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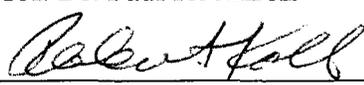
"WHY THEN THE LAW?"
SALVATION HISTORY AND THE LAW IN
MARTIN LUTHER'S INTERPRETATION OF GALATIANS
1513-1522

A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Historical Theology
In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By
Erik Horst Herrmann
May, 2005

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Prof. Dr. Robert Kolb Reader

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ABBREVIATIONS

- AWA *D. Martin Luther. Operationes in Psalmos: 1519-1521.* Archiv zur Weimarer Ausgabe der Werke Martin Luthers: Texte und Untersuchungen, eds. Gerhard Hammer and Manfred Biersack, vols. 1 and 2 (Cologne/Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1981/91).
- Benzing *Lutherbibliographie*, Bibliotheca Bibliographica Aureliana, vol. 10/143, eds. Josef Benzing / Helmut Claus, 2 vols. (Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner, 1989/1994).
- Biblia* *Biblia cum postillis Nicolai de Lyra et expositionibus Guillelmi Britonis in omnes prologos S. Hieronymi et additionibus Pauli Burgensis replicisque Matthiae Doering.* (Nürnberg: Anton Koberger, 1487).
- CCCM *Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1967f.).
- CCSL *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* (Turnhout, 1954 ff.).
- CSEL *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1866 ff.).
- GCS *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte.* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1897-1949).
- Glossa* *Biblia Latina cum Glossa Ordinaria: Facsimile Reprint of the Editio Princeps Adolph Rusch of Strassburg 1480/1,* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1992).
- PG *Patrologia Graeca*, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris: 1857-66).
- PL *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris: 1844-66).
- RGG³ *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft*, 3d. edition, ed. Kurt Galling (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1958).
- S. Pauli* Jacobus Faber Stapulensis, *S. Pauli epistolae XIV ex Vulgata, adiecta intelligentia ex graeco, cum commentariis.* Faksimilie-Neudruck der Ausgabe Paris 1512 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1978).
- SBO *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, ed. Jean Leclercq, O.S.B. (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957f.).
- SC *Sources Chrétiennes* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1942ff.).
- Sent.* *Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae.*

- WA *Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Schriften*, 1 ff. vols. Eds. J.F.K. Knaake et al. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883ff.).
- WABr *Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Briefe*, 18 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1930-1986).
- WATr *Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Tischreden*, 6 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1912-21).

All translations of primary sources are my own unless otherwise noted. For English translations of Luther I have consulted the American edition of Luther's works when applicable (*Luther's Works*, eds. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut Lehmann, 55 vols. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, and Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955f.). Nevertheless, the translations remain my own, as do any errors.

Psalm citations follow the numbering of the Gallican Psalter as found in the Latin Vulgate, rather than modern English editions of the Bible.

Quotations from critical editions have retained the format of the original when indicating the biblical text or manuscript peculiarities. Sometimes this will appear in the form of capitalization, in other instances as bold or extended type.

ABSTRACT

Herrmann, Erik H. “ ‘Why Then the Law?’ Salvation History and the Law in Martin Luther’s Interpretation of Galatians 1513-1522.” Ph.D. Diss., St. Louis, MO: Concordia Seminary, 2005. 283 pp.

This study examines Luther’s early exegesis of Galatians 3:19-4:7 and its relationship to his theological development, especially his doctrine of law and gospel. Luther’s earliest exegetical lectures on the Psalms (1513-15) demonstrate essential agreement with the interpretation of Galatians common throughout the exegetical tradition. The law’s function is understood solely in terms of its preparatory role in salvation history among Old Testament Israel. It has no value beyond the coming of Christ, who instead imparts the new law of the gospel. Like the Old Testament itself, the law ought to be interpreted spiritually, a type and shadow of the evangelical law.

In Luther’s lectures on Paul, first Romans (1515-16) and then Galatians (1516-17), a new understanding develops which interprets Paul’s doctrine of the law more broadly so that its preparatory role is applicable in all times. Coupled with an increasingly more radical view of sin, Luther comes to interpret Galatians as a description of the law’s theological function on the individual conscience, regardless of the dispensation of salvation history. Rather than a veiled type foreshadowing the spiritual doctrines of the gospel, the law prepares one for the gospel by revealing man’s sin, a testimony to the fundamental human situation. Important in this transformation are the anti-Pelagian writings of Augustine, which Luther read thoroughly during this time, and his dispute with late scholastic theology and its doctrine of merit.

Luther’s published commentary on Galatians in 1519 along with the *Weihnachtspostille* of 1522 represent the public presentation of this interpretation of Paul, marking the beginning of Luther’s influence on the history of Pauline exegesis. These are especially significant in the context of Luther’s relationship to the German reform movement and his escalating conflict with the papacy.

A final chapter makes some further observations on the possible consequences that Luther’s interpretation of the law had for hermeneutics. Unlike traditional spiritual exegesis which is grounded in the progression of revelation in salvation history, Luther finds the distinction of law and gospel better equipped to address the problem of application. The four-fold method of interpretation is eventually abandoned in favor of this distinction as the primary hermeneutical approach to the Scriptures.

INTRODUCTION

This is a study about Martin Luther as an exegetical theologian. Accordingly, its interest in Luther's doctrine of the law is an exegetical concern rather than an interest in the doctrine *per se*.¹ That is to say, the question posed intersects the larger problem of how and to what extent Luther's exegetical work shaped his theological development. This, in turn, draws the eye toward his relationship to the preceding theological and exegetical tradition. Commenting on Gerhard Ebeling's provocative remark that all of church history is the history of biblical interpretation, Jarsolav Pelikan wryly observed that "the interpretation of the Scriptures has played a role of greater import and influence in the history of theology than it does in the

