common denominator is not really God-established unity, just cordiality and shallow relationships based on a humanly established foundation. The Swiss Anabaptists who wrote the Schleithem Confession understood this. The unity they described is based in the triune God who has acted to reconcile humanity to himself (and to one another) through the suffering and resurrection of Christ; a reconciliation and unity effected by the Spirit of God. It is highly unlikely that these Swiss Anabaptists would have viewed those as true Christians who denied these fundamental truths.

There is a second lesson about unity to be learned from the Anabaptists gathered at Schleithem, a lesson that is exceptionally challenging: unity among those professing to be Christ's followers should be evidenced by holiness and obedient service to God. Unity in holy living and devoted service to God is not usually associated with discussions of unity within the body of Christ. Most discussions of unity in a church focus on mutual love and care among the members. Certainly, this group of Swiss Anabaptists understood the importance of mutual caring love among the brethren as essential for a true church; however, they did not separate holiness and obedience to Christ's commands from the love of one another. Indeed, personal and corporate holiness reinforces love for one another because it seeks the blessings of the resurrection life for one's brothers and sisters in Christ.

In addition, while it is easy to stress unity in terms of the previously mentioned doctrinal content, the Schleithem group will not allow us to rest comfortably there. Instead, they press us on to understand that God-established unity expresses itself in lives of moral purity and service for the good of the body of Christ. Even beyond this, living a life of holiness is done in service to the gospel, which proclaims that God has provided reconciliation through Christ. If, as the charge is often made, the morality inside the church differs little from that outside of it, there is not much possibility of unbelievers recognizing that the reconciling work of Christ makes any difference for life in the concrete world of the here and now. The Schleithem believers remind us that holiness is positive in its orientation; the life of Christ's disciple, rather than being simply a matter of avoiding certain things, is concerned with walking in the resurrection of Christ, of being buried with him in death to sin in order to be raised with Christ. Even the idea of separation from evil and wickedness is not merely about ceasing from certain kinds of activities, but about being reconciled to God in order to be his people, of serving God in goodness, light, faith, and in union with Christ. Thus, the Christian's life is no longer about the individual, but about Christ, about a life of devoted

service to God. Such a life cannot be experienced apart from holiness. Furthermore, just as unity within a church cannot exist apart from the being and work of the triune God, so also can it not exist apart from personal and corporate holiness in obedient service to God. This may be the hardest lesson to learn from the Anabaptists gathered at Schleithem, certainly not the hardest to understand, just far more challenging to practice.



## *Leonhard Schiemer's Anabaptist Catechism (1527/28)*

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As others before and after him, Leonhard Schiemer's<sup>1</sup> stint as an Anabaptist was a brief one, not because of apostasy, but rather because of his faithful witness until death. Schiemer had become concerned about those in the church that he identified as “nominal Christians,” and he addressed those concerns when he wrote:

The following is how the heathen (*die heiden*) or nominal Christians (*die namchristen*) pray. . . . There is no one [among the nominal Christians] who steps up and says: No, God's Word should not be blasphemed or forbidden (*Gottes wort nit lectern und verbieten*), for we must obey God rather than men. Instead they are afraid that they may be denounced with Christ. Therefore when they are required to hallow his name they hide so that no one will hear or suspect them. The Lord answers this kind of behavior and says: Whoever denies me before men, I will deny before my father in heaven. Paul says that we must confess with our mouths (*Mit dem mund mueß man bekennen*). However, the true Christians and the children of God (*die warhaften Christen und kinder Gottes*), stand out through their lives and words (*steen herfür mit leben und wort*), they witness with their blood (*bezeugens mit irem bluet*), that we must obey God rather than men when we pray.<sup>2</sup>

Schiemer's remarkable spiritual trek took him from Franciscan monastic life to the martyr's pyre as an Anabaptist.<sup>3</sup> He taught that the “outer word”

<sup>1</sup>For an excellent recent study on Leonhard Schiemer see Michael D. Wilkinson, “A Necessary Smelting: Leonhard Schiemer's Theology of Suffering” (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011), 1-205.

<sup>2</sup>Leonhard Schiemer, *Leonhard Schiemers Schriften in Glaubenszeugnisse oberdeutscher Taufgesinnter*, ed. Lydia Miller (Leipzig: M. Heinsius, 1938; Reprint, New York: Johnson Reprint, 1971), 69.

<sup>3</sup>Actually Schiemer was first beheaded and then his body was burned at Rattenberg on 14 January 1528. See “The Hutterian Brethren,” trans. and ed. *The Chronicle of the Hutterian*



alone did not signify a true relationship with Christ, but rather the true light of the Holy Spirit was needed which shone within the heart of the believer.<sup>4</sup>

Leonhard Schiemer's Anabaptist excursion led him from Nikolsburg, Moravia, where he came into contact with Balthasar Hubmaier, to Vienna, where he was instructed by Hans Hut. After he was baptized by Oswald Glaidt, a former associate of Hubmaier and an eventual colleague of Hut, he traveled to Steyr in Bavaria, and subsequently to Rattenberg in the Tyrol. There he was captured just six months after his conversion to Anabaptism.<sup>5</sup> It was while in prison in the Tyrol that Schiemer may have left his clearest mark on Anabaptism through his pen.

In 1527, or very early 1528, Schiemer authored the second Anabaptism catechism called *Von der Prob des Geistes, Frag und Antwort, auch Gegenred* (*The Test of the Spirit, Questions and Answers, Also Counter-Pleas*).<sup>6</sup> He did not provide the reader with an introduction to *Prob des Geistes* in which he explained his purpose or reason for his authorship of this document. Regardless, Schiemer's brief stint as an Anabaptist had a long-lasting impact.

The *Prob des Geistes* is a catechetical work consisting of one hundred thirty-five questions and corresponding answers divided into three parts.<sup>7</sup> The first part consists of sixty questions, the second has thirteen questions, and the third and final part is made up of sixty-two questions.<sup>8</sup> There is no set theological pattern in the catechism. Various topics are discussed in each section and appear in random order.

The influence of Hubmaier *and* Hut may be seen in Schiemer's

*Brethren*, vol. 1, *Known as Das große Geschichtbuch der Hetterischen Brüder* (New York: Plough Publishing House, 1987), 56.

<sup>4</sup>Robert Friedmann, "Schiemer, Leonhard," in *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, vol. 4, eds. Harold S. Bender and C. Henry Smith (Scottsdale, PA: Mennonite Publishing House, 1959), 452.

<sup>5</sup>"The Hutterian Brethren," *Chronicle*, 56.

<sup>6</sup>"Hutterischen Brüdern," *Die Lieder der Hutterischen Brüder* (Scottsdale, PA: Mennonitisches Berlagshaus, 1914), 18-19; Robert Friedmann, "The Oldest Known Hutterite Codex of 1566: A Chapter in Anabaptist Intellectual History," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 33 (Apr 1959): 106; Robert Friedmann, "Leonhard Schiemer and Hans Schlaffer, Two Tyrolean Anabaptist Martyr-Apostles of 1528," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 33 (Jan 1959): 34. Many of Schiemer's works were collected in the *Kunstbuch* and circulated throughout Pilgram Marpeck's circle. Several other writings attributed to Schiemer were *not* included in the *Kunstbuch*, including *Prob des Geistes*. See Jörg Probst Rotenfelder gen. Maler, *Briefe und Schriften oberdeutscher Täufer 1527-1555*, eds. Heinold Fast und Martin Rothkegel in *Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationgeschichte* 78 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2007), 1-775; John D. Rempel, ed., *Jörg Maler's Kunstbuch: Writings of the Pilgram Marpeck Circle in Classics of the Radical Reformation* 12 (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2010), 1-753.

<sup>7</sup>There are five questions that have no corresponding answers in the *Prob des Geistes* (Questions five, nine, thirty-four, forty-six, fifty-one, and sixty). Also, between the eighty-fifth and eighty-sixth questions, are four statements. The first three pertain to three aspects of baptism, while the final statement deals with the gospel as a whole. See Leonhard Schiemer, *Von der Probe des Geistes, Frag und Antwort, auch Gegenred*, (1527/28), Bratislava, Slovakia, Archiv mesta [Codex Hab. 13—1595], Microfilm, at Goshen Associated Mennonite College (Spool No. 27), 180a-95b. Hereafter, *PDG*.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*

catechism. Schiemer's baptismal theology mirrors that of Hubmaier's, as detailed in the latter's *On the Christian Baptism of Believers* (1525). Schiemer's inclusion of the "Gospel of all creation" is evocative of Hut's "Gospel of all creatures" teaching.<sup>9</sup> Throughout the entire catechism the overwhelming emphases include baptism and love for God and neighbor.<sup>10</sup>

After beginning his catechism with a few questions regarding the humanity of Christ, Schiemer proposed two brief questions. The inquirer asked, "Are you a Christian?" The reply given was simply, "Yes."<sup>11</sup> Then the questioner followed up with, "What does that [being a Christian] entail?" The response given was:

To love God with your whole heart and your neighbor as yourself  
(*Got lieben aus gantzem hertze[n] vnd deinen nagsten als dich selbst*),  
[and] you have done this [when] you have had nothing of your  
own, so that you may say "it does not belong to me, but rather to  
the community of God (*sunder der gmain gotes*)."<sup>12</sup> It is written that  
"they had everything in common, and said nothing [was kept]  
from one another, and they gave to each what was needed and  
required."<sup>12</sup>

The implementation of the "community of God" was a fulfillment of "loving God and neighbor" for Schiemer, which was demonstrated by the sharing of all goods among the brethren. Schiemer revealed his openness to the community of goods doctrine developed by Jacob Wiedemann.<sup>13</sup>

Toward the end of the catechism the question asked was, "How does

<sup>9</sup>See Gottfried Seebass, "Hans Hut: The Suffering Avenger," in *Profiles of Radical Reformers: Biographical Sketches from Thomas Müntzer to Paracelsus*, eds. Hans-Jürgen Goertz and Walter Klaassen (Kitchener, ON: Herald Press, 1982), 54-61; C. Arnold Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology: An Introduction* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 1995), 71, 77.

<sup>10</sup>Schiemer used the word "baptism" or *der Taufe* eleven times, and the word "baptize[d]" or *taufen* ten times throughout the text of the *PDG*. He used the word "love" or *lieben* sixteen times.

<sup>11</sup>"Frag. Bistu ein Crist. Antwort. Ja." *PDG*, 181a.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup>Wiedemann followed the eschatological teachings of Hans Hut and the nonresistant principles of the Swiss Brethren. Basing his teaching on the primitive Jerusalem NT Church, Wiedemann developed the doctrine of the community of goods (communism, the sharing of all goods within the community). Against Wiedemann, Hubmaier's followers (*Schwertler*) practiced what they believed to be the actual NT teaching: the sharing of goods with brethren *who were in need*. In this respect, the *Schwertler* were closer to the Swiss Brethren than Wiedemann's group (*Stäbler*). For Wiedemann and the *Stäbler* the doctrine of the community of goods soon became the mark of the church. They withdrew from worshipping with other Anabaptists and were eventually asked to leave Nikolsburg because of their divisiveness. Before their expulsion from Nikolsburg, the community of goods was only a theoretical idea for the *Stäbler*. However, once the group settled in the abandoned village of Bogenitz they decided to follow the practice of the Jerusalem church by pooling all their possessions together. Thus, they began to practice what would later become the communal lifestyle of Hutterite Anabaptism. William R. Estep, *The Anabaptist Story: An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 127-29.

one recognize the followers of Christ?" The response given was, "By the love that binds them together in one Spirit, God, and Father."<sup>14</sup> In *A Short Gospel for the World Today* (1527), Schiemer mentioned that as a result of corrupt religious leadership "faith seems to disappear from the earth, love dies and becomes cold, Matt. 24[:12], as Christ warned."<sup>15</sup> For Schiemer "faith" and "love" were linked to one another, but it was "love" for both God and neighbor which would reveal the true Christians to the world.<sup>16</sup>

Balthasar Hubmaier authored the first Anabaptist catechism (*Lehrtafel*) in late 1526 or early 1527. Leonhard Schiemer penned the following second Anabaptist catechism approximately one year later.<sup>17</sup>

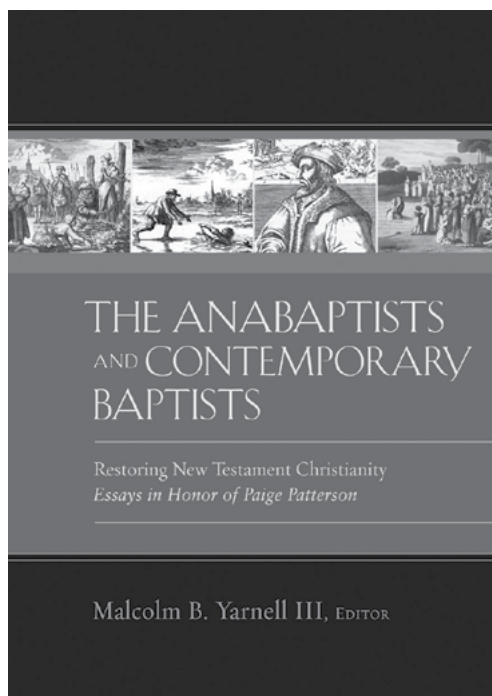
<sup>14</sup>"F. Wie erkenn man die nachvolger Cristi. A. Bei der lieb, so sy in ainem Geist, got vnd vater ir aller meinander verbunden sein." *PDG*, 193b.

<sup>15</sup>Leonhard Schiemer, *A Short Gospel for the World Today* (1527) in *Spiritual Life in Anabaptism*, trans. and ed. Cornelius J. Dyck (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1995), 216.

<sup>16</sup>*PDG*, 193b.

<sup>17</sup>For a detailed study of Hubmaier's and Schiemer's catechisms, and the possible nexus between those documents and an earlier *Unitas Fratrum* catechism (*Kindefragen*, 1522) see Jason J. Graffagnino, "The Shaping of the Two Earliest Anabaptist Catechisms" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008), 1-273.

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VON DER PROB DES GEISTES,  
FRAG UND ANTWORT, AUCH GEGENRED (1527/28)<sup>18</sup>

By Leonhard Schiemer

Transcribed by Mitchell L. Hammond

Edited by Jason J. Graffagnino

[180a] Volget nun ein feinner vnd schöner Artickl von der Prob des Geist[e]s.

Frag. Versteestu die heilig [180b] Geschrift, oder mag ainer die heilig (1 Joha[n] 4) g[e]schrift versteen on den heilige Geist, denn es steet geschriben, man sol die geister grabiere[n]. Ich frag dich bekennstu Cristum in d[a]z fleisch kumen sein.

Antwort. Ja in Maria.

F. Seindt auch alle die Selig, dies bekennen.

A. Nein.

F. Ich frag dich, Ob du bekenst Cristum in d[a]z fleisch kumen sein.

A. Ja.

F. Wie, wan, wo.

A. Ist es nit alles vmb vnsern willen beschehen in Maria.

<sup>18</sup>This document was attributed to Leonhard Schiemer first by Hutterite Bishop Elias Walter in the *Lieder der Hutterischen Brüder* (1914), and its authorship was verified by Robert Friedmann in the late 1950s. No further scholarship has disputed that this was the writing of Schiemer. See Hutterischen Brüdern, *Die Lieder der Hutterischen Brüder* (Scottsdale, PA: Mennonitisches Berlagshaus, 1914), 18-19; Robert Friedmann, "The Oldest Known Hutterite Codex of 1566: A Chapter in Anabaptist Intellectual History," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 33 (Apr 1959):106 and "Leonhard Schiemer and Hans Schlaffer: Two Tyrolean Anabaptist Martyr-Apostles of 1528," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 33 (Jan 1959): 34. As of the writing of Jason Graffagnino's dissertation (Aug 2008), there had been neither a modernized German text nor a full English translation of this second Anabaptist catechism. The following transcription and translation was produced in 2006 through the assistance of Mitchell Lewis Hammond, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of History, University of Victoria, British Columbia. This translation should not be viewed as an authoritative critical edition, which would be beyond the scope of this project. Instead the purpose of this German transcription and following English translation is to provide the student of Schiemer, and Anabaptism as a whole, access to a readable text of one of the earliest Anabaptist catechisms. The page numbers of the original manuscript are included in brackets within the text. The German text used in this translation is Leonhard Schiemer, *Von der Probe des Geistes, Frag and Antwort, auch Gegenred*, (1527/28), Bratislava, Slovakia, Archiv mesta [Codex Hab. 13—1595], Microfilm, at Goshen Associated Mennonite College (Spool No. 27), 180a-95b.

*THE TEST OF THE SPIRIT, QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS,  
ALSO COUNTER-PLEAS (1527/28)*

By Leonhard Schiemer

Translated by Mitchell L. Hammond

Edited by Jason J. Graffagnino

**The First Part**

[180a] Here follows a fine and beautiful article concerning the test of the spirit.

Question. Do you understand the holy [180b] scripture, or may another understand Scripture without the Holy Spirit? For it is written [that] one should test the spirits (1 John 4). I ask you: do you confess Christ has come in the flesh?

Answer. Yes, in Mary.

Q. What about all the saints, do they confess this?

A. No.

Q. I ask you if you confess that Christ has come in the flesh.

A. Yes.

Q. How, when, where?

A. Did it not take place for our sake in Mary?

F. Mueß es nit in vns auch war werden, wie versteestu d[a]z (Joha[n] 1), d[a]z der Johannes schreibt, d[a]z wort ist fleisch worden, vnnnd wondt in vns, du frag ich dich, ob d[a]s beschehen sey, vnd ob du mit Paula bekennt, der sagt (Gala. 2), ich leb nit, sunder Cristus lebt in mir. bekenstu auch mit Paulo (Gala. 6), d[a]s dir die welt gecreütziget ist, vnd du der welt, darumb wollich solliches nit bekennt, der ist ein anthe Crist denn ein yeder den Cristum aufflost ist ein wider Crist, du hast [181a] Cristum aufflost, stellest Cristum d[a]s haubt an die gldt mass.

F. Bistu ein Crist. (Mat. 6)

A. Ja.

F. W[a]z gehort ainem Cristen zue. (Mat. 9)

A. Got lieben aus gantzem hertze[n] vnd deinen nagsten als dich selbst, hast solliches gethon, hast nit nichts aig ens gehabt, damit du mogest sage[n] es gehort nit mir zue, sunder der gmain gotes, Es steet geschriben sy heten alleding gemain, vnd saget kainer von dem seine[n], vnd man gab ainem yetlichen w[a]z im notd war, vnnnd bedarff.

F. Ist die zu naigung zue dem sünden auch sündt.

A. Nein, dann da die verwilligung nit ist, da ists nit sündt.

F. Darumb so sein auch die kinder on sündt, die weil sy die zuenaigung von Natur haben, aber nit verwilligen, weil sy boss noch guets versteen, demnach ein gots lessterung, den leufft vo[n] inen, (wie sy mainen, beschwore[n]).

F. Darff man von allen dinge[n] frage[n] [d]i[e] geschriben steendt.

A. Ja. dan[n] [181b] es steet geschriben, alleding die geschriben seindt, sein vns zue ainer leer geschriben.

F. Bekenstu auch d[a]z got alle ding gemacht hat (Sapi 11), in der zeit Ordnung mass zil vnd gewicht.

A. Ja.

F. Hat ein Cristlich leben ein Ordnung.

A. Ja.

F. Wie facht est an.

A. Im glauben.

Q. Must it not also be true within us? How do you understand it, that John writes: “the word became flesh and dwells within us” (John 1)? I ask you if that has taken place, and whether you profess with Paul, who states: “I do not live; rather Christ lives in me” (Gal 2). Do you also profess, as Paul does, that the world is crucified to you, and you to the world (Gal 6)? Thereby the one who does not confess this is an anti-Christ, for he who breaks from Christ is against Christ. If you have [181a] broken from Christ, then you must place Christ as the head on the body [i.e., return to Christ].

A. [No answer given].

Q. Are you a Christian (Matt 6)?

A. Yes.

Q. What does that entail (Matt 9)?

A. To love God with your whole heart and your neighbor as yourself has to be done. You must admit that you have nothing of your own, consequently you may say, “It does not belong to me, but rather to the community of God.” It is written that “they had everything in common, and said nothing [was kept] from the others, and they gave to each what was necessary” (Acts 2).

Q. Is the inclination to sin also sin?

A. No, since the intention is not there, then the inclination is not sin.

Q. Therefore, so also are children without sin, since, although they have the inclination from nature, but not the intention. They do not understand evil or good, or any offense against God which comes from them (such as, for example, swearing).

A. [No answer given.]

Q. May one ask about all things that are written?

A. Yes, for [181b] it is written, all things that are written are written as a teaching [tool] for us.

Q. Do you also profess that God has made all things, in the order of time, and space?

A. Yes.

Q. Does Christian life have a rule?

A. Yes.

Q. How does it begin?

A. In faith.



F. Hastu auch ein Glauben, wie lang hast du in gehabt.

A. Ich waiß es nit, ich verstee d[a]z wort glauben nit, dann Paulus sagt, glaub ist nit yeder mans ding. (2 Tess 2)

F. Ist dann der glaub der erst anfang aines Cristlichen lebens.

A. Ja.

F. Haist doch glauben ein gewisse zuuersicht vnd vertrauen in got (Heb. 11), nun wie kanstu got vertrauen, so du in liebst, die lieb geet vor, Joha[n] 8 wie der herr sagt, so yemantd mein redt wirt halten, der wirt den thodt nit schmeckhen. darumb helt kainer sein redt vnnd gebot (Mat 22) er lieb in dann zuuor, dieweil di[e] [182a] [unclear] Lieb die erfüllung des gsatzes ist, nun mainstu nit, d[a]z die lieb vorgeet.

A. Ja.

F. Wie kanstu ain lieben ee du in kenst, (Johan 17) muess d[a]z erkenntnuß nit vorgeen, wie der herr auch sagt, d[a]z ist d[a]z ewig lebe[n].d[a]z sy dich erkennen, d[a]z du allein warer got bist, vnnd den du gesenndt hast, Jesum Cristum, so nun erkantnuss gotes d[a]z ewig leben ist, wie kans der anfang ains Cristlichen lebens sein.

A. Ich waiss nit.

F. Kan auch ein Cristlich lieben im schlaff, oder im wein anfahen, d[a]z er nichts darumb waiss, wan[n] es gescheh[en] sei, ists so gar ein spotlich ding vmb ein Cristlichs leben, d[a]z es ainer nit empfindt, aintweders du oder der glaub ist thodt gewesen, vnd ist noch nit lebendig worden, w[a]z haist glaub[en].

A. Ist dan[n] glauben nit ein leben, di[e] weil ich glaub d[a]z Cristus für mich genueg hat than, sei für mich gestorbe[n] hat mein sündt außgetilgt.

Gege[n]redt. Ja ist er nit auch für dich gen [182b] himel gefahren.

A. Nein wir werden alle mit ime vnd durch in Salig.

Q. Do you have faith? How long have you had it?

A. I do not know. I do not understand the word “faith,” for Paul says that faith is not for every person (2 Thess 2).

Q. Is faith the beginning of a Christian life?

A. Yes.

Q. If faith is a certain foreknowledge and trust in God, then how can you trust God, and love Him (Heb 11)? Love comes first, as the Lord says, “he who keeps my word, he will never taste death (John 8).” Therefore should no one keep His word and commandments, He [would] love him before since [182a] love is the fulfillment of the law (Matt 22). Now surely you do not mean that love comes first?

A. Yes.

Q. How can you love someone before you know him? Must not acquaintance come first, as the Lord shows this is eternal life, that they recognize you, that you alone are the true God, and you have sent Him, Jesus Christ. So then if recognition of God is eternal life, how can it be the beginning of a Christian life?

A. I do not know.

Q. May also a Christian love while asleep, or while drinking, since he does not then know when it may have taken place? Is it not then a contemptible thing concerning a Christian life, one cannot sense, that you and your faith have died, and have not yet been made alive? What does faith mean?

A. It is not, for faith [itself] is life, since I believe that Christ has done enough for me, has died for me, and has redeemed my sins.

Contra: Yes, is He then not also gone [182b] up into heaven for your benefit?.

A. No, we will all be with Him and blessed through Him [until He comes again].

F. (Johan 3) Wie kanstu es reden, waist nit d[a]z niemandt gen himel fart, dan[n] der herabgestigen ist, der sun des menschen, die weil ers selbs redt, wer wils im brechen, Ja weder ich noch du, versteestu es recht d[a]z Cristus Salig sai, vnnd alle seine glider mit im, warumb woltestu auch dich nit zum leiden zum haubt machen, die (Phili 1) weil Paulus sagt, Es ist nit genueg allain in Cristum glauben, sunder auch vmb in leiden, hat nun Cristus dein sündt außgelegt. Ist kain sündt mer in dir, wie hat er diers aussgelescht, so noch sündt in dier ist, haist auch d[a]z aussleschen, so es noch brint, hastu nit gelesen, wer sündt thuet ist nit aus got, woraus muess er dan[n] sein hie ist kain mittel, di[e] nach dem fleisch leben, werden sterben.

A. Hie redt er aufs gesetz.

F. Bistu nit mer vnder dem gsatz.

A. Ich bin im newe[n] Testament.

F. Wann hat sich an [183a] gefangen.

A. Da Cristus geboren ist worden.

F. Was halst von mose, dauidt vnd allen propheten.

A. Ich halt sy für diener vnnd leerer gotes, vnnd inen von got beuolhen, d[a]z gsatz dem volckh für zuetragen.

F. Sagt doch Cristus, alle di[e] vor mir kume[n] seindt sein alle dieb vnnd morder, Nun frag ich dich auf dein mainung, sind dann all Propheten vo[n] got gesandt dieb vnnd morder.

