

CURRENT THEOLOGY

CURRENT ACCENTS IN LUTHER STUDY: 1960-67

In 1521, the year in which Luther made his stand at Worms in what the Whiggish English historian James Froude has described as "perhaps the finest scene in human history," Luther exclaimed: "We have become the spectacle of the world!" Four and a half centuries later Luther is once again in front and center as the Church reconsiders its past with an eye toward the future. "The historian," quipped the philosopher A. W. Schlegel, "is a prophet looking backward." In the eighteenth century J. G. Hamann, the magus of the North, could lament (1759): "What a shame for our times that the spirit of this man [Luther] who founded our church lies thus under the ashes. What a power of eloquence, what a spirit for interpretation, what a prophet! How good the old wine will taste to you!" A hundred years later Theodosius Harnack declared the renewed study of Luther's theology to be one of the joyous developments in theological scholarship, although his own two-volume work (1862) remained almost a unique effort in the dismal nineteenth century. With the renaissance of Reformation studies in the twentieth century, Luther literature has reached mountainous proportions, so that one American scholar has estimated that more has been written about Luther than about any other person in history with the exception of Christ.

The fifty years between the Reformation celebrations in 1917 and the year 1967 have not only witnessed an increase in volume but also the emergence of many new lines of inquiry in Luther study. The influence of Karl Holl and his school, the impact of crisis theology, and the affinity between our fast-moving tumultuous times and the dramatic revolutionary developments of the sixteenth century have combined to produce Luther studies notable not only for their extent but also for their depth. The years since the Second World War have been marked especially in Germany by a *Wissenschaftswunder* comparable to the fabled *Wirtschaftswunder*. This survey will point up certain trends in Luther research and will cite the most important studies of these last "seven fat years."¹ The Nestor of American Reformation scholars, Roland H. Bainton, once commented that there is hardly any

¹ Titles will be supplied for the more significant monographs and articles which have appeared since those included in John Dillenberger's most recent bibliographical article, "Major Volumes and Selected Periodical Literature in Luther Studies, 1956-1959," *Church History* 30 (1961) 61-87. For earlier reports on progress in research, see the "Bibliography of Bibliographies" in Lewis W. Spitz and Heino O. Kadai, eds., *Guide to Reformation Literature* (St. Louis, 1967), and Vilmos Vajta, ed., *Lutherforschung heute* (Berlin, 1958). I am grateful to Miss Arlene Miller for her assistance in bibliographical research.

aspect of Reformation history which does not require further research or that could not benefit from a re-examination. Viewing the vast operation underway, one receives the distinct impression that scholars are attempting to advance simultaneously on all fronts. And yet the most intriguing developments are in the area of theological studies; for, as Paul Joachimsen once declared, Luther's reformation was essentially theological and any interpretation which does not take this fact into account detracts in a peculiar way from its unique essence.

LUTHER'S RELATION TO SCHOLASTICISM AND HUMANISM

One of the most laudable undertakings in contemporary Luther research is the serious effort being made to establish with greater precision the relation of Luther's thought to its medieval and Renaissance background. Catholic scholars have contributed tremendously erudite work in this area of research.

A simple caricature of the now outdated view of the Scholastic background would look something like this. The old Catholic view held that Luther inherited a decadent form of Scholasticism, which was a major source of his errors (Denifle, Grisar, DeWulf, Gilson). Scholastic theology in the thirteenth century, that greatest of centuries, was Thomistic, integral, and energetic. In 1879 Leo XIII, after all, declared St. Thomas *tutior*, safer than others. Scholastic theology in the fourteenth century was Franciscan, nominalist, and decadent. There was a marked break in continuity between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and the Scholastic doctors Duns Scotus and William of Occam were the primary contributors to the decline of Scholastic theology. The old Protestant view held that there were points of continuity as well as points of divergence between Luther and Scholastic theology (Seeberg, Ritschl, and, in part, even Holl). Scholastic theology in the thirteenth century represented corrupt Thomism, and in the fourteenth corrupt nominalism. Continuity was in evidence, for example, in Luther's view of God, dependent on Occam, or in the idea of the real presence in the Sacrament without a materialistic transubstantiation such as the Fourth Lateran Council had sanctioned in 1215. Luther reacted, however, against the decadent forms of fifteenth-century Scholasticism, opposing to it his Pauline biblical theology. The new knowledge of late medieval thought acquired in recent decades is of critical importance as a corrective to the old picture of Scholasticism and for a better understanding of Luther's religious outlook and formal theology.

An American historian of philosophy at U.C.L.A., Ernest A. Moody, argued (1935) that there was a close tie between Occam and the symbolic logic of late nominalism. E. L. Thompson asserted that logic as a philosophic

discipline did not regain the same level of precision again until the 1920's. The greatest student of the *via moderna*, Paul Vignaux, in his studies of justification and predestination in Scotus, Pierre d'Auriose, Occam, and Gregory of Rimini, stressed the difference between *potentia absoluta*, by which God can do an infinite number of things, and the *potentia ordinata*, by which God does that which He actually does. In a series of articles republished in a collection in 1950, the Franciscan Philotheus Boehner undermined most of the widespread generalizations about Occam. He denied that Occam was an extreme empiricist or skeptic, arguing that Occam held that the mind comes out to work actively on an object—allowing, therefore, for a high degree of empirical knowledge in Occam. Occam lowered the horizontal line dividing things known by revelation alone and by reason, reducing the realm of natural knowledge somewhat from that allowed by Thomas. Ludger Meier, publishing in the *Archivum Franciscanum historicum* (1950), did not see any evidence, however, for a direct influence of Occam on Luther at Erfurt, since Occam's own works were not important at that center.

Gabriel Buescher, writing on the Eucharistic teaching of Occam, described Occam's opposition to remanentism, that the bread remains with the body, and his assertion that quantum belongs to substance and that the accidents adhere to nothing and are sustained by God's will, in contrast to St. Thomas' teaching that the accidents adhered to a quantum that remained. In a work on grace and the Eucharist in Occam's philosophical theology, Erwin Iserloh in 1956 emphasized the negative effect of Occam on Luther's thought, describing his thought as nonsacramental, divorced from revelation, lost in anonymity and in the lack of contractual relationship with God. In the Introduction, Iserloh's mentor, Joseph Lortz, stressed that Occam's thought was no longer "fully Catholic"; for his emphasis on the *potentia absoluta* undermined the reality of sacramental grace, and his Pelagianism followed from his assertion that man could perform all the acts of faith *ex naturalibus*, from his natural abilities. Luther reacted negatively to Occam's unbiblical speculation and Pelagianism, but on the other hand he was so strongly influenced by Occam that he was stunted theologically and failed to achieve the full Catholicity of St. Thomas or of the Roman missal.

Werner Dettloff, *Die Entwicklung der Akzeptions- und Verdienstlehre von Duns Scotus bis Luther unter Berücksichtigung der Franziskanertheologen* (Münster, 1963), stressed the inheritance of the *acceptatio divina* from Duns Scotus via Occam and Gabriel Biel, whom he evaluates very lowly, to Luther.² In a work on theology and philosophy in Luther and in the Occamist tradition (1955), the Swedish Lutheran scholar Bengt Hägglund em-

² Dettloff, pp. 286-90, takes issue with Iserloh.

phasized the difference between Occam's and Luther's understanding of faith and Luther's more modest opinion of the value of philosophy for religious knowledge. His article, "The Background of Luther's Doctrine of Justification in Late Medieval Theology," *Lutheran World* 8 (1961) 24-46, stressed the continuity of Luther's thought with tradition, as did his work on Luther's anthropology published in Lund in 1959. Reinhold Schwarz, *Fides, Spes und Caritas beim jungen Luther unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der mittelalterlichen Tradition* (Berlin, 1962), studied Luther's exegetical lectures from the *Dictata super Psalterium* to the Galatians commentary, in order to demonstrate that from the very beginning Luther denies to *caritas* and the other theological virtues an independent habitual quality. In his commentary on Romans Luther defined grace as a benignity, not as a *habitus*, and openly attacked the idea of *virtus* as an inherent quality in man not first engendered by God.