¹ There have been numerous studies and articles that have focused on various aspects of Luther's doctrine of the law, or his distinction of law and gospel. Some of the more significant include: Paul Althaus, *The Divine Command*, trans. Franklin Sherman (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966); Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther and the Old Testament*, trans. Eric and Ruth Gritsch (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969); Werner Elert, *Law and Gospel*, trans. Edward Schroeder (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967); Hayo Gerdes, *Luthers Streit mit den Schwärmern um das rechte Verständnis des Gesetzes Mose* (Göttingen: Göttinger Verlagsanstalt, 1955); Lauri Haikola, *Gesetz und Evangelium bei Matthias Flacius Illyricus: Eine Untersuchung zur lutherischen Theologie vor der Konkordienformel* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1952); idem, *Studien zu Luther und zum Luthertum* (Uppsala: Lundequistska, 1958); idem, *Usus Legis* (Uppsala: Lundequistska, 1981); Johannes Heckel, *Lex Charitatis: Eine juristische Untersuchung über das Recht in der Theologie Martin Luthers*, 2d ed. (Köln: Böhlau-Verlag, 1973); Gerhard Heintze, *Luthers Predigt von Gesetz und Evangelium* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1958); Wilfried Joest, *Gesetz und Freiheit: Das Problem des Tertius usus legis bei Luther und die neutestamentliche Parainese* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1951); Steffen Kjeldgaard-Pedersen, *Gesetz, Evangelium, und Busse. Theologiegeschichtliche Studien zum Verhältnis zwischen dem jungen Johann Agricola (Eisleben) und Martin Luther* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983); Matthias Kroeger, *Rechtfertigung und Gesetz. Studien zur Entwicklung der Rechtfertigungslehre beim jungen Luther* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968); Ole Modalsli, *Das Gericht nach den Werken: Ein Beitrag zu Luthers Lehre vom Gesetz* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963); Herbert Olsson, *Schöpfung, Vernunft und Gesetz in Luthers Theologie* (Uppsala: Appelbergs, 1971); Albrecht Peters, *Kommentar zu Luthers Katechismen, Band I: Die Zehn Gebote, Luthers Vorreden* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990); idem, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, Handbuch systematischer Theologie, vol. 2 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohr, 1981); Martin Schloemann, *Natürliches und Gepredigtes Gesetz bei Luther* (Berlin: Verlag Alfred Töpelmann, 1961); Aarne Siirala, *Gottes Gebot bei Martin Luther* (Helsinki: 1956); Gustaf Wingren, *Creation and Law*, trans. Ross Mackenzie (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1961); Andreas Wöhle, *Luthers Freude an Gottes Gesetz: Eine historische Quellenstudie zur Oszillation des Gesetzesbegriffes Martin Luthers im Licht seiner alttestamentlichen Predigten* (Frankfurt: Haag & Herchen, 1998).

histories of theology.”² Given Luther’s dictum, *sola scriptura*, it would seem that consideration of the Reformer as both heir and creative force in the history of exegesis is not only appropriate but necessary to appreciate fully his significance in the history of theology.

This is true especially since *sola scriptura* was, for Luther, first and foremost a practical doctrine. Long before he had worked it out as a controversial theological principle, Scripture held central place in Luther’s piety, his spiritual struggles, and his work as a theologian. Luther is not extraordinary in this regard, though perhaps this fixation with the Bible appears more pronounced in him than in others. Nonetheless, even with the ascendancy of a more speculative, dialectical theology in the schools, Scripture continued to be the fountain of spirituality for many throughout the Late Middle Ages. Alongside the well established tradition of the *lectio divina* in the monasteries, the reading and study of Scripture was also fostered among lay communities, an important feature of the piety expressed in the *devotio moderna* of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Thus, regardless of how one wishes to categorize Luther—monastic, scholastic, humanist—he was, at least, a man of his times.

Nevertheless, it is also true that in the context of the university, Luther’s singular preoccupation with the Scriptures led to a methodological revolution, one that would force the theology of the day to confront the exegetical task as both its proper work and central problem. Specifically, it was the interpretation of Paul that captivated Luther and filled his early polemic.

² Jarsolav Pelikan, *Luther the Expositor* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 6. The call of Ebeling to approach church history from the perspective of exegesis—*Kirchengeschichte als Geschichte der Auslegung der Heiligen Schrift* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1947)—was enthusiastically received, but in the face of frustrations over sources and methodology less has been done than originally hoped. See also Lukas Vischer and David Lerch “Die Auslegungsgeschichte als notwendige theologische Aufgabe,” in *Studia Patristica*, ed. Kurt Aland and F. L. Cross, vol. 1 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1957): 414-19. For some helpful reflections over this issue see Karlfried Froehlich, “The Significance of Medieval Biblical Interpretation,” *Lutheran Quarterly* 9 (1995): 139-50.

While the unfolding of the *causa Lutheri* is far more complex than a single turn on a single text, the place of the *Paulus Lutheri* in this unfolding is still a tremendously important feature.

One aspect of this development is reflected in Luther's early interpretation of Galatians. To get at the heart of the matter, however, the text under investigation has been narrowed to Galatians 3:19-4:7, since in this short passage many of the central problems in Pauline interpretation are brought together. Gerhard Ebeling has pointed out, and rightly I believe, that nowhere in the New Testament is there any indication of how one ought to address the problem of the Christian appropriation and use of the Old Testament save in Paul's doctrine of the law.³ This question of the testaments and their relationship to one another, a question that is simultaneously one of theology and hermeneutics, becomes especially pronounced in texts where Paul specifically sets out to delineate the purpose of law and its relationship to the gospel of Christ. The interpretation of Paul's rhetorical question posed to the Galatian Christians, "Why then the law?" and its answer seems to be a natural place to turn. Furthermore, because Luther changes his mind on its interpretation, an examination of his early engagement with Galatians can contribute to the overall picture of his theological development. Initially Luther is in accord with the tradition on both this text's interpretation and its theological application. But then, during the course of his early exegetical lectures, he comes to an interpretation that is fundamentally new in the history of interpretation.

³ Gerhard Ebeling, "Reflexions on the Doctrine of the Law," in *Word and Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), 274: "It is quite true that the Pauline doctrine of the law must be addressed as being in actual fact the only fundamental theological indication in the New Testament as to how the question of the use of the Old Testament in the church would have to be thought out."

The Question

Separatio legis et evangelii proprium et principale opus est Marcionis—“the separation of law and gospel is the proper and principal work of Marcion.” So said Tertullian. Marcion, however, claimed Pauline precedent for this work, and so began the first great conflict over the interpretation of Paul.