A. Nein.

F. Sein sy doch vor Cristo kumen. I[tem]. Paulus sagt, d[a]z gsatz ist vnser zucht maister gewesen bis auf Cristum, wie hat dan[n] Abraham seinen tag gesehen, vnnd sich erfreüdt, wie Christus sagt, ee Abraham wart bin ich. (Johan 8)

A. Ja nach der Gothait.

F. Wer hat dann d[a]z gsatz geben, vor ee die gothait w[a]r [?], so du Cristum nach der gothait kenst?

A. Ja, hie muess ich in nennen nach der gothait.

F. Wie waist wan[n] man[n] in nimbt nach der gothait oder menschait? [183b]

A. Ich muess darauf sehen.

F. Maisterstu die geschriff, oder ist sy dein maister, wo leernet man[n] die obgemelten vnderscheidt von der gothait vnd menschait Cristi.

A. Ich frag auch darumb.

Q. (John 3) How can you say that? Do you not know that no one goes to heaven, except those who came down from there? The Son of man says so Himself. Who will contradict Him? Nay, neither I nor you—understand well that Christ is blessed, and all of His limbs along with Him. (Phil 1) Why do you not also wish to place suffering at the head, since Paul says, “It is not enough only to believe in Christ, but [one must] also suffer for him”? Since Christ has taken away your sins, there is no more sin in you. If there is still sin within you, how can you say that He has extinguished it within you? Is it extinguished, if it still burns? Have you not read, he who commits sin is not from God—from where, then, must he be? There is no help here; those who live by the flesh will die.

A. There He speaks of the Law.

Q. Are you no longer under the Law?

A. I am under the New Testament.

Q. When did this [the NT] [183a] begin?

A. When Christ was born.

Q. What do you think of Moses, David, and all the prophets?

A. I consider them God’s servants and teachers, and they are commanded by God to give the law to the people.

Q. But does not Christ say “all who came before me are all thieves and murderers”? Now I ask you for your opinion, are all the prophets sent from God thieves and murderers?

A. No.

Q. But they came before Christ. Also, Paul says, “the law was our tutor until [the coming of] Christ.” How, then, did Abraham see His [Christ’s] days and rejoice, as Christ says, “Before Abraham was, I am?”

A. According to the Godhead.

Q. Then who gave the law? Knowing the Godhead, do you know Christ according to the Godhead?

A. Yes, here I must name Him according to the Godhead.

Q. Who knows when one may identify Him according to [His] godhead or [His] humanity? [183b]

A. I must give that thought.

Q. Do you master the Scripture, or is it your master? Where does one learn the aforementioned difference between the deity and humanity of Christ?

A. I must also think about that.

F. Du muest mir mei[n] frag nit aus dem maul stelen, vnd mich damit frage[n], hastu dich doch im anfang berüembt, du seist ein Crist vnd waist so gar nichts vom anfang.

A. Ich beger zue leerne[n].

F. Wie kanst du ein Crist sein, die weil du es noch mindert [?] geleernet hast, wilt erst etwan leerne[n], wie bleibst auf deiner redt, hast doch selbs die andern geleernet, oder hast vor all dein tag nichts von im gehort, bis jÿetz auff die stundt.

A. Ja, ich.

F. Von wem hastu es gehort, ist er von got gesandt gewese[n] hast vor seinen geist probiert.

A. Ja.

F. Kenst aber di[e] geister von ainander.

A. Nain.

F. Wie probierstu sÿ dan[n], so du sÿ nit kenst, wie sein aug der gnadigen [184r] frag kumen, wann d[a]z new testament hab angefangen, vnd d[a]z gsatz auffgehört.

A. Wann ainer in Cristum glaubt, so hort d[a]z gsatz auf.

F. Hangt nit d[a]z gantz gsatz vnd alle propheten in der liebe gotes, vnd das nachste[n], so muess kainer goet vnd den nachs[ten] lieben, so er in Cristum glaubt, vor spricht doch Paulus, so glaub aufhört, demnach bleibt die lieb vor vnd nach dem glauben, wir reden lang vo[n] Christe, vnnd hab dich nie gefragt ob du Cristum kenst, denn alle prophet[en] haben geweissagt auf den künfftige[n] Cristum, alle Apostl haben gezeugt von den vergangne[n] Cristo.

F. Kenstu Cristum?

A. Ja.

F. Wie brait, lang, tieff, vnnd hoch ist er?

A. Vonn der schaidl bis auf die füess.

Q. You must not steal my question from my mouth and ask it to me. Did you not at the start claim you are a Christian? Yet you know nothing from the beginning.

A. I desire to learn.

Q. How can you be a Christian, since you have not yet learned the least thing? And you [now] wish first to learn something, as you keep saying. Have others taught you? Or have you, in all of your days, heard nothing about Him up until this very hour?

A. Yes, I [have].

Q. From whom did you hear it? Is he sent from God? Have you tested his spirit?

A. Yes.

Q. But do you know the spirits from each other?

A. No.

Q. Then how do you test them, if you are not acquainted with them? How merciful are the questions [184r] [which] come [from] his eye? When has the New Testament begun and the Law ended?

A. When one believes in Christ, the Law ends.

Q. Does not the entire Law and all the prophets depend on love of God and love of one's neighbor? Must one still love God and his neighbor when he believes in Christ? However, Paul pronounces that if faith ends, nevertheless love remains before and after faith. We have spoken at length about Christ and [I] have not asked you if you know Christ. All the prophets foretold the coming of the Christ, and all the Apostles have testified to the actual coming of the Christ.

A. [No answer given].

Q. Do you know Christ?

A. Yes.

Q. How broad, long, deep, and high is He?

A. From the head to the foot.

F. D[a]z wissen alle türckhen vnd haid[en], d[a]z kain mensch lenger ist. (Mat. 13) ich hor wol, du thuest gleich wie die [unclear] Juden, di[e] sagten auch, wir kennen in wol, er ist Josephs sun, aber der herr [184v] (Luc. 4) strafft sy also, Richtenndt nicht, nach (Johan 4) dem ansehen, sunder richt ein recht 7 8 gericht, darumb mein Brueder, so reichstu auch nicht ein recht gericht, du muest bekenne[n] mit Paulo, wir kenne[n] Cristum nit mer nach dem (2 Cor. 5) fleisch, solliche leut, deiner meinung, werde[n] zue Cristo sage[n] zue der zeit (Mat. 7) des gericht, herr haben wir nit mit dir gessen vnd getrunckhen, dan[n] wiert er sagen, weicht all vo[n] mir ir vbelthaten, ich kenn eur nit, d[enn] ir kenndt mich hie auch nit, gleich wie die Juden kennen Cristum nit, den nun ist alles disputierten verloren, hastu nit gemarckht, vorhin die Prob des geistes, Bekennstu Cristum in das fleisch kumen sein.  
A. Ja in Maria zue Nazareth.

F. (1 Joha[n] 4) Die weil du nit anders bekennst, vnnd mainst d[a]z solliches die bekantnuß sei, nun hat niemandts Cristum empfangen, vnnd geben, dann maris, wie versteestu dan[n], d[a]z wort ist [185r] fleisch worden, vnnd wondt in vns, ist solliches in dir beschehen.  
A. Ich hoff es.

F. Ci [?] du muest sein gewiss sein vnnd nit hoffen.  
A. Sollich hoffnung ist genueg zur Salligkait.

F. Waist d[a]z Petrus sagt, du solst vrbietig sein Rechenschafft zue geben, sollicher hoffnung, wie bistu zue sollich[er] hoffnung kumen, wie war dir vmb dein hertz, den ersten tag, dan[n] warlich kainer verschlaffts, wens aber nie geschehen, ists vnmüglich d[a]z er waiss daruon zue reden, er mag es kainem ableernen, darumb die weil du Cristvmb nit anders bekenst, so bistu nach aus dem geist des annti Criste[n], wolliches ist der teuff[e] vnnd die weil du nit hast den geist Cristi, so bistu nicht sein, der fleischlich mensch vernimbt nichts vom geist Gotes, darumb all dein verstandt, kunst, witz [?] vnd vernunfft, ist lug vnd falsch.  
A. Ich main ich hab in auch.

F. Kan in ein mensch empfahren, der in nit kent.  
A. Nain. [185b]

F. (Joha[n] 14) Kennstu den heiligen geist, habe[n] in alle menschen.  
A. Nein, wolliche den, wie kumbt er zue ainem, wo hast zeuckhnuß der geschriff.

F. Glaubstu auch verzeihung der sünden.  
A. Ja.

Q. All the Turks and heathen know that no man is longer [than that] (Matt 13). I understand, however that you do just like the Jews, who have said, we know Him [Jesus], He is Joseph's son. But the Lord [184v] has punished them (Luke 4). Do not judge according to appearance, but rather make a righteous judgment (John 4). Thus, my brother, if you also do not make a righteous judgment, you must profess with Paul, "We no longer know Christ according to the flesh" (2 Cor 5). Such people, [who have] your view, will say to Christ at the time of judgment, "Lord, have we not eaten and drunk with you" (Matt 7)? Then He will say, "away from me, all of you evil-doers, I do not know you, for you also do not know me." In the same way the Jews do not know [Jesus] Christ, since all that they dispute about Him is lost to them. Have you not noticed, earlier, the test of the Spirit: Do you confess that Christ has come in the flesh?

A. Yes, in Mary of Nazareth.

Q. Since you do not profess otherwise, and you claim that this is certain knowledge—that no one other than Mary conceived and bore Christ—how, then how do you understand "the Word is [185r] made flesh and dwells in us" (1 John 4)? Has such taken place in you?

A. I hope so.

Q. Must you be certain and not hope?

A. Such hope is enough for salvation.

Q. Do you know what the Apostle Peter said, "You should abjectly accept His judgment." How do you come to such hope? How did it appear in your heart? On the first day, truly, no one falls asleep; when, however, it has never happened, it is impossible that one knows to speak of it. He may not learn it from anyone. For that reason, then since you do not proclaim Christ, in so doing you are still separated from [Christ] [by] the spirit of the anti-Christ, which is the devil. Since you do not have the Spirit of Christ, therefore you are not His [Christ's]. The fleshly person hears nothing from the Spirit of God. Therefore all his [i. e., the non-Christian] understanding, art, wit and reason, is a lie and false.

A. I think I have Him [the Spirit of Christ] also.

Q. Can a person receive Him who does not know Him?

A. No. [185b]

Q. Do you confess the Holy Spirit? Do all people have Him (John 14)?

A. No, only those to whom He comes. This is in accordance with the testimony of Scripture.

Q. Do you also believe in forgiveness of sins?

A. Yes.



F. Wer verzeichts.

A. Got allain.

F. Sunst niemandt.

A. Nain.

F. Wie versteestu den spruch Cristi w[a]z ir pindet auf erden, ist pund[en] (Mat. 18) im himel, zue wem hat Cristus solliches geredt, nit zue den Crist[en]. (Joha[n] 20)

F. Glaubstu auch ein Cristliche kirch[en].

A. Ja.

F. W[a]z ists bistu darinn, zaig miers, wo ists, wie glaubt sy we[n] sy nichts waiss.

A. Sÿ ist im wort.

F. Bistu den nur ein Crist vo[n] wort[en] (Rom. 2) d[a]z Euangelion steet in d[er] Crafft vnnd nit in Worten. (Jam. 1)

A. Sÿ ist im geist.

F. W[a]z mainstu damit.

A. Im hertze[n] steets alles.

F. Ist den dein hertz ein geist, ich het gedacht es wer d[a]z bosest fleisch in menschen, so sagt vns vns [as written] Cristus, der geist hat weder fleisch nach pain.

F. Glaubstu auch [186a] ein Cristliche gemeinschaft d[er] heillige[n].

A. Ja.

F. Bistu darin gewesen, oder bist yetzundt darinnen.

A. Ja.

F. Wo bistu darein kume[n].

A. Im geist.

F. Geist hat weder fleisch noch bain ist dann kain flaisch in der gemeinschaft, so heten die Cristen zue der zeit der apostl auch nit fleisch vnd bluet gehabt.

F. Halstu auch Cristlichen Ban[n].

A. Ja.

Q. Who forgives?

A. God alone.

Q. Otherwise no one?

A. No.

Q. How do you understand the words of Christ: "What you bind upon earth is bound in heaven" (Matt 18)? To whom did Christ say such words? Was it to Christians (John 20)?

A. [No answer given].

Q. Do you believe in a Christian church?

A. Yes.

Q. What is it [and] are you in it? Show me where it is, how do they believe when they do not know?

A. She [the church] is in the Word.

Q. Are you, then, merely a Christian [by virtue of] words (Rom 2)? The Gospel rests upon deeds and not in words [alone] (Jam 1).

A. She is in the Spirit.

Q. What do you mean by that?

A. Everything rests in the heart.

Q. Is, then, your heart a Spirit? I would have thought that it would be located in the most evil flesh in people, after all Christ tells us that the Spirit has neither flesh nor limbs.

A. [No answer given].

Q. Do you also believe [186a] in a Christian communion of saints?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you ever been in it, or are you now therein?

A. Yes.

Q. Where and how did you enter?

A. In the Spirit.

Q. Spirit has neither flesh nor limbs. There is, then, no flesh in the communion. The Christians at the time of the apostles also had no flesh and blood.

A. [No answer given].

Q. Do you also keep a Christian ban?

A. Yes.

F. Ist kain öffentlich sündt in deiner gmain, strafft man[n] sÿ auch noch Ordnung Cristi.

A. Es sein jÛtz nit solliche gmain, wie zue der zeit der apostl, oder Cristi, wir kÛnnen nit all volkumen sein.

F. Warumb sein jÛtz nit solliche Gmain wie zue der zeit der apostl, Liß Paulum der sagt, wer ein anders Euangelion sagt vnd leernet, sei verfluecht It[em] wer nit mit mir samlet, der zerstreut, It[em] alle pflanzung, di[e] mein himlischer vater nit gepflantzet hat, die wirt außgereüt. It[em] ich bin d[er] weinsteckh, ir die reben, vnd ein jÛtliche reben die nit frucht bringt [186b] [??] 12 wirt abgeschniten. Weiter sagt got[?] (Acto 5) man sol nichts zue oder vom gsatz (Mat. 8) thuen, nun hat dich kain solliche gmai[n] angenumen, sag mir, wie kumbt man in dise Gmain, w[a]z maint Cristus, so er sagt, prediget d[a]z euangelion aller Creatur, ich frag dich noch ains, bistu geschriff gleert, oder vo[n] Got geleert, finstu auch d[a]z ein geschriff glerter sei salig worden.

A. Ich bin von got geleert.

F. Wo hat got sein schuel.

A. Ich waiss nit.

F. Wer die schuel nit waiß, ist nie darin gewesen, wie kumbst d[a]z du auf kainer warhait nit bestanden so bistu auch sein glidt.

Q. [If] there is no public sin in your community, then does one punish according to the ordinance of Christ?

A. Now at present no community as in the time of the apostles or Christ exists. We cannot all be perfect.

Q. Why is there not now such a community as in the time of the apostles? Read Paul, who says, "He who repeats and learns another Gospel shall be cursed. Also, he who does not gather with me, he scatters. Also, all growing things which my heavenly father did not plant, they will be rooted out. Also, I am the grapevine, you are the grapes, and each grape that brings forth no fruit [186b] will be cut away." Further, God says one should do nothing, concerning the law or [apart from the law] (Acts 5). Now as no such community has accepted you, tell me, how does one enter this community (Matt 8)? What does Christ mean when He says, preach the gospel of all creation?<sup>19</sup> I ask you, further, are you taught from texts or from God? Do you also find that one [who has been] taught by texts may be blessed.

A. I am taught by God.

Q. Where does God have His school?

A. I do not know.

Q. He who does not know the school has never been inside it. How is it that you do not hold to any confession of faith? The devil has never held to any truth, thus you are also his member.

A. [No answer given.]

<sup>19</sup>Similar phrasing to Hans Hut's "Gospel of All Creatures" emphasis. See Gottfried Seebass, "Hans Hut: The Suffering Avenger," in *Profiles of Radical Reformers: Biographical Sketches from Thomas Müntzer to Paracelsus*, eds. Hans-Jürgen Goertz and Walter Klaassen (Kitchener, ON: Herald Press, 1982), 54-61; Snyder, *Anabaptist History and Theology*, 71, 77.

## VOLGET NUN DIE GEGENREDT DER FRAG VND ANTWORT

FRAG. WENN ODER WIE BISTU [187a] ein Christ worden.

A. Da mir der willen vnd d[a]z wort gotes, durch ein trewen diener gotes verkündigt ist worden, da hab ich im von hertze[n] glaubt, vnnd hab mich in gotes willen vnd leben, im nach zue volgen, begeb[en].

F. Glaubstu in Cristum.

A. Ja ich glaub d[a]z Jesus Cristus mich durch seine[r] thodt gegem dem vater versüenndt, vnd mich sambt im zue ainem mit erben angenommen, so ich anderst mit laidt.

F. Zue wollicher zeit bistu ein Christ worden.

A. Am Montag nach katarina, Anno Domino 1527 Jar.

F. Wo bistu in Cristenn kumen.

A. Inn der tauff.

F. W[a]z ist der tauff.

A. Es ist ein pundt zeichen gotes, in wollicher sich der mensch mit got verbindt, im gehorsam zue sein wie Cristus.

F. Auf wen bistu taufft

A. Auf d[e]m namen Jesus Cristi.

F. Inn wen bistu taufft.

A. In den thodt Cristi zue ainem leib, vnd in d[er] tauff hab ich Cristum anzoge[n].

F. Wie bistu taufft.

A. Nach ordnung Cristi, da da mir zum ersten der willen vnd [187b] wort gotes gepredigt ist worden, vnnd in den selben hab ich glaubt vnnd mich also got ergeben in den gehorsam Cristi, vnd Cristum anzogen.

F. W[a]z ist Cristum anzieh[en]?

A. Es ist new gebore[n] worden, auff d[a]z ich sei ein newe Creatur gotes.

F. Glaubstu Cristum in d[a]z fleisch kumen sein.

A. Ja.

**The Second Part**

HERE FOLLOWS A REJOINDER TO THE QUESTION AND ANSWER.<sup>20</sup>

QUESTION. WHEN OR HOW DID [187a] you become a Christian?

A. When the will and Word of God were proclaimed to me by a true servant of God, and I believed him from my heart. I also commenced to imitate him, when consistent with God's will and life.

Q. Do you believe in Christ?

A. Yes, I believe that Jesus reconciled me to the Father through His death and accepted me. As a co-inheritor, I suffer [along with Christ].

Q. When did you become a Christian?

A. On the Monday after Catherine's [feast day], A. D. 1527.

Q. Where did you come to Christ?

A. In baptism.

Q. What is baptism?

A. It is a mark of God, through which the person binds himself to God, to obey Him as Christ did.

Q. Upon whom are you baptized?

A. Upon the name of Christ.

Q. In whom are you baptized?

A. In Christ's death to the body, and in baptism I have taken on Christ.

Q. How were you baptized?

A. According to the rule of Christ [Matt 28:18-20], from the first time that the will and Word of God were preached to me, [187b] is when I believed in it. Thence forward I have surrendered to God in the obedience of Christ and took on Christ.

Q. What does it mean "to take on Christ?"

A. It is to have been born again. Therefore I am a new creation of God.

Q. Do you believe Christ has come in the flesh?

A. Yes.

<sup>20</sup>"All-caps" print represents the large, bold lettering of the original 1527/28 manuscript.

F. In wolliches fleisch.

A. Inn mein fleisch.

F. Wie wann wo ist er in dein fleish kume[n].

A. Da ich mich in seine[m] willen erbe[n], gleich wie Maria, da sÿ die verhaissung des Enngels hort, vnd sÿ sprach mir gescheh nach deinen worten.

F. Lebt auch Cristus in dier.

A. Ja, in ainem newenn lebenn, Cristus hat in mir vberwunden, thodt sündt holl teuffel vnd die ganntze welt.

Q. In which flesh?

A. In my flesh.

Q. How, when, [and] where, does He come into your flesh?

A. As I surrender to His will, just like Mary, as she hears the annunciation of the angel and says, "May it happen to me according to your words."

Q. Does Christ also live in you?

A. Yes, in a new life. Christ has conquered death, sin, hell, the devil, and the whole world.



[188a] VOLGET NUN ALHIENACH EIN ANDER PROB DES  
GEISTS/ ODER FRAG UND ANTWORT

Frag. Was ist die Cristlich kierch?

A. Kierchen ist ein versammlung aller heilligen, in ainigkait des geistes vnd offentlich bekanntnuß Jesu Crist, der kirchen ist Cristus, brüederlich straff ist ir gewalt, Got ist d[a]z ainig ewig wesen, allein guete von wollichen alleding ir guet vnd wesen haben.

F. Bei weÿ erkennstu in?

A. Ich erkenn in aus seiner Allmechtigkeit, darin er himel vnd erdt erschaff[en] hat, dieweil er alle ding erschaff[en] [188b] hat. Sollen im auch ding diene[n]. Ja himel vndt erdt, vnd alle Creatur sollen im dienen.

F. W[a]z ist di[e] dienstbarigkeit gotes.

A. Die haltung seiner gebot.

F. W[a]z ist d[a]z gsatz?

A. Gebot oder gsatz ist ein verbindung des Bosen, vnd ein verschaffung das guet.

F. Wie vil sein Gebot.

A. Zwei zeh[en] sein in der taffl moÿs geschriben vnd in vnseren hertzen das widerspil anzaigt.

F. Warumb seindt sy geben?

A. Aus zweÿen vrsachen. Erstlich, d[ass] der mensch den willen gotes thue, zum andern sich selbs vnd die sündt lernen erkennen.

F. W[a]z ist sündt?

A. Ein yedliche bewegung oder lust, wider den willen gotes sein, vns erwechst.

F. W[a]z ist Buess.

A. Ein beclagung der Sündt gege[n] got mit betruetben hertze[n], gueten fürsatz zu thuen.

F. W[a]z haist glaupe[n].

A. Glauben sampt den 12. Artickeln ist ein lebendige vertrauen, in di[e] werckh des geists vollstreckhenn. [189a]

F. Wolliche sein die werckh des geistes.

A. Lieb freudt friedt, demuet, freuntligkait, güetigkait, glaub sefft, muetigkait, trew massigkait.

### The Third Part

[188a] HERE FOLLOWS ANOTHER TEST OF THE SPIRIT/OR QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

Q. What is the Christian church?

A. The church is an assembly of all the saints in the unity of the spirit and in public profession of Jesus Christ. The church is Jesus, and brotherly discipline is its authority. God is the sole, eternal being, alone the good from which all things have their goodness and [integral] nature.

Q. How do you know Him?

A. I know Him in His omnipotence (by which He created the heavens and earth) that He created all things. [188b] All things should serve Him. Verily, heaven and earth and all creation should serve Him.

Q. What is the service of God?

A. The keeping of His commandments.

Q. What is the law?

A. Commandments, or law, is a binding of evil and an enabling of good.

Q. How many are His commandments?

A. Twice ten, they are written on the [stone] tablets of Moses, and they are reflected or displayed [written] in our hearts.

Q. Why were they given [to us]?

A. For two reasons: First, so that humankind would do the will of God. [Second], also so that they would learn to recognize themselves and the sin [within themselves].

Q. What is sin?

A. A certain movement or desire against the will of God that awakens in us.

Q. What is repentance?

A. An accusation of sin, accompanied by a heavy heart for opposing God, [and] the intention to do good.

Q. What is faith?

A. Faith according to the "12 Articles" is a living faith, to be executed [enforced] through the works of the spirit. [189a]

Q. What are the works of the spirit?

A. Love, joy, peace, humility, friendliness, goodness, belief, courage, truth, moderation.

F. Wolliches sein die werckh des fleischs.

A. Eebruch, huererey, vnrainigkait, abgoterey, zauberey, feindtschafft, [?]ader, eifer, zorn, zanckh, zweitracht, secten hass mordt, fressen saufen, vnnd der gleichen.

F. Wen [wan?] bistu ein Crist worden?

A. Da ich mich nach dem Exempel Cristi, got vndergebe[n] gab, Gerechtigkait auf diser Erdt willig in mir zu erdulden, wi[e] auch Cristus für die gantz welt geliten hat, auf d[a]z wir seinen fuesstapffen sollen nach volgen, wie vns dan[n] Cristus gelehret hat.

TAUFF DES GEISTES IST EIN INWENDIG ERLEUCHTERUNG des Geist[e]s und hertzen, so geschichts vom heilligen Geist, durch [189b] d[a]z lebendig wort Gotes, d[a]z wort ist lebendig, so es glaubt vnd darnach gelebt wiert.

TAUFF DES WASSERS IST EIN EÜSSERLICH ZEUCKNUß, des innwendigen pundts so der mensch mit Got durch Cristum gemachet hat.

TAUFF DES BLUETS IST EIN TAEGLICHE THÖDTUNG des fleischs im thodt, darbey alles Leiden vmb gotes willen, erdul[en] ergriffen wiert.

EUANGELION EIN GUETE BOTSCHAFFT VON Got außgangen, vnnd d[a]z menschliche [190a] Geschlecht salig zue machen, alle di[e] in Cristum glauben.

F. W[a]z sein di[e] Sex werckh der Ba[r]mhertzigkait.

A. Dem hungerigen speisen, die durstigen trenckhen, vnnd die allenden hausen, die nackhenden beklaiden, die kranckhen haimsuech[en], die gefangnen trossten.

F. Wer bistu.

A. Ein vernünfftig Creatur Gotes.

F. W[a]z ist vernunfft.

A. Es seindt alle kreffft des mensche[n], dar durch er redt, w[a]z begreifen mag.

F. Warumb hat diers got verlih[en], für alle andere Creatur.

A. D[a]z ich in preisen, erkennen, eere[n], loben, vnd lieben soll. A. d[a]z ainig ewig wesen, allain guet, wollichen alleding ir wesen haben.