Two Protestant scholars have focused attention upon Gabriel Biel as a key figure in Luther's relation to late nominalism. Leif Grane, a church historian at the University of Copenhagen, offered a summation of Biel's theology in *Contra Gabrielem: Luthers Auseinandersetzung mit Gabriel Biel in der Disputatio contra scholasticam theologiam 1517* (Copenhagen, 1962). Grane provided a detailed commentary upon the disputation, stressing especially those points on which Luther differed from Biel and went his own road toward reformation. Heiko Augustinus Oberman, head of the Institute for Reformation History at Tübingen, in the first volume of a trilogy on Scholasticism and the Reformation, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), argues for the vigor of late Scholasticism, which was not merely "Schulwissenschaft von Spätlingen gepflegt." He sees Biel as standing with Occam on all basic philosophical and theological issues and transmitting the "impressively coherent structure" of Occam's system to Luther. He was not "halbwissend," leaving misinformation to his intellectual heir. Biel knew Augustine and Gregory best among the Fathers, and Peter Lombard among the Schoolmen, citing Aquinas with precision. He knew canon law and did six volumes of glossae or florilegia on the Scriptures. Biel knew both *viae* but belonged to the *via moderna* school, stressing God's *potentia ordinata*. While man's will has been corrupted, God's grace is not denied to all who *faciunt quod in se est*. Faith as an act of will is a necessary response to the revealed knowledge of God and is not so inimical to or divorced from reason as the usual clichés about nominalism suggest. The nominalists did not push their epistemology through to a logical extreme of skepticism. Christ as savior

has won the *iustitia Christi* for man, but man must merit the complete *iustitia Dei* by doing the works which Christ as lawgiver prescribes, in order to achieve the *meritum de condigno*. In a series of learned articles which suggest the direction of Oberman's investigations into Luther's relation to Scholastic thought, he describes Luther's struggle to free himself from Scholastic theology, his rejection not only of the *facere quod in se est* of nominalism but of the more subtle *fides caritate formata* of Thomism, his evangelical break-through to the all-sufficient *iustitia Christi* imputed to man *sola gratia*, and his Christological hermeneutical principle: "*Facientibus quod in se est Deus non denegat gratiam*: Robert Holcot, O.P., and the Beginnings of Luther's Theology," *Harvard Theological Review* 55 (1962) 317-42; "Some Notes on the Theology of Nominalism," *ibid.* 53 (1960) 47-76; "'Iustitia Christi' and 'Iustitia Dei': Luther and the Scholastic Doctrines of Justification," *ibid.* 59 (1966) 1-26. A recent volume, *Forerunners of the Reformation* (New York, 1966), offers key texts from Scholastic, humanist, and moralistic reformers before the Reformation. Oberman's talented student, William J. Courtenay of Wisconsin University, has with his mentor edited three volumes of *Gabrielis Biel canonis missae expositio* (Wiesbaden, 1963-66) and has written his Harvard dissertation on Biel's teacher Eggenlinus Becker von Braunschweig (d. 1481).

The charitable reflection that if Luther had only known St. Thomas, he would not have been led to reject a Scholastic theology that was no longer fully Catholic (Lortz), has brought into focus the question of Luther's familiarity with Thomism. Stephanus Pfürtner, *Luther und Thomas in Gespräch* (Heidelberg, 1961), studied the question of the certainty of salvation in both and moved on to criticize the decree on justification of the Council of Trent as inadequately expressing the fuller teaching of Thomas and, by implication, misrepresenting Luther. H. Vorster, *Das Freiheitsverständnis bei Thomas von Aquin und Martin Luther* (Göttingen, 1965), and Gerhard Hennig, *Cajetan und Luther: Ein historischer Beitrag zur Begegnung von Thomismus und Reformation* (Stuttgart, 1966), press the investigation farther. Hennig shows that in Cajetan Luther encountered and intelligently engaged in debate the greatest Thomist of the sixteenth century, but that Cajetan had formalized and rigidified Thomas' thought to an unfortunate extent. In actual fact, Luther knew a great deal of Thomas; for among other sources, he read extensive passages quoted in Biel, who as a former Cologne University student had a precise knowledge of such Thomistic formulas as the *fides caritate formata*. Two of Luther's Wittenberg colleagues, in fact, lectured on the *via antiqua*. Otto H. Pesch, O.P., "Freiheitsbegriff und Freiheitslehre bei

Thomas von Aquin und Luther," *Catholica* 17 (1963) 197-244, saw their differences as a crisis of vocabulary, with many basic agreements concealed beneath variant terminology and modes of thought; for when Luther denies freedom, he has a different concept in mind than Thomas when he affirms it. Pesch's 1965 Munich dissertation is a massive work which is to be published in Mainz, *Die Theologie der Rechtfertigung bei Martin Luther und Thomas von Aquin*.

Other studies related to the patristic and medieval background of special interest to Luther scholars are those of Damasus Trapp, an Austrian Austin friar, whose studies of Gregory of Rimini and the Augustinian branch of nominalism have convinced him of the vitality of theology in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; Hayo Gerdes, "Luther und Augustin," *Luther-Jahrbuch*, 1962, pp. 9-24; Bernhard Lohse, "Die Bedeutung Augustins für den jungen Luther," *Kerygma und Dogma* 11 (1965) 116-35; Roland Mousnier, "Saint Bernard and Martin Luther," *American Benedictine Review* 14 (1963) 448-62; George Lindbeck, "Nominalism and the Problem of Meaning as Illustrated by Pierre D'Ailly on Predestination and Justification," *Harvard Theological Review* 52 (1959) 43-76; and Rudolf Hermann, "Zur Kontroverse zwischen Luther und Latomus," *Luther and Melancthon* (ed. Vilmos Vajta; Philadelphia, 1961) pp. 104-18. Obviously, much work remains to be done on Luther and Scholasticism.

Luther's relation to humanism has continued to excite scholarly interest. Lewis W. Spitz, *The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), explored the drive toward religious enlightenment of the humanists from Agricola to Erasmus and related Luther to these efforts, stressing the positive cultural affinities but the theological differences between Luther and the humanists, both in degree and in kind. Maria S. Grossman, *Humanism at Wittenberg, 1486-1517* (diss., Radcliffe College, 1960), underlined Luther's active role, as did Kurt Aland in the Wittenberg-Halle *Festschrift*. The Erasmus-Luther confrontation still intrigues scholars such as Oskar Mehl, "Erasmus contra Luther," *Luther-Jahrbuch*, 1962, pp. 52-64. Martin Burgdorff's study (1928) of Erfurt humanism's influence on Luther is inadequate, and Oswald Schmidt's monograph (1880) on Luther's knowledge of the classics is badly dated. A comprehensive work on Luther's knowledge of patristics similar to Peter Fraenkel's work on Melancthon or even Luchsius Smits's work on Calvin's knowledge of Augustine would make a great contribution. Relatively little attention has been paid in recent years to the question of Luther's relation to mysticism. R. H. Kerbs's Ohio State University dissertation in 1959 was one of the few exceptions to this general tapering off of interest.

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The French historian Michelet, who had written a biography of Luther based on his writings, once cynically defined theology as "the art of befuddling oneself scientifically." The bewildering array of new titles on Luther's theology, the many refinements and subtle differentiations, the recognition that in history there is no such thing as *Voraussetzungslosigkeit* (presuppositionlessness!), might well confuse the neophyte. And yet certain tendencies in research on Luther's theology emerge with a careful look and are seen to be related to larger intellectual and theological movements of our day.