According to Tertullian, the epistle to the Galatians was especially important to the heretic of Pontus. The dispute between Peter and Paul recounted in its second chapter took on paradigmatic proportions. For Marcion, this brief conflict epitomized the entire message of Paul: the *heilsgeschichtlich* antithesis of Judaism and Christianity, of Old Testament and New Testament, of law and gospel. Incorporating this thought into a quasi-gnostic dualism, Marcion could not maintain the unified course of salvation history under the direction of a single God. The time of the Old Testament was radically opposed to the time of the New. Its writings and its law were alien to the gospel. It could have no bearing or relevance for one who adhered to Christ. For Marcion, Paul’s disparagement and apparent abrogation of the law necessarily entailed the abrogation of the Old Testament. It is understandable that, in opposition to Marcion’s position, defenders of the oneness of God would concentrate on the continuity between the testaments, and do so by stressing the essential *unity* of law and gospel.

The significance of Marcion for the history of the church has been oft debated since von Harnack’s provocative “Reformer” interpretation.⁴ From the ambiguous relationship to

⁴ Adolf von Harnack, *Marcion: Der moderne Gläubige des 2. Jahrhunderts, der erste Reformater, Die Dorpater Preisschrift (1870)*, ed. Friedemann Steck (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003); idem, *Marcion: Das Evangelium vom Fremden Gott* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1960), esp. 196-215.; Barbara Aland, “Marcion/Marcioniten,” in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, ed. Gerhard Müller, vol. 22 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1992), 89-101; Davad L. Balás, “Marcion Revisited: A ‘Post-Harnack’ Perspective,” in *Texts and Testaments: Critical Essays on the Bible and Early Church Fathers in Honor of Stuart Dicson Currie*, ed. Wallace Eugene March (San Antonio, Texas: Trinity University Press, 1980): 95-108; John J. Clabeaux, *A Lost Edition of the Letters of Paul: A Reassessment of the Text of the Pauline Corpus Attested by Marcion*, Catholic Biblical Quarterly

Gnosticism to the formation of the New Testament canon, Marcion continues to remain a controversial figure among modern scholars even as his life and teaching remain shrouded in uncertainties. Yet it is perhaps safe to say that opposition to Marcion resulted in greater attention given to the interpretation of Paul.⁵ It was not the church's understanding of law and gospel in and of itself that was new, but that this understanding was intentionally worked out as *Paul's* doctrine of law and gospel. Thus in the wake of Marcion's error we may see the interpretation of Paul deepen two significant and related trends: the gospel was defined as *lex* in order to preserve the *theological* unity between the testaments; and *allegory* became the primary means to bring *hermeneutical* unity to the two testaments.

Early and medieval exegetes interpreted Paul's doctrine of the law strictly as a discourse on its temporary role in *Heilsgeschichte*. This was understood in various ways. Some opined that Paul was speaking exclusively of the external observances and ceremonies which were given in the old dispensation as a dutiful pedagogue to curb Israel's predisposition towards idolatry and prepare them through shadows and figures for the coming Christ. Others focused more on the law's moral aspects as it revealed Israel's sin. This would then cause them to long for grace—again, a necessary preparatory disposition for the reception of Christ. In either case, the law did not extend its pedagogy *anno Domini*. It ceased with the coming of Christ.

Yet neither approach regarded the law's abrogation in an absolute sense as Marcion did. The law ceased according to the letter but continued according to the spirit. The gospel gave the

Monograph 21 (Washington, D. C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1989); Gerhard May, "Marcion in Contemporary Views: Results and Open Questions," *The Second Century* 6 (1988): 129-51; Idem and Katharina Greschat, eds., *Marcion und Seine Kirchengeschichtliche Wirkung* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002).

⁵ See Pieter Gotfried Verweij, *Evangelium und Neues Gesetz in der ältesten Christenheit bis auf Marcion*, *Studia Theologica Rheno-Traiectina*, vol. 5 (Utrecht, Holland: Kemink & Zoon, 1960), 356-60; Maurice Wiles, *The Divine Apostle: The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles in the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 49f.

law a deeper more spiritual signification: the ceremonies were now fulfilled signs of New Testament realities and the moral law was now the *new law* of Christ—the *nova lex*, the *lex evangelii*. The differences between the old and new law lay only in degrees of perfection. The prohibitions and obligations of the *vetus lex*, which were directed merely to external behavior—“Thou shalt not kill,” were now in the *nova lex* directed to the interior man—“Thou shalt not hate.” Whereas the old law directed one to things temporal and carnal, the new law pointed to things eternal and spiritual. The new evangelical law was more efficacious than the old, conferring grace so that one could fulfill its requirements out of filial love rather than hypocritically through servile fear. Yet in substance the two were the same. *Lex* was the thread that joined the two testaments.

As the law was abrogated according to the letter but continued spiritually in the gospel, so also the Old Testament lost its literal relevance with the coming of Christ but continued as Christian Scripture when interpreted according to the spirit. The Old Testament was read primarily as a record of figures and types waiting to be filled with the spiritual content of the New Testament. Once again the distinction between them was set in gradations of perfection and clarity: *figura/res*, *umbra/veritas*, *temporalia/aeternalia*. If the thrust of Paul’s argument was *Heilsgeschichte* so that the *finis legis* corresponded to the *finis veteris testamenti*, then allegory seemed to be the only way to preserve the Old Testament as Christian Scripture. Just as the doctrine of the law brought theological harmony to the testaments, so spiritual exegesis functioned hermeneutically in the same way.

The uniqueness of Luther’s interpretation of Galatians consists of a distinction of law and gospel that is set in existential rather than historical categories. The force of Paul’s argument lay not in the progression of salvation history from the Old Testament to the New, but in the

theological function of the law and the gospel on the individual. The “times” of wrath and salvation, of confinement and freedom, of slavery and sonship are descriptions of two exclusive theological situations, not two successive ages of history. Hence, for Luther, the abrogation of the law is a complete and absolute abrogation—but in the *conscience*. The law’s pedagogy is brought to an end with the coming of Christ, and the coming of Christ is the daily coming of faith.