F. Wie kanstu in kennen, dieweil er vnsichtbar ist.

A. In der Beschaffung himels vnd der erden, sampt allen Creaturen.

Q. What are the works of the flesh?

A. Adultery, whoredom, impurity, godlessness, magic, enmity, wrath, jealousy, rage, quarrelsomeness, religious hatred, murder, deceit, gobbling or guzzling, and the like.

Q. When did you become a Christian?

A. As I, according to Christ's example, gave myself in submission to God, willing to suffer [His] earthly justice within myself. As Christ suffered for the entire world, so we should follow in His footsteps as Christ has taught us.

**BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT IS AN INNER ENLIGHTENMENT**<sup>21</sup> of the Spirit and heart, which comes from the Holy Spirit through [189b] the living word of God. The Word is alive, as it is believed and lived out thereafter.

**BAPTISM WITH WATER IS AN OUTER SIGN** of the inner bond [covenant] that humankind has made with God through Christ.

**BAPTISM WITH BLOOD IS A DAILY KILLING** of the flesh in death, thereby all suffering will be taken up, suffered for God's sake.

**GOSEPL IS GOOD NEWS** sent from God, and, to make humanity [190a] blessed, [to make] all believe in Christ.

Q. What are the six works of mercy?

A. To feed the hungry, give drink to the thirst, and to house all of them; to clothe the naked, visit the sick, comfort the imprisoned.

Q. Who are you?

A. A rational creation of God.

Q. What is reason?

A. It is all human power[s], through which one speaks, [and] may grasp something.

Q. Why did God bestow it upon you, before all other creation?

A. So that I might praise, confess, honor, laud, and love Him. He is the sole eternal being, [He] alone [is] the good, from which all things have their being.

Q. How can you recognize Him, since He is invisible?

A. In the ordering of the heavens and the earth, together with all creation.

<sup>21</sup>"All-caps" print represents the large, bold lettering of the original 1527/28 manuscript.

F. Was zaigen sÿ dir in dem an.

A. Dreÿ ding sicht die welt, der viert wil sÿ nit warneme[n]. Zum ersten, [190b] sein Allmechtigkait, dardurch er alle ding beschaffen, so krefftig vnnnd bis zum enndt behelten werden, zum and[er]n sein weißhait, in wollicher alleding verordnet, vnnnd regieret werden, zum dritten sein Guet, d[a]z alle Creatur auff erden, etw[a]z guets in im habe[n], zum vierdten sein gerechtigkeit, wirt die ganz welt nit beger[e]n, wie wenig sÿ darumb wissen wil.

F. Ist got nit auch barmhertzig.

A. Sein erbarmung ist in allen seinen werckhen.

F. Warumb wilstu sÿ dann nit.

A. Den[n] wir ein geschlecht auff erden, di[e] warlich erkennen.

F. Wolliches.

A. Die Cristen allain, wie sunst die gantz welt daruon schwatzen kan.

F. Was ist ein Christ.

A. Es ist ein zwierig geborner mensch.

F. Wie ist die d[a]z muglich.

A. In der Crafft gotes wol, einmal wierden wir alle menschen geboren, auß fleisch vnd bluet, d[a]z waiß[t] du vnnnd die ganntz welt, zum ander[n] aus got, wir er spricht, solt ich andere[n] [191a] fruchtbar machen, vnnnd selbs erfruchtbar bleiben. (Esai. 66)

F. Wan bistu ein Crist worden.

A. Da ich mich wie vor anzaigt.

F. Wer ist ein Crist.

A. Er ist ein Sun des lebendigen Gotes, ainmal geberen von ainer raine[n] Junkhfrau, von dem heiligen Geist empfangen, durch wollichen er auch gesalbt vnd versigelt ist, allen dene[n] so in in glauben, d[a]z sÿ warlich auch gebalbet, vnd versiglet werden zum ewigen leben, darumb ich auch ein Crist haiss, d[a]z ist ein gesalbter gotes, inn wollicher Cristus, taglich empfangen vnd geboren wiert.

F. Wie geschicht d[a]z.

A. Durch d[a]z euongeli[on], d[a]z wort gotes, so durch den Enngl Gabriel, d[a]z ist den Boten gotes, d[er] gsandt prediger verkündiget, gehort vnnnd behalten, damit d[a]z wort fleisch vnd hat wonung vnder vns.

Q. What do you see displayed in the world?

A. The world sees three things, the fourth they do not wish to discern. First, [190b] His omnipotence, through which He made all things, the power that will last until the [end of time]; additionally, His wisdom, through which all things are ordered and will be governed; third, His goodness, so that all earthly creatures have some good within; fourth, His justice, which the entire world does not desire, since it knows so little about it.

Q. Is God not also merciful?

A. His mercy is in all His works.

Q. Why, then, do other people not desire it?

A. Because we [Christians] are a house upon the earth who truly recognize it [God's mercy].

Q. Who are these [who recognize God's mercy]?

A. The Christians alone, regardless of how the world may babble on about it.

Q. What is a Christian?

A. He is a twice-born person.

Q. How is that possible?

A. In the very power of God all people are born from flesh and blood, as you and the whole world knows. Then from God, as He says, I should make others [191a] fruitful and remain fruitful myself (Isa 66).

Q. When did you become a Christian?

A. I explained that before.

Q. Who is a Christian?

A. He is a son of the living God, [who] was once born from a pure virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit, through whom He is also anointed and sealed, so that all who believe in Him are [themselves] truly anointed and sealed for eternity. Therefore I am also called a Christian, an anointed one of God's, in whom Christ is conceived and born every day.

Q. How does this take place?

A. Through the Gospel, the Word of God, which was pronounced by the angel Gabriel, God's messenger, He was sent as a preacher. He was heard and He kept His message, so that the Word would become flesh and dwell among us.

F. Bekennt doch der merer thail menschen ein gantzen dritten thail der welt, d[a]z wort sei fleisch word[en], wie Johannes bezeuget, so seindt sÿ [191b] all Cristen.

A. Nain, sÿ sein darumb nit Cristen, sunder die da bekennen, d[a]z Cristus in ir fleisch kumen sei, der laider wenig seindt.

F. D[a]z bekennen, kumbt aus dem erkennen, weiter seindt dann mer erkandtnuß Cristi, dann ainer.

A. Ja. Es seindt zwu erkandtnuß Cristi, ainer leiblich, vnnd aine geistlich.

F. Wolliche erkennen Cristum leiblich.

A. Alle mundt Cristen erkennen d[a]z, d[a]z er empfangen, geliten, vnd gemartert sei, Ja, d[a]z er sitz zue d[er] rechten gotes, aber sÿ wollen in weder empfangen, oder geboren noch leiden.

F. Wolliche kennen in geistlich.

A. Die da glauben vnd bekenne[n], mit hertzen mundt vndt that, d[a]z im Cristus sei empfangen gebor[e]n vnd leidt.

F. W[a]z ist glaub[en].

A. Es schwetzt die ganz welt so vil vom glaupe[n] vnnd ein yeder leerer, macht ein besunder entschuldigung darab, wollichen ich für mich nimb, so findt d[en?] ander ein anstoss, ich wil dir aber [192a] gern sagen, w[a]z mein glaub ist, ein sicher vnnd gewiss vertrauwen, d[a]z got mein vater sei, vnnd ich sein kindt.

F. D[a]z glaubt der Judt auch.

A. Es ist war, sÿ seindt vnder allen völkher der welt erwolt, worden zue kinder gotes, darumb auch Christus Jesus der Sun des lebendigen gotes, von im nach dem fleisch geben hat müessen, in wollichem sÿ got hat wollen verg[e]wissen, wie er dan[n] durch di[e] Propheten, Esaias vnd Jeremias hat kundt gethon, Ja auch durch iren möyse, die weil sÿ aber den ueruolgt, verachtet haben, vnd die verg[e]wissung in die gantz welt, allen völkher[n] verkündigen lassen, alle die sÿ annemen, freÿ gemacht haben, kinder gotes zu werden, also ist der vnderscheidt zwischen [mir?] vnd Juden nit, den erst vergwisst zu werden, wa[n?] sein messias kumbt.

F. Wer hat dich verg[e]wisst.

A. Got selbs.

F. Durch woÿ [?]

A. Durch den geist Cristi in meinem hertzen empfangen[n].

Q. Do not the majority of people, an entire third of the world, profess that the Word has become flesh, as John testified, so that they [191b] are all Christian?

A. No, they are not therefore, Christians, but only those who profess that Christ has come in *their* flesh, who, unfortunately, are very few.

Q. That profession, comes from the recognition that there are then more understandings of Christ than one?

A. Yes, there are two understandings of Christ, one physical and one spiritual.

Q. Who professes the physical Christ?

A. The mouths of all [so-called] Christians proclaim it, that He was conceived, suffered and crucified. Yea, and He sits at the right of God. They, however, will not suffer either to conceive in themselves or bear Him.

Q. Who knows Him spiritually?

A. Those who believe and profess, with their hearts, mouths, and deeds, that Christ is conceived, born, and suffers in them.

Q. What is faith?

A. The whole world chatters so much about faith, and every teacher makes a particular apology about it. I even take this role for myself when another finds an objection to the faith. However, I will [192a] gladly state what my faith is to you: a sure and certain trust that God is my Father and I am His child.

Q. The Jews believe that as well.

A. True. They were chosen from among all the peoples of the world as the children of God. Therefore, must Christ Jesus, the Son of the living God, be born from them according to the flesh, in whom God wished to justify them [the Jews], as He had had proclaimed through the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah? Yes, also through their Moses. Since they [the Jews] persecuted and disdained Him, and the revelation was proclaimed to all peoples, He made all who accepted them [God's teachings] free to be children of God. Thus the difference between me and the Jews will be verified when His Messiah comes, for whom each party is looking.

Q. Who justified you?

A. God Himself.

Q. Through whom?

A. Through the Spirit of Christ received into my heart.



F. Den [192b] berüemen sich alle Pabstler, ja sundlich die grossen doctores.  
 A. O Lieben Brüeder, d[a]z ist nit bewert [?], Paulus spricht, der sich selbs rüembt, sunder den got rüembt, d[a]z ist durch wolliche got sein geist, in die Crafft bringet, wie er auch in die Crafft von [indistinct symbol] in [?] die werck kumen, vnd von dem vater bracht ist worden, dardurch den Sun berüembt vnd erklet ist worden.

F. Wie kumbt der geist Cristi in die Crafft.

A. So sich d[er] mensch selbs verleugnet, willigelich auff sich nimbt sein Creütz, volgt Cristi nach.

F. Hastu dein selbs verleugnet.

A. Auß der Crafft gotes thue ich taglich, als oft ich meine[n] aigen willen brich, vnd mich des willens meines vaters befeisse, die im himel ist.

F. Hastu auch ein freÿen willen.

A. Ja, ÿe freÿer er ist herwiderumb ÿeweiter von Got ÿngefangner, denn so yemandt der sun freÿ macht, der ist warlich freÿ.

F. W[a]z is dann dein Creütz. [193a]

A. Er ist anfencklich der alt Adam, die alten Tückh, so sich in mir rüeren, wider den geist der mich oft gar in die erden druckht, so er so gar nichts widerwartigs leiden wil. Zum andern die wollust vnd begierigkait, die feuren pfeil des feindts so ich widerwillen empfindt in meinem fleisch, zue creützigen d[a]z selb. Zum dritden den so wart ich auf d[a]z creütz, so mir mein vater mit gnaden schicken wiert, nach sein willen, wie er auch Cristi geschickht hat, do sein Sündt kam.

F. [?]des sins, so muesst ir all gethodt werd[en] wie Cristus, ist gethodt worden.

A. Nain, sunder alle di[e] mit erbe[n] wollen, di[e] müessen auch mit leid[en] wie er ainen jëtlichen verordnet nach der mass [?], so er vns aussthält, er waiß beß[er] w[a]z vns nutzt, dan[n] wir selbs.

F. Wie kumbts d[a]z er leiden zueschickht.

A. Der Criste Jesu warhafftig nachvolgen wil, bedarf [193b] bei diser welt nit gedencken, d[a]z er on leiden sein werden, wie es dann taglich erscheint.

F. Wie erkenn man die nachvolger Cristi.

A. Bei der lieb, so sÿ in ainem Geist, got vnd vater ir aller meinander verbunden sein.

F. Wie kan mans so balt [?] inne[n] werden, weil auch Türckhen vnd haiden an einander lieben.

A. Ja, haiden lieben die freundt, vndt bit für sÿ.

Q. Is that what all of the popes [192b] claim, nay even the great doctors?

A. Beloved brothers, it is not worthy, as Paul says, that one glorify oneself, but rather Him whom God glorifies, that is [the one] through whom God makes His spirit manifest. He is manifested in deeds, and is brought forth from the Father through whom the Son is glorified and made known.

Q. How is the Spirit of Christ made manifest?

A. In the following way: the person denies himself, willingly takes up his cross, [and] follows Christ.

Q. Have you denied yourself?

A. I do it every day through the power of God, whenever I break my own will and endeavor to do the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Q. Do you also have a free will?

A. Yes, the freer the will is then the furthest away is the realm where it is ensnared. For only the one who has been made free by the Son is truly free.

Q. What then is your cross? [193a]

A. To begin with, the old Adam, the old treachery that rests in me, which is directed against the Spirit, [and] which pushes me down even into the earth. It tolerates nothing against itself. Additionally, there remain lust and greed, the fiery darts of the enemy, which I unwillingly sense in my flesh. These crucify my flesh. Third, I await the cross that my Heavenly Father will mercifully send me according to His will, as He also sent Christ to be "sin" in His own body [for our sins].

Q. Then all of you must be killed, as Christ was killed?<sup>22</sup>

A. No, rather all who wish to inherit with [Christ] must also suffer with Him as He designated to each according to His measure. As He distributed to us, He knows better than we do what benefits us.

Q. Why does He send suffering?

A. He who truly wishes to imitate Christ, [193b] may not think that this world will be without suffering, as is made clear every day.

Q. How does one recognize the followers of Christ?

A. By the love that binds them together in one Spirit, God, and Father.

Q. How can one come in so quickly, for Turks and heathen also love one another.

A. Yes, heathen love their friends and pray for them.

<sup>22</sup>Two unclear words precede this question.

F. Durch wie hastu dich zu im verbunden.

A. Durch den geist Crist, Ja innwendig durch di[e] tauff, auch eüsserlich die dan[n] ein pundt zeichen ist der Cristen.

F. Warum hastu dich tauffen lassen, warstu doch dennoch wol ein Crist.

A. D[a]z ist war, so ich den tauff nicht gehabt mocht, weil ich aber die zeuckhnu[ß] des wassers, zue sampt der zeuck[h]nuß des geists hab mügen haben, sei got gelobt, es spricht Johannes in seiner epistl, d[a]z drei zeuge[n] sein, der geist des wassers vnd der bluets [194a] die seindt ains, d[a]z ist sÿ sollen bey einander sein, dann, sÿ gehören in ains.

F. Wo hastu dan[n] die zeuckhnuß des bluets.

A. In mei[ne]m Creütz, wi[e] ich dir gesagt hab.

F. Bistu doch in deiner kindthait getaufft worde[n].

A. Es ist war, aber nit nach ordnung Cristi.

F. W[a]z ist nach der ordnung Cristi tauffen.

A. D[a]z man die innwendig des geists tauffs, von got empfacht, die doch kumbt, durch d[a]z gehore, d[a]z wort gotes kumbt aus dem d[a]z pundt zeichen anneme[n].

F. Wo hat Cristus verboten kinder zu tauff[en].

A. Wo hat ers erlaubt, den sollen wir doch nichts thuetz, dan[n] wo ers vns leeret vnd erlaubt, du wirst nichts thuen w[a]z dich guet dunckht.

F. Hat doch Christus verschafft, die eselin vnnd fullin zue im zufüeren, aber darumb nit tauffen, du waist mein brueder, d[a]z du di[e] kinder nit mer leiblich zue Cristo kanst bringe[n] die weil er immer leiblich da ist, als er leiblich zue Jerusalem was [194b] sund[er] schaw, d[a]z du sÿ im geist vnnd durch die vnderweisung des willen gotes zue im bringest, da hab von der wier geen, herfließ, vnd last sÿ nit aller Bosßhait auf wachs[en] wie bißher geschehen ist, so bringstu sÿ recht zue Cristo.

A. Zaig mir ain ainig geschriff, d[a]z di[e] Lamblen vnd knablen nit tauffen soll, weil sÿ de Juden allzeit geweschen haben, ee dann sÿ sÿ geopffert hab[en].

F. Eÿ das ist gewiß, d[a]z di[e] tauff allain für di[e] menschen ist verordnet, vnd nit für alle die Lamblein.

A. Warumb taufft man[n] dann di[e] Juden vnnd haiden nit, seindt sÿ doch auch menschen.

Q. How are you bound to Him [God]?

A. Through the Spirit of Christ. Yea, internally through baptism, also outwardly it is a sign of allegiance to Christ for Christians.

Q. Why did you have yourself baptized? Were you not already a Christian?

A. That is true. If I had not wished to have the baptism, I would still be a Christian. However, because I wished to have the sign of the water together with the sign of the Spirit, God must be praised. John says in his letter that there are three marks: Spirit, water and blood. [194a] The three are one, that is, they should be side by side; they belong in one.

Q. Where do you have the sign of blood?

A. In my cross, as I have told you.

Q. Were you not baptized in your childhood?

A. That is true, but not according to the rule of Christ.

Q. What is it to be baptized according to the rule of Christ?

A. One receives the baptism of the Spirit internally from God. This comes through the hearing of the Word of God, [and] then from accepting the sign [of baptism].

Q. Where did Christ forbid the baptism of children?

A. Where did He allow it? We should do nothing except what He teaches and allows. You shall not do what you simply think is good.<sup>23</sup>

Q. Did not, however, Christ manage to lead the young asses and foals to Himself, but not to baptize them? You know, my brother, that you cannot any longer bring children physically to Christ, although He is always physically there, as He [was] physically [194b] in Jerusalem. This especially shows, that you bring them to God in the Spirit, and through instruction in the will of God. And you do not permit all kinds of evil to grow, as has happened before.<sup>24</sup> Thus you bring them correctly to Christ.

A. Show me a single text [that says] that the lambs and little boys should not be baptized; for the Jews have always washed them, before they sacrificed them.

Q. It is certain that baptism is designated for people alone, and not for lambs.

A. Why are the Jews and heathen not baptized, for they are human, too?

<sup>23</sup>The roles of the examiner and the responder appear to change over the next few questions and answers.

<sup>24</sup>This sentence begins with two unclear words.

F. Sy seindt aber nit glaubig.

A. Doagara [?], so tauft ma[n] allain die glaubigen, vnnnd beuelcht die kinder, dieweil der barmhertzigkait gotes, bis sy d[a]z worts behaglich werden, darnach thue man[n] fleis[?] vnuermaligte Braut Christo zue vermahlen.

F. Wirt er dan[n] taglich in dir empfangen.

A. Nein, sunder [195a] in denen die Cristen werden.

F. Wie wirt ainer ein Crist.

A. So er hort d[a]z wort gotes, vnnnd behalt d[a]z selbig in im, richt all sein leben darnach.

F. W[a]z thuet er in dir.

A. Er waxt taglich bis er geboren wirt.

F. Wann wirt er geboren.

A. Wann ich sterb, dan[n] in Cristum sterben haist ein geburt, als got derzuo Cristo sagt, nach seiner Ur steendt, vnd heut hab ich dich gebore[n].

F. Wirt der nit auch geboren, so er Leidt veruolungung betrüebnuß schelt[en?] wort, vnnnd der gleichen von seinet wegen.

A. Nein, sunder es sindt schmerzzen vnd [unclear word] der geburt, wie Cristus seinen jungern sagt, vom schwangern weib die geboren.

F. Du redst gleich, als sei dein fleisch Cristi fleisch.

A. So der Cristus in mir ist, so ist namlich mein fleisch verwandelt in seins, dann ich erken[ne] mich ein glidt des leibs.

F. Wie kan d[a]z sein, steckht doch dein fleisch voller sunden.

A. Wen[n] ich d[a]z selb nit erkennet, [195b] hiet [?] mich dem vater nit vnd gebe[n] in seines suns ebenbildt zue vernewren.

F. Wie hastu dich im ergeben.

A. D[a]z ich in allem meinem thuen vnd lassen, wortenn werckhenn vnd gedannckhenn, ein auffmerckhen hab auf den willenn gotes, denn selbenn zue volstreckhen, inn mir vnnnd allenn denn meinigen.

F. Wer kann das thuenn.

A. Ein Crist leicht, dann es ist von ewigkait nie gehört, d[a]z ai[ne]m misslungenn wer, der sich des willen gotes gefleissen hat.

Q. But they are not believers.

A. Hence, one baptizes only believers, and commands it for children in the mercy of God, until the Word is comfortable for them. Afterward, one strives<sup>25</sup> to wed the unwed bride, Christ.

Q. Will He then be conceived in you every day?

A. No, rather [195a] in those who will become Christians.

Q. How does one become a Christian?

A. He hears the Word of God, sustains it within himself, and directs all his life toward it.

Q. What does He [Christ] do within you?

A. He grows daily until He is born.

Q. When is He born?

A. When I die, for in Christ to die signifies a birth. For God said to Christ, at the appointed hour, today, I have given birth to You.

Q. Was He [Christ] not also born as He was suffering persecution, despair and scolding words and the like?

A. No, rather they are the pains of birth. As Christ says to His disciples, they are like the little ones born from pregnant women.

Q. You talk as if your flesh is the flesh of Christ.

A. As Christ is in me, so is my flesh transformed into His, for I proclaim myself a member of the body [of Christ].

Q. How can that be, since your flesh is pierced full of sin?

A. If I did not proclaim that, [195b] then my Father would not protect me and give me His Son's likeness to renew [me].

Q. How have you submitted to Him?

A. In that I attend to the will of God in all my deeds and rest, words, works and thoughts, in order to accomplish this in myself and to claim all that is mine.

Q. Who can do that?

A. Certainly a Christian can, for in all eternity it has never been heard that one who eagerly has done the will of God has failed [i.e., been rejected by God].

<sup>25</sup>The meaning of this word is unclear.

F. Wer sagt mir denn willenn Gotes allzeit.

A. So wiert ein Crist, so wiert dir der willenn Gotes geoffenbaret.

Q. Who is he who shows me the will of God continuously?

A. He will be a Christian, and thus will the will of God be revealed.





*Translator's Preface to Massimo Firpo's  
"Religious Radicalism: from Anabaptism  
to Anti-Trinitarianism"*

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I remember sitting in my second church history class, listening to my professor lecture about the Reformation, and asking him if there had been a reformation in Italy, like in Germany, Switzerland, France, and England. My learned professor informed me that there had been, but that it had been short-lived. A few years later, while visiting my parents in Milan, I entered the Mondadori store on via Marghera seeking to find some book on the Italian Reformation. The sales associate referred me to the only book on the subject that he had in the store: Massimo Firpo's *Riforma Protestante ed Eresie nell'Italia del Cinquecento* (San Donato Milanese: Editori Laterza, 2004).

In this 160-page book, Firpo gives a quick, well researched summary of the Italian Reformation, from its origins and the role played by major cities, major Reformers, and major documents, to its premature end. While its style is typical of many Italian academic works (paragraph-long sentences with imbedded quotes in sixteenth-century Italian or Latin), it is very accessible and presents a plethora of information in a very succinct way. Ending this very helpful, little volume is the tenth chapter: "Religious radicalism: from Anabaptism to Anti-Trinitarianism." This was the first I had heard about Italian Anabaptism, and knowing Paige Patterson's and Emir Caner's interest in the topic, I quickly proceeded to make a rough translation of the content of this chapter for them. Little did I know at the time that this would be the genesis of my interest and research on the topic of Italian Anabaptism.

What follows is an updated translation of this tenth chapter. While it was not always the case, when possible, Italian phraseology was preserved in an attempt to convey the full intent of the original author, as was the original Italian grammatical structure, resulting in many English run-on sentences. All quotations in the translation parallel quotations in the text, which quote original sources in sixteenth-century Italian or Latin. Titles of works were left in their original form, but are sometimes followed by a translation in square brackets for the benefit of the Anglophone reader.

Now that I am acquainted with the works of Cantimori, Cantu, Gastal-

di, Rotondò, Stella, and many others, and having spent a significant amount of time studying the works of Camillo Renato, I admit that I am not in total agreement with Firpo's narration. Nevertheless, I find it very beneficial as an introduction to the topic and to the key persons associated with Italian Anabaptism. I also greatly appreciate how Firpo's portrayal allows the reader to feel the theological and social tensions that these Italian reformers had to deal with as they struggled to make sense of Scripture, philosophy, and life. I pray it will be beneficial to you also and will bring a renewed interest to this little known part of church history.

**Firpo, Massimo. "Religious Radicalism: from Anabaptism to Anti-Trinitarianism." In *Riforma Protestante ed Eresie nell'Italia del Cinquecento*, 143-60. San Donato Milanese: Editori Laterza, 2004.**

The image that we have tried to depict in these pages [viz. the first nine chapters] would remain incomplete without the mention of a consistent presence of religious radicalism of an Anabaptist nature, especially in the northeastern regions of the peninsula. The roots of the movement should apparently be identified in the Tyrolean and Trentino offshoot of the great revolt of 1525, and amongst the followers of Michael Gaismayr who sought refuge in great numbers in the Venetian territory. Gaismayr, who himself established residence at Padua and was on the payroll of the Serenissima, was known to have people preach and read "things authored by Luther in his own home." He also kept close contact with the church in Zurich and with Zwingli, up until Zwingli's death in Kappel in October of 1531 (a few months before Gaismayr was himself eliminated by a Habsburg hit man), with the hope of mobilizing an anti-imperial protestant faction which would also include Venice. Jakob Huter, the founder of the Anabaptist Moravian colonies, was Tyrolean. He was burned alive in Innsbruck in 1536, but was very successful in proselytizing on either side of the Alps. The mobility of artisans, sellers, and students along the Brennero way facilitated a constant influx and an exchange path for the small clandestine communities that were created in many cities of the mainland (and in a few rare cases, even in the countryside), whose Christian witnessing effort was able to exhaust every subversive instance in an austere separatist choice. The role played by the mysterious Tiziano was without a doubt decisive. Having gotten close to the radicalism of the Italian exiles in Graubünden during his stay in Switzerland, following his adhesion to the reformed faith, he then returned homeland and promoted active proselytism ("He always goes persuading and teaching this doctrine") and was given the reputation to be the first to bring Anabaptism from Germany.