Neo-orthodoxy has given a powerful new impulse to the study of Luther's theology. Karl Barth, in an essay published in that fateful year 1933, "Die Reformation als Entscheidung," republished in *Der Götzte Wackelt!* (Berlin, 1961) pp. 71-86, reminded the world that the Reformation had to do first and foremost with the declaration of Christian truths that were either forgotten or half-forgotten in the Church: the glory and authority of the Bible, the sovereignty of God the creator, the meaning of Jesus Christ as the redeemer of sinful man, the power of faith in this Jesus, the freedom of the Christian in the world, the necessary humility as well as the necessary courage of the true Church. Dialectical theology has an affinity to Luther's *theologia crucis* and the conception of God working *a contrario*. The Barth-Brunner debate on natural theology echoes with overtones from Luther's criticism of all "religion." The transcendence-immanence of God discussion is reminiscent of the contrarities of the *deus absconditus* and *deus revelatus* terminology. The existential concerns raise the question of Luther's paternity of the movement and counterquestions such as whether Luther thought ontologically. It is natural that Hans Küng's attempt to see harmonies between Karl Barth and Catholic theology spilled over into a confrontation with Luther's theology as the incipient stage of Protestant thought.

So many of Luther's writings were occasional, written in a polemical context, and so much of his work was exegetical (including his homiletical writings) rather than systematic, that the scholar must read widely in Luther to begin to understand him. In the twelfth century Robert of Melun conceded: "Sacri patres quod non oppugnabantur non defendebant." So it was with Luther; for we learn from his *Contra Latomum* his views of Scholastic anthropology, from his *De servo arbitrio* against Erasmus his conception of the *omnipotentia generalis* and *necessitas*, and from his writings on the Sacrament against Zwingli his Occamist thesis on the ubiquity of Christ. That is how things go when they are moving, Luther declared, as one can see from the five books of Moses which are such a jumble! Luther planned to write at

least one systematic work *de justificatione*, but fortunately for Protestantism, he never managed to get to it. His one hundred folio volumes, therefore, remain a tremendously deep wellspring from which refreshing insights and new inspiration can constantly be drawn. By the same token, no single simple interpretation can pretend to comprehend all that Luther had to say on any major facet of theology. Otto Wolff, in a work on the main types of modern Luther interpretation, identified six of them and might without effort have added two more, that of Ernst Troeltsch and that of dialectical theology. Two scholars have undertaken statements on the entire range of Luther's theology. The greatest Finnish Luther authority, Lennart Pinomaa, has written *Faith Victorious: An Introduction to Luther's Theology* (Philadelphia, 1963), and Paul Althaus of Erlangen has summarized a lifetime of research in *Die Theologie Martin Luthers* (Gütersloh, 1962; Eng. tr., Philadelphia, 1967).

Theology Proper

Karl Holl went beyond Ritschl's simple ethical picture of God to present Luther's God as a paradoxical unity of anger and love, hiddenness and revealedness. But Holl subordinated the Incarnation and Christology a bit too much to the sovereign God who pronounced His own prerogatives in the first commandment. Eric Vogelsang, Ernst Wolf, Otto Scheel, and above all Erich Seeberg in subsequent decades sought to correct this emphasis in Holl and the distorted picture of German idealism (Dilthey) which had exaggerated Luther's ties to mysticism and his preoccupation with metaphysical and religious speculation. Two emphases seem to predominate in recent works: the stress upon the existential nature of Luther's theology, and the dialectical character of the *theologia crucis et passionis*.

The existential element in Luther's theology, as well as the intellectual line of descent through Kierkegaard to modern existentialism, has for decades intrigued thoughtful men. Man standing immediately *coram Deo*, the importance of personal pronouns in religion (I-Thouism!), and the awesomeness of the abscondite God are themes which can excite even scholars. John Dillenberger's account of scholarly preoccupation with God hidden and revealed reports the extent and depth of Luther research on this subject. Since Gustav Aulen's work on Luther's picture of God (1926), presenting Luther's conception of God as the hidden God in nature and history and the revealed God who can be comprehended only in Christ, the picture of Luther's theology proper has remarkably deepened. Friedrich Kattenbusch and Helmut Bandt in independent studies developed the idea of the Hidden God in the paradoxes of the lowly revelation of Christ and His cross itself. The term

Deus absconditus is biblical, of course, and patristic, appearing in Clement's *Stromata* and Origen's *De principiis*, as well as in the Scholastic *Deus nudus*. Alfred Adam has traced the ancestry and meaning of Luther's concept in a fascinating article, "Der Begriff *Deus absconditus* bei Luther nach Herkunft und Bedeutung," *Luther-Jahrbuch*, 1963, pp. 97-106, beginning with the concept of God's infinity in Scotus and Occam, stressing the immanence of God's Being in all created things, and the comforting nature of the revelation in Christ.

Kjell Ove Nilsson, *Simul: Das Miteinander von Göttlichem und Menschlichem in Luthers Theologie* (Göttingen, 1966), stressed the immanence of God in creation and in the Church, the *simultaneity* or coexistence of God and man in the realms of nature and grace. The Swedish theologian David Löfgren, *Die Theologie der Schöpfung bei Luther* (Göttingen, 1960), sought to fill the gap in the literature with this monograph on Luther's teaching on creation. It is more than a summary of the loci on creation, however, for Luther understood creation as an ongoing act which transpires whenever God acts through His powerful Word. Thus creation is not a completed act and the world is not merely the result of that action, but the Incarnation and the Church are an integral part of God's ongoing creative work.³ A thesis worthy of notice is A. E. Carlson, *The Relevance of Luther's Understanding of the Holy Spirit for Contemporary Theology* (diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1962). Many collections of articles and symposia touch upon the problems of Luther's theology proper.⁴

The existential nature of Luther's theology is a subject much discussed and controverted; for it has come on target not only through the thrust of contemporary philosophy, but has been related to Luther through the contemporary exegesis of the Rudolf Bultmann school. The connection of existentialism with Luther has been traced through the concatenation of influences mediated by Kierkegaard. L. Refsell, *Kierkegaard's Understanding of Luther* (diss., Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, 1964) makes the point. An exegete, the Bultmannian Friedrich Gogarten, declared that "Luther broke the supremacy of the ethical over faith down to the very roots in that he took faith out of the ethical, yes, out of the worldly realm altogether." "In faith," wrote Gogarten, "through the God who approaches him, man is preserved in his humanity and so is established as person. The work of Christ consists in this that the possibility of faith is disclosed to man. Christ's humanity is the presentation and revelation." The sober Luther scholar

³ See Franz Lau's scholarly *Auseinandersetzung* from Löfgren, "Theologie der Schöpfung gleich Theologie überhaupt?" *Luther-Jahrbuch*, 1962, pp. 44-51.

⁴ Such, for example, as Rudolph Hermann, *Gesammelte Studien zur Theologie Luthers und der Reformation* (Göttingen, 1960).

Lennart Pinomaa published (1940) a book on the existential character of the theology of Luther, pointing to the generic relation between a theology of *Anfechtung* or soul-struggle and Luther's religious solutions. The Erlangen theologian Walther von Loewenich has explored the relation of contemporary Protestant thought to Luther in *Luther und der Neuprotestantismus* (Witten, 1963).

One small but weighty recent volume towers above larger books as an important representation of the existential emphasis in Luther interpretation: Gerhard Ebeling's *Luther: Einführung in sein Denken* (Tübingen, 1964).⁵ Ebeling's work is not an introduction to Luther's theology either as an elementary exposition or as an outline of all its parts, but rather as an attempt to reach the core of his theology and to relate its major themes to that vital center. He conceives the center of Luther's theology to be the *verbum incarnatum*. God's Word *extra nos* is the *scopus* of his whole thought, word, and action as reformer. His battle against the Aristotelian amalgam in Scholastic theology was due to the fact that here extraneous philosophical ideas foreign to the Word were mixed in with the evangel. The anxiety of living beneath an abscondite, even wrathful God is relieved by that faith in the Word of God which brings certainty of salvation. The Christian living *coram Deo*, in the presence of the God of love, experiences the unity of faith and love, of trust in God and the love for neighbor. Law and gospel are related by a dialectical alternative, for the *et* in *lex et evangelium* combines an additive and a subtracting function, distinguishing law as the Word of God to us and gospel as the Word of God in us, but relating the two through their correlative and co-ordinating function. Man is not a human essence, but a personal human being in the state of becoming here and now in the temporality of his existence. Concerned to emphasize the relevant and abiding elements of Luther's theology, Ebeling stresses the existential and humanly most urgent components of Luther's thought rather than those of strictly historical interest.