For Luther, the *unity* of the two testaments is to be found in this existential *separation* of the law from the gospel. Such a separation is the necessary experience of all God’s people, regardless of the times or places in which they live. Pressed down by the accusation of the law, the believer is driven to seek the consolation of the gospel. The testaments are therefore united by the one God who deals with his people in two distinct ways, and by the one faith which arises from this twofold work of God. Thus the distinction of law and gospel is the source of both theological and hermeneutical continuity. Allegory is unnecessary, for the relevance of the Old Testament depends on its witness to the common experience of faith. Because Christ is the content of every gracious promise, this faith is always christological. In this way, Christ is everywhere in the Old Testament—not just allegorically, but effectively as the divine Word of promise. It is in this particular christological understanding of the Bible that Luther finds the foundation for application and proclamation. Although allegory continues to have a place in Luther’s preaching and exegesis, it nevertheless assumes a different function and is not the basis for his interpretation of Scripture.⁶

⁶ See Gerhard Ebeling, *Evangelische Evangelienauslegung: Eine Untersuchung zu Luthers Hermeneutik* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1942). Luther did not eschew the use of allegory in its entirety. He clearly finds it homiletically useful to varying degrees throughout his lifetime. The point here is that allegory and typology are no longer the basic interpretive structures for making the Christian canon relevant.

However, Luther arrived at this understanding gradually. At the beginning of his vocation as a doctor of the Bible, Luther exhibits the traditional understanding of Galatians. Throughout his *Dictata super Psalterium* (1513-1515), to be *sub lege* is to live in the time of the Old Testament. It is the time of the *vetus lex*, of *figura* and *umbra*, of *caro* and *temporalia*. In contrast, to be *sub gratia* is to be directed by the more spiritual demands and promises of the New Testament: the *res* and *veritas*, the *spiritus* and *aeternalia* of the *nova lex*. In the places where he cites Galatians, such is also his understanding. The distinction between the law and the gospel is quantitative and chronological: they differ only in degrees of clarity and perfection in the history of salvation. *Lex* is still the common thread which binds the testaments together.

By the time Luther publishes his commentary on Galatians in 1519 and his *Weihnachtspostille* in 1522, the categories have clearly changed. Here the distinction is primarily qualitative and personal. The law is concerned with works and revealing sin no matter where it is found—this includes the Mosaic law, natural law, human laws, and the *lex evangelii* of the Sermon on the Mount. The gospel is not merely the spiritual interpretation of the law, but retains an entirely different function: the forgiveness of sins. For Luther, the Pauline purpose of the law is not contingent upon the temporal succession of redemptive history, but on the individual's faith. Thus the ancient fathers of the Old Testament who believed in God's promises were "under grace" and Christ was present to them, but whoever lives without such faith remains even now "under the law."

Between the two poles of his Psalms lectures and his Postils lay Luther's early lectures on Paul, his attempts to reform theology within the university, his sudden rise to fame and infamy, and his conflict with the papacy. Influence also lies beyond the poles, the long exegetical tradition of the past being the most important for our question. Considered within the

complexity of this picture, Luther's interpretation of Galatians is seen as an integral part of his efforts toward reform and the rise of a Reformation theology.

Present Research

This survey of secondary literature is limited to works that both handle Luther's early interpretation of Galatians directly and address similar questions to those asked here. The general shape of the present research is thereby indicated, as is the possibility for further contribution. Other literature relevant to the topic will, of course, be referenced within the study itself.

Karin Bornkamm's comparison of the 1519 commentary and the 1531 lectures on Galatians surveys the theological and hermeneutical themes in the two works, noting developments and continuities between the earlier and later expressions of Luther.⁷ The influence of Gerhard Ebeling's method of interpretation is apparent as Luther's contribution to existential themes and ideas finds emphasis throughout.⁸ Consequently, Bornkamm recognizes the importance that Luther's more individualistic application of the *tempus legis* and the *tempus gratiae* has for Luther's theology. Still, the parameters of the study leave one wondering how

⁷ Karin Bornkamm, *Luthers Auslegungen des Galaterbriefs von 1519 und 1531: Ein Vergleich*, Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte, vol. 35 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co, 1963).

⁸ See Ebeling, "Die Anfänge von Luthers Hermeneutik," in *Lutherstudien*, vol. 1 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1971), 1-68 [appearing first in *Die Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 48 (1951): 172-230]; idem, "The New Hermeneutic and the Early Luther," *Theology Today* 21 (1964): 34-46; cf. also the remarks of Otto H. Pesch in "Existential and Sapiential Theology – the Theological Confrontation between Luther and Thomas Aquinas" in *Catholic Scholars Dialogue with Luther*, ed. Jared Wicks, S.J (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1970), 61-81, esp. 76f. For criticism to this approach see Hans Joachim Iwand, "Wider den Mißbrauch der 'pro me' als methodisches Prinzip in der Theologie" *Evangelische Theologie* 14 (1954), 120-25; Erwin Iserloh, "'Existenziale Interpretation' in Luthers erster Psalmenvorlesung?" *Theologische Revue* 59 (1963), 73-84; Walter Kneck, "Das reformatorische 'pro me' und die existenziale Interpretation heute" in *Studien zur Geschichte und Theologie der Reformation: Festschrift für Ernst Bizer*, ed. Luise Abramowski and J. F. Gerhard Goeters (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969), 283-303.

Luther actually came to this understanding of the text. As a systematic evaluation of Luther, there is also little in the way of historical context.

Kenneth Hagen has also made a comparison of the two commentaries with special attention to Luther's approach to the Scriptures.⁹ Hagen's primary goal is to counter certain trends in Luther scholarship which, he believes, imposes modern ideologies and standards on Luther's exegesis. Instead, Luther's handling of Galatians ought to be viewed as an outgrowth of the medieval, monastic context. Luther's reading of Scripture is understood as primarily devotional and meditative, following the approach of the monastic contemplation of the *sacra pagina*. Hagen does note that Luther transposes Paul's essentially *heilsgeschichtlich* argument in Galatians three to the individual's experience of faith, but apparently regards it only as another example of this monastic approach to the text.¹⁰ As with Bornkamm, the parameters of Hagen's book prevent him from considering Luther's earlier interpretation of this text, or how and why it changed.

Timothy Maschke, a student of Hagen, wrote his doctoral dissertation on Luther's understanding and use of allegory in his Galatians commentaries.¹¹ He has set his thesis against that of Gerhard Ebeling who argued that Luther's hermeneutical breakthrough was tied to his rejection of allegory. Maschke maintains that Luther never gave up allegory but only changed its significance, returning to the "original" Pauline use of allegory. No longer was allegory a means of application but, following Paul's example, a means of illustration. The theme of allegory is

⁹ Kenneth Hagen, *Luther's Approach to Scripture As Seen in His "Commentaries" on Galatians 1519-1538* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1993).