A vivid (even if not always accurate) overall picture of the movement is seen in the detailed interrogations of Pietro Manelfi. This priest from the Marches, of whom we have already spoken about when we narrated the path to his conversion to the Lutheran heresy, was re-baptized by Tiziano at Ferrara and became the influential "minister" appointed to visit the various

Anabaptist “churches.” In the autumn of 1551 he would then voluntarily present himself in front of the inquisition in Bologna to spill the beans and denounce his brothers in the faith. In his declaration, Manelfi listed one by one the numerous “Lutherans, Anabaptists, and other heretics” whom he had known and visited during his numerous travels, not only in the Venetian dominion, but also at Ferrara and in Romagna, at Bologna and Florence, at Modena and Pisa, at Piacenza and Cremona. Out of his declaration emerges a thick and various world spreading from Padua to Istria, from Verona to Rovigo, from the Cittadella to Friuli, comprised of tailors, hat makers, perfumers, shoemakers, innkeepers, weavers, apothecaries, rag merchants, tooth-drawers, barbers, dyers, furriers, blacksmiths, metal workers, peddlers (among whom were a “handicapped without feet” and a “hunchbacked who sold bread in the square” at Vicenza), often with all their families. In addition there were painters and sword smiths who were often forced to leave their professions (“the Anabaptists do not want any who make weapons or paintings”). There were also doctors, notaries, rectors and canonries of the Pola cathedral, ex-priests and friars married with children (whom had become artisans), teachers, farmers, a student, a doctor in law and even a commendatory abbot from Naples such as Girolamo Busale. He was rich of “great benefices” and because of them was accused of nourishing himself “of the blood of the beast, that is the pope,” and therefore was forced to transfer them to his father “so that he could be accepted among Anabaptists, because they did not want anybody among themselves who had any benefits and preeminence, unless he renounce them.” These were often forced to go through bitter human and religious experiences, like in the case of the schoolteacher from Padua, Alvise de Colti, just to mention one example. He was re-baptized toward the middle of the 1550s and then “separated and driven away by the Anabaptists because he taught youth to make the sign of the cross.” He was put on trial due to the accusation of the priest from the Marches and regained his freedom in 1554. He moved soon after to Vicenza (where he took up his profession again and became a factor for count Odoardo da Thiene); he then moved to the Friuli region (where he was a livestock merchant); and finally he moved to Mantua, where, based on new accusations, he was arrested again in 1568, while in his seventies, and burned at the stake two years later for being an unrepentant heretic.

The denouncing done by Manelfi offered the Roman and Venetian authorities the decisive instrument to strongly suppress those dangerous conventicles: true “conspiracies of rascals against the state of paradise and of the world.” At the time in Milan it was written that “These cursed heretics, in addition to other things, remove the authority of every lordship and preach a Christian freedom saying that we are not to be subject to anyone, directly against and to the destruction of every state.” Worrisome revolutionary specters seemed to be taking flesh on the background of the very serious heresies revealed during the interrogations of the priest from the Marches. Here is how he epitomized the faith to which he had adhered when he was

converted, beyond the illicitness and invalidity of infant baptism: “Magistrates cannot be Christians. The sacraments do not confer any grace, but are only external symbols. Do not hold in the church anything except sacred scripture. Do not hold any of the opinions of the doctors. Hold to the fact that the Roman church is diabolical and antichristian.” But, as Manelfi himself also reported, similar “ancient opinions as the Anabaptists’,” based on a rigorous refusal of social hierarchy, had known a rapid development towards anti-Trinitarianism. This happened in parallel with the radicalization of the stands of some of the Italian exiles in Graubünden, among whom of importance was Camillo Renato. His writing, *Adversus baptismum* of 1548, suggested to the guardians of reformed orthodoxy, the first troubled and hostile comments on those “clever [...] Italians prone to controversy and difficult to placate” and, in 1553, on those “men who are always eager for rarer and newer things, of which I am ignorant,” always ready to introduce doubt and start discussions.

In those years, the anti-Trinitarian writings of Michele Servetus were circulated even on this side of the Alps, and already during clandestine meetings held in Vicenza in 1546 (in which Lelio Sozzini supposedly took part) there would have emerged strong discords on the question of “if Christ was God or man.” This was done under the impetus of the radical scriptural exegesis of Girolamo Busale, who, having then returned from Naples after his adherence to Anabaptism, was determined to oppose the traditional doctrines defended by Tiziano. It was precisely to resolve such a delicate problem, further debated in the following years (together with the doubts of some “that the gospel was not the writings of the evangelists alone, but that there were other [writers]”), that an actual “council,” prepared by the missions of specific delegates, was summoned to Venice in 1550. As a witness to the thick web of connections in which the Italian movement was inlaid, delegates were sent “as far as Basel to call two per church in every place.” The disconcerting account of the Anabaptist synod, offered by Manelfi, is worth reading even if there are doubts of its full truthfulness:

And there in the year 1550, in the month of September, there met sixty, between Anabaptist ministers and bishops, in Venice, for a council, where, for forty days fasting, praising, and studying the sacred scriptures, they determined the following articles:

1. Christ was not God, but man, conceived by the seed of Joseph and Mary, but filled with all the virtues of God.
2. Mary had other sons and daughters after Christ, proven by the fact that in several scripture passages Christ had brothers and sisters.
3. No angelic beings were created by God, and where scripture speaks of angels, it speaks of ministers, that is of humans sent by God so as established by scripture.
4. There is no other devil than the wisdom of man, and

therefore that serpent of which Moses speaks of having seduced Eve, is nothing other than human wisdom, because we do not find in scripture anything created by God which is an enemy of God, if not the wisdom of man, as states Paul to the Romans.

5. The impure will not resurrect in the day of judgment, but only the elect, of which Christ was chief.

6. There is no other hell than the grave.

7. When the elect die, they are asleep in the Lord, and their souls do not benefit anything until the day of judgment, when they will be resurrected; the souls of the impure perish with their body, as do the souls of all other animals.

8. The human seed has, from God, the power to produce flesh and spirit.

9. The elect are justified by the eternal mercy and kindness of God, without any visible work, we mean without the death, the blood and merit of Christ.

10. Christ died as a demonstration of the justice of God, and by justice we mean the cumulus of all the goodness and mercy of God and of all his promises.

Far from limiting themselves to a mere refutation of the Trinitarian dogma, these definitions (confirmed a few months later in a new meeting held in Ferrara) implied the negation of the divinity of Christ, reduced to pure man “conceived by the seed of Joseph,” and therefore the negation of the validity of the vicarious expiation and of the saving worth of the sacrifice on the cross. This resulted in the abandon of the fundamental presupposition of the Lutheran and Calvinistic doctrine of justification by faith. It was substituted by the unfathomable ordinances of the divine mercy, altogether deprived of any iniquitous and terrifying value by the claim of the inexistence of hell and of the doctrine of the sleep of the soul after death, such that only the elect are destined to resurrect on the day of the final judgment. Such theological radicalism finds no parallel, anytime during this century, in the varied world of European Anabaptism. It therefore allows us to catch a glimpse of further specific elements of the manner in which the reform was lived and interpreted on this side of the Alps. It is the obvious preamble of the subsequent anti-Trinitarian developments associated with the Italian heretical emigration, destined to mature into the Socinian tradition of the sixteen hundreds, until the crisis of the European conscience and the Illuministic era. The cultural matrices of such extreme doctrinal outcomes are still evasive. Yet, observing the presence at the head of the movement of figures originating from environments of high culture, as were Celio Secondo Curione, Francesco Negri, Girolamo Busale, and Lelio Sozzini, rightly underscores the additions to the many irreducible contributions originating from Anabaptism from beyond the Alps: from the humanistic culture to the Paduan Aristotelian rationalism, from the Erasmian biblical philology to

the persistent prophetic tensions, from radical spiritualism to the movement following Juan de Valdez, among whose followers in the Spanish Naples of the 1540s emerge significant connections with the Hebraic culture of the Sephardi Diaspora and with the Judaizing heredity of the *conversa* tradition.

For example, Girolamo Busale, who was probably of Marrano origins, a native of Calabria having lived in Padua and Naples, was always engaged in heterodox propagandizing and, together with his brothers Bruno and Matteo, and his cousin Guglielmo Basalù, they were plugged into a group connected in a variety of different ways to a Valdesian legacy—among whom were Isabella Briseigna, Marcantonio Villamarina, Lorenzo Tizzano *alias* Benedetto Florio, Francesco Renato, Juan de Villafranca—which assembled itself at times in his house in Naples to celebrate the rite of the holy supper “the German way.” It was toward the end of the 1540s, still in Padua (always at the center of the Italian religious dissent in its different forms), that he submitted himself to the rebaptism ceremony and, being a principal actor in the doctrinal radicalization process in an anti-Trinitarian sense of the venetian community, he became for a brief time an influential “minister,” having the fame of being “very versed in the Hebrew and Greek languages” and of being “a great man,” with “a lively character”: “He worried all with whom he associated with and [...] debated his opinions, and persuaded himself that all bought into his reasoning.” Just in 1550, among other things, the year of the Anabaptist council in which he himself supposedly had participated, Curione published in Basel the *Cento e dieci divine considerationi* [*Hundred and Ten Divine Considerations*] of Valdes, attested to have circulated in manuscript form among venetian Anabaptists.

Having transferred himself to Naples to escape growing suspicions and “to teach and preach there this Anabaptist doctrine” sanctioned by the Venetian synod, it did not take long before Busale started to assume the attitude of an inspired prophet. By now, he was convinced that the Holy Spirit spoke “through his mouth” and was determined to preach his doctrines “publically,” emphasizing the Judaizing elements. This is evidenced by the fact that it did not take long for Anabaptists from Padua to be informed that “in Naples there is a new heretical sect which comprises large numbers of people and even important people in the city, who, among other heresies, hold to the belief that Christ is not God, but a great prophet, and that he did not come as messiah, but as a prophet and truly died and has not yet resurrected, but still has to resurrect and return as messiah [...]. They deny all the New Testament and claim that it is a Greek and gentile invention, and that Paul did not understand anything of the Old Testament, especially concerning justification and the resurrection.” Significant is the fact that while Busale was trying to leave Italy to escape being arrested, he did not head toward the Alpine passes and the protestant churches, but toward Alexandria in Egypt (where he had some family connections) and then to Damascus, where he died several years later. He was remembered by Biandrata as one of the founders of the anti-Trinitarian movement of the 1550s, “a man of theological integrity

and ability second to none.”

The experience of Giovanni Laureto of Naples, was no less complex and restless. An Olivetan monk who left his order and was converted to the reform tradition, Laureto was later re-baptized by Busale (“I discovered him when he was doubting the divinity of Christ,” he would say, “and reasoning together about this, we started reading and re-reading the Scriptures to clarify this point”). Sometime later he again visited Busale while at Padua and then accompanied him to Naples, all the while ready to return to the venetian university city to resume immediately his incessant wanderings, led by a sort of anxious desire to recover the authentic contents of original Christianity. Having finally landed in Salonicco (where a small Anabaptist diaspora community of “maybe twenty” people had established itself), he supposedly continued to deepen his biblical studies with “Jews and rabbis,” until the time when he decided to convert to Judaism. This was the extreme consequence of his denial of the divinity of Christ and the last step before his definite return to the ancient faith and the catholic fold.

The uninterrupted series of arrests, confessions, trials, abjurations, convictions, and escapes, stemmed by the denunciations of Manelfi (and destined to drag on for more than a decade), in the dominion of the San Marco republic—but also in Ferrara, Florence, Naples—signaled the arrival of an unrelenting disintegration of venetian Anabaptism and of its multiple Italian ramifications, whose followers and extreme offshoots will ultimately find asylum in the Moravian Hutterite colonies. Here they returned to the rigorous separatist positions and the original stances of social egalitarianism, abandoning the anti-Trinitarian doctrines altogether. Doctrines, which in a few years, even in Poland, would eventually demonstrate themselves to be fundamentally incompatible with the Anabaptist heritage, as demonstrated by the ultimate failure, in 1567, of the attempted fusion of a Moravian community with the *Ecclesia minor fratrum Polonorum*. Worthy of reading are the words pronounced by the Anabaptist Giuglio Gherlandi in October of 1561, a year before his capital sentence was executed in a venetian prison. Gherlandi was one of the main architects, together with his brethren Francesco Della Sega and Antonio Rizzetto (they also were executed within a few years), of the courageous work of messianic proselytism in Northwestern Italy promoted at the time by the Moravian communities. He stated that: “I have tried to find a people who were freed, by the gospel of truth, from servitude to sin and who would walk in new life and heavenly regeneration by the resurrection of Jesus Christ and who were empowered by God, through the holy spirit to resist sin [...], this people are his holy Church, immaculate, separate from sinners, without a wrinkle or spot or any such thing; that, which like at the time of the apostles Peter and Paul was in Jerusalem, now is in the country of Moravia.” A few years later Gian Giorgio Patrizi da Cherso, another Italian exile, would echo his sentiments:

They live with charity and what each one earns is put in com-



mon and they live in community; older men who do not lie to each other serve as distributors to all what they have need of; they do not carry weapons except for a small knife to cut bread; they preach twice a day and the one who sins is separated from the group and fed separately; and if they knew that one of their own profession was at the end of the world, they would send him money to bring him to themselves [...]. There is no gaming, no blaspheming, no homicide or any other vice and [...] all live from their work in a community of forty or fifty, depending on the locality, and [...] in none of those localities do they want to see priests or friars, and when they come they scream to them: “Wolf, Wolf!”

Almost all the inhabitants of Cinto transferred themselves to Pausram in Moravia, by means of a sort of selective emigration by echelon. Cinto, a small rural village between Pordenone and Portogruaro that practically converted en bloc to Anabaptism due to the propagandizing of Francesco Della Sega, was an extraordinary heterodox community of illiterate peasants, ready to manifest its dissent even by contesting ecclesiastical ceremonies in explicit and defiant ways, and able to resist and last up until the end of the 1580s, even though it was being weakened by the Moravian exodus. They told each other that in those faraway lands “are certain Churches [...] that govern themselves with great charity and great love, and in those places all are allowed to live according to Christ and to hold to whatever opinion one has and likes without fear, and the ones who are in some need are always helped by their brothers.” This resulted in many experiencing scorching disappointments. Some would eventually come back on their steps, as happened to the venetian artisan Marcantonio Varotta, who ended up deciding to return to the ancient church after a feverish series of trips and experiences throughout all of reformed Europe:

I left Moravia—he would tell to the inquisitor in Udine in January of 1567—because while I was there, for about two months, I saw many faiths and many sects, one against the other, one condemning the other, all producing catechisms, where all wanted to be ministers, and some pulled this way and some pulled that way, and all wanted to be the true church. In a single small place called Austerlitz, there were thirteen or fourteen varieties of faiths and sects. I was so scandalized by so many varieties of faiths and sects, that I started to consider the fact that these heresies could be false and that the faith of the Roman church was the true one.

Here, in the same house where Varotta found hospitality, the house of venetian aristocrat Niccolò Paruta (one of the most influential protagonists of the developments of Servetian criticism in a Socinian direction),

Bernardino Ochino would spend the last days of his life in 1564. Ochino had been chased even from Poland because of the anti-Trinitarian doctrines to which he had at last adhered to at the end of his restless itinerary in the whole reformed world: from Geneva to Augusta, from Strasburg to London, from Zurich to Basel. Some of the more learned representatives of the fervent venetian Anabaptist world, after all, converged in the ranks of the Polish and Transylvanian anti-Trinitarian movements. One such personality was the doctor from Padua, Niccolò Buccella, who folded and recanted after his first trial in 1562-64. He then transferred himself in 1574 to the court of Stephano Báthory in Transylvania and subsequently to Poland, where he would tighten the fraternal friendship relations with Fausto Sozzini and would eventually die in 1599. By now, Buccella had been a stranger to any religious confession and was convinced—as would relate the papal nuncio—“that each one, interpreting the new and old testament in whatever sense one thinks is consonant, has to live according to what his conscience, illuminated by this light, dictates to him.” The aspiration of Gian Giorgio Patrizi was not any different. He, eventually having removed any Nicodemian mask, had left his country in 1558, to “go to a place where I can believe whatever I will want,” as he stated at the time. Similar was the aspiration of a humble Anabaptist arrested the day after Manelfi’s denunciation, who naively readily confessed that he had been “held” while he was getting ready to follow the many comrades in faith who had escaped “to Turkey and Germany from here and there” to evade the repression: “In a few days I was also going to go where the others went, not to become a Turk, but to live in freedom with my faith.”

Moreover, Anabaptism and anti-Trinitarianism made up the more radical and secret nucleus of an esoteric doctrine that was professed in the sphere of another heterodox group with many ramifications in central northern Italy, between Ferrara and Mantua, Riva di Trento and Brescia, Bologna and Venice, Milan and Siena, known to the inquisitors as the “Georgian sect” from the name of the Benedictine Sicilian Giorgio Siculo. An extraordinary, and in many ways still mysterious, character, Giorgio Rioli—this was Siculo’s real name—was strangled in prison at Ferrara in the spring of 1551 as an “impious heretic” and a “scoundrel,” soon after the publication of two books, the *Epistola alli cittadini di Riva di Trento* [*Epistle to the Citizens of Riva di Trento*] and the *Espositione nel nono, decimo et undecimo capo della epistola di san Paolo alli Romani* [*Exposition on the Ninth, Tenth, and Eleventh Chapters of the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Romans*], both published in Bologna the year before, with the due approval of the inquisitors. These books nonetheless became the target, a few years later, of bitter confutations from both the Catholics and the Protestants, among whom was Calvin himself, who did not miss the opportunity to express concern for the notable success that the “revelations” of this character had been met with in Italy. A man gifted with an uncommon charisma, even though he had a lack of culture to the point of requiring a sort of translation of his writings from the Sicilian dialect, Siculo

was convinced, the day after his recantation that he pronounced at the conclusion of his trial, that he had denied the truth, and therefore was terrified by the certainty of his eternal damnation for he was predestined to commit the supreme sin that cannot be forgiven. This conviction was based on an event which we mentioned already, the case of Francesco Spiera, the heretic of Cittadella who died in despair in 1548, and it was a paroxysmal case of crisis of religion and of haunted psychological collapse, which nevertheless had a vast European echo to the extent to which it lent itself to different assessments. This can be seen, for example, from *Francisci Spierae [...] Historia*, published in Basel in 1550 by Celio Secondo Curione, who did not miss the opportunity to polemize against many Italians who “play with God,” but at the same time - with a barely veiled polemic against Calvin and his *De Vitandis Superstitionibus* of the previous year - also did not miss the opportunity to highlight the fact that “Satan is not only in Italy, the Antichrist is not only in Italy, all wicked men are not only in Italy, all irreverence and mischief is authored by the papacy.”

This tragic event, which had several distinguished eye witnesses (among whom were Fonzio, Gribaldi, and Vergerio, who according to his own words drew from it the final stimulus to go into exile) because it dragged out for weeks, allowed in fact the substantiation of the anti-Nicodemian polemic of reformed theologians. Furthermore, having revealed the extreme consequences of the predestinarian theology (so as to negate any divine mercy), it allowed the denunciation of “the false doctrine of the protestants”—as a matter of fact, this is what Siculo wanted to do with the title of his opus—inasmuch as it was responsible for the “lie,” or rather the “great blasphemy of his disciple Francesco Spiera against God and the holy doctrine of his holy gospel.” These claims that seemed to be directed toward a controversial defense of the orthodoxy of Catholicism, but which instead masked an inspired announcement (“a divine work and not a human one [...] all full of heavenly science”) of a doctrine of universal salvation in pursuance of grace and the evangelical message, rich in disturbing spiritualistic and Nicodemian implications. “They do not deny Christ, as Francesco Spiera and his lying teachers have mendaciously said, those who, on account of weaker brothers, and also because it is not lawful for them to provide and determine otherwise, consented, with the other infirm brothers, to those cults which did not appear to be licit or true to them. Neither do they deny Christ, those who accept and confess publically the things and the orders that belong to the holy Roman Church in as much as they will otherwise be provided and determined to be legitimate by its teachers,” would write, for example, Siculo, referring to the “infinite number of those who belong to the protestant doctrine, maxims of those who are in Italy, France, and other locations and kingdoms which rule and govern themselves under the order and rite of the Roman Church.”

But even more radical was the message that Siculo had entrusted to his unpublished writings that, like the so-called *Libro maggiore o Libro grandei* [*Major Book*] (successively published in print with the title *Libro della verità*

*christiana et dottrina apostolica* [*The Book of Christian Truth and of Apostolic Doctrine*], but which got lost notwithstanding the tenacious hunting of the inquisitors), were destined to a cautious clandestine circulation and to readings wisely articulated according to the maturity of the individual followers. Based on the little indirect information related to that “great plague” of a writing, it would seem that in it were gradually clarified, not only the anti-Catholic elements of the Georgian doctrine (denial of the papal authority and of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, of purgatory, of the cult of the Virgin and of the saints, of the meritorious worth of works, of the mass, of indulgences, of the real presence during the Eucharist, and so on and so forth of “all the sacraments”), but also the final radical and anti-Trinitarian conclusions to which it came to (“it said that our soul was not created by God, but by men together with the body, it said that there was no hell nor purgatory, but our soul would go flying in the air until the day of judgment [...], it denied the Trinity”) and the prophetic revelations that would have announced its imminent triumph. “He promised many things that will make all the world run after him, if he will deliver them; but if he does not, he will seem a beast and will remain alone,” so wrote one of his disciples to the duke of Este in November 1550. A little time later another one would speak of the wait for a new council, capable of purifying the Church from all “wrinkles and stains,” and even of the coming of the “spirit of God on earth” that the “doctrine and vision of Giorgio” had promised. All this contributes to explaining the obstinacy with which, for twenty plus years, the Holy Office tried to get their hands on the followers and the imitators of the Sicilian visionary, who themselves became more discouraged and disappointed as the years passed by and time took care to deny Siculo’s miraculous prophesies. Siculo’s followers found their numbers especially among pious monks of the congregation in Cassino, not without the implied permission of its president Andrea da Asolo. Even if with differing awareness of the subversive implications of those doctrines, they also found their numbers among diligent reforming bishops who would display appreciation for the works of the Sicilian heretic, using them at times as a source of inspiration for their homilies and their pastoral commitments.

What deserves to be highlighted is the fact that around 1550, among the closest disciples of the maestro were also numbered well-to-do merchants, doctors, humanist scholars, university professors, students and especially many Benedictine monks, among whom was the abbot Luciano Degli Ottoni, one of the official theologians of the order of the Trentino Alto Adige assembly, tied to powerful cardinals like Ercole Gonzaga and Cristoforo Madruzzo, and his brother don Benedetto Fontanini of Mantua. Fontanini was the author of the first draft of *Beneficio di Christo* [*The Benefit of Christ*], in the Naples of Juan de Valdés, who had lived beside Siculo in the monastery in Catania at the end of the 1530s. Even in the case of Giorgio Siculo, and of the extreme theological and prophetic radicalism of the “sect” inspired by him and its astonishing offshoots, unexpected connections

seem to connect—by means of complex and at times undecipherable esoteric and Nicodemian mediations—influential prelates and men of culture with prophetic excitement and popular petitions. In the spirit of those unprecedented doctrinal contaminations, Giuglio da Milano was led to denounce, in the *Esortazione al martirio* [*The Exhortation to Martyrdom*], the “satanic” Sicilian Benedictine monk and those who, like him, had “mixed popery with Anabaptism and [...] had started to create a third sect.” A definition that is not deprived of some analogies with what had just recently been written by Francesco Negri, stigmatizing the turbid “mix of Christian things with papal ones” of which the “spiritual ones” had made themselves responsible, according to him, only so that they could continue to stay comfortably seated “on two saddles.”

It is also very probable that non-random nor regular relations interconnected the principal representatives of the manifold world of Anabaptists, anti-Trinitarians, and disciples of “don Georgio.” They seemed to have scheduled an appointment in Ferrara in 1550-51, on the eve of the arrest and the execution of Siculo, who here could count on the support of a figure like Camillo Orsini, who was very close to Pole and Flaminio. Orsini was moreover well disposed to offer his protection to another radical Anabaptist such as Pierto Bresciani, who, for the occasion, had returned to Italy from his exile in the Grisons. Also very significant from this perspective is the fact that after having sought to intervene in the conciliar debates by sending, toward the end of 1546, his *De iustificazione* to Ottoni (to whom should be attributed the translation into Latin of this, as well as other writings of his teacher), Siculo soon after personally appeared in Trento with the intention to communicate his doctrines to the English cardinal, and to announce to him his prophetic revelations. This is what he supposedly was ordered to do by Christ himself, during one of the frequent apparitions “in person” in which Christ would illuminate Siculo’s soul with the “true intelligence of the sacred Scriptures.”