Cheers and cries of dismay greeted the appearance of Albert Brandenburg's *Gericht und Evangelium: Zur Worttheologie in Luthers erster Psalmen-vorlesung* (Paderborn, 1960). Protestants of Bultmannian persuasion observed with keen interest the publication of a work by the Johannes Adam Möhler Institut which offered an existential interpretation of Luther's theology based on the *Dictata*. Catholic Luther scholars such as Joseph Lortz and

⁵ The *periti* will recognize Ebeling as the author of the fundamental work *Evangelische Evangelienauslegung* (Munich, 1942), the most important attempt to analyze Luther's hermeneutics in recent times. See Gerhard Ebeling, "The New Hermeneutics and the Early Luther," *Theology Today* 21 (1964) 34-46. Cf. Eberhard Wölfel's review of his *Luther: Einführung . . .* in the *Luther-Jahrbuch*, 1966, pp. 128-34.

Erwin Iserloh were in anguish over the effect such a reading of Luther might have upon the ecumenical discussions related to a revisionist reading of Luther. "Hat Luther ontisch gedacht oder war er Existentialist?" asked Lortz. "A grotesque misrepresentation!" exclaimed Iserloh. Brandenburg identified *Iudicium* as the basic theological concept, God's Word of judgment which becomes gospel to him who humbly acknowledges its justice. All other antithetical terms such as the spirit and the letter or sin and grace, and all "root ideas" such as the soul-struggle of man or abscondite nature of God, are related to this basic concept. In analyzing the theology of the Word in the *Dictata*, Brandenburg offers a highly existentialist reading. Christ becomes so contemporary in the confrontation by the believer in faith that the historical Christ who lived "then" scarcely seems to have been real, for all that matters in terms of spiritual awakening takes place in and through the Word in the "here and now." Brandenburg is indebted to Ebeling's interpretation of Luther, but he clearly goes too far beyond both Ebeling and Luther to read a Bultmann and Gogarten contemporary existential meaning into Luther's theology. One finds in Luther expressions suggestive of an absolute personalism and actualism which seek to minimize or ignore superordinate entities, as Thomas Sartory has observed, but Luther does not in reality lose sight of the Church or of tradition. Many of Brandenburg's critics take as assertions ideas which he advances as mere suggestions or observations on tendencies in Luther's thought. Moreover, one must recognize the main thrust of his book, namely, a call to wrestle in ecumenical discussions with the most fundamental issues of theology rather than with safe peripheral matters.⁶

A number of studies treat of man's predicament and of his position before God. Especially noteworthy are: Dale Johnson, "Luther's Understanding of God," *Lutheran Quarterly* 16 (1964) 59-69; E. Grislis, "Luther's Under-

⁶ In a contribution to the *Jedin Festschrift, Reformata reformanda* 1 (eds. E. Iserloh and K. Repgen; Münster, 1965) 313-29, "Auf dem Wege zu einem ökumenischen Lutherverständnis," Brandenburg states that he has no intention of making an existentialist out of Luther. See his textual studies: "Solae aures sunt organa Christiani hominis: Zu Luthers Exegese von Hebr. 10:5f.," *Einsicht und Glaube* (G. Söhngen *Festschrift*; Freiburg, 1962) pp. 401-4; "Thesen zur theologischen Begründung der Rechtfertigungslehre Luthers: Röm. 3:4 in Luthers Römerbriefvorlesung," *Unio christianorum* (Lorenz Jaeger *Festschrift*; Paderborn, 1962) pp. 262-66. For Iserloh's severe criticism of Brandenburg's existentialist interpretation, see "'Existentielle Interpretation' in Luthers erster Psalmenvorlesung?" *Theologische Revue* 59 (1963) 73-84. Another harsh critic of Brandenburg is H. Geisser, "Das Abenteuer der Lutherinterpretation als verbindendes Element zwischen den Konfessionen," *Materialdienst des Konfessionskundlichen Instituts* 14 (1963) 81-90. For a Protestant reaction, see Franz Lau, "Luthers Worttheologie in katholischer Sicht," *Luther-Jahrbuch*, 1963, pp. 110-16.

standing of the Wrath of God," *Journal of Religion* 41 (1961) 277-92, based upon his 1957 Yale dissertation; T. N. Tentler, *The Problem of Anxiety and the Problem of Death in Luther, Calvin and Erasmus* (diss., Harvard, 1961); Heinz Bluhm, "Luther's View of Man in His Early German Writings," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 34 (1963) 583-92; C. W. Hovland, "Anfechtung in Luther's Biblical Exegesis," in *Reformation Studies* (ed. Franklin Littell; Richmond, 1962) pp. 46-60; John von Rohr, "Medieval Consolation and the Young Luther's Despair," *ibid.*, pp. 61-74; Paul Hacker, *Das Ich im Glauben bei Martin Luther* (Graz, 1966), a Catholic scholar who points to the believer as an important component in the faith-relation, but sees this subjectivity as a source of Luther's heresy.

Theologia crucis et passionis

S. T. Coleridge declared in a line borrowed from John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*: "In almost all the qualities of a preacher of Christ, Luther after Paul and John is the great master." For Luther, Christ is the true *scopus* of inquiry about God as well as the foundation of faith. In the commentary on the *Magnificat* and throughout his writings Luther never ceased to express wonder at the paradoxical nature of the revelation and soteriology. The word *dennoch*, nevertheless, is the fulcrum of his thought rather than the easy logical *deswegen* or *propter*. God's love is *agapē*, bestowed upon an undeserving and unlovable object. Man is redeemed in spite of his condition of sin or basic unspirituality. Walther von Loewenich, in using the term *theologia crucis* in his highly influential book on Luther's theology, has made the phrase a commonplace for Luther's soteriology and the doctrine of justification. In the young Luther, von Loewenich explained, justification can be understood as the tropological interpretation of the cross of Christ. Christ is the *exemplum* of the *iustificatus* (a point on which Karl Barth criticized Luther). Justification is both a crisis and the establishment of an ethic at the same time.

In recent decades a number of eminent Reformation scholars have written on the central dogmas of justification and sanctification. Von Loewenich's Erlangen colleague Wilhelm Maurer missed the mark in arguing that Luther came to his doctrine of justification through his "creative reproduction of the old church dogma through Augustine" as the ground of all theology. Alex Gyllenkrok argues, in opposition to Regin Prenter, that the early Luther made no distinction between justification and sanctification. Rudolf Hermann stressed the forensic nature of justification. In a book of special profundity, Wilhelm Link proceeded from Luther's formula *simul iustus et peccator* to examine the doctrine of justification. The phrase is not to be understood psychologically, as descriptive of the condition of man's being,

but theologically, stating the fact that the Christian is just in God's eyes thanks to God's forgiving grace, even though in this life man remains in fact a sinner (*iustus in spe, peccator in re*). In Augustine, Thomas, nominalism, and mysticism, Link argued, the kerygmatic content of the gospel is adulterated by the introduction of extraneous elements—grace as *habitus*, for example. Two English Methodists, Philip Watson and Gordon Rupp, made outstanding contributions to the discussion. Watson, however, somewhat overemphasized Luther's theocentrism (the *solī Deo gloria*), without stressing the centrality of God in Christ as did Rupp in his brilliant essays entitled *Coram Deo*. The numerous works of recent years must be understood against the background of this discussion.