¹⁰ Ibid., 103: "The historical sequence of Moses-then-Christ is transposed "spiritually" or theologically by Luther to apply to everyone 'past, present, and future'."

¹¹ Timothy Maschke, "The Understanding and Use of Allegory in the Lectures on the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Galatians by Doctor Martin Luther" (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 1993).

traced throughout the entire commentary, but Galatians 4:22f. serves as the logical focal point. The form of Maschke's question limits his scope to Luther's definition of allegory in Galatians, rather than the interpretation of Galatians itself.

The only work that deals directly with the question here posed is a brief article by Eerdmann Schott which focuses on Luther's unique exegesis of Galatians 3:24, "the law was our pedagogue unto Christ."¹² He compares Luther to the received exegetical tradition, especially the *Glossa ordinaria*, Nicholas of Lyra, and Faber Stapulensis, concluding that Luther indeed makes a sharp break from it. Though the tradition recognizes that one of the purposes of the law was to reveal sin, it does not connect this with the notion of the pedagogue. Rather, the pedagogue unto Christ was the law's preparatory instruction for the more sublime doctrine of Christ. Faith was equated to knowledge so that through the ceremonies and shadows of the *vetus lex* the Old Testament faithful had an *implicit* faith. The coming of Christ ushers in an *explicit* faith embodied in the *nova lex*. Schott notes that Luther's distinction of the "historical" and "spiritual" coming of Christ solves an exegetical problem in Galatians which the tradition only perpetuates or ignores through its distinction of the old and new law. However, Schott also limits his investigation to the published commentaries of Luther, seemingly unaware that Luther had earlier agreed with the tradition. Consequently the notion of a "break" with the exegetical tradition is incomplete.

Sources and Method

The principal texts for this study are Luther's first lectures on the Psalms (1513-15), his lectures on Romans (1515-16) and Galatians (1516-17), his published commentary on Galatians

¹² Eerdmann Schott. "Lex paedagogus noster fuit in Christo Jesu (Vulgata): zu Luthers Auslegung von Gal 3:24," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 95 (1970): 561-70.

(1519), and two sermons from the *Weihnachtspostille* (1522), one based on Galatians 3:23-29, and the other on 4:1-7. Other contemporary works are also taken into account, along with letters and other documents that reflect the various aspects of Luther's reforming activity.

The first chapter presents a survey of the exegetical tradition, giving priority to texts that would have influenced Luther directly. The second chapter concentrates on Luther's earliest interpretation of Galatians as it is expressed in his Psalm lectures, his so-called *Dictata super Psalterium*. The *Dictata*, a notoriously difficult text to interpret, stands as an important hinge to this study and needs to be examined with an eye towards the extent of Luther's indebtedness to the exegetical tradition, as well as to how much of his thought can be said to foreshadow something essentially new. The new critical edition of these lectures has made such an inquiry more reliable, though perhaps no less demanding.¹³ The next chapter looks to Luther's first Pauline lectures, Romans and Galatians. Here the significance of Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings, which Luther now utilizes for the first time, is evaluated as well as his more explicit attacks against scholastic theology. Luther's understanding of Paul's doctrine of the law is enormously important with respect to both. These lectures are then compared with Luther's contemporary sermons on the Decalogue, especially those preached in Advent of 1516. The fourth chapter examines the commentary of 1519 and the 1522 Postils, taking into account that the context of Luther, now a controversial celebrity throughout Germany, has drastically changed. Rather than further examples of new ideas, these works are more important as public presentations of a Pauline theology already acquired. The final chapter takes the opportunity to touch upon some of the questions regarding Luther's hermeneutics in light of his new

¹³ The complete Wolfenbütteler Psalter-Handschrift was published in 1993 as WA 55I, followed by the Dresdener Scholien-Handschrift as WA 55II in 2000.

understanding of Galatians. It is the secondary literature on this topic that will receive the most attention here.

A final point with respect to the handling of secondary literature: the goal of this study is to understand, from the primary sources, the process by which Luther moves from an essentially traditional position to a new interpretation of Galatians and the consequences that such a change might have had for Luther's theology. It is thus intended as a constructive picture of Luther's early theological development. Reliance and connections to other studies are, of course, necessary, but for the sake of clarity any differences in the interpretation of sources will be dealt with sparingly.

CHAPTER ONE

GALATIANS IN THE TRADITION

The concentration of this chapter is almost exclusively on the Latin exegetical tradition, and even here an exhaustive treatment is unnecessary. There are several reasons for this. First, knowledge of Pauline commentaries before the proliferation of Latin commentaries in the fourth and fifth centuries is fragmentary at best. To be sure, there were commentaries on Paul—Jerome is aware of several commentaries on Galatians before his own, and indicates an awareness of almost twenty different Greek commentaries on various Pauline epistles.¹⁴ The commentaries on Galatians are, however, almost entirely lost to us. Second, since this chapter is intended to serve as background for Luther’s own exegetical development, we are concerned primarily with those works which would have influenced him directly. Furthermore, to attempt to account for every comment on Galatians throughout the early church and Middle Ages would appear horribly pedantic, especially since so many are too brief to be significant or at least relevant for the question here posed. Instead, we have chosen to present the general contours of the tradition’s interpretation of Galatians by focusing on major exegetical figures.

The chapter is organized into three sections: the “Patristic Period” and the “Medieval Tradition,” with “Augustine” set in between as a kind of fulcrum. His influence upon both the

¹⁴ Cf. Jerome’s prologue to his commentary on Galatians, in which he names Origen (d. 253), Didymus of Alexandria (d. 399), Apollinaris of Laodicea (d. 391?), Alexander the “old heretic” (3rd century Valentinian?), Eusebius of Emesa (d. 360), and Theodorus of Heraclea (d. 356); PL 26, 331-33. See the discussion of Alexander Souter, *The Earliest Latin Commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul, a Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 107f. See also Karl Staab, ed., *Pauluskommentare aus der griechischen Kirch*, 2nd ed. (Münster/Westfalen: Aschendorff, 1984); Maria Grazia Mara, “Paul; III: Commentaries on the Pauline Epistles” in *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, vol. 2, ed. Angelo Di Berardino, trans. Adrian Walford, vol. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 658-59;

medieval tradition and on Luther himself is indisputable and thus justifies both the pride of place and space here afforded to the great African bishop.