The peculiar Italian origins of these complex radical leanings, connected with the Anabaptist dissent in different ways, but eventually little by little diverging from it, found precise acknowledgment in the extreme doctrinal choices arrived at by many of the ones who found refuge in Switzerland. This was the case in the Grisons of Camillo Renato (who in the early forties, in Bologna, had already asserted the doctrine of the sleeping of the soul after death), Girolamo da Milano and Pietro Bresciani from Lombardy, of Francesco Renato from Calabria, of the mysterious Tiziano, and also of Giovan Francesco da Bagnacavallo, of Niccolò Camogli, of Girolamo Turriani, of Battista Bovio, of Filippo Valentini, and of numerous heterodox from Modena, including the Sozzini brothers and many others. This was also the case in the Basel of Sebastiano Castellione, of Pietro Perna, of Giovanni Bernardino Bonifacio the marquis of Oria, of Celio Secondo Curione, of Silvestro Tegli, and also of Mino Celsi, of Agostino Doni, of Fausto Sozzini, of Francesco Pucci. Basel was the unmitigated center of anti-Calvinistic op-

position and of the battle against the new orthodox dogmatism (the *Satanae Stratagemata* denounced by Giacomo Aconcio in 1565) and the authoritative decline of the reformed churches. A decline whose most evident and clamorous sign was the sentence of Michele Servetus in 1553 to die at the stake, which induced Matteo Gribaldi (civil law professor in Padua) to write his *Apologia*, and Rebato to write his indignant verses in *Carmen*. This was also the case, in the Geneva, of the anti-Trinitarian clique that had gathered around Giorgio Biandrata, Valentino Gentile, Gian Paolo Alciati, protagonists of a hard clash against Calvin, until the definitive break in 1558 and of their exile to eastern European countries. It is not the job of these pages to follow the complex events of the “religiously caused” Italian emigration to Switzerland and then to Moravia, Poland, and Transylvania. Events that for all intents and purposes, whether they resulted in orthodoxy or heresy—of first importance is the development of the Socinian anti-Trinitarianism and its indispensable connection with the ever maturing theorization of the freedom of conscience and of religious rationalism—appertain of the history of European Protestantism and had ever so marginal and faint echoes in Catholic Italy.

Even these radical unrests, while they were destined to follow autonomous paths in the dust of confessions, sects, disputes, and controversies stemming from the reformation, underscore yet again the complex cultural heredity, the political and social peculiarities, the restless experimentalism, and the extraordinary creativity that marked the religious crisis of the fifteen hundreds on this side of the Alps. The progressive weariness of those impassioned hopes of being able to contribute to a profound mutation of the theological contents and of the institutional structures of the Christian faith has to be seen against the background of both the progressive stiffening of the protestant churches, in the context of their doctrinal and normative profiles that by this time were set in place, and the consolidation of the renewed Trent certitudes and the repressive system that was put in place to protect them, and if necessary, impose them. In a period of a few years, as a matter of fact, there would be no delay in the inauguration of a long anti-reformation season by the commitment of the episcopate to pastoral reforms and the disciplining of religious life; the seminaries and the new forms of clergy recruitment; the synods and the pastoral visits; the zeal in benevolence, support, and education of new religious orders; the mission of the Capuchin and Jesuits in the countryside to promote the Christianization of “our Indies” (with long lasting consequences for the Italian rural world); the overall clericalization of society; and the constriction of every aspect of free theological research and discussion between devotional conformism and ecclesiastical authoritarianism.



## *Book Reviews*

### **Biblical Studies**

*A Brief History of Old Testament Criticism: From Benedict Spinoza to Brevard Childs.* By Mark S. Gignilliat. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. 186 pages. Paperback. \$16.99.

Many graduate and postgraduate students in biblical studies may empathize with Mark Gignilliat's experience leading to the writing of his most recent work, *A Brief History of Old Testament Criticism*. The impetus for the book comes from Gignilliat's entrance into postgraduate work in biblical studies, when he had a strong handle on exegetical issues but a loose grip of the history of interpretation within the discipline (11). It was the latter that tightened during Gignilliat's doctoral studies with Christopher Seitz and gave birth to his desire to help students better grasp the vast history of interpretation within Old Testament studies.

Gignilliat clearly states the intended audience for his book—students (12). He keeps this audience in mind as he limits both the length of the book and technical details that may distract. The book displays a unique format that focuses on a few specific scholars within the modern era of interpretation. Gignilliat hopes to connect the dots for students in the ever-expanding history of interpretation. This focus in such a broad and complex field, typically introduced by concepts rather than personalities, is perhaps open to criticism. He attempts to ward off this criticism by acknowledging potential deficiencies and providing reasons for his structure of the book. In short, Gignilliat filters out a lot of information, albeit important information, because he wants the book to be accessible. He believes that the representative scholars portray larger themes of critical methods and approaches to the Old Testament (13). According to him, people are more interesting than concepts (12).

Each chapter gives a personal history of the scholar while locating him in the cultural milieu of his day. Once the setting has been given, Gignilliat discusses the significant works and the subsequent impact within scholarship and in the life of the church. He moves chronologically through each chapter. Beginning with Benedict Spinoza, he traces scholarship through the lives of W. M. L. de Wette, Julius Wellhausen, Herman Gunkel, Gerhard von Rad, William Foxwell Albright, and concludes with Brevard Childs. Each chapter concludes with a concise bibliography.

A valuable part of his work is Gignilliat's postscript, which takes the place of a conclusion proper. In it, Gignilliat addresses the tension of faith and critical studies of the Bible, giving a sobering description of scholarship as an academician who has faith. While this tension is not resolved, Gignilliat raises some unique questions about the current state of scholarship and its future.

Gignilliat achieves his goal of giving students a framework to understand critical methodologies employed when studying the Old Testament. He acknowledges the shortcomings of focusing on personalities and thus anticipating criticism of his approach (13). In fact, the method of studying key figures may succeed in ways that comprehensive, descriptive, conceptually driven histories cannot. If students who are



early in their development of understanding of biblical studies read *A Brief History of Old Testament Criticism*, then they will be introduced to key figures in the field of Old Testament studies and have access to concise bibliography for further study.

Gignilliat's hermeneutical method is discernable as he writes each chapter, particularly the chapters on Benedict Spinoza and Brevard Childs. However, he acknowledges his position, which is perceptible even by the key figures about whom he writes (14). While some may disagree with his hermeneutic, Gignilliat's theology does not invalidate his discussion of the history of interpretation.

While many significant scholars are not mentioned in this work, it is the complete absence of approaches concurrent with and subsequent to Brevard Childs that is problematic. Gignilliat acknowledges this deficiency (169). Considering his intended audience, however, such a privation may prove detrimental because students must understand postmodern and postcolonial approaches in order to grasp the methods in current monographs and articles in Old Testament studies. Gignilliat certainly provides a great foundation for understanding scholarship, but any student who wants to be brought up to speed on current scholarship while dealing with the necessary swath of field will be left wanting.

Despite its shortcomings, *A Brief History of Old Testament Criticism* accomplishes the goal of providing an accessible entrance into the history of Old Testament scholarship. It will greatly benefit college and seminary classrooms as a reading supplement for introductory survey courses. Curious students or those who are deficient in the history of interpretation will profit from this book, as well. In such a concise work, Gignilliat should be commended for covering much scholarly ground that enriches and equips his reader.

Ethan Jones

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***A Theological Introduction to the Pentateuch: Interpreting the Torah as Christian Scripture.* By Richard S. Briggs and Joel N. Lohr. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. 227 pages. Paperback \$22.99.**

Written by a group of authors and edited by Richard S. Briggs (Lecturer in Old Testament and Director of Biblical Studies at Cranmer Hall, St. John's College, Durham), and Joel N. Lohr (Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology Biblical Department, University of Toronto) this book attempts to expand upon the contributions of Walter Moberly by presenting a uniquely theological introduction to the Pentateuch. The aim of the book is not the sort of introduction that one might find in a standard introduction to the OT. Rather, the goal is to give an introduction to the theological themes present in the books, as well as a case-study on how to read each book theologically.

The book is structured according to the five books of the Pentateuch, and includes an introduction to what they mean by theological introduction and exegesis, as well as an appendix containing Walter Moberly's contributions. The introduction agrees with Moberly's definition of theological interpretation that "theological interpretation is reading the Bible with a concern for the enduring truth of its witness to the nature of God and humanity, with a view to enabling the transformation of humanity into the likeness of God" (5). All of the contributors claim to be influenced heavily by Walter Moberly.

Richard Briggs authored the first chapter, on Genesis. He summarizes

attempts at describing the structure of Genesis (such as the *toledot* formulations) and the Documentary Hypothesis. Next, he describes several theological themes: the family; blessing; Genesis as Torah—or the “old testament of the Old Testament”—and Genesis 1-11 as an introduction to Scripture. Next, Briggs gives a test-case for his theological interpretation in Genesis 11:1-9. He concludes that Gen 11:1-9 shows God scattering the people as both a correction and a blessing. The attempt to build a tower and settle down is in confrontation with the purpose given in 1:28 to fill the earth.

Jo Bailey Wells wrote the second chapter, on Exodus. She presents the following theological themes in the book: God as the central character; liberation; holiness; priesthood; and then the book's relationship to history (she concludes it is not the same as modern history writing). Then she gives a theological reading of Exodus 19:1-8. She concludes that when read in light of the previously mentioned theological themes, the point is that the covenant is wider than just those people and God.

Joel N. Lohr wrote chapter three, on Leviticus. Following the form of the book, he presents an outline of the book and gives a short introduction. Then he presents the theological themes as he understands them (he labels these “hermeneutical issues”): corporate responsibility; protestant biases against ritual and priests; anthropological readings of Leviticus; death and life in Leviticus; and Leviticus in the NT. Then he provides a theological exposition of Leviticus 16. He argues that this chapter gives understanding to a wide range of concepts in the NT.

Next, Nathan MacDonald authored chapter four, dealing with Numbers. He presents three theological themes: the people of Israel; the priests and the Levites; and the land. He focuses on Numbers 20-21, and concludes that its contribution is “to provide a subtle commentary upon the idea of punishment of a generation” (142).

The fifth chapter, by Rob Barrett, deals with Deuteronomy. He suggests that the theological themes are: Loyalty to YHWH; blessing and curse; and the nature of Deuteronomy's law. Barrett focuses on Deuteronomy 8, suggesting that “the community that lives with the sermon of Deuteronomy 9 must be willing to step outside its economic environment and live according to alternative rules...” (168). He also exegetes Deuteronomy 15:1-11. Here Barrett writes, “Modern communities reflecting on economic life under God must first struggle to recognize and critique reigning economic assumptions which elevate particular notions of fairness...” (173). The book ends with an appendix outlining Moberly's contributions to his pupils' understandings of the Pentateuch.

This book accomplishes its purpose of giving a theological introduction to the Pentateuch, by providing examples of theological exegesis in each book. One of the strengths of the book is that it dialogues with weighty scholarship (there is a lengthy bibliography containing well-known theologians). The book also does a good job of presenting different approaches to theological exegesis. After reading the chapters by different contributors, one doubts that Richard Briggs' type of theological exegesis on Genesis would yield the same results as the theological exegesis done by Rob Barrett on Deuteronomy (which yields several economic implications). Additionally, the format of each chapter is helpful in its organization.

Still, there are several weaknesses with this book. The diverse group of authors present a less than coherent picture of theological exegesis. A work like John Sailhamer's *The Meaning of the Pentateuch* deals with the theology of the Pentateuch with a much more unified voice due to its single author. Additionally,

while this book appears to be a sort of introductory work, it assumes a serious foundation in theological thinking. It does not appear to be a suitable introduction for undergraduates or first-year seminarians, because it assumes some knowledge of discussions of structure and history of interpretation on each book. Third year seminarians and serious researchers can benefit from this book. But, with its real shortcomings, the work does accomplish its goal of giving a theological introduction to the Pentateuch. In light of this, it can only be recommended as long as one is aware of its semi-complex nature.

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***The Kingdom of God as Liturgical Empire: A Theological Commentary on 1-2 Chronicles.* By Scott W. Hahn. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012. 224 + xi pages. Paperback. \$24.99.**

Among the books of the Bible, Chronicles may well receive the least amount of attention. Such is especially true when considering the role that Chronicles plays in Christian theology. The nature of the book as history, much of it already represented in Samuel and Kings, and its attention to lists, including the first nine chapters of genealogies, probably has something to do with the lack of attention. Can one even do theology with such a book as Chronicles?

Hahn has done so. This book is a look at Chronicles with an eye towards its theological message. Beyond the introduction, each of the seven chapters addresses a unit of Chronicles and consists of four sections: an outline of the unit, a synopsis of the unit, a commentary, and a section outlining a Christian interpretation of the unit.

Hahn characterizes Chronicles as “prophetic historiography characterized by the author’s profound assimilation and interpretation of the covenantal and liturgical worldview of the Hebrew Bible” (3). By “covenantal worldview” Hahn means the fundamental nature that covenant plays in God’s relation to humankind. For the Chronicler, the way that God interacts with the world is expressed through his covenants to creation, Adam, Abraham, Moses, and David. By “liturgical worldview” Hahn means that for the Chronicler, praise and worship of God, performed according to God’s instructions, is the purpose of all creation. Covenant and liturgy are the forces that move history forward and unify all of salvation history.

Chronicles is an attempt “at the recapitulation of the history of the people Israel” (3) although it “reflects a broadly internationalist, even cosmic outlook” (22). Fundamental to the Chronicler’s telling of this history is typology. The Chronicler connects the events that he is recounting to other events in the canonical history, such as the binding of Isaac (Akedah), the Exodus, and Sinai (particularly the golden calf). Again and again Hahn shows how the Chronicler uses the language and patterns of these events in describing the history of the Davidic dynasty in order to show unity in God’s work and to encourage his audience that God will continue to work in similar ways in the present and the future. As Hahn puts it, “What happened in the past is crucial for the Chronicler, but only because in the what of history he sees the patterns of divine intention and intervention revealed—the why of history” (7, emphasis his).

Hahn shows how the Chronicler presents David as a new Moses and Solomon a new Joshua. He shows David to be a new Melchizedek priestly king and how

the temple is a picture of creation portrayed in the Garden of Eden. Through each major section of Chronicles, Hahn points out these connections. The number of typological associations is numerous, but Hahn does more than simply assert them. He points out the verbal, structural, and thematic similarities upon which he bases these associations.

Several features of Hahn's commentary distinguish it as theological interpretation. Hahn knows well that he is interpreting the book within a particular faith tradition: Roman Catholicism. He is also aware of the fact that he is examining the biblical text through canonical rather than historical lenses (e.g. discussion of date on page 19). However, one comment particularly highlights his work as theological interpretation: "Unfortunately, in aspiring to a scientific reading of the text, scholars often refuse to accept at face value the Chronicler's faith as a legitimate guide to his authorial intentions; instead they seek to ascribe some ulterior motives for his work. This basic failure of scholarly sympathy is behind a number of persistent misunderstandings of Chronicles" (69).

As a commentary, this work is quite brief. Because of its size limitation much of the material in Chronicles is either ignored or treated in a summary fashion. This observation should not detract from the contribution of the book. It is filled with insightful textual observations. Furthermore, the book is a valuable resource for detecting the underlying unity of Chronicles and the theological and canonical framework that undergirds the work. It is also a valuable contribution to discerning the role that Chronicles may play in the Bible's theology.

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***Job.* By Tremper Longman III. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. 496 pages. Hardcover, \$44.99.**

With his usual attention to detail, expertise in the language, and skill in application, Tremper Longman has contributed another excellent volume to the Baker Commentary on the Old Testament. This is the final of seven volumes of the series covering the five books of Wisdom and Psalms. Longman concedes the oddity of his own authorship of two different works in a series that he has edited; nonetheless, there is much to commend in this volume.

Longman asserts that the work is intended for ministers and seminary students and retains the focus throughout. The book is logically arranged and carefully researched as evidenced by the detailed footnotes and comprehensive bibliography. After an initial introduction, the author begins each section of the commentary with his own translation supported by critical notes. This is followed by a section on interpretation and finally theological implications.

It is in vogue for commentators to side step questions of historicity by simply not taking a definitive stand on the issue. While that is ostensibly the position the author takes, citing a position "between the view that Job was a historical character ... and the view that Job is a purely literary figure" (33), throughout the work, Longman seems to lean more towards the fact that the events (if not the characters described) were not historically true (33-34, 51, 54-55, 77, 92, 441, 454). Though curiously his own historical overview in the Introduction seems to add more weight to the opposing view. Relatedly, Longman's views on the role of the accuser (52, 78,

82, 92), the heavenly council (92), the identity of the “sons of God” in Gen 6:1-8 (120), imprecatory prayers (320), the identity and role of Elihu (25, 62-63, 367), the affirmation of Job by God (458-59), and the mythological explanation of Behemoth and Leviathan (441, 454-55) will inspire spirited academic discussions.

Longman’s description of the views of the friends and the perspectives from which they argue is instructive. He explains how their different perspectives (experience, tradition, reason, and youth) all yield their conclusions related to the question of Job’s suffering (114, 155, 187, 380-81). However, in the end, all four friends (including Elihu) come up with the same basic conclusion which expresses truth that is fundamentally misapplied (445).

Perhaps the greatest strength of this work is the demonstration throughout the commentary of how the book of Job is relevant today. The author demonstrates the fallacy of easy answers and mechanical explanations (67) to explain the universal question of suffering (cf. 152). But, as Longman clearly states, the purpose of the book of Job is not to produce a theodicy, but rather a discussion of wisdom (31, 66-67, 462), which is occasioned by Job’s suffering. Moreover, he consistently demonstrates that wisdom belongs to and comes from the Lord. Indeed, Longman concludes the discussion of theodicy, and indeed the commentary itself, with the reality that the book of Job doesn’t really offer an explanation for Job’s suffering (462). Yet, this is often the point that Scripture reveals—that God does not owe mankind an explanation, nor are humans capable of understanding the wisdom of God. Thus, perhaps the contribution that the book of Job makes to theodicy may well be that wisdom is found in trusting in the Lord even in unexplained (or unexplainable) suffering.

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***The Gospel According to Isaiah 53: Encountering the Suffering Servant in Jewish and Christian Theology.* Edited by Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2012. 334 pages. Paperback, \$27.99.**

This work is a gem for all those interested in the exegesis of Isaiah 53, but more importantly in the use of Isaiah 53 for the evangelism of Jews. It is divided into three parts: (1) Christian and Jewish interpretations of Isaiah 53; (2) Isaiah 53 in biblical theology; (3) Isaiah 53 and practical theology.

In part one, R. Averbeck briefly surveys Christian interpretations of Isaiah 53 and then provides an extended discussion on the term “guilt offering” in 53:10. He helpfully suggests viewing the Servant songs as beginning with corporate Israel, being narrowed to a righteous remnant, and finally narrowed to an individual in Isaiah 53 (37). Michael Brown surveys Jewish interpretations, noting nine Jewish sources which interpret Isaiah 53 messianically, and this list is probably not exhaustive (62-63). He then shows that, despite these sources, the corporate interpretation of Isaiah 53 has been dominant in Jewish interpretations since Rabbis Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Radak in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (64).

Part two is primarily exegetical work on Isaiah 53 itself, as well as hermeneutical discussions on the use of Isaiah 53 in the NT. W. Kaiser surveys the identity and mission of the Servant in the OT and the NT (ch. 3). M. Wilkins traces and briefly comments on the allusions and quotations of Isaiah 53 in the NT (ch. 4). D. Bock provides a penetrating analysis of Isaiah 53:7-8 in Acts 8:32-33 (ch. 5). C.

Evans looks at Isa 53 in Paul, Peter, Hebrews, and John (ch. 6). D. Allen examines the substitutionary and cultic terminology in Isaiah 53 (ch. 7). R. Chisholm looks at forgiveness and salvation language in Isaiah 53, especially for whom these are intended and what exactly they are (ch. 8).

The heart of the book is in part three. J. Feinberg first relates postmodern themes from Isaiah 53 in order to make the message more applicable to this large audience today. He argues that, from Isaiah 53, we can see a great narrative about God and his love, that God cares and is personal, that Christianity provides freedom within community, and that God enables concern for the marginalized. The best chapter, in this reviewer's opinion, came from M. Glaser on using Isaiah 53 in evangelism to Jews (ch. 10). He came to believe in Jesus as Messiah through Isaiah 53, although the same was not true for his parents, who shunned him. He has been using the passage to evangelize ever since his conversion. He notes that most Jews today are not religious and do not read the OT, nor do they believe in revelation. He then lays out twelve barriers that hinder communicating the truth of Isaiah 53 to modern Jews, as well as five practical ways to overcome these barriers. D. Sunukjian suggests a model for preparing to preach on Isaiah 53 (ch. 11) and provides two appendices of actual sermons, one expository and one a dramatic-narrative sermon. D. Bock provides a conclusion, in which he summarizes at length the content of each article.

This book was executed well. It is intended not as a heavy scholarly contribution to the exegetical issues of Isaiah 53, although the issues were covered in detail. The book is intended for pastors, students, and laymen. The first two parts provide an extensive amount of information for the reader to become familiar with the meaning of Isaiah 53, both Christian and Jewish. The chapter by Glaser is especially helpful in understanding how practically to go about sharing Isaiah 53 with Jewish people today. His words are especially important that warn against sharing Isaiah 53 with a Jew with the assumption that they believe in revelation, sin, heaven and hell, or that they understand the nature of prophecy. As a concise resource for those interested in preaching and teaching Isaiah 53, this may be one of the best available. It should be highly recommended for laymen, students, pastors, and scholars alike.

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***The New Testament in Antiquity: A Survey of the New Testament within its Cultural Contexts.* By Gary M. Burge, Lynn H. Cohick, and Gene L. Green. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009. 479 pages. Hardcover, \$49.99.**

*The New Testament in Antiquity: A Survey of the New Testament within its Cultural Contexts* is a beautiful volume and a student favorite taking you on a visual journey through the world of the New Testament. The twenty-seven-chapter work covers the historical setting of the New Testament, the world of Jesus and world of Paul, each book of the New Testament (some books are grouped together), and the canon and text of the New Testament. In addition to written material, each chapter contains numerous color images, maps, charts, and sidebars which bring the world of the New Testament to life like no other book on the market today. The images, which are one of the strongest features of the volume, include archaeological sites, landscapes, statues, coins, pottery, mosaics, inscriptions, and manuscripts, to name only a few.

The authors name four goals for the work: academic rigor and thoroughness,

accessibility, a focus on the ancient context of the New Testament, and a confessional commitment to the evangelical tradition. In my estimation, they have accomplished the final three while only partially meeting the first. Although the work approaches 500 pages, each chapter is brief and full of images, providing only a sketch of some of the detailed information that one would expect in a New Testament survey or introduction. By eliminating the images, charts, and sidebars (which would certainly be a mistake), the volume would decrease by approximately 50%. As an example of the brevity, the discussion of the authorship of Ephesians spans a page and a half and that of 2 Peter half a page. While it may be appropriate to eliminate some of these items altogether in order to make a specific contribution, by discussing many of these items briefly, the goal of thoroughness has not been met. At the same time, the brevity of each chapter provides students a valuable and scenic overview of the landscape of New Testament studies. At the graduate level, the book is best used in tandem with other volumes that more thoroughly address introductory issues. At the undergraduate level, the volume could stand on its own depending upon the focus of the course.

In its first edition, the book is tainted slightly by a few too many editorial mistakes. While this may seem pedantic, such mistakes are perhaps more troublesome for a volume of this sort. As an example, one of the first images is mistakenly identified as papyrus manuscript 52. If an image is not what it is meant to be, it may do more harm than good. Furthermore, if there is one error of this sort, the possibility of others seems likely. Nonetheless, one can certainly forgive the editors inasmuch as the book contains hundreds of images of many different sorts, and only experts in each field could verify the legitimacy of each.

My strongest criticism of the work pertains to the lack of thorough documentation. Each chapter contains only a handful of endnotes, often leaving the reader with no clear place to go to substantiate the authors' claims. This too impacts the authors' goals of academic rigor and thoroughness.

These reservations notwithstanding, *The New Testament in Antiquity* makes a solid contribution to the field and will likely find its way into many classrooms in the coming years.

David Hutchison

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***Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament.* By G. K. Beale. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. 173 pages. Paperback, \$17.99.**

G. K. Beale is well-known for his study on the NT use of the OT, having written on the subject for his entire academic career. This handbook is incredibly welcomed as a concise resource for students to lay the foundation of their knowledge on the subject. The purpose of this work is "to provide a short guide to the use of OT citations and allusions in the NT" (xvii). It is written for serious readers of the Bible "with the hope that even scholars might benefit" (xvii).

Chapter one discusses the history of the debate about whether the NT authors quoted and alluded to the OT contextually. This includes a discussion of testimony books and the definition of typology, the latter being a lengthy and insightful discussion. Beale defends C. H. Dodd's thesis in *According to the Scriptures* that the NT authors used the OT contextually, but acknowledges that those who disagree may still profitably use his suggested step-by-step methodology in chapter three (12f.).

Chapter two is a brief explanation of resources for studying OT references, with a necessary discussion of the definition of quotation, allusion, echo, and intertextuality. Beale places allusion and echo on a sliding scale of probability rather than distinguishing them (32) and prefers the term “inner-biblical exegesis” or “inner-biblical allusion” over “intertextuality” to avoid postmodern connotations (39f.).

Chapter three is the “core of the book,” in which Beale lays out a nine-step process for studying NT uses of the OT (41). Each step, as well as useful resources for each step, is explained. Chapter four presents the multitude of ways the NT authors use the OT, although it is not a comprehensive list. This ranges from fulfillment of direct prophecy (56f.) to using the OT as a substructure for a NT epistle or narrative (80-88), among many other uses and variations of each category of usage (Beale lists, for example, three variations of “prototypical” uses of the OT).

Chapter five contains a list and explanation of what Beale considers five presuppositions of the NT writers. These include (1) “corporate solidarity” (or “representation”), (2) that Jesus is the true Israel of the OT and the true church of the NT, (3) that history is unified so that correspondence between former and latter parts are designed, (4) the already-not yet eschatological schema, and (5) that later parts of Scripture are the key to interpreting earlier portions of the OT and its promises (96f.). He contends that each of these presuppositions is rooted in the OT (100).