Paul Tillich in *The Protestant Era* (p. 196) asserted that "Justification is so strange to the modern man that there is scarcely any way of making it intelligible to him." Perhaps modern man can be rendered teachable by an encounter with this concept in a period in his own historic past. The many ambitious efforts to gain precision and clarity on this vital central point would suggest that more motivation is at work in the minds of scholars of all denominations than merely satisfying their own intellectual curiosity. The antithesis of law and gospel has come in for detailed examination. Martin Schloemann, *Natürliches und gepredigtes Gesetz bei Luther* (Berlin, 1961), investigated the question of the unity of Luther's conception of law, giving special attention to his controversy with the antinomians. He agreed with Franz Lau on the unity of the *lex naturae*, *lex Mosis*, and *lex Christi* in the basic law of love. He agrees with Elert, Bring, Olsson, Pinomaa, and Lau on the opposition or contrast of law and gospel, opposing Karl Barth, who is critical of Luther on this point. Carl Weber, "The Third Use of the Law and Luther's *Lectures on Galatians* (1535)," *American Benedictine Review* 17 (1966) 372-96, explores the law as a guide or rule for the Christian life. A neat contrast on confessional lines can be observed between the evangelical Protestant appreciation of Luther's *sola gratia* emphasis in William Robinson, *The Reformation: A Rediscovery of Grace* (Grand Rapids, 1962), and the work of the Dominican Thomas McDonough, *The Law and the Gospel in Luther: A Study of Martin Luther's Confessional Writings* (Oxford, 1963), a volume which reveals the influence of Lortz's style of ecumenicity.⁷ McDonough centers on the tension between law and gospel, doubt and faith

⁷ Two other Catholic works on the doctrine of grace meriting special attention because of their relevance to this central concern of Reformation theology are Charles Journet, *The Meaning of Grace* (tr. Geoffrey Chapman; New York, 1960), and R. W. Gleason, *Grace* (New York, 1962). Two recent dissertations on sin and justification which should be cited are G. H. Dellbrügge, *Simul iustus et peccator: A Study in the Theologies of Martin Luther and Reinhold Niebuhr* (diss., Yale, 1962), and R. T. Dell, *Man's Freedom and Bondage in the Thought of Martin Luther* (diss., Boston, 1962).

in Luther and seeks to establish three basic points: that according to Luther man remains his whole life as a sinner under the law and wrath of God, that in justification by faith man is purely passive, and that justification is therefore purely forensic and imputative in character. This work is well intentioned, but falls far short of doing Luther's theology justice.

The question of the relationship of faith and good works has been the focus of two new heavyweight studies worthy of special mention: Ole Modalsli, *Das Gericht nach den Werken* (Göttingen, 1963), and Albrecht Peters, *Glaube und Werk: Luthers Rechtfertigungslehre im Lichte der Heiligen Schrift* (Berlin and Hamburg, 1962). Luther's polemic against a piety predicated upon the necessity for good works and his emphasis upon salvation by God's grace alone quite naturally led to the question of the relation of faith and good works. While Luther stressed that the faith of the regenerate man works spontaneously in love for the good of the neighbor, the connection between faith and good works became somewhat tenuous in some Protestant teaching. Wilfried Joest in a work on law and freedom compared Luther's admonitions to good works in accordance with the *tertius usus legis* with the biblical texts which command good works. He pointed to a substantive dialectic of faith and works in St. Paul and in the Gospels, and found the same dialectic and paradox in Luther, if one does not artificially systematize his thought. The Norwegian scholar Modalsli, a student of Joest, continued this investigation, showing that in his sermons of the 1530's, in the catechisms, in the university disputations, as well as in the Galatians and Romans commentaries, Luther ascribed a declarative significance to good works, which serve as proofs of the living and saving faith within. Modalsli placed the meaning of God's judgment according to man's works in the center of his investigation (*locus iudicii operum*) and wrestled with the problematics involved in Luther's sermons admonishing to good works in anticipation of the final judgment and his adherence to the doctrine of justification by faith alone (*locus iustificationis*). Luther's teaching on the necessity of good works received emphasis in the antinomian controversy. Peters centered his attention primarily upon the fusion of faith and good works in the total life of the Christian. Luther's doctrine of justification, as Karl Holl had already discovered in the Romans commentary, embraced a variety of biblical modes and expressions and was not restricted to a simple forensic justification. Of interest in this connection is I. D. K. Siggins' *Luther's Doctrine of Christ in His Sermons on St. John's Gospel* (diss., Yale, 1964).

The discussion of Luther's fidelity to St. Paul's anthropology or his "creative" handling of the texts (*Hat Luther Paulus entdeckt?*), initiated by Hans Pohlmann and Paul Althaus, seems to have subsided these past few years.

Brian Gerrish, a student of Wilhelm Pauck and a professor at the University of Chicago Divinity School, contributed a brilliant book to the discussion of the role of reason in Luther's theology, *Grace and Reason* (Oxford, 1962). He showed that Luther used the term "reason" in three different ways: as natural reason which is the glory of God's creation, regenerate reason of the man of faith, and arrogant reason of unspiritual man which refuses to accept God's Word on His terms. Because of Luther's fulminations against the arrogance of man in this context—for reason is used figuratively for the *totus homo* in his various natural, spiritual, or unspiritual conditions—he is wrongly classified as an antirationalist by popular theologically-uninformed writers. Gerrish has also contributed a brief but substantial article on "Atonement and 'Saving Faith,'" *Theology Today* 17 (1960) 181-91. Gerrish's conclusions agree in a general way with those arrived at by Bernhard Lohse in discussing the reason-and-faith problem. Robert H. Fischer has contributed a study of the role of reason, diverging slightly from Gerrish, in his article "The Place of Reason in Luther's Theology," *Lutheran Quarterly* 16 (1964) 41-48. Worth special mention is the article by R. L. Greaves, "Luther's Doctrine of Grace," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 18 (1965) 385-95.

The question of the *initia Lutheri*, pointed up decades ago by Karl Holl, continues to exercise the ingenuity of scholars. The debate as to an early (1513-14) or late (1518-19) date for the *Turmerlebnis* and the interpretation of Luther's own 1545 account of his road to reformation continues unabated. Ulrich Nembach alludes to the issues in a brief article, "Zur Problematik von Luthers Turmerlebnis," *Theologische Zeitschrift* (Basel), 1963, pp. 106-12. Kurt Aland has pressed even farther the argument for a late date, familiar from the earlier books of Uuras Saarnivaara, Carl Stange, and Ernst Bizer. In his *Der Weg zur Reformation: Zeitpunkt und Charakter des reformatorischen Erlebnisses Martin Luthers* (Munich, 1965), Aland made a case for dating the "tower experience" between February 15 and March 28, 1518. On the other hand, textual studies of the first publications and of the great commentaries of the years 1513 to 1518 support the belief that Luther from the very beginning conceived of the *iustitia Christi* imputed to man in a way at variance with Scholastic theology and that he gained increasing clarity on this point from the *Dictata* through the Romans, Galatians, Hebrews, and the second Psalms commentaries. The introduction by Wilhelm Pauck to his *Library of Christian Classics* edition of *Luther: Lectures on Romans* (Philadelphia, 1961) is both lucid and profound in making this point. Four additional studies may be cited: Heinz Bluhm, "The Idea of Justice in Luther's First Publication," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 37 (1966) 565-72; Heinrich Bornkamm, "Zur Frage der *Iustitia Dei* beim jungen Luther," *Archiv für Reformations-*

geschichte 52 (1961) 16-29; 53 (1962) 1-60, which supports Pauck's general conclusions; Robert Stockmann, *Der königliche Weg* (Mainz, 1965), a study of Luther's understanding of the way of salvation in his lectures on Romans; and Joachim Rogge, "Die Initia Zwinglis und Luthers," *Luther-Jahrbuch*, 1963, pp. 107-33.

The Word, Scripture, and Tradition

One of the three cardinal principles of the Reformation, the *sola scriptura*, has come in for close examination in connection with the current controversy over a new hermeneutics as well as with the polemical assertion that Luther was not a *Vollhörer* or good listener to the "whole counsel" of the Scriptures. Perhaps Luther's exegetical principle was more radical than older Protestantism imagined. There is no easy yes-or-no answer to these questions, but the general thrust of recent works seems to establish the point that Christ as the Word was the real *scopus* of Luther's exegesis and not merely the doctrine of justification as such. Walther von Loewenich, in his work on Luther's understanding of Johannine Christianity and his exegesis of the Synoptic Gospels, underlined the fact that in spite of his Pauline orientation Luther lived in the world of the Gospels and displayed in his exegesis an astonishing freedom toward his own formulas. Von Loewenich saw an unmistakable tendency in Luther toward demythologizing and an existential interpretation implied in Luther's insistence on the necessity for engagement by faith in what the Scriptures record as having transpired. If he was not a *Vollhörer* in an additive sense, he was so in terms of depth of understanding and willingness to hear the strongest words spoken in the Scriptures, words of law and words of promise. As the first theologian since Irenaeus to employ a theological rather than a historical or ecclesiastical basis for the canon, Luther's whole approach to the Scriptures had a freshness and a relevance still felt in scientific theology today.