Patristic Period

Already in the second and third centuries one can observe an essential unanimity throughout the writings of the early church in its view of the law.¹⁵ According to most early Christian writers, the Mosaic law served a limited but relatively positive purpose among the Jews of the Old Testament.¹⁶ Because the Jews had rejected God at Sinai and bowed down to the golden calf, God gave—in addition to the Decalogue—numerous ordinances, sacrifices, and ceremonies to preserve them from the idolatry to which they were prone.¹⁷ This was the meaning assigned to Ezekiel 20:25, “I gave to them commandments that were not good, and statutes in which they could not live,” an important passage for the doctrine of the law

Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 354-61.

¹⁵ Several important studies have been written on this topic, so I am content to present simply an overview. For greater detail the reader is directed to Carl Adolph Gerhard von Zezschwitz, *System der christlich kirchlichen Katechetik*, vol. 2 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1872), pp. 161f.; Eva Aleith, *Paulusverständnis in der Alten Kirche* (Berlin: Verlag von Alfred Töpelmann, 1937); G. Philips, “La grâce des justes de l’Ancien Testament” *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 23 (1947): 521-56, *passim*; Victor Ernst Hasler, *Gesetz und Evangelium in der alten Kirche bis Origenes: Eine auslegungsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Zürich/Frankfurt: Gotthelf, 1953); Karl Hermann Schelkle, *Paulus Lehrer der Väter: Die altkirchliche Auslegung von Römer 1-11* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1956), *passim*; R. P. C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen’s Interpretation of Scripture* (Richmond, Virginia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1959), 289-310; Pieter Gottfried Verweij, *Evangelium und neues Gesetz in der ältesten Christenheit bis auf Marcion*; Maurice Wiles, *The Divine Apostle*, 49-72; Theodore Stylianopoulos, *Justin Martyr and the Mosaic Law*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series, no. 20 (Missoula Montana: Scholars Press, 1975); Marie-Francois Berrouard, “Servitude de la loi et liberté de l’Evangile selon Saint Irénée,” *Lumière et Vie* 12, no. 61 (1963): 41-60.

¹⁶ The *Epistle of Barnabas* [hereafter *Bar.*] stands out as the most notable exception. The author apparently maintains the outrageous notion that the various laws prescribed by Moses were never intended to be observed literally, even by the Jews, but that such an understanding was the deception of an “evil angel”; *Bar.* 9:4f.; cf. 2:4-9; 10:1-12.

¹⁷ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* [hereafter *Dial.*] 18, 2; 19, 5-6; 20-22; 46, 5; Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* [hereafter *Adv. Haer.*] IV, 15, 1-2; 16, 5; Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* [hereafter *Paed.*] I, 11, 96, 3—97, 1; *Apostolic Constitutions* I, 6; VI, 20-21.

throughout the writings of early and medieval authors.¹⁸ Although the laws were burdensome, given on account of the “hardness of their hearts,” their purpose was ultimately benevolent, serving the Jewish nation as a “yoke” (cf. Acts 15:10; Galatians 5:1; Matthew 11:29-30) which, through such inundation of laws, steered them away from apostasy and directed them to worship the true God. This then prepared them for the coming of a “new law” (καινός νόμος) and Christ, the “new lawgiver” (καινός νομοθέτης).¹⁹ The ceremonies also benefited the Jews in that, when spiritually understood, they prefigured and pointed to Christ and the spiritual realities of the New Testament.²⁰ Consequently, Christians were no longer obligated to the ceremonial aspects of the law, for they had served their historical purpose and were now fulfilled in Christ.

On the other hand, the moral law as expressed in the Decalogue was not abrogated with the coming of Christ, but continued on into the New Testament as the gospel. The gospel extended and deepened the law so that, reaching beyond the mere prohibition of evil *deeds*, it also concerned itself with the inner life of evil *thoughts* and *desires*; avoidance of the former

¹⁸ See, for example, Justin Martyr, *Dial.*, 21, 2-4; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* IV, 15, 1; Apostolic Constitutions, VI, 20-21; Ambrose, *Ep.* 64, 2, CSEL 82/2, 150f.; Ambrosiaster, CSEL 50, 76, 16-77, 13; 428, 25-429, 13; 469, 24-470, 14; CSEL 81/1, 339, 13f.; CSEL 81/3, 326, 20f.; Jerome, PL 26, 369, D-370, C; 385, B-C; 402, D; Theodoret of Cyrus, PG 82, 482 Df.; Peter Lombard, PL 191, 1399 D; Peter of Poitiers, *Sententiarum libri quinque*, IV, 3; PL 211, 1145 B-C; William of Auxerre, *Summa Aurea*, IV, tr. 2, c. 2; Spicilegium Bonaventurianum, vol. 19 (Rome: Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1985), 21, 38f.; Robert Grosseteste, *Expositio in Epistolam Sancti Pauli ad Galatas* [hereafter *Ad Galatas*], CCCM 130, 67, 513-27; 86, 527-39; Idem., *De cessatione legalium*, I, xi, 2; ed. Richard C. Dales and Edward B. King, *Auctores Britannici Medii Aevi*, vol. 7 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 69, 4 and IV, vii, 6; *ibid.*, 182, 9-10; Thomas, *Sent.* IV, d. 1, q. 1, a. 5, qc. 1, s. c. 2; Biel, *Sent.* IV, d. 1, q. 3, a. 2, c. 1.

¹⁹ For “new law” see, for example, Bar. 2:6; Justin, *Dial.* 11, 4 (contrasted to the “παλαιός νόμος” of Mt. Horeb; 11, 2); 12, 3; cf. Ignatius, *Magnesians* 2:1 (“νόμω Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ”); Tertullian, *Adversus Iudaeos* [hereafter *Adv. Jud.*] 3; 6; *De praescriptione Haereticorum*, 13. Justin speaks of Christ as the “lawgiver,” *Dial.* 12, 2; 18, 3, and as the “eternal law” (αἰώνιος νόμος), *Dial.* 11, 2; cf. *Shepherd of Hermes*, Par. 5, 6:3; Par. 8, 3:2.