Chapter six contains a helpful annotated bibliography of sources for post-biblical Judaism as it relates to the study of the NT use of the OT and a case study of how this could help the student. Chapter seven concludes the book with a case study illustrating Beale’s nine-step process laid out in chapter three.

As a work for students, this may be the best guide for beginning or improving study in the field of the NT use of the OT. Those who do not agree with Beale’s conclusions on some or on many matters can still benefit from the discussions on each topic, from the comprehensive methodology suggested, and from the sources provided and explained. His numerous examples, which are explained at length, are sufficient (if not persuasive) demonstrations of his positions. His case study in chapter seven was also a helpful inclusion, since the particular is more understandable for some students than the theoretical.

One improvement upon the handbook would be to include more examples from outside of John’s writings. While many examples are included from Paul and the Gospels, the majority are from John, particularly Revelation. This is understandable given Beale’s extensive published work in Revelation, but the book almost resembles a handbook on John’s use of the OT rather than that of the apostles, at least when it comes to illustrating the general principles asserted for apostolic interpretation. Yet this is a minor quibble and the work as a whole should be utilized by professors—both for themselves and for their students—and by teachers in the church. Thankfully the work is written at such an introductory level that it may be used profitably for teaching in the church—and should be. Our churches would be strengthened, discipleship would be bolstered, and Bibles would be read more if only congregants could understand what in the world the OT narratives and teachings have to do with the cross of Christ.

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***Reading the Gospels Wisely: A Narrative and Theological Introduction.* By Jonathan T. Pennington. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. 268 + xiv pages. Paperback, \$24.99.**

Jonathan Pennington offers a much-needed corrective balance to many books on Gospel studies that concentrate mostly on hermeneutical methodology with very little on attitude or focus. His book rightly warns that there is a danger in getting so caught up with the tools of exegesis that one misses God's real message in the Gospels.

Pennington is Associate Professor of New Testament Interpretation at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. His expertise in the field of Gospel studies is apparent throughout this thought-provoking book. Instead of an introduction to the four canonical Gospels, this book is a careful description of *how* to read, engage, and apply the Gospels (xiii). He lays a careful foundation and framework and then describes how spiritually to read (158-62), interpret, and apply the Gospels by reading them as stories.

As one might expect, Pennington is an effective teacher and storyteller himself. He leads the reader through a well-defined study, deftly constructing his case, and continually reminding the reader of each step that has been completed (169, 213-14). One of his strengths is his lavish use of relevant illustrations. Whether it is a basketball game (175), golf (228), Kentucky derby (152), seed corn bagging table (209), orcs at Mordor (98), or a mother-in-law's refrigerator magnet diet Bible verse (157-58), Pennington expertly employs these stories aptly to illustrate a point and help guide his reader to the importance of understanding story in the Gospels, which is the heart of his message. He notes,

We are a story people. In the very fabric of our being we are spring-loaded for story. Story is how we make sense of the world and our own lives. Story powerfully creates life and hope, the lack of which is depression. Hope is imagination, and imagination is central for human flourishing and life (46).

The primary methodological tool Pennington promotes is a helpful version of narrative criticism (169-77, 214-15). Rather than a dry, clinical narrative evaluation such as one might use for studying Shakespeare's plays, Pennington exhorts the reader to find God's message in the stories. He suggests reading the Gospels within concentric circles of contextual meaning (such as the macro-plot in the Gospels and even in the entire canon (183-202) as well as making God-centered applications that lead to Christ-centered preaching (216-23).

Fortunately, Pennington does not just give a theoretical argument. Along the way he applies his suggested method of study to Luke 7:1-10 for a practical test case (169-71, 180-82, 203-208). However, he uses plenty of other Gospel texts for examples as well (187-88, 91).

Another needed corrective Pennington offers scholars is a return to the centrality of the Gospels, which seem to have taken a back seat to Pauline studies in both academic and church life. He sees them as the keystone in the archway of the biblical canon—holding together “the Old Testament Scriptures on the one side and the rest of the New Testament writings on the other (231).

This reviewer disagrees with Pennington's claim that meaning equals application—that the two are hopelessly intertwined (131-36). Instead, the

traditional distinction between determining the one meaning of a text and its various applications seems the wiser road. Pennington's blurring the lines between the two can lead to the logical extension that any given Bible text can mean anything. Pennington rightly argues against that disastrous claim, but it seems to be unavoidable with his methodology (135). It seems he is hedging too much on a text's true meaning in his attempt to avoid claiming to have "*the final and definitive correct reading*" (136, the italics are his).

Surprisingly, even though he teaches Greek and has published the Zondervan *New Testament Greek Vocabulary* CDs, Pennington says almost nothing of the value of studying the Gospels in the Greek language. An emphasis on understanding Koine Greek would help this book.

Yet, most of this book is right on target. For instance, he notes the waning influence of Historical Jesus studies and the crisis of modern historicism (89-93, 148-49). Recent studies have certainly led to many bankrupt conclusions that disparage the truth of the canonical Gospels. Instead, he affirms Richard Bauckham's excellent proposal to read the Gospels as accurate eyewitness testimonies (98-103).<sup>1</sup>

Not only is this book helpful for pastors and teachers of the Gospels, it is also beneficial for any student of the Word of God. It is especially valuable for exegetically-trained students and scholars who may have lost sight of the powerful message of story in the Gospels as well as the need for responding to God's powerful message contained therein. Pennington's balance of narrative criticism with an emphasis on the spiritual message and the call for life change helps the Bible interpreter to stay on target in Gospel studies. His Gospel expertise has enabled him to make a fine contribution to kingdom work.

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***A Theology of Luke and Acts: God's Promised Program, Realized for All Nations. Biblical Theology of the New Testament.* By Darrell L. Bock. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. 495 pages. Hardcover, \$39.99.**

Darrell Bock has published lengthy commentaries on both Luke and Acts in the BECNT commentary series. He is therefore well-suited for writing a biblical theology of Luke and Acts. This work includes three parts: (1) introductory matters; (2) major theological themes; and (3) Luke and the canon. Chapter 2 covers introductory matters summarized from Bock's commentaries and argues for traditional and conservative views on the Lucan materials. Chapter 3 argues for reading Luke-Acts as a unified work, in spite of recent arguments to the contrary. Chapter 4, concluding part one, is a lengthy summary of the entire work of Luke-Acts.

The second part covers fourteen theological themes. These include (1) God's plan, (2) Christology, (3) pneumatology, (4) salvation, (5) Israel, (6) the nations (7) the church, (8) discipleship and ethics, (9) the response to Jesus, (10) women and the poor, (11) the law, (12), ecclesiology, (13) eschatology, and (14) the Scriptures. In the first four themes, Bock has a chapter that surveys the theme in narrational order from Luke 1 to Acts 28, with a second chapter synthesizing the material in sub-themes. The organization of these chapters was disappointing since there was so much overlap and so little depth to the discussions. Bock attempts to mention every

<sup>1</sup>Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

verse in Luke-Acts that refers to the chapter's respective theme, leaving little room for any exegetical discussion or debate with other scholars. The lack of footnotes in many of the chapters evidences the summary nature of the material. Rather than read Bock's narratival chapters, one would be better served by reading Luke-Acts for oneself. Theologically, Bock's progressive-dispensational viewpoint comes out in his discussion throughout the work, but especially in his treatment of Israel, the nations, and the church.

In the concluding chapter, Bock relates six "core themes of Luke-Acts," which he considers to be "the most central points around which Luke builds his theology" (450). First, Jesus' coming represents the inauguration of God's promised plan in the OT. Second, Israel's story is not anti-Semitic, as some recently have claimed; it is an in-house debate especially regarding the nations and their role in the church. Third, the Spirit is the sign of a new era. Fourth, salvation and identity is tied to Jesus' work rather than to explicit statements of what the cross accomplished as in Paul's letters. Fifth, Luke tells a trinitarian story. Sixth, Luke tells a story that is in direct continuity with the OT story.

The methodology of this work is something to consider. Bock's intent was to explicate major theological themes in Luke-Acts. But is this truly the task of someone writing a biblical theology of Luke-Acts? Obviously the question of methodology is subjective and vexing. But it seems insufficient anymore simply to lay out various themes within a biblical corpus and leave it at that. Moreover, the OT and its storyline is really only discussed as it arises with specific Lucan texts that refer to the OT. Allusions, such as those to Ps 2:7 and Ps 110:1, are explained briefly but this is only a piecemeal exposition of various portions of OT salvation-history. Without stating any specific ways to improve upon the methodology employed here, it seems that something other than an explication of major themes would have been more helpful.

Overall, the work is helpful as an introduction to students studying Luke-Acts. The narratival portions are helpful if one wanted to read them alongside one's own reading of Luke-Acts for brief commentary. Among other works produced on Lukan theology, it is longer and perhaps less methodologically satisfying. Yet, one would come away from reading this book with a decently solid base for beginning theological studies in Luke-Acts.

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***Opening Paul's Letters: A Reader's Guide to Genre and Interpretation.* By Patrick Gray. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012. 176 pages. Paperback, \$19.99.**

It is perhaps timely that Patrick Gray's book, *Opening Paul's Letters*, emerges as the modern letter is gradually declining. In a cultural setting where people now prefer email, text messaging and social networking as their primary means of communication, it is quite feasible that scholars, teachers and pastors will need to try even harder to connect Paul's letters to these present mediums of communication. Gray's work seeks to do just that by drawing connections between present-day methods of communicating and their first-century counterparts. In this, he guides contemporary readers to a diligent and careful reading of Paul's letters, enabling them to understand "what letters were and how they functioned in Paul's first-century setting" (vii).

Gray's investigation of Paul's letters takes an epistolary approach that focuses upon its unique literary type (genre), i.e., the ancient letter, and its corresponding conventions, strategies, and patterns for communicating its message. This approach in genre analysis reads the letters of Paul against the backdrop of a much larger epistolary landscape. Readers realize with Paul's letters, that the literary type is somewhat different than the Gospels or Acts, and thereby, requires a different set of principles and strategies for interpretation. Unlike other ancient literary forms, however, the "letter" is the one type (genre) that is most comparable to our present setting, and this can cause present-day readers actually to "read" Paul's letters without really *reading* them (1). By this Gray means that readers constantly make interpretive decisions, even if unconsciously, and can easily fail to account for the different structures of this ancient literary type. Consequentially, they fail to comprehend the intentions and message of the author. For this reason, it is necessary to account for the enormous complexity of historical, social and literary framework within which Paul's letters exist. *Opening Paul's Letters* attempts to make this framework accessible to both beginning and advanced readers of Paul's letters.

There are many books that aim to orient contemporary readers to Paul's letters, many of which approach this topic by focusing on the author-text dimension of the message, i.e., the factors that led to the author creating the letter. However, Gray's guidebook is genre-specific, focusing instead on the literary type itself, the structure and conventions used to shape its message and how the letter appears to its readers (their circumstances and expectations of receiving such a letter). This text-reader dimension of the message focuses upon the form, structure and conventions in a letter and investigates how it communicates meaning to the readers, both the intended readers of the first century and those readers who have received it as part of the Scriptures.

In guiding readers seriously to consider Paul's letters, Gray asserts that they must first come to Paul's letters and read them as *real* letters, not as part of a collection of other literary types within a single volume. To do so, contemporary readers need to "know something about the wider world in which . . . [Paul] lived and wrote" (22). The world of Paul's letters includes historical contexts, such as the influences of both Judaism and Hellenism, the historical conditions of Roman rule, Greco-Roman philosophy and the social construct of first-century life. Also, included here are the literary subtleties of the "letter" genre as well as the expansive use of letters in Greco-Roman society. To refuse to read Paul's letters against these contextual backdrops is to *misread* Paul at its core, but additionally, this background illuminates the context from which Paul's letters should be interpreted (62-3).

A further, necessary context for interpreting Paul's letters resides in our understanding of Paul's audiences. Often, letters themselves do not reveal everything necessary to reconstruct the recipients or their particular circumstances. The most difficult part of understanding Paul's letters is dealing with the reality that moderns are actually "eavesdropping" or listening to a "one-sided conversation" (9-13). For this reason, it is necessary for modern readers diligently to learn as much as possible about the communication setting to read accurately Paul's message in its intended manner and then to apply it correctly to modern contexts.

Gray also discusses several other issues typically discussed in interpreting Paul's letters, such as authorship (139-52), smaller literary types (sub-genres or registers; 45-52) and use of the Old Testament (119-38). Gray writes that Pauline authorship does matter in investigating literary genre, particularly in terms of audi-

ence expectation and assessment of a letter's meaning and function within its communication setting (140). He surveys the arguments against Pauline authorship of the disputed letters (Ephesians, Colosians, 2 Thessalonians and the Pastorals), the arguments of an inconsistent itinerary between the letters and Acts, arguments of style, and inconsistent theme or theology reflected in the letters, and then surveys the issue of pseudonymous authorship for these letters.

*Opening Paul's Letters* is appropriately entitled as a guide to the major issues in the diligent reading of Paul's letters. It is obvious that Gray writes as teacher who seeks to steer readers to important issues, which are articulately yet concisely stated, so that he or she may come to their own conclusions. Gray targets "new readers" of Paul's letters, those who are so immersed in the technologies of the twenty-first century, and successfully finds parallels between how these letters were read at inception and how they are now read within the twenty-first century. Furthermore, Gray keenly summarizes general principles of interpreting and then applies them to relevant Pauline texts. In this way, *Opening Paul's Letters* is less theoretical and technical; instead, it aims at equipping beginning readers of Paul's letters to see how these principles are applied to the letters themselves. This book is valuable to any student or reader seeking to situate Paul's letters within their historical and literary landscape while at the same time connecting with how modern readers may interpret Paul within their own setting.

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### Theological Studies

***A Little Book for New Theologians: Why and How to Study Theology.* By Kelly M. Kopic. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012. 126 pages. Paperback, \$7.20.**

Seminaries are often mistakenly and purposefully called cemeteries. This is unfortunate, but real. One can blame institutions, professors and churches, but the heart of the problem is the problem of the human heart. A person pursuing theological training without pursuing the Triune God is a recipe for disease. Kelly Kopic has written this little book on why and how to study theology as a vaccine and as a reminder for young theologians to keep a God-centered perspective when doing theology. Kopic received his Ph.D from King's College, his M.Div from Reformed Theological Seminary, and his B.A. from Wheaton College. He is currently professor of theological studies at Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Georgia, where he has served since 2001. This book is a stated attempt to update Helmut Thielicke's classic work, *A Little Exercise for Young Theologians* (10). Up to this point in his career, Dr. Kopic has spent the majority of his time and energy reflecting on the work of John Owen, that puritanical paragon of doing theology from one's knees with scopes sharply set on the exaltation of Christ and the transformation of the heart, all for God's glory. This background makes Kopic eminently capable of writing a book such as this.

This book is broken up into two parts and ten manageable chapters. Part one answers the question, "Why Study Theology?" and begins with a quote by Martin Luther affirming that just as we are called Christians, so we are also called theologians. All Christians have a theology. Our lives are surrounded by theological questions, so theology is inevitable and "it is not a conversation our souls can afford to avoid" (20). Theology is also inevitable in that God created us and desires to see us

reflect his glory and bask in his love (22). Knowledge of God and worship of God are interrelated and worship is tied to wisdom. The distinction between the wise person and the foolish person depends on how one responds to God. Kacic concludes part one with the helpful reminder that theology is a pilgrimage, always second order and always tentative. Our theology also has a two-fold limitation: our fallenness and our finitude. Our theology can be true, but ever remains incomplete. Theologians young and old are continually dependent on the Holy Spirit. As philosopher Paul Helm notes, we are on an “epistemological pilgrimage” (32), or as Puritan theologian John Owen put it, “we see but his back parts” (35). This is no excuse not to strive for theological faithfulness, but a reminder that “our call is to come, to gaze at Christ, to hear his word and to respond in faith and love” (37).

Part two examines the characteristics of faithful theology and faithful theologians. Chapter four introduces the second part with a reminder that theology must always be *lived* theology. The rest of the book unpacks faithful reason, prayer and study, humility and repentance, suffering, justice and knowing God, and the love of Scripture. Kacic’s chapter on reason is one of his longest. He argues that reason, for the Christian, works in the service of faith. Following the approach of Augustine, believers must always begin with revelation, not self-enlightenment. To use his words, “Unless you believe you will not understand” (53). Kacic prefers to speak of “faithful reason” since reason only works rightly when full of faith (55). As we reason from faith, the Holy Spirit works through our rational faculties. Gently brushing aside the myth of neutrality, Kacic shows that our faith will be determinative for what we deem reasonable.

In the next chapter, building on Thielicke’s warning to keep the second, rather than third, person in view when approaching theology, he writes, “Scripture is God’s voice to his people, and by his Spirit we encounter it as a living, rather than a dead, letter” (65). Therefore, theology and prayer are inextricably linked. In other words, theology is communing with God. Kacic refers not to a fifteen-minute morning devotion, important though that is, but a way of being, constantly communing with the Lord. Everything a theologian does is before the face of God. Following Warfield’s emphasis, ministers must be *both* learned and godly, just as a soldier needs both his right and left legs (68). “We cannot choose between prayer and study; faithful theology requires prayerful study” (70). Chapter seven is a much-needed chapter on humility in theology. He notes that how we treat others reveals a great deal about how we view ourselves before God. “Humility recognizes one’s dependence on the wisdom and insight of others” (72). Augustine is held up as a model of theological humility because he saw his theology as a work in progress and even published a book of retractions at the end of his career. The humble theologian keeps in mind the greatness of God and the finitude and fallenness of man. Our theology, therefore, is always incomplete.

Chapter eight begins with an exposition of Psalm 113 and God’s holy exaltation and stunning condescension. Kacic posits that true theology must account for the value God places on the marginalized and the vulnerable. To love God is to love what he loves. He writes, “Active concern for the poor and needy is a core concern of our theology” (86). Using Isaiah 1 and the first letter of John, the author shows that concern for truth necessarily brings with it a concern for one’s neighbor. The book then develops the idea that the best theology is done in community. Stemming from the Reformation tradition, the author adheres to *sola Scriptura*, but also recognizes that the Holy Spirit has a history and has been active in guiding previous theo-

gians (93). All of us wear culturally colored lenses and reading those saints who are dead yet speaking helps us identify our own particular presuppositions in order better to check cultural baggage at the door. He quotes the famous line by W.R. Inge: "He who marries the spirit of the age soon finds himself a widower" (96). Kacic also exhorts the budding theologian to dip into streams besides his own, asserting that one can learn something from most theological traditions. The book concludes with a chapter on the importance of Scripture. The inscripturated text is where God has self-identified. His word and his works go together. Kacic concludes his little book on doxological doctrine with a fitting definition of theology. It is "an active response to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, whereby the believer, in the power of the Holy Spirit, subordinate to the testimonies of the prophets and apostles as recorded in the Scriptures and in communion with the saints, wrestles with and rests in the mysteries of God, his work and his world" (121).

My primary complaint about this book is that I did not receive it my first year of seminary. Containing short and well-written chapters, the book is full of mature exhortations. It is enriched by the inclusion of a host of quotations from a broad selection of theologians, past and present, showing that Dr. Kacic is not writing anything novel here. His is the historic way of doing theology. This reviewer found no significant disagreements, but resonated deeply with most of the content of the book. Dr. Kacic reminds young theologians of the sheer privilege and joy it should be to think God's thoughts after him. He also constantly connects theology and worship, thereby modeling what he is advocating. His treatment of the need for humility in theology is especially pertinent. The metaphor of theology as a pilgrimage is a helpful reminder. Kacic includes short expositions of Scripture from both Testaments throughout this little book. He clearly bows his intellect to the authority of God's Word, encouraging his students to lower their faces to the pages of Scripture to feel the warmth of God's breath (113). Finally, the book has a couple of nice indexes making it easy to refer back to it later.

As a Baptist, I may have added or minimally expanded on a few topics. For instance, there is not enough emphasis on the importance of the local church. Also, agreeing with Barth that theology exists to critique the preaching of the church, I would have liked to have seen a chapter on preaching. I would have liked to see his section on how the cross shapes theology expanded. The notion of mystery in theology received scant treatment. Since exegesis must be the life-blood of theology, I personally would have appreciated a call for young theologians to shut their mouths where God has not opened his. Agreeing that Augustine was Pauline on many things, this reviewer would have liked to have seen a more robust treatment of the jarringly predominant theme of love in the New Testament, especially when disagreeing with other blood-bought, Spirit-indwelt theologians. Given the space given to social justice in theology and the archetypal and ectypal knowledge of God, I was disappointed not to see these more important issues treated in a more thorough way.

While this book has yet to be received widely, one can hope that professors will assign this book to first-year seminary students. It is the perfect sort of book for the spiritual formation class that many of the SBC seminaries require, and yet even seasoned theologians will be refreshed by it. I am confident that it will be successful in awakening many from their spiritual dogmatic slumbers.

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***The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History and Modernity.* By Stephen R. Holmes. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012. 231 pages. Kindle edition. \$9.99.**

Holmes' thesis is that "the twentieth century renewal of Trinitarian theology" depends "in large part on concepts and ideas that cannot be found in patristic, medieval, or Reformation accounts of the doctrine of the Trinity. In some cases, indeed, they are points explicitly and energetically repudiated ... by the earlier tradition" (Kindle Locations 124-126). Holmes not only defends the thesis that the Trinitarian renewal has departed from the tradition, but he also contends for a revisionist historiography that reinterprets what he recognizes to be the "standard [historical] narrative of the Trinitarian revival" (2360-361).

Holmes prosecutes his case by introducing the reader to the proponents and claims of the Trinitarian revival in chapter one. According to the revival, "[b]y the end of the nineteenth century, the doctrine of the Trinity was perceived either as wrong or, at best, as useless orthodoxy" (129-30) so that in "the second half of the twentieth century," there was "a surprising revival of interest in the doctrine of the Trinity" (114-15). Holmes attributes the revival to Barth, Rahner, and Zizioulas (70). Earlier writers, including Zizioulas himself, listed Barth, Rahner, and Zizioulas' predecessor Lossky as the three founders of the revival (Bray, "Trinity" in *New Dictionary of Theology*, 694; Houston, "The Nature and Purpose of Spiritual Theology," *Evangelical Review of Theology* 16, no. 1 (1992): 132; Schwöbel, "Introduction" in *Trinitarian Theology Today*, 1995, 2; Zizioulas, "The Doctrine of God the Trinity Today" in *The Forgotten Trinity*, 1991, 20). Perhaps Zizioulas has become more influential or the passage of time has provided a more historical perspective on the founders' identities. In order to demonstrate that the claims of the revival authors differ from the tradition, Holmes presents the major figures of the tradition and their Trinitarian doctrine from the patristic period up to the time just before the twentieth-century revival (chapters 2-9).

It seems that through his historic narrative, Holmes has cogently made his case that the twentieth-century Trinitarian revival has departed from the tradition. His primary evidence includes the contrast of four revival themes with a summary of patristic doctrine: (1) scholars of the Trinitarian revival hold to a focus on the Gospels to the exclusion of the OT in deriving the Trinity from Scripture compared to the patristic derivation of the Trinity from both the OT and NT; (2) the revival maintains a "social Trinitarianism" involving three modern psychological persons with three centers of consciousness and will compared to the patristic belief in one will in God due to the doctrine of divine simplicity; (3) the revival affirms univocal language compared to the patristic affirmation of tropic or analogical language due to divine ineffability, and (4) the revival entangles God's life with the history of the world compared to the patristic doctrine of ontological dualism of creator and creature that preserved both divine transcendence and immanence (2374-388).

Holmes' work seems to be the first or at least one of the first monographs to present a complete revisionist historiography of the Trinitarian revival's "standard narrative." Many of the revisionist historical judgments that Holmes seems to take as established have been published for at least the last two decades, with some going as far back as at least 1964, and these revisions appear to be represented as settled scholarly opinion in a growing number of reference works (Emery, *The Oxford Handbook of the Trinity* [2011]; Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* [2003];



Phan, *The Cambridge Companion to the Trinity* [2011]). However, Holmes' revised narrative may come as a surprise to some readers, because although Grenz (*Rediscovering the Triune God*, 2004) and Kärkkäinen (*The Trinity: Global Perspectives*, 2007) recognized these revisions, they seem to have retained the standard narrative.

Holmes' revisionist narrative, or that the history of the Trinity consists of one unbroken tradition that was never lost or eclipsed and in which the so called revival is really part of a continuing conversation with Schleiermacher, Hegel, and Dorner (2156-161), is based on at least five important revisions. First, Holmes rejects de Régnon's "thesis that Latin and Greek Trinitarianisms are fundamentally different traditions" (1959-960), primarily on the bases of his interpretation of "Augustine as the greatest interpreter of the Cappadocian theology" (1472-473) and Gregory Palamas' appropriation of Augustine's psychological analogy (1957). Second, Holmes rejects Rahner's interpretation of Aquinas (that in his *Summa*, Aquinas isolated the Trinity from personal piety by separating the Trinity from and subordinating it to the doctrine of God and by detaching the Trinity from salvation history) on the basis that the later editorial titles given by English translations to the two treatises, "On the One God" and "On the Trinity," have obscured the fact that both treatises are about the Trinity (191, 199, 1864ff.). Third, Holmes rejects the idea that the doctrine of the Trinity was lost or eclipsed "[b]y the end of the nineteenth century" (129-30), primarily on the basis of a reference to Muller's *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* (2148ff.). Fourth, Holmes rehabilitates Schleiermacher's Trinitarianism from Barth and Brunner's critiques (i.e. the Trinity is marginalized by its placement at the end of *The Christian Faith*, etc.), in part by rehashing the *Schlufstein*, "coping-stone," argument that the Trinity "crowns" Schleiermacher's theology by its placement at the end (2237ff.). Finally, Holmes attributes the revival's deviation from the tradition, at least in part, to the legacy of Harnack's thesis of a "Hellenistic infestation" of the tradition (2352, 2373-374).