Recent books and articles on Luther as an exegete are: Willem Jan Kooiman, *Luther and the Bible* (Philadelphia, 1961); Wolfgang Zucker, "Linguistic Philosophy and Luther's Understanding of the Word," *Lutheran Quarterly* 15 (1963) 195-211; Werner Kuemmel, "The Continuing Significance of Luther's Prefaces to the New Testament," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 37 (1966) 573-81; Otto Hof, "Luther's Exegetical Principle of the Analogy of Faith," *ibid.* 38 (1967) 242-46; Douglas Carter, "Luther as Exegete," *ibid.* 32 (1961) 517-25. Luther's exegetical principle was Christological rather than historical-literal, related to Jean Gerson and Lefèvre d'Étaples' spiritual and Messianic tropological approach rather than to Nicholas de Lyra's literal emphasis. See Heiko Oberman's vigorous state-

ment, "Preaching and the Word in the Reformation," *Theology Today* 18 (1961) 16-29. As *doctor in Biblia*, Luther commented on the Old Testament professionally and so extensively that Heinrich Bornkamm concluded that at a modern university Luther would have had the chair of Old Testament studies. Specialized recent writings on Luther's exegesis of Old and New Testament books which merit special mention are: L. M. Blankenheim, "Die Richtervorlesung Luthers," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 51 (1960) 1-18; Gerhard Krause, *Studien zu Luthers Auslegung der kleinen Propheten* (Tübingen, 1962), in which Krause goes beyond a philological analysis to compare the traditional elements and the new accents as Luther pressed toward an evangelical-theological interpretation of the minor prophets; and Karin Bornkamm, *Luthers Auslegungen des Galaterbriefs von 1519 und 1531* (Berlin, 1963), in which this student of Hans Rückert demonstrates the completeness of Luther's evangelical theological development in the first commentary and finds only differences in individual minor points and in emphases in the second commentary. Luther had respect for tradition, the democracy of the dead, and did not, of course, advocate arbitrary subjective-private interpretation deviating from the *doctrina evangelii* of Christ's pure Church.

Church and Sacraments

Whereas formerly stress was often placed upon the distinctive emphasis of Luther upon the priesthood of all believers and the hidden, not to say invisible, nature of the Church, recent works seem to stress Luther's awareness of the continuity of the Church and his concern for the welfare and unity of the whole Christian Church on earth. A representative work is Wolfgang Höhne, *Luthers Anschauung über die Kontinuität der Kirche* (Berlin, 1964). John Headley, *Luther's View of Church History* (New Haven, 1963), emphasized that Luther thought of history in biblical terms and categories rather than in humanistic or even in Augustinian terms. He does not, however, bring out any development in Luther's thought. Martin Schmidt, in a summary statement, places Luther's understanding of *Heilsgeschichte* within the context of his view of history as such: "Luthers Schau der Geschichte," *Luther-Jahrbuch*, 1963, pp. 17-69. Schmidt employs the usual categories for his discussion which are familiar to Luther scholars from such books as Krumwiede, Zahrnt, and Walther Koehler.

Luther's view of the Church as the kingdom of God's grace has been compared in various studies with that of earlier thinkers and with the Catholic and sectarian teachings. In the *Gedenkschrift für D. Werner Eiert: Beiträge zur historischen und systematischen Theologie* (eds. F. Hübner et al.; Berlin,

1955), Ernst Kinder compares Augustine's and Luther's concepts of the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world, Martin Schmidt compares Wyclif's conception of the Church with Augustine's and Luther's, and Holsten Fagerberg examines Luther's conception of the Church in his lectures on the Psalms. François Refoulé, "L'Eglise et le Saint-Esprit chez Luther et dans la théologie catholique," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 48 (1964) 428-70, reveals the influence of the Lundensian school in his treatment of motifs. Clarence Bauman, "The Theology of the 'Two Kingdoms': A Comparison of Luther and the Anabaptists," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 38 (1964) 37-49, is instructive, though predictable. For a Lutheran view, see William A. Johnson, "Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms," *Lutheran Quarterly* 15 (1963) 239-49.

A wholesome corrective to the misconception that Luther's "unsichtbare Kirche" was a disembodied assembly of souls or a "Platonic city" and that his stress on the Word minimized the sacraments as Word of forgiveness is to be found in the following studies on Church, ministry, and the sacraments: Cyril Eastwood, *The Priesthood of All Believers: An Examination of the Doctrine from the Reformation to the Present Day* (Minneapolis, 1962); Douglas Stange, "The Martyrs of Christ: A Sketch of the Thought of Martin Luther on Martyrdom," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 37 (1966) 640-44; and Brian Gerrish, "Priesthood and Ministry in the Theology of Luther," *Church History* 34 (1965) 404-22. Hellmut Lieberg, *Amt und Ordination bei Luther und Melanchthon* (Göttingen, 1962), offers the first comprehensive monograph on the subject since that of G. Rietschel in 1889. He stresses the call to the office, the divine character of the office, the importance of ordination, and the way in which Luther derives the office from the priesthood of all believers. Both Luther and Melanchthon related the office to the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments as the means of grace to the central purpose of the office.

The sacraments as the means of grace and as carriers of the Word of promise is a central theme of various studies of Luther's sacramental teachings. Special mention must be made of the following studies: Harry G. Coiner, "The Inclusive Nature of Holy Baptism in Luther's Writings," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 33 (1962) 647-57; Regin Preter, "Eucharistic Sacrifice according to the Lutheran Tradition," *Theology* 67 (1964) 286-97; and a thesis, R. J. Goeser, *Word and Sacrament: A Study of Luther's View as Developed in the Controversy with Zwingli and Karlstadt* (diss., Yale, 1961). A minor intra-Lutheran sacramentarian controversy is reflected in the exchange between two Luther scholars in these articles: William H. Lazareth, "Sacraments of the Word in Luther," *Lutheran Quarterly* 12 (1960) 315-30; Edward Emmers,

"Did Luther Advocate Feeding Faith on Christ's Testament?" *ibid.* 13 (1961) 173; Lazareth, "A Reply on the Relation of Word and Sacrament in Luther," *ibid.*, pp. 173-77.

Individual and Social Ethics, Society and the State

The questions raised by Johannes Heckel and other scholars in earlier books about the relation of natural law to the law of love, to the Decalog, and to the Sermon on the Mount (evangelical counsels?) continue to play a role in the discussion of Luther's ethical theory. The most comprehensive recent treatment of Luther's ethics, Paul Althaus' *Die Ethik Martin Luthers* (Gütersloh, 1965), may be viewed as a complement or companion to his general work on Luther's theology discussed above. In this work he describes the Christian as a citizen of two very different kingdoms, of God and of the world, and he relates the eschatological tension in Luther's thought to this position of the Christian. The relation of the ethical life to the faith of the believer is explained and emphasized in three works of special value: Carter Lindberg, *Luther's Concept of Love: A Critique of Anders Nygren's Interpretation of Martin Luther* (diss., Iowa University, 1965); Donald Ziemke, *Love for Neighbor in Luther's Theology* (Minneapolis, 1963); and William Lazareth, *Luther and the Christian Home: An Application of the Social Ethics of the Reformation* (Philadelphia, 1960).

Luther's opposition to monasticism was based not merely upon the good-works assumption underlying it, or upon the notion of a superior form of religious life implicit in it, but upon the idea that it was not socially productive and that the Christian should serve his neighbor in life in the world rather than withdraw from it. Bernhard Lohse, *Mönchtum und Reformation: Luthers Auseinandersetzung mit dem Mönchsideal des Mittelalters* (Göttingen, 1963), proceeds from a study of Luther's *De votis monasticis* to a consideration of the general principles upon which he based his objections. In view of the growing number of monastic and fraternal establishments within the Evangelical Church of Germany and France, Luther's views have a new interest, as reflected in the little work by René H. Esnault, *Luther et le monachisme aujourd'hui* (1964).