²⁰ Justin, *Dial.* 40-42; 44-5; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* IV, 14, 3; 16, 1; 19, 1; Tertullian, *Adv. Jud.*, 3-6.

marked the behavior of slaves, the latter of sons.²¹ Nonetheless, because the author of the law and the gospel was the same Lord, it was necessary to maintain their essential unity as one and the same law.²²

When it came to the interpretation of Paul's doctrine of the law, early Christian writers strove to soften any apparent derogation of the law, especially since Marcion had defended his position on the basis of such Pauline texts. Thus, passages where the law's relationship to sin was indicated—Romans 5:20, “the law came in to increase the trespass,” Romans 7:5, “our passions of sin which were through the law,” Romans 7:8, “apart from the law sin was dead,” and Galatians 3:19, “Why then the law? It was added on account of transgressions”—were carefully interpreted so as not to implicate the law as a *cause* of sin. The increase of sin may be a consequent result of the law's arrival, but such cannot be the purpose or intention of the law. Rather, the law was given to Israel to show sin and to restrain it.²³ Such was its nature as a “pedagogue.” The law-as-pedagogue could be fearful in its discipline, but ultimately it was a positive figure, guiding and instructing towards Christ, the perfect teacher.²⁴ When limited to the ceremonial precepts, the pedagogy of the law corresponded to the “yoke” idea, bearing both a

²¹ See especially Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* IV, 9, 2; 13, 1-4; 16, 3-5; 28, 2. Cf. Clement, *Paed.* I, 7, 59, 1-2, which describes the pedagogy of the law in the Old Testament as one of *fear* (νόμος ἐπαιδαγωγῶγει τὸν λαὸν μετὰ φόβου) in contrast to the New Testament which turns fear into *love* (ὁ φόβος εἰς ἀγάπην).

²² Clement, *Paed.* I, 7, 58, 1; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* IV, 9, 1-3; 12, 3.

²³ Clement and Cyril of Alexandria both argue that Rom. 5:20 does not indicate an increase of sin but only an increased *awareness*. Consequent of such knowledge is greater guilt, since one cannot plead ignorance. Origen, on the other hand, denies that this passage refers to the Mosaic law at all, but only to the natural law. For specific citations see Wiles, *The Divine Apostle*, 54-57.

²⁴ Clement, *Paed.* I, 7, 59, 1-2; cf. *Paed.* I, 11, 96, 3—97, 1 where, according to Gal. 3:24, the law was a pedagogue which led to the “true Pedagogue” (τοῦ ἀληθοῦς παιδαγογοῦ), Christ. Here, he clearly means the moral law, which is found in various forms in pagan philosophy, in Moses, and then definitively in the teaching of Christ. Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* IV, 16, 5, notes that “precepts of slavery” (*servitutis praecepta*), which were given by Moses separately from the Decalogue (i.e. the ceremonial laws), were purposed for Israel's “instruction” (*eruditioni*),

punitive and preparatory role. The moral aspects of the law might also be entailed in such instruction, but always with the appropriate shortcomings of its Old Testament form (fear, slavery, etc.). Whichever course one took, the law's purpose and function was, for all these early theologians, a temporary one which ended with the advent of Christ and the arrival of the new law of the gospel.

The sudden emergence of Latin commentaries in the fourth and fifth centuries marks an important event in the history of exegesis. In a remarkably short period of time—less than fifty years—at least six significant commentaries on Paul appeared in the West. Indeed, this period marks the veritable beginning of the Latin commentary on Paul. While one should perhaps be cautious about ascribing to this era the start of a Paulism heretofore unknown,²⁵ neither can one overlook the fact that some of the most influential exegesis of Western Christianity was produced at this time. The reasons for such a marked interest in the Pauline epistles during this period are complex and often debated,²⁶ although, for our question, it is enough to recognize that the anti-Marcion polemic which significantly shaped the Pauline exegesis of earlier times had its contextual parallel in the Manichean movement during the fourth century. The same calumnies of the Old Testament and its law were voiced, and the same difficulties with Paul's opinion of the law needed to be explained.

“chastisement” (*castigationi*) and as a “sign” (*in signum data sunt*). See below, pages 46f., for a discussion of a similar threefold office of the law delineated in the medieval tradition: *paedagogus*, *flagellum*, and *signum*.

²⁵ For a helpful collection of essays that furthers this point, see William Babcock, ed. *Paul and the Legacies of Paul* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1990).

²⁶ See Bernard Lohse, “Beobachtungen zum Paulus-Kommentar des Marius Victorinus und zur Wiederentdeckung des Paulus in der lateinischen Theologie des vierten Jahrhunderts” in *Kerygma und Logos: Festschrift für Carl Andresen zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Adolf Martin Ritter (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 351-66; Mara, “Commentaries on the Pauline Epistles.”

The first of these Latin commentators was the well known Marius Victorinus.²⁷ Famous in Rome as a premier rhetorician, Victorinus converted to Christianity in 355 and subsequently turned his talents towards defending and explicating the faith. His commentaries on Paul reflect his particular training, concentrating on syntax and the rhetorical structure of Paul's argument rather than much theological reflection.²⁸ For this reason, Jerome was quick to dismiss the relevance of Victorinus, as one who knew nothing of the Scriptures.²⁹ Nonetheless, Victorinus does remain an important witness to the Latin reception of Paul.

The anonymous "Ambrosiaster" apparently wrote his commentaries on the Pauline epistles in Rome during the time of pope Damasus (366-384).³⁰ Attempts to identify the author have been unsuccessful, although he was soon associated with the writings of Ambrose. In addition to his Pauline commentaries, he also composed *Quaestiones veteris et novi testamenti* which were later ascribed to Augustine.

Jerome's commentary, written in Bethlehem around 386, exhibited a very different method than that of his two contemporaries. Rather than a continuous exposition of Paul's argument, Jerome drew extensively from earlier Greek commentaries on Galatians, especially

²⁷ The best general survey on the commentaries of this period is still Souter, *Earliest Latin Commentaries*. Important studies on the exegesis of individual authors include Souter, *A Study of Ambrosiaster* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905); Coelestinus Martini, *Ambrosiaster, de auctore, operibus, theologia*, Spicilegium Pontificii Athenaei Antoniani, vol. 4 (Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, 1944); Werner Erdt, *Marius Victorinus Afer, der erste lateinische Pauluskommentator: Studien zu seinen Paulus kommentaren im Zusammenhang der Wiederentdeckung des Paulus in der abendländischen Theologie des 4. Jahrhunderts* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter D Lang, 1980); Lohse, "Beobachtungen zum Paulus-Kommentar des Marius Victorinus"; Eric Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1-121.