While the second through fourth revisions now appear to be somewhat standard, the first and fifth revisions require further supporting evidence beyond that provided. Additional documentation for which specific revisionist scholars were reinterpreting which specific original revival authors may strengthen Holmes' presentation.

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***The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say About Human Origins.* By Peter Enns. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2012. 172 pages. Paperback. 2012. \$17.99.**

In his intriguing work *The Evolution of Adam*, Peter Enns offers a contribution to the faith and science literature. In it, Enns is specifically interested in one particular question within that debate, namely, reconciling the biblical account of human origins with the scientific or evolutionary account of human origins. More accurately, he is not offering a reconciliatory treatment of the two views, but offering an alternative reading of the biblical account that he argues has greater support than a more *literal* reading of the Bible on origins.

Enns begins his treatment with a briefing on the subject of evolution and a literal reading of the Genesis creation narrative (Introduction). He argues that a literal reading gives us a picture that Adam and Eve are created instantaneously, which

is in contrast to the evolutionary picture given to us in modern science which states that humans gradually come into existence through adaptation and natural selection (xiv). In fact, in one place, he states, "If evolution is correction, one can no longer accept, in any true sense of the word "historical," the instantaneous and special creation of humanity described in Genesis, specifically 1:26-31 and 2:7, 22 (xiv)." The reality is that this does not follow from what he previously states and what he proceeds to argue. This claim may be too strong even if it does entail tensions. He proceeds on the view that a literal reading with modern science is incompatible unless one is willing to make serious adjustments to the biblical story. He offers that there are four ways to handle the problem. One can either accept evolution and reject Christianity, accept Paul and reject evolution and modern science, reconcile the two, or rethink Genesis and Paul (xvii-xviii). He proceeds to argue that given the creation narrative context, we ought not read it literally as offering an answer to the question of where humans came from and how they came, for this is the job of science, but it offers a "story" on where we came from in terms of social identity (chapters 2-4). In the second section of the book, Enns engages with Paul. He and others consider "Paul's view of Adam" a more serious problem, but he offers a solution whereby one should read Adam as a metaphor in Paul and see the Adam-story as part and parcel of the real Christ. Enns argues against the notion that Paul communicates the reality that Adam was a real and literal historical figure. Adam, for Enns, should be read as a metaphor or a representation for a "people" not necessarily a single person.

The highlights of Enns treatment on the subject are clear. First, there is no other serious evangelical treatment of the issue. Second, he offers some interesting constructive readings of both Genesis and Paul that comprise what he considers essential theological matters. Three, he offers an interesting proposal as to why the motivation exists behind the affirmation of a literal historical Adam and Eve. He argues that it is based upon the desire to maintain our social or group identity (145). Having said this, there are several criticisms of the book.

Enns lacks a metaphysical ground and mechanism for explaining the foundations for Christian redemption. It would have been nice if Enns put forward a brief explanation on how humans are related theologically and how his view of origins accounts for the nature of original sin. While he does seek to exalt Christ and redemption, he lacks the foundation for understanding this redemption (i.e. *What are we being redeemed from and to? Why?*). A literal or natural reading of Scripture on Adam is reflected in ecclesiastical tradition (or so it seems) and that is that a first pair actually transmits sin in some form or fashion. Furthermore, it is unclear that direct creation of man is not compatible with evolution. If humans are souls, then it is not incompatible to say that God creates humans directly and immediately at some point in evolution. Enns raises this possibility but dismisses it rather quickly (xv).

All in all, this book will serve the evangelical community and offers a novel contribution to the evangelical literature on the science and faith debate. Enns offers a *way* of reading the Bible that is commensurate with what he considers the entailments of evolutionary thought given to us in modern science. While many evangelicals will not be convinced by his constructive proposal, it will serve individuals by way of raising the sorts of questions that need to be raised. Many who affirm a stronger form of biblical authority and inerrancy will not be satisfied with the conclusions. Yet, the debate on Adam continues.

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***Reflections of a Disenchanted Calvinist.* By Ronnie W. Rogers. Bloomington, IN: CrossBooks, 2012. 208 pages. Paperback. \$14.99.**

Across the years, Pastor Ronnie W. Rogers of the Trinity Baptist Church in Norman, Oklahoma, has developed the art and spiritual attainment of pastoral ministry to a level that few can imitate. He has served his denomination in many positions, such as the chairmanship of the Board at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; but at the same time, he has given his focus overwhelmingly to the local church. One result of this commitment is a steady stream of young people going out from the churches he has served to enter church-related vocations around the world. In the midst of all this he has been a pastoral theologian, studying long hours and collating the results of that study not only in his preaching but also in all his pastoral ministries.

Consequently, I should not have been surprised when *Reflections of a Disenchanted Calvinist* came to my desk. But, I was surprised. First, I was aware of the fact that Pastor Rogers had inclinations toward Calvinism. He was never obnoxious with the matter, as sometimes happens, but I knew that his sympathies lay there. So, my first astonishment was to discover that his studies and observations in pastoral ministries had led him to abandon the Calvinistic position. Second, having known of his prowess as pastor theologian, I was, nevertheless, astonished at the thoroughness of his presentation bringing together the finest in thinking with a masterful grasp of Holy Scripture. *Reflections of a Disenchanted Calvinist* is a remarkable book, especially since it was penned by a man who had to churn out the manuscript amidst the daily grind of pastoral duty.

In the third place, the book is an answer to prayer. For some time I had prayed that someone would write from a non-Calvinist or Baptist position a relatively brief, yet thorough, exposition, which for all of its succinctness would be thorough and clearly demonstrate why Calvinism is not an option. This should not have surprised me either, for this is exactly what Pastor Rogers has done in this superb volume. Citing the best-known Calvinists of the present era as well as from Christian history, Pastor Rogers is able to present the objectionable nature of what this Reformed viewpoint does to one's concept of God, to say nothing of the damage done by imposing the Calvinist grid on Scripture, therefore, failing to account for much of what the Bible clearly says.

The book may seem redundant to some. A fair amount of repetition occurs in the book, but a careful reading shows why the author did this. The entire argument that he presents is dependent upon understanding not only the parts but the whole of the biblical position. Consequently Rogers weaves the threads of earlier conclusions into later arguments to show the cohesiveness of the biblical position.

Understandably, Calvinists will not appreciate the book, and they will provide their usual criticisms of the book, together with a restatement of the structure of Calvinism. There is, after all, little that is new under the sun. The explanations of the Calvinists will satisfy them, but those who have not yet made up their minds will be profoundly impacted by the sane and balanced assessment and by the determined obedience to Scripture found in *Reflections of a Disenchanted Calvinist*.

Of course, what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Just as there are really no new ground-breaking arguments in favor of Calvinism, so there are no new turf-turning arguments against it. Ronnie Rogers has put things together in a refreshing way, but he would be the first to say there is nothing "newly discovered" in

this book. He has not slashed through the Gordian knot. The debate that has centuries of history will also continue into the future; so why my accolades for this book? At first this view is germinated in the pastor's garden rather than in the academic nursery. Therefore, it is written with a pastor's heart, not an academic mind. Second, this book is long enough to treat the subject but brief enough to be consumed by busy people, whether in the pastorate or among the laity. Third, I find the logic and the scriptural interpretation of the book compelling. For those who find Calvinism an issue and its view of election "disquieting," this book is invaluable. My prayer to God is that not a single pastor who cares about the things of God will fail to read this book and, whenever there is trouble in churches, pass it on to lay people who will find themselves identifying with the over-all love for Christ and passion that Pastor Ronnie Rogers has so profoundly presented.

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***The Church: The Gospel Made Visible.* By Mark Dever. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2012. 177 pages. Paperback. \$12.99.**

For decades, theologians and prognosticators have declared that Americans are now living in a post-Christian era. Signs of the fading influence of a Judeo-Christian worldview can be easily verified in entertainment, polls, legislation, and personal conversations. However, more insidiously, American Christians also find themselves living in a post-church era, though this does not receive as much attention. While they may not realize or admit it, many Christians today functionally love Christ but hate his bride. In an over-realized Christian individualism, the church is simply viewed as one optional component among many to benefit a Christian's personal (and often private) relationship with the Lord. As Mark Dever, senior pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., states in his book *The Church: The Gospel Made Visible*, "For too many Christians today, the doctrine of the church is like a decoration on the front of a building. Maybe it's pretty, maybe it's not, but finally it's unimportant because it bears no weight" (ix).

For this reason, Dever seeks to provide a "popular primer on the doctrine of the church" (xii). He argues that the church is critically important to God and thus should be important to believers. As the title suggests, the church is the way God makes the gospel visible to the world. Added to that, Dever says, the doctrine of the church, or ecclesiology, "is the most visible part of the Christian theology, and it is vitally connected with every other part" (ix). He writes against the prevailing atmosphere of pragmatism in modern churches, asserting that good ecclesiology is a matter of gospel clarity.

In the preface, Dever explains that this book is an updated adaptation of a chapter he wrote in the 2007 publication *A Theology for the Church*.<sup>2</sup> In comparing the two, it is obvious that *The Church* is nearly an exact replica of the chapter in Akin, Nelson, and Schemm's book both in content and structure. However, since this book is intended as a more popular level work, there are places where the language has been modified for a broader audience. The structure is subdivided under three questions about the doctrine of the church. "What Does the Bible Say?" examines Scripture's statements on the nature of the church and topics such as the marks of

<sup>2</sup>Mark Dever, "The Doctrine of the Church," in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin, David P. Nelson, and Peter R. Schemm (Nashville: B&H 2007).

the church, ordinances, church membership, polity, discipline, purpose, and mission. “What Has the Church Believed?” provides a historical look at the marks of the church, ordinances, and organization. Finally, “How Does It All Fit Together?” builds off the first two questions and concludes that a biblically faithful church is Protestant, gathered, congregational, and baptistic (127).

One area of contrast between Dever’s chapter in Akin, Nelson, and Schemm’s book and this volume is the addition of a section titled “An Informal Introduction: The Sufficiency of the Bible for the Local Church,” which comes between the preface and the first chapter. This introduction serves as a summary of the book as well as an argument against those who say the Bible does not give instruction on church matters. Dever says Christians are not left to wonder what they are supposed to do in the church. “My hope,” Dever says, “is that the reader sees how Scripture’s beautiful sufficiency frees us from the tyranny of mere human opinion” (xxviii).

Dever can be applauded for his strong scriptural and historical defenses of both the essence and practices of local churches. His views remain consistent with his earlier works such as *A Display of God’s Glory, Nine Marks of a Healthy Church, By Whose Authority?* and *The Deliberate Church*.<sup>3</sup> The Word of God (i.e., the Bible) is the sole authority on all matters of the church, including its nature, doctrine, and organization. Notably, Dever spends a few pages in chapter 7 explaining that he holds to the regulative principle, the view that only elements that can be clearly seen in Scripture are permissible in the worship of the church. Dever says, “In short, recognizing the regulative principle amounts to recognizing the sufficiency of Scripture applied to assembled worship. In the language of the Reformation, it amounts to *sola scriptura*” (72). With this in mind, however, he obviously does not hold to a hyper-regulative-principlism that disallows modern applications of basic scriptural principles.

With a high view of Scripture, it comes as no surprise that expository preaching plays a central role in Dever’s understanding of the church and the primary responsibility of elders/pastors. Holding to the Reformation’s view of the two marks of the church—the Word rightly preached and the ordinances rightly administered—Dever says preaching is central over the sacraments. “The Word being rightly taught should lead the church to rightly administer the ordinances of Christ,” Dever says (95). Dever also builds strong arguments from Scripture for regenerate church membership coupled with loving, grace-filled church discipline.

As for church government, Dever calls for a nuanced congregational polity led by a plurality of elders, with one elder serving as the senior pastor. He laments that many pit congregationalism against elder leadership but points out that “all three aspects of authority seen in the New Testament (individual, plural eldership, and congregational) should be enjoyed in every congregation” (142). He promotes an elder-led model against that of elder rule and explains that a biblical form of congregationalism does not necessitate competition between congregation and elders. The congregation, Dever says, has final authority over doctrine, teaching, and membership. But, he says, “The congregation’s authority is more like an emergency brake than a steering wheel. The congregation more normally recognizes than

<sup>3</sup>Mark Dever, *A Display of God’s Glory: Basics of Church Structure* (Washington, D.C.: 9Marks, 2001); Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*, New Expanded ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004); Mark Dever, *By Whose Authority?: Elders in Baptist Life* (Washington, D.C.: 9Marks, 2006); Mark Dever and Paul Alexander, *The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2005).

creates, responds rather than initiates, confirms rather than proposes”(143).

Other than a few stylistic and grammatical changes, very few weaknesses emerge in this work by Dever. Certainly, some who disagree with his approach to polity might blame his Reformed views on soteriology with clouding his understanding of church government, but this could not be farther from the truth. Given his Reformed theology, one would expect him to espouse a Presbyterian, elder-rule model of church government rather than elder-led congregationalism. No, Dever seeks only to be faithful to Scripture, which is to be commended.

*The Church* represents two decades of pastoral ministry and sincere study of the Bible in the life of Mark Dever. Anyone familiar with Dever’s ministry quickly realizes that he not only espouses this grand ecclesiology, but he has also experienced its outworking in the local church replete with all the successes and failures therein. Thus, *The Church* provides pastors with a well-structured model for healthy churches that reflect God’s glory to the world. Additionally, the book could also serve well as a teaching tool within local churches both for leaders and members. In the end, this book deals a blow to nominal Christianity and provides a wake-up call to lackadaisical churches around the world.

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### Historical Studies

***A Cultural Handbook to the Bible.* By John J. Pilch. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012. 307 pages. Paperback. \$26.00**

This is a unique book and difficult to place within a genre or type. The core of the book is a collection of bimonthly articles the author wrote in *The Bible Today*. This book is also a sequel to an earlier book, *The Cultural Dictionary of the Bible* (Liturgical Press, 1999). In the first book, Pilch collated articles written from 1993 to 1997. That book was well received and translated into other languages. Hence this new book is the collected articles published from 1998 to 2006.

The aim of the articles is to illustrate the biblical texts within their proper cultural and historical context. The author has focused on Middle Eastern culture and social scientific approaches used to interpret the biblical text. This book is different from the first, in that it is a narrative versus a list of dictionary entries. The book is grouped by various subjects into eight major sections: The Cosmos, Earth, Persons, Family, Language, Human Consciousness, God and the Spirit World, and Entertainment. Within each of these sections there are from five to nine topics. For example, in the section about Earth, there are six topics: Desert and Wilderness, Caves, Swamps, Snakes, Dragons, and Mirrors and Glass. It is clear that each of the topics was originally an individual article written for the journal (*The Bible Today*). The author grouped these topics into sections, whether or not the topics belonged together, or introduced the reader to a specific topic.

The section on Earth implies that it is going to be about the ancient Israelite views of the natural world or an introduction of historical geography. The first topic discusses the regions of the wilderness. The next topic is about caves. The introduction mentions the cave where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, then it mentions geological aspects of Syro-Palestine as well as prehistoric caves and some mentions of people in caves from the biblical text (e.g. Lot and his daughters, imagery of clefts

of the rock in the Song of Solomon). It concludes with Eusebius' connection with three special caves in the life of Jesus (cave of his birth, his tomb, Ascension cave). This topic is a scattering of data about caves and discusses Byzantine pilgrimage and church sites and their connection to early church fathers and pilgrims mystical experiences. The next topic is about swamps from Moses in the Delta to Jesus' baptism in the Jordan.

Pilch next discusses snakes and then dragons (although he notes the term for dragon in the Old Testament is snake; which, in some translations, particularly in Exodus, are probably crocodiles). The last topic is mirrors and glass. This section mentions Pauline metaphors of mirrors (e.g. 1 Cor. 13:12) and ancient Roman glass.

The reader does not learn about the various regions of Palestine, nor an overview of the animal and material world. We know that there were deserts, snakes, caves, swamps, and glass. Surely this section does not accurately reflect the topic—Earth. This example is representative of the other sections of the book. Pilch moves freely in his discussions between Old Testament and New Testament interspersing with the modern period. The author notes in his preface that the book should not be read from beginning to end, but by choosing topics from the Table of Contents that interest the reader. This is not a reference book, nor can it be used as a textbook. It is written for a Catholic lay audience and the topics individually would have been informative and insightful in their original presentation of a popular journal. Pilch is at his best when he is discussing New Testament background, especially the life and times of Jesus. It is unfortunate that the author did not rewrite his original essays into a synthetic work, as he is an excellent communicator and is a scholar who is comfortable with social scientific approaches to the Bible. His expertise in Middle Eastern culture provides much needed insight to the cultural context of the sayings of Jesus and the context of the world of the Bible. For those who have followed his bimonthly contributions, this is an excellent collection of his insights into the biblical world.

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***Rediscovering the Church Fathers: Who They Were and How They Shaped the Church.* By Michael A. G. Haykin. Wheaton: Crossway, 2011. 172 pages. Paperback. \$16.99.**

Echoing a call by Thomas Oden and Andrew Purves, Michael Haykin is advocating a rediscovery of the church fathers; a process he describes as a vital need for Evangelicals. Haykin defines “church fathers” as those patristic writers who composed their works between the first and eighth centuries (16). He contends that a careful study of these early church leaders frees us from the myopia of our own age, establishes the historical foundations (“map”) for the Christian life, informs our understanding of Scripture, corrects mistaken views of what the Fathers actually believed, helps us understand church heresies, and establishes humility in light of the testimonies of these who modeled faith often in hostile times.

Haykin refers to the Fathers whom he has included in this work as “case studies.” His criteria for selecting them is somewhat arbitrary, referring to them as “men that I have listened to and walked with” (29), but he adds that part of the reason for their selection are the issues with which they dealt.

The Fathers that Haykin has chosen to accentuate in this volume are: Ignatius of Antioch, the author of the letter to Diognetus, Origen, Cyprian, Ambrose, Basil

of Caesarea, and Patrick. One notes the irony of a statement made by the author in an Appendix with reference to the writing of Pelikan, “[his] omissions are matched by some odd inclusions” (163). Indeed, one may have that same sentiment when considering Haykin’s inclusion of Patrick and omission of others. However, in light of the author’s autobiographical chapter indicating his Irish roots, the presence of Patrick makes sense.

Each chapter focuses on the context of the church father under discussion, noting the unique issues with which they dealt. Thus, the studies focus on the martyrdom of Ignatius, the apologetic focus of the author of the letter to Diognetus, the faithfulness of Origen (despite the obvious concerns in his theology) as a confessor of the Christian faith, the emphases on the Lord’s Supper in Cyprian and Ambrose, Basil’s steadfast insistence of the full deity of the Holy Spirit, and the humble faithfulness of Patrick.

The book concludes with an autobiographical explanation of Haykin’s journey in studying the church fathers and two appendices. The first appendix is a brief guide for reading the church fathers, which—though informative—would have been more helpful if expanded. In essence, Haykin gives the reader a “where to begin” strategy. The final appendix is a brief study of Jaroslav Pelikan’s contribution to the study of the patristics.

The author is clear that the writings of the church fathers are not Scripture and that we have license to disagree with them, but we listen to them respectfully as “senior conversation partners about Scripture and meaning” (29). He faithfully identifies how contemporary issues impacted the lives and writing of the Fathers and how their ministries impacted the world around them.

In the end, Haykin’s work is interesting and enjoyable to read. His chapters on Origen and Basil stand out as capstones of the work. They are both insightful to read and relevant in current theological discussions. More interaction with contemporary research on the Fathers and a more clear explanation of the organization of the book and the inclusion of the Fathers would have added depth and clarity. Moreover, a summary chapter addressing how the church today could apply the lessons that the Fathers taught would have been helpful.

Haykin’s work adds a needed voice to an often overlooked heritage of our faith and theology. One hopes his call to rediscovery will be heeded.

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***James Robinson Graves: Staking the Boundaries of Baptist Identity.* By James A. Patterson. Studies in Baptist Life and Thought. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012. 238 pages. Paperback. \$19.99.**

In the Studies of Baptist Life and Thought series (edited by Michael A. G. Haykin), B&H Academic seeks to reintroduce great, historical Baptist figures to a new generation. The series consists of works penned on John A. Broadus, Andrew Fuller, Adoniram Judson, and James Robinson Graves. This volume, written by James A. Patterson, professor of Christian Thought and Tradition and associate dean of the School of Theology and Missions at Union University, “seeks to blend biographical insight with a more thematic approach that focuses principally on [Graves] controversial beliefs about ecclesiology, Baptist history, and eschatology” (xv).

Graves’ life spanned most of the nineteenth century, in which he was an edu-



cator, a pastor, a journalist, an author, and a Confederate soldier. He was born in 1820 to Lois Schnell and Zuinglius Calvin Graves in Chester, Vermont where he grew in the shadow of Separate Baptist stalwarts such as Isaac Backus, John Leland, and J. Newton Brown—each contributing to a unique aspect of the young Graves' ecclesiological development. He was licensed in 1842, albeit “without his knowledge,” and ordained shortly thereafter (23). The bulk of Graves' ministry took place in Nashville, and later, Memphis, where he would leave an indelible mark upon middle Tennessee and upon Southern Baptists as a whole.

Graves' increasing interest in Baptist life and thought developed alongside the rise of Campbellism, which, while similar to much of Baptist doctrine, held to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration and “opposed any practices that could not be squared with the letter of the New Testament” (24). As such, Graves was uniquely poised to grow into the great defender of Baptist beliefs. This Baptist warrior—a term applied to him by Baptist historian, W.W. Barnes—became embattled throughout his life and ministry against the Campbellites, Methodists, Pedobaptists, and, ultimately, against other Southern Baptists who dared to challenge Graves' historical or theological convictions.

He taught that one could trace the true church (Baptists) back to the New Testament period; however, “Graves... came close to identifying Baptists through history not so much by their doctrines but rather by the blood that they spilled because they bucked the established church” (111). In doing so, “the identity that he popularized as ‘Baptist’ intermingled Baptists with a potpourri of heretics, ecclesiastical misfits, and valiant reformers who challenged the established church but did not necessarily articulate Baptist doctrines” (121). His defense of Baptist succession provided the foundation from which he argued that Baptist churches alone were independent of ties to the Roman Catholic Church; thus, Baptists were neither Catholic nor Protestant. Pedobaptists and Methodists, then, fail the test of ecclesiastical order, for they all stem from the same Roman Catholic source, and “no one is amenable to church membership who has not been immersed by an administrator, *who is himself an immersed believer*” (45).

Patterson demonstrates several shifts in Graves' thought, especially after the Civil War. During this time, it appears that Graves shifts from a position of close communion, “which allowed for intercommunion between Baptist churches,” to that of closed communion, which insists that “the Lord's Supper was a local church ordinance exclusively for its members and no one else” (171). Further, Graves' eschatology shifts from what might be classified as historic premillennialism to a form of dispensationalism. Interestingly, Patterson notes that this eschatological shift near the end of Graves' life led him to participate with members of other denominations (or societies, as Graves averred), which demonstrated a subtle shift in the manner in which Graves interacted with non-Baptists.

Patterson's work cannot be easily classified as biography. Despite Graves' copious denominational, historical, and theological writings, diaries and intimate details of his life are scarce. Most of that which we know of Graves' personal life has been collected and sifted from the diaries of others (often his opponents), church records, and a biography written by Graves' son-in-law, which Patterson describes as “waxing to the extreme limits of hagiography” (166). Due to these constraints, Patterson emphasizes the thought and doctrinal development of Graves, rather than the actual details of Graves' life. This thought and development, however, is that which makes Graves such a fascinating historical figure. Though readers may differ with Graves

on any number of ecclesiological, historical, or eschatological points, they must acknowledge with the author that “J.R. Graves was easily one of the most dominant, energetic, and polemical personalities in nineteenth-century Baptist life” (xiv).

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### Studies in Ethics and Philosophy

***Imaginative Apologetics*. Edited by Andrew Davison. Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2011. 167 pages. Paperback. \$22.50.**

The Enlightenment project of reducing knowledge to deductive reason and certain proofs has long been acknowledged to be a failure. It simply cannot achieve its aims. Still, there are those who continue to cling to its ways of thinking. The authors of *Imaginative Apologetics* contend that one of those adherents is the church both in its theology and its apologetics (3-8). They argue that the church needs to be freed from this false worldview and immersed in a new world view that utilizes a fuller account of reason.

This fuller account of reason involves the use of imagination as connected to reason, and as a means of arguing for God and theological truths. Reason, the authors contend, both knows and desires leading us to seek truth in many ways (xxv). As a result, the church should embrace the whole of reason and give an expansive view of what it means to be a human being (xxvii-xxviii). It must return to a more humble position of reaching out to the needs and desires of people. Apologetics should be both rational and attractive because human beings are more than cold intellect and we cannot convince others on purely rational grounds, only by being attractive and more persuasive (9-11).

Rationality begins within a community of people with presumptions/axioms in which people choose to have faith since all thought is done through prior commitments. These axioms not only guide how we think, but also are tested and changed. Since no way of thought has pride of place, the church invites people to see what its worldview and community is like and how it is better than other worldviews (13-17, 26-28). This is the point where imagination becomes important. Imagination helps to awaken people to their desire for absolute truth. By stoking the fires of imagination, the church can get people to reflect on their experiences of reality and the mysteries that it contains. People are stoked to think, make parallels, and establish meaning concerning reality that takes on a theological nature and gives them a sense of the divine because people desire to go beyond just the bare facts (31-45).