On Church-state issues, William Mueller's *Church and State in Luther and Calvin* (Garden City, N.Y., 1965) is a paperback reissue. It is a work of considerable value, except for a few compulsive obiter dicta on pedobaptism. Lewis W. Spitz, "The Impact of the Reformation on Church-State Issues," in *Church and State under God* (ed. Albert Huegeli; St. Louis, 1964) pp. 59-112, 459-72, undertakes with a measure of success to point up the changes effected by the Reformation in Church-state relations and provides laborious

bibliographical detail. Conrad Bergendorf relates Luther's political views with his social ethic in a brief article, "Christian Love and Public Policy in Luther," *Lutheran Quarterly* 13 (1961) 218-28. The general thrust of these studies is to underline the fact that Luther both preached and practiced the Christian's duty to be involved in the solution or amelioration of society's problems right down to the day he died, after settling a dispute between the counts of Mansfeld in the dead of winter.

In connection with social ethics and the historical impact of the Reformation upon social problems, an enormous literature has developed in recent decades. Thanks in part to Friedrich Engels' preoccupation with the Peasants' Revolt, Marxist historians such as Meusel, Smirin, Steinmetz, and Leo Stern have been hyperactive in analyzing the background of, and class conflicts in, the Reformation movement.⁸ This literature is analyzed and the borrowings from "bourgeois" historians exposed in a thesis by Abraham Friesen of the University of California, Santa Barbara, *The Marxist Interpretation of the Reformation* (diss., Stanford, 1967), to be published also in German by the Institut für Europäische Geschichte in Mainz. A Lutheran campus pastor at Berkeley, Ralph Moellering, offers an essay with a relevant ring, "Attitudes toward the Use of Force and Violence in Thomas Muentzer, Menno Simons, and Martin Luther: A Comparative Study with Reference to Prevalent Contemporary Positions," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 31 (1960) 405-27. A final article meriting special attention is by the distinguished author of *The Reformation Era* (2nd ed.; New York, 1964), Harold J. Grimm of Ohio State University, "Social Forces in the German Reformation," *Church History* 31 (1962) 3 ff. Grimm is very interested in the role of the city councils in such centers as Nuremberg.

A score of books have appeared on Luther and culture, Luther and the fine arts, Luther and education, Luther and the twentieth century, Luther and the English Reformation, and many other specialized topics. These will have to be omitted from the present survey in the interest of another subject more closely related to theological studies, namely, the new ecumenical appreciation of Luther.⁹

⁸ Günter Fabiunke, *Martin Luther als Nationalökonom* (Berlin, 1963), undertakes to establish Luther as the oldest German national economist and as a thorough anticapitalist. The value of the book is sadly reduced by its heavy Marxist bias.

⁹ A few representative titles may be listed at random as an indication of the type of books appearing in these various areas: Georg Wünsch, *Luther und die Gegenwart* (Stuttgart, 1961), with some fine pages on Luther and Marx; Joseph McLelland, *The Reformation and Its Significance Today* (Philadelphia, 1962), based on popular lectures; M. L. Bluhm, *Martin Luther: Creative Translator* (St. Louis, 1965); Oskar Thulin, "Luther in den Darstellungen der Künste," *Luther-Jahrbuch*, 1965, pp. 9-27; Ivar Asheim, *Glaube und Erziehung*

THE ECUMENICAL LUTHER

The ecclesiastical climate has changed remarkably since Hurrell Froude remarked that the best to be said for the Reformers was that they burned well, or Dean Inge referred to Luther as "the vulgar disrupter of Christianity, a merry monster who ate his food on fast days, kissed his nun wife, berated the pope, and utterly rejected philosophy." In fact, the days of vicious polemic seem now merely like an episode in the distant past, when Heinrich Denifle delivered what Fr. Thomas Sartory has described as his "pan-sexual interpretation" of the Reformation and Hartman Grisar, S.J., his "pathological" reading of Luther's psyche. The Reformation is no longer maligned as the *cloaca maxima* draining off the impurities into Protestantism (Denifle). Prof. Joseph Lortz, now of the Institute for European History in Mainz, was clearly the pioneer of ecumenical revisionism, expressing high regard for Luther's person and accepting him as a *homo religiosus*, and even as a prophetic figure. Lortz regretted Luther's subjectivity and unwillingness to accept ecclesiastical authority, but in two more recent essays he concluded that in the Romans commentary Luther had not yet moved beyond Catholic teaching and gave a more positive judgment of Luther's theology than he had previously done. Lortz's major work, *Die Reformation in Deutschland* (2 vols.; Freiburg, 1939-40), has appeared in its fourth edition in 1962.¹⁰ In a three-volume work, Adolf Herte followed the long life of Johannes Cochlaeus' defamations of Luther in Catholic historiography and suggested that some Protestant scholar might do a parallel history of the idea of the pope as Antichrist in Protestant historiography. Johannes Hessen, Peter Manns, Erwin Iserloh, Thomas Balling, and Hans Küng are some of the names of Catholic scholars who appeared early on the ecumenical scene. Be it said that there are still some vestigial remains or throwbacks to the pre-Lortz era at large, notably Reinhold Weijenborg, but times have changed. Lortz's influence is evident in the English-speaking world, as a biography by an English Catholic layman indicates, namely, John Todd, *Martin Luther*

bei Luther (Heidelberg, 1961), indicating how Luther approached education as a theologian, not a pedagogical theorist; Erwin Doernberg, *Henry VIII and Luther* (Stanford, 1961); John S. Oyer, *Lutheran Reformers against Anabaptists* (The Hague, 1964).

¹⁰ Two of Lortz's lesser works have been translated into English: Daniel O'Hanlon, S.J., ed., *How the Reformation Came* (New York, 1964), and John C. Dwyer, S.J., ed., *The Reformation: A Problem for Today* (Westminster, Md., 1964). The two articles more favorable to the Luther of 1515-16 and expressing greater appreciation of Luther's theological stance are Joseph Lortz, "Luthers Römerbriefvorlesung: Grundanliegen," *Trierer theologische Zeitschrift* 71 (1962) 129-53, 216-47, and "Martin Luther: Grundzüge seiner geistigen Struktur," *Reformata reformanda (Festgabe für Hubert Jedin)* 1 (eds. E. Iserloh and K. Repgen; Münster, 1965) 214-46.

(Westminster, Md., 1964), an admirer of Gordon Rupp. Typical of the earlier historico-biographical phase of the ecumenical Catholic Luther research was Iserloh's booklet denying that Luther had actually nailed the ninety-five theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. Rather, he argued, as a dutiful and obedient son of the Church, Luther sent the theses to Archbishop Albrecht and Bishop Jerome, his ecclesiastical superiors.¹¹ Several articles have already been published which chronicle and assess Catholic ecumenical historiography.¹² It remains to point to some of the more substantive recent monographs and to seek out the most significant tendencies currently in evidence.

¹¹ Erwin Iserloh, "Luthers Thesenanschlag: Tatsache oder Legende?" *Trierer theologische Zeitschrift* 70 (1961) 303-12 (reprinted, Wiesbaden, 1962). The tracts and treatises have multiplied so prolifically that only a few titles can be included here. Iserloh was led to investigate the "myth" of the nailing episode when Hans Volz undertook to prove that it took place on the morning of November 1 rather than on the evening of October 31: *Martin Luthers Thesenanschlag und dessen Vorgeschichte* (Weimar, 1959). Others defended the historicity of the event and deny duplicity on Luther's part; thus Kurt Aland, "Der Thesenanschlag fand—und zwar am 31. Oktober 1517—statt," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 16 (1965) 686-94. Clemens Honselmann, *Urfassung und Drucke der Ablass-thesen Martin Luthers und ihre Veröffentlichung* (Paderborn, 1966), advanced the dubious argument that Luther produced two versions of the theses, one sent to the Archbishop and Bishop and another with the preamble prepared for publication in reaction to Tetzel's anti-theses. The course of the controversy, to date as yet unresolved, can be followed in these reports on the scholarly debate: Bernhard Lohse, "Der Stand der Debatte über Luthers Thesenanschlag," *Luther* 34 (1963) 132-36; H. Steitz, "Luthers 95 Thesen: Stationen eines Gelehrtenstreites," *Jahrbuch der hessischen kirchengeschichtlichen Vereinigung* 14 (1963) 179-91; and Franz Lau, "Die gegenwärtige Diskussion um Luthers Thesenanschlag," *Luther-Jahrbuch*, 1967, pp. 11-59.