²⁸ For Victorinus' style and method see Souter, *Earliest Latin Commentaries*, 21-38; Stephen Cooper, "Narratio and Exhortatio in Galatians According to Marius Victorinus Rhetor," *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 91 (2000), 107-35.

²⁹ Jerome, PL 26, 332, B-C: "Non quod ignorem Caium Marium Victorinum, qui Romae, me puero, rhetoricam docuit, edidisse Commentarios in Apostolum; sed quod occupatus ille eruditione saecularium litterarum, Scripturas omnino sanctas ignoraverit."

³⁰ See Souter, *Earliest Latin Commentaries*, 39-49.

that of Origen, and juxtaposed the various interpretations in his text.³¹ As a result, clarity is sometimes exchanged for Jerome's desire to represent a *variorum* of patristic exegesis. Still, his commentary is quite detailed and contains long, learned expositions, making it one of the most valuable sources for Pauline interpretation in this period.

In addition to the expositions of Augustine and Pelagius, which we will deal with in the next section, there is another commentary from this period which, like Ambrosiaster, remains anonymous. It was discovered in Budapest and published by H. J. Frede in 1973.³² This work was composed between 396 and 405, and follows a similar old Latin text as that exhibited in Victorinus and Ambrosiaster (the so-called "I-type").³³ However, the glosses on Galatians are sparse and do not contribute significantly to the question at hand. By and large, the comments that are offered reflect the same ideas found in the other commentaries.³⁴

Already in several of the prefaces to Galatians, it becomes apparent that the Latin interpretation of Paul's doctrine of the law is essentially the same as that of the preceding centuries. Victorinus describes the situation of the epistle as follows: the Galatians had "yoked themselves to Judaism, when they observed the Sabbath and circumcision with a corporal

³¹ See Jerome's preface regarding his own method, PL 26, 332, B-333, B. See also Caroline P. Bammel, "Die Pauluskommentare des Hieronymus: die ersten wissenschaftlichen lateinischen Bibelkommentare?" in *Cristianesimo latino e cultura greca sino al sec IV.*, Studia ephemeridis "Augustinianum," 42 (Rome: Institutum Patristicum "Augustinianum," 1993), 187-207.

³² Hermann Josef Frede, *Eine neuer Paulustext und Kommentar*, 2 vols., *Vetus Latina: Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel, Aus der Geschichte der lateinischen Bibel*, vols. 7-8 (Freiburg: Herder, 1973-4).

³³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 227-33.

³⁴ Although neither of them wrote Pauline "commentaries" as such, both Ambrose of Milan and Tyconius represent important interpretations of Galatians from this period. For Ambrose see especially *Epp.*, 20; 64; 65; 66; (Maur.: 77; 74; 75; 78). The study by Viktor Hahn, *Das wahre Gesetz: eine Untersuchung der Auffassung des Ambrosius von Mailand vom Verhältnisi der Beiden Testamente* (Münster Westfalen: Aschendorff, 1969) demonstrates in Ambrose the same basic *heilsgeschichtlich* interpretation of the law found throughout the exegetical tradition, supporting the thesis presented here. Tyconius' third rule, "de promissis et lege," in his *Liber Regularum* presents an interpretation of Galatians very similar to Augustine's. However, it is difficult to determine whether or not Tyconius' influence on Augustine extends to this matter. See note 60 below.

understanding, and hearkened also to the rest of the works which are from the law. Moved by this situation, Paul writes this epistle, wanting to correct them and to recall them from Judaism, so that they might only keep faith in Christ, and by Christ have the hope of his salvation and promises, since obviously no one is saved by the works of the law.”³⁵ Likewise, Jerome remarks that it is the special topic of both the epistle to the Romans and to the Galatians, to preach “the cessation of the old law and the introduction of the new law.”³⁶ Jerome leaves little doubt as to which precepts of the old law he has in mind; namely, the imposed burdens of the Sabbath, circumcision, food regulations, ritual washings, and the like.³⁷

Ambrosiaster’s *argumentum* for Galatians runs along the same lines, the first sentence beginning provocatively: “All who believe in Christ and observe the ‘law of deeds’ (*legem factorum*) wrongly understand Christ;” that is, if they understood Christ to be the divine Lord of the law, then they would cease to place their hope in the law. He goes on to define this *lex factorum* as the new moon festivals, the Sabbath, circumcision, and the distinction of foods; again, clearly restricting Paul’s argument to the ceremonial law.³⁸ In doing this, Ambrosiaster

³⁵ Victorinus, *In Epistolam Pauli ad Galatas* [hereafter *ad Gal.*], CSEL 83/2, 95, 3-10: “Summa autem huic epistolae haec est: errare Galatas quod evangelium fidei, quae est in Christo, adiungant ad Iudaismum, corporali intellectu observantes sabbatum et circumcisionem, item cetera opera quae ex lege perceperant. His rebus motus, Paulus scribit hanc epistolam eos volens corrigere et a Iudaismo revocare, ut fidem tantum in Christum servent et a Christo spem habeant salutis et promissionum eius, scilicet quod ex operibus legis nemo salvetur.” Cf. *Ibid.*, 113, 27-31; 144, 3f.; 159, 4-6.

³⁶ Jerome, PL 26, 334, A: “In his autem duabus, ut dixi, Epistolis, specialiter antiquae legis cessatio et novae introductio continetur.”

³⁷ Jerome, PL 26, 333, C—334, A: “Nullus quidem Apostoli sermo est, vel per Epistolam, vel praesentis, in quo non laboret docere antiquae legis onera deposita, et omnia illa quae in typis et imaginibus praecesserunt, id est, otium Sabbati, circumcisionis, injuriam, Kalendarum et trium per annum solemnitatum recursus, scrupulositatem ciborum, et per dies singulos lavacra iterum sordidanda, gratia Evangelii subrepente cessasse, quam non sanguis victimarum, sed fides animae credentis impleret.”

³⁸ Ambrosiaster, *ad Galatas* [hereafter *ad Gal.*], Arg., 1; CSEL 81/3, 1, 3-11: “Omnis credens in Christum et observans legem factorum male intellegit Christum...