According to the authors, people would not have the necessary ingredients by which they can reason without imagination. Perception gives us data, imagination meaning, and reason truth to which people willfully assent (73-78). This imaginative apologetic, however, involves more than just argumentation. The church needs a healthy spiritual life that points to God and will cause people to take the gospel seriously (96). This apologetic should also be aware of the culture and speak to it using the culture’s hermeneutic. As a result, the culture will understand the gospel and see ways in which it truly yearns for God (112-25).

However, this approach to theology and apologetics has some serious issues. Though the authors reject the Enlightenment project, they take their view—the mechanics of rationality—as rationally foundational. All people reason in the

manner they claim. As a result, their position on the mechanisms of epistemology takes pride of place, which is exactly opposite to what their argument asserts. If it does not take pride of place, then one can only judge it as being better than the alternatives, and how can he do that if all judgment takes place within the biased presuppositional confines of a worldview? One can only have an opinion as to what is the best explanation, not knowledge.

This view of apologetics also appears to be based in a phenomenological philosophy. Knowledge is more of a personal and/or communal enterprise than a grasping of reality as it is making imagination so important to rationality. Knowledge is not discovery of reality, but a construction of concepts that are cast onto reality in order to understand it. Such a philosophy raises a fundamental problem. If knowledge of reality is based on imaginative constructs filtered through the presuppositions of the community in which one lives, does he or any community really have true knowledge of reality? It does not appear so. No one has access to the way reality really is, only to their biased, communal conception. Such a philosophy inspires doubt and skepticism, not knowledge.

Further, why believe that rational thought requires imagination? What does one imagine when he deduces that  $2+2=4$  or infers that  $A$  causes  $B$  or judges that one explanation is better than another? It seems perfectly possible that a person can make rational deductive, inductive, and abductive inferences without imagining anything, and simply because a person(s) develops a word, concept, or model to explain his perception of reality does not indicate that imagination is involved. It is not obvious what place imagination has in reasoning if it has a place at all.

Lastly, this view of apologetics also fails to take seriously the problems that sin throws into the epistemological mix. If all human beings are sinners, then we should not expect either our imaginations or our cultural hermeneutics to be reliable guides to the truth. We also cannot expect to utilize other cultural hermeneutics to present theological truths since some hermeneutics will not be compatible with those truths. As a result, it is not evident how an imaginative apologetic is useful in a fallen world.

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### Studies in Preaching and Pastoral Ministry

***Prophetic Preaching.* By Craig Brian Larson. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2012. 150 Pages. Paperback. \$12.27.**

Many religious men and women have attempted to prophesy about the world's end. Others have attempted more daring predictions, such as identifying himself or herself as the coming Messiah or have predicted themselves ushers of a "New Kingdom." Prophecy fails when those who attempt it forget the primary guideline needed: the Word of God. *Prophetic Preaching*, part of The Preacher's Toolbox series, was written to provide a guide for those who preach prophetically detailing the need for sound expository analysis and good character. Craig Larson—using an interview, question-and-answer format—selected leading voices in today's churches and seminaries to provide such a framework. The book serves valiantly as a necessary marker for prophetic preachers. This review will address several contributions, as well as one area this reviewer felt needed more specificity.

"Chan bases prophetic preaching on God's Word—not the preacher's person-

ality, brilliance, or effort” (11). His emphasis on a text-primary approach is assuring and strong. The standard upon which preaching is drawn upon must be Scripture. Prophetic preaching is no different. Chan further emphasizes that although there are good preachers, there are also false prophets, for “when you look at the biblical warnings about false prophets, much of it has to do with their character: their greed, lack of love, self-centeredness, and pride” (13). Preachers must govern their lives with a watchful eye.

James MacDonald emphasizes the role of biblical authority in prophetic preaching. He writes, “I preach the authority of God’s Word without apology” (29). Biblical authority holds true to God’s words, and as such, wields the absolute truth and standard for our lives. Further, he adds that there are no excuses for a preacher not to engage the word, for “Christ also preached the Word without apology” (30).

John Koessler further develops the task of prophetic preaching. “Preaching,” he writes, “is the proclamation of God’s Word, but it’s also a form of two-way communication. It’s not just what you say; it’s how people hear what you say” (89). In order for the preacher to be effective, he must preach the whole counsel of God and be heard. He follows with two effective ways that test the authority of the audience today: “(1) Is the preacher saying anything that applies to where I am? (2) Did I experience God while the preacher was speaking?” (96).

Andrew Thompson’s chapter was especially enlightening; for it not only addressed the power of God’s word, but provided a systematic and structural approach to the Old Testament prophets. Thompson argues that tracing prophetic Scripture and its fulfillment in history leads the preacher to speculation, and suggests that “by focusing on the *covenant context* of a prophetic speech, preachers can apply such a passage to their own churches in richly textured ways that are faithful to the biblical authority’s intent while being helpful for building community” (121). Maintaining this focus leads the preacher to avoid speculation, and emphasize the character and plan of God. This recognizes the person and work of Christ as the primary thrust of prophecy.

In Buchanan’s chapter—“Preaching in the City of Man”—the contributor fell into a common vice that plagues many who preach the Old Testament Scriptures: moralizing the text. He glosses over the distinguishing items in the text and focuses on several major themes, such as love, purity, and morality. While none of the above themes are inconsistent with the Scriptures, proper hermeneutics demand that the preacher focus on the Word and words of God rather than merely the themes of God. Buchanan insists that preachers learn to develop a “Daniel spirit” in preaching, allowing for firmness and civility (26). According to Buchanan, maintaining a civil tone is crucial to the preaching task, for “if we don’t ‘get the tone right,’ we won’t lead anyone to Christ” (19). His point that the manner in which one preaches prophetically plays a major role in the manner in which he will be heard is well-taken, even if overstated. The power of preaching—prophetic or otherwise—lies neither in the preacher or his tone, but in the very Word of God.

Prophetic preaching appears to be missing in today’s culture and society. Often it is not well received because so many have focused on speculation and assumptions, rather than the truth of God’s Word. The contributions in *Prophetic Preaching* emphasize the vast importance of the inerrancy and efficacy of the Scriptures as foundational to the prophetic preaching task.

Philip Koo

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***Building Below the Waterline: Strengthening the Life of a Leader.* By Gordon MacDonald. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2011. 250 pages. Paperback. \$10.48.**

The title of this work conveys the image of building a foundation that will support a life amidst the storms of ministry. With the wisdom of experience and the honesty of lessons learned through failure, Gordon MacDonald has written a timely work on timeless principles necessary for success in ministry.

With his normal ease-of-reading style and compelling illustrations, MacDonald brings the readers into his life and we look over his shoulder as he journals life-lessons. Some of the material, especially the chapter on the Root of Leadership, comes from some earlier writings by MacDonald, but fit within the scope of this work.

In one sense, this work can only have been written after a lifetime of ministry credentials. Knowledge learned from study is not the same as understanding gleaned from experience. In another sense, one imagines that this book was both a joy and struggle to write. MacDonald has chronicled many of the keys that have guided his ministry; but, he has also recounted some of the painful failures of his life.

The book is very generally comprised of two sections: the inner life of a leader and the outer life of a leader; though the sections tend to overlap much like these two aspects converge in the life of the minister. Each of the twenty-four chapters contains insights related to issues important for every servant of the Lord. The author deals with character issues, such as calling, character, motivation for ministry, integrity, compassion, prayer, temptation, and forgiveness; details of ministry, including late-night phone calls, dealing with difficult people, church growth, and church conflict; and leadership lessons on building trust, dealing with difficult issues, how to finish well, and how to leave effectively.

The two most compelling chapters in the book (“DNF: Did Not Finish,” and “Pastor’s Progress”) address the darkest moments of the author’s life and what God taught him through them. MacDonald is transparent about his own failures, expresses appropriate safeguards necessary for ministers, and is a testimony of the grace of the Lord. A follow-up section or chapter on how to help ministers who have failed to recover might have accentuated the value of these chapters.

This is not a book to be read through quickly. It needs to be digested slowly. These are safeguards. They are words to the wise; to those who have ears to hear. The goal is to allow others to learn from his experiences. The lessons are well-taught. I hope they are well-received.

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### Studies in Christian Education

***Renewing Minds: Serving Church and Society through Christian Higher Education, Revised and Expanded.* By David Dockery. Forward by Robert P. George. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2008. xxii + 152 pages. Paperback, \$19.99.**

As the President of Union University, perhaps the most significant university closely aligned with the sizable and influential Southern Baptist Convention, David Dockery stands in a unique position to offer a way forward for Christian higher education, which he also might call a way backward. Dockery observed, “The

integration of faith and knowledge is the most distinctive task of Christian higher education—always was, is now, and always will be” (84) and noted the debilitating effects of “the separation of faith from learning and teaching . . . even in church-related institutions” (4).

At the heart of the book is a call to Christian colleges and universities to re-focus their energies upon the integration of faith and knowledge, learning, and teaching and upon the resulting unity of knowledge across fields of study. According to Dockery,

This means that Christ-centered higher education cannot be content to display its Christian foundations merely with chapel services and required Bible classes. We must bring students to a mature reflection of what the Christian faith means for every field of study. (21)

The edition under review is the second revised and expanded edition, published in 2008, only one year after the original version. Dockery noted in his preface that he attempted to reformat the book for presentation to an academic audience (xviii). The inclusion of endnotes must have been part of that effort.

While Dockery called the work “an introduction to the field of Christian higher education,” the book gives the impression of a manifesto for what he calls the integration of faith and knowledge toward the unity of knowledge and learning. He described this unity, or universe of knowledge, which is an old idea at the very root of the concept of the *university*. “Thus specific bodies of knowledge relate to one another not just because scholars work together in community, not just because interdisciplinary work broadens our knowledge, but because all truth has its source in God, composing a single universe of knowledge” (12).

In *Renewing Minds*, Dockery describes the sorts of emphases and organization necessary to implement and to maintain such an integration. The book follows along those lines, beginning with the foundational issues of integration, working through the organizational structures of a shared community a college or university might require in the development of a consistent model of integration, developing a framework for a theology for Christian higher education, and concluding with the global mission of Christian higher education.

The book rightly has garnered great praise from leadership in the Evangelical and Christian higher education communities. It is a monumental work that required years to develop and to produce, and it is worth the time of every Christian to read.

Critics of the effort, most of whom seem to believe that the book offers nothing truly new, might not grasp fully the Bible’s declaration, “So there is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9c). Leaders understand that often the most important work is the reorganization and presentation of old ideas in new ways that challenge the *status quo*. Dockery has achieved that, offering the challenge of a virtual remake of the Christian university as we know it today.

The most impressive aspect of the book is its brevity, given the landscape it covers. Its concision reflects its nature as an “introduction” and leaves several matters largely undone and others wanting. While beginning and concluding with biblical and theological groundings, the book makes no real effort to present, or even to develop, more than an appeal for a theology for Christian higher education. Dockery started in right directions, such as when he declared, “The essence of the Christian faith is that God is Savior, but we fail to understand the comprehensiveness of the Christian faith unless we also see God as Creator, Sustainer, Ruler, Father, and

Judge” (82). What a great beginning that was followed by less than two pages to the end of that chapter.

Included in that theology would be an epistemology, a biblical, Christian understanding of knowledge and truth. Perhaps the most urgent need left underdeveloped, the epistemological foundations for the integration of faith and knowledge, requires a clear understanding of just what knowledge and truth are. Dockery did not ignore the matter. In what might be called his thesis statement, he tied truth and knowledge together directly: “I would suggest that the starting point of loving God with our minds, thinking Christianly, points us to a unity of knowledge, a seamless whole, because all true knowledge flows from the one Creator to His one creation” (12). At the same time, one might ask just what “true knowledge” is.

Again, given that the book is an introduction, the omission of a fully orbed epistemology of Christian higher education was necessary. However, much is left open to the imagination by this particular deficit. For only one example, Dockery built much upon the familiar statement, “All truth is God’s truth,” credited in idea to Augustine and granted book title status by Arthur Holmes. Dockery plainly implied that it means that every field of study is open to Christian investigation. However, in a scientific age, would the statement mean that anything that “science” claims to be truth actually is God’s truth?

In the scope of this opus, these are small matters that call for further work by all of us engaged in this field. An important work, *Renewing Minds* demands both a reading and a response.

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**Abstracts of Recently Completed Dissertations  
in the School of Theology at Southwestern Baptist  
Theological Seminary**

**“Factors Influencing the Sermonic Structure of Jean Claude and his Influence on Homiletics.” By J. Denny Autrey. Supervised by Steven W. Smith.**

This purpose of this dissertation is to evaluate the influence of Jean Claude on homiletics. This objective will be accomplished by answering two questions; first, what were the factors of influence that helped formulate Claude’s theology of preaching resulting in his sermon structure? Second, is his approach to sermon structure a viable tool for effective exposition?

One’s individual approach to preaching is contingent upon a number of elements. These elements impact one’s philosophy of ministry. The resulting philosophy will determine how an individual approaches sermon preparation in order to fulfill the task required for effective communication.

Effective preachers reflect a high view of Scripture and a passion to present the message of the text from proper biblical interpretation. The initial interest for this study was Charles Simeon. It was determined that the source for Simeon’s inspiration for his sermon structure stemmed from the work of Jean Claude. Claude’s “An Essay on the Composition of a Sermon” links the changing face of exposition from the method used by the early church fathers through the Reformers and into the current era of expository preaching. Argument is presented that Claude modified the seventeenth-century expression of exposition.

The development of this thesis will reveal an evolution in the expository method and its effectiveness. Claude’s method brought greater clarity to the exposition of a text. His approach to sermon structure altered the art of exposition, producing a more focused method of expressing a subject. Expressing the main idea of the text, Claude’s perspective, enhanced by the use of an introduction and conclusion, produced a unified theme for preaching. Often labeled textual exposition, this method is still used effectively today. Beginning with the seventeenth century, a historical analysis clearly demonstrates Claude’s influence today.

**“A Text-Driven Application of the Apocalypse: A Historical-Contextual Focus on the Seven Churches in Order to Accomplish Text Driven Application.” By Vern Charette Jr. Supervised by David L. Allen.**

This dissertation argues for a historical-contextual focus on the seven churches of Asia in order to accomplish text-driven application from the Apocalypse. Chapter one introduces the problem the dissertation addresses, providing its thesis, background and methodology. Chapter two establishes



the need for making direct text-driven application within any text-driven sermon, including sermons from the Apocalypse. Chapter three defines text-driven application as well as identifies the necessary hermeneutical principles for employment. Chapter four analyzes the apocalyptic genre to determine its function and provides an audience analysis and exegesis of the seven churches of Asia. Chapter five provides a model of text-driven application from a challenging pericope, namely, Rev 11:1–13. Chapter six concludes the dissertation with a summarization and restatement of the thesis.

**“An Intentional Philosophy of Preaching: An Examination of the Relationship between William Perkins’s Homiletic Method and Doctrine of Revelation.” By Adam Lee Hughes. Supervised by Steven Smith.**

This dissertation argues William Perkins’s homiletic was connected to his theology; thus, his preaching method was derived from an intentional preaching philosophy and was not simply a stylistic decision. The argument for the connection is based primarily on Perkins’s philosophy of ministry which is explicit in his work *The Calling of the Ministry*. Chapter one establishes the relevance of the dissertation, traces the current scope of scholarship in the study of Perkins, and identifies the thesis statement as well as the method to be employed in the remainder of the dissertation. Chapter two sets the context for the remainder of the dissertation by describing the historical, biographical, and theological milieu out of which Perkins’s homiletic grew. Chapter three defines the four concepts of Perkins’s preaching ministry from *The Arte of Prophecy* for the purpose of identifying a base by which his theory may be observed in his practice. This chapter also examines Perkins’s extant sermons, searching for the presence of each of the four parts of his homiletic theory. Chapter four searches for a clear understanding of Perkins’s doctrine of Revelation. Again, the idea is to locate a consistent connection from Perkins’s homiletic theory and praxis through his doctrine of Revelation. Chapter five attempts to understand explicitly why Perkins believed it was imperative for a connection to exist between one’s homiletic and bibliology in his preaching ministry. This task will be accomplished by identifying and defining Perkins’s understanding of a true minister, in short his philosophy of preaching, from part one of his text *The Calling of The Ministry*. Chapter six offers eleven implications for contemporary homiletics based on the existence of Perkins’s intentional preaching philosophy, namely the impetus for the connection between his preaching method and his doctrine of Revelation. The conclusion provides suggestions for further research, as well as a summary of the conclusions drawn from this project.

**“A Comparative Study of the Human-Environment Relationship of Two Evangelical Groups.” By Dae Jung Kim. Supervised by William Goff.**

This dissertation assesses the formative, theological, and ethical factors of environmental ethics within two evangelical groups: the evangelical left and the evangelical right. It presents their beliefs in a proper human-environment relationship, and applies these beliefs to the stewardship of creation and relief of the poor. The introduction deals with a statement of the human-environment problem, definitions of significant terms, background and review of resources, the thesis statement, methodology and scope of the literature, and summary of the dissertation. Chapter two identifies formative factors of the two evangelical groups. This research presents the influence of secular or pagan environmentalisms on the development of the two groups. Chapter three investigates theological factors such as God, humanity, creation, and a proper correlation between humanity and creation. Chapter four examines the application of the two worldviews in the stewardship of creation and the relief of human poverty. These worldviews form two different environmental stewardships and influence the two groups' approaches toward the relief of human poverty. Chapter five discusses and critiques the general areas of agreement and differences of the two groups and provides an assessment of the two groups' environmental ethics.

**“Baptist Primitivist: Internal and External Religion in the Theology of Thomas Grantham, 1633-1692.” By Spencer Franklin Plumlee. Supervised by Paige Patterson.**

The purpose of the dissertation is to show that the primitivism of Thomas Grantham has a consistent theological framework focused on “internal religion” and “external religion.” Grantham, a General Baptist pastor in seventeenth-century England, has been the focus of three known dissertations, but none of these has dealt extensively with his theological framework. This dissertation will shed new light on the nature of Grantham's theological framework found in Book 2 of his *Christianismus Primitivus* (1678), the first systematic theology written by a Baptist. Chapter one exposes the reader to the need, purpose, and outline of the dissertation. The thesis of this paper uses terminology unique to Grantham's theology, and this chapter provides definitions of these terms. Chapter two provides an introduction to the life of Grantham, overviewing the cultural and theological context of seventeenth-century England. Chapter three argues that Book 2 of *Christianismus Primitivus* should be the lens through which Grantham's theology should be read as it displays his theological framework: “internal religion” and “external religion.” Within this argument, the third chapter explains the priority of “internal religion” and the supportive role of “external religion.” Chapter four outlines the development of Grantham's theological framework, theologically and historically. The fifth and sixth chapters focus on Grantham's conception of “internal religion,” showing its nature to be conversion and the Christian life. Chapter five addresses conversion, in which Christology

and theology proper function as the theological emphases, and chapter six addresses the Christian life, in which Grantham posits a present and future development. The seventh, eighth, and ninth chapters examine Grantham's conception of "external religion," respectively examining the nature, ordinances, and officers of the church. Each chapter shows that Grantham understands the church to focus on development and protection of "internal religion" within its membership. The final chapter summarizes the conclusions of this dissertation.

**"A Defense of Christian Idealism." By Gregory E. Trickett. Supervised by John Baker Howell, III.**

In the literature on substance ontology, i.e. ontological studies concerning the nature and number of substances that constitute and comprise all of reality, idealism has received short shrift. The lion's share of the discussion is taken up with the two major and normative positions, dualism and materialism. Even within this discussion much ink has been spilled either declaring the death of dualism in favor of materialism or defending dualism in light of these allegations. In this dissertation, the writer undertakes to do three things: first, present a viable, Christian idealism in the spirit of George Berkeley; second, defend that view against the major alternatives in the substance ontology debate and defend it against the most significant philosophical and theological objections; and third, show that the view affords the Christian with certain benefits. In so doing the author hopes to help situate idealism in the current discussion surrounding substance ontology issues and to bring glory to God in an exercise of academic worship.

## **Abstracts of Recently Completed Dissertations in the School of Church and Family Ministries at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary**

### **“The Effect of Paternal-Adolescent Spiritual Communication upon Adolescent Attitudes toward their Father, Life Satisfaction, and Family Satisfaction.” By Brent James Baskin. Supervised by Johnny Derouen.**

The problem of this study was to determine the differences in three areas of relationship satisfaction (life, family, and father) as experienced by adolescents across two groups of paternal-adolescent dyads. Adolescents in group one participated with their fathers in adolescent family-focused spiritual conversations. Adolescents in group two did not participate with their fathers in adolescent family-focused spiritual conversations.

An assessment was administered to adolescents in randomly assigned groups who were in the seventh through twelfth grades during the 2012-13 school year. Adolescents in the control group did not participate in adolescent family-focused spiritual conversations. The treatment group participated in adolescent family-focused spiritual conversations with their father three times a week for four weeks. The students were from seven churches in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and from Heritage Christian Academy in Rockwall, TX. An independent samples t-test was used to determine if there were differences between the two groups.

The independent samples t-test did not show a difference between the two groups on the Family Satisfaction, Life Satisfaction, or the Child Attitude toward Father scales. Thus, alternatives to sit-down family-focused spiritual conversations for fathers must be considered by youth leaders and educators to see increased improvement in these areas. Further study is needed to determine why sit-down family-focused spiritual conversations proved difficult for fathers.

Since no differences occurred, all means were tested using grades as the independent variable. A significant difference between high school adolescents and junior high adolescents was found with high school adolescents scoring higher on the Family Satisfaction, Life Satisfaction and Child Attitude toward Father scales. Therefore, ministers should work to continue to connect younger adolescents to the family. Additionally, the higher scores for high school adolescents may open the door for family and paternal spiritual influence.

### **“Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament as Evidenced by Jesus and Peter.” By Gregory J. Lawson. Supervised by Chris Shirley.**

This dissertation argues that patterns of discipleship exist in the New Testament based on the life and ministry of Jesus and Peter. The foundational pattern for biblical pattern is based on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. An additional pattern is developed in the New Testament with the life and ministry of Peter. Peter follows Jesus' pattern thus expanding and reinforcing

the concept of discipleship inherent within the life and ministry of Jesus.

Chapter one introduces the thesis in the context of a historical and contemporary discipleship deficiency. Chapter two introduces the pattern of Jesus with a focus on Jesus' discipleship patterns, the importance of the Word, modeling, and commissioning. Chapter three explores Peter's pattern of discipleship with a focus on: the importance of the Word, the sufferings and the glory of God, commissioning of disciples, and leadership development. Chapter four provides a synthesis of the conclusions drawn from the project as well as suggestions for further research.

**“The Study of the Relationship between Spiritual Maturity and Marital Commitment among Married Individuals in Selected Korean Churches.”  
By Jong Cheon Lee. Supervised by William Michael McGuire.**

The problem of this study was to determine the relationship between two dimensions of marital commitment, as measured by the Dimensions of Commitment Inventory, and specified predictor variables of spiritual maturity among married individuals in selected Korean churches. Two dimensions of marital commitment were personal and moral commitment. The selected predictor variables of spiritual maturity were awareness, realistic acceptance, instability, grandiosity, and disappointment, measured by the Spiritual Assessment Inventory.

Spiritual Assessment Inventory (SAI) and Dimensions of Commitment Inventory (DCI) were administered to a convenience sample of Korean married individuals attending the ten Korean churches located in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. The total of subjects who were included in the analysis was 241. Two standard multiple regressions were utilized to examine the relationship between two dimensions of commitment (personal and moral) and the five predictor variables of spiritual maturity. The first multiple regression examined the relationship between personal commitment and five subscales of spiritual maturity: awareness, realistic acceptance, instability, grandiosity, and disappointment. The second multiple regression examined the relationship between moral commitment and five subscales of spiritual maturity: awareness, realistic acceptance, instability, grandiosity, and disappointment.

The first multiple regression analysis showed that awareness was a significant positive predictor of personal commitment. However, it showed that realistic acceptance, instability, grandiosity, and disappointment were not significant predictors of personal commitment. The result of this study showed that Korean married individuals who had high levels of an awareness of God tend to have high levels of personal commitment. The second multiple regression analyses showed that awareness was a significant positive predictor of moral commitment. However, it showed that realistic acceptance, instability, grandiosity, and disappointment were not significant predictors of moral commitment. The result of this study showed that Korean married individuals who had high levels of an awareness of God tend to have high levels of moral commitment.

**“A Framework for Curriculum Design for Equipping Russian German Cross-Cultural Missionaries.” By Mickey R. Stockwell. Supervised by Chris Shirley.**

The problem of this study was to create a theologically sound and missiologically effective framework for designing curricula for the equipping of evangelical Russian-German cross-cultural missionaries.

The Delphi Technique was used to obtain unbiased recommendations from Russian-German missionaries for inclusion in curriculum for training cross-cultural missionaries. Twenty experienced and respected missionaries were chosen by missiological experts in the Russian-German context to participate in the study. Responses from the open-ended questions from the first round were synthesized and the missionaries were asked to rate the responses on a scale of 0-5. Responses were prioritized according to the means and standard deviation scores obtained. A group of three missiological experts from the Russian-German context used the information provided to develop the framework for curriculum development.

The hypothesis of this study was that a theologically sound and missiologically effective framework could be developed to guide cross-cultural curricula creation for equipping evangelical Russian-German missionaries. The following research questions were used to gather appropriate information used in developing the framework.

1. What core theological subjects should be included?
2. What key missiological elements should be incorporated in a curriculum design?
3. What are the desired skills and expected outcomes considered necessary to be effective missionaries?
4. What are the common deficiencies in current training programs?

Missionaries were eager to participate because there is a need for holistic-integrated training for cross-cultural missionaries. Theological and missiological subjects are fairly common across cultures; therefore, responses in these areas were typical. Missionaries enthusiastically responded in the areas of skills and attitudes, and deficiencies in current programs. A panel of missiological experts from the Russian-German context utilized responses to develop a culturally appropriate framework for curriculum development based on the needs of students and the desired outcomes of mission sending agencies.

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