¹² Representative titles are: M. Lienhard, "La place de Luther dans le dialogue protestant-catholique actuel," *Positions luthériennes*, no. 2 (1965) pp. 65 ff.; Ricardo García-Villoslada, "Joseph Lortz y la historiografía sobre Lutero," *Arbor*, 1964, pp. 5-27; Daniel B. Carroll, "The Protestant Reformation: Varieties of Catholic Response," *American Benedictine Review* 15 (1964) 530-41; Patrick McGrath, "Catholic Historians and the Reformation," *Blackfriars*, March-April, 1963, pp. 108-15, 156-63; Per Erick Persson, "The Reformation in Recent Roman Catholic Theology," *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 2 (1963) 24-31; Otto H. Pesch, O.P., "Twenty Years of Catholic Luther Research," *Lutheran World* 13 (1966) 303-16; K. Forster, "Wandlungen des Lutherbildes," *Studien und Berichte der katholischen Akademie in Bayern*, no. 36 (Würzburg, 1966); Walther von Loewenich, "Evangelische und katholische Lutherdeutung der Gegenwart in Dialog," *Luther-Jahrbuch*, 1967, pp. 60-89; Erwin Iserloh, "Luther in katholischer Sicht heute," *Concilium* 2 (1966) 231-35. Hopefully soon to appear is a full-scale report by Werner Beyna, *Das moderne katholische Lutherbild*, as Volume 7 of *Koinonia: Beiträge zur ökumenischen Spiritualität und Theologie*, ed. Thomas Sartory.

Thomas Sartory observed¹² that Catholic writings on Luther are moving from the personal appreciation of Luther as a religious man and the historical investigation of his dogmatic development in relation to fixed Catholic positions to a genuine discussion of the essential theological convictions of the reformer. This discussion is no longer limited to the questions of the extent to which Luther can be excused for his aberrations because of the low estate of Catholic thought in his day or of the elements in Luther which can be salvaged as still authentically Catholic. The discussion has become ever more earnest and consequential in searching for the fundamental structural base upon which single dogmatic statements rest and testing their acceptability on the basis of the scriptural source of religious knowledge (Scripture as the only legitimate source of tradition). Luther's theology is in the center of an ecumenical historical dialogue, without condescension and with fewer prejudgments than ever before.

The studies by Otto Pesch, O.P., and other Catholic scholars noted above which compare Luther and St. Thomas in a constructive way, as well as those wrestling with central concerns such as Luther's teachings on justification and sanctification, are a part of the new phase of ecumenical Luther studies. Because of his long and devoted association with Joseph Lortz, Peter Manns's contribution to the Jedin *Festschrift* is a most notable evidence of a second stage of development in the ecumenical approach to Luther: "*Fides absoluta* und *Fides incarnata*: Zur Rechtfertigungslehre Luthers im Groszen Galater-Kommentar," *Reformata reformanda* 1, 265-312. Manns argues that Luther's emphasis on the *fides absoluta* (i.e., *sola fide*) was a natural reaction against work-righteousness and was a reflex response to the formula *fides caritate formata* understood in a work-righteous sense. But Luther really held a *fides incarnata* to be essential, which acknowledged the necessary relation of faith and love, for in faith the Christian already possesses love. Two Catholic scholars have given a positive interpretation to Luther's formula *simul iustus et peccator*: the brilliant theologian Karl Rahner, "Gerecht und Sünder zugleich," *Schriften zur Theologie* 6 (Einsiedeln, 1965) 262-76, and Reinhard Kösters, "Luthers These 'Gerecht und Sünder zugleich,'" *Catholica* 18 (1964) 48-77, 193-217; 19 (1965) 138-62, 171-85. The Innsbruck liturgical authority Hans Bernhard Meyer, *Luther und die Messe* (Paderborn, 1964), in the light of the reforms of Vatican II, offered a favorable assessment of Luther's liturgical reforms in contrast to the sacramental practices in the late Middle Ages.

Otto Pesch, O.P., in an article on "Catholic Luther Research," has noted

¹² Thomas Sartory, "Martin Luther in katholischer Sicht," *Una sancta* 16 (1961) 38-54.

that also Romance-language countries have joined intensively in the scholarly discussion of Luther's theology, though still somewhat behind the latest development in Germany.¹⁴ In America John Dolan's *History of the Reformation: A Conciliatory Assessment of Opposite Views* (New York, 1965), offers essays on historiographic controversies, medieval failures at reform efforts, and the reassertion of papal power in the Catholic Reformation. The book shows signs of haste, however, and some superficial judgments. Pesch also in the same article cites five dissertations approved by Catholic theological faculties which upon publication will strengthen further the current tendency both to look behind traditionally-accepted Catholic dogmatic formulations and to explore earnestly the theology of the evangelical reformer in search of a hidden consensus, a foundation upon which a united Christendom may make its stand.

A number of Protestant Reformation scholars have laid great stress upon the catholicity of Luther and the concern of the Reformers for the whole Christian Church on earth. John T. McNeill published a revised edition of his pioneering 1930 volume *Unitive Protestantism* (Richmond, 1964). Jaroslav Pelikan, *Obedient Rebels: Catholic Substance and Protestant Principle in Luther's Reformation* (New York, 1964), explored the paradox that Luther was more "Catholic" than many of his opponents. Gustaf Aulen's book has been translated into English as *Reformation and Catholicity* (Philadelphia, 1961). In a work comprehensive but not well integrated, Gottfried Edel explored the Catholic elements in the young Luther: *Das gemeinkatholische mittelalterliche Erbe beim jungen Luther* (Marburg, 1962), written by an evangelical scholar at Lortz's Institute in Mainz. Peter Fraenkel, *Einigungsbestrebungen in der Reformationszeit* (Wiesbaden, 1965), pointed to the concern for unity even in the age of controversy.¹⁵

At the close of an article on the interpretation of the Reformation, Roland H. Bainton concluded modestly with the words "much work remains to be done."¹⁶ With the community of scholars dedicated to a common pursuit of

¹⁴ Otto Pesch, O.P., "Catholic Luther Research," *Lutheran World* 13 (1966) 313-16. See also A. Ebeneter, "Luther und das Konzil," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 84 (1962) 1-48; and Avery Dulles, "Luther's Unfinished Reformation," *Catholic Mind* 43 (1965) 32-35.

¹⁵ See also Hans Asmussen *et al.*, *The Unfinished Reformation* (tr. R. J. Olsen; Notre Dame, 1961); James Atkinson, *Rome and Reformation* (London, 1966); and Walther von Loewenich, *Der moderne Katholizismus* (Witten, 1963).

¹⁶ Reprinted in Lewis W. Spitz, ed., *The Reformation—Material or Spiritual?* (Boston, 1962) pp. 1-7.

historical truth and theological insight, prospects for progress are very bright indeed.¹⁷

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¹⁷ See also the reports on "Luther Research since 1945" by Friedrich Kantzenbach, Regin Prenter, Lauri Haikola, Carter Lindberg, and Otto Pesch in *Lutheran World* 13 (1966) no. 3. The *Luther-Jahrbuch* includes an annual Luther bibliography. Jean Delumeau, *Naissance et affirmation de la Réforme* (Paris, 1965), offers an outline of historiographic variations through the centuries. A second edition of the *Bibliographie de la Réforme 1450-1648: Oeuvres parus de 1940 à 1955* appeared in Leiden, 1961. Above all, the publication of Josef Benzing's monumental *Lutherbibliographie: Verzeichnis der gedruckten Schriften Martin Luther bis zu dessen Tod* (3 vols.; Baden Baden, 1965-66) will be a tremendous boon to future Luther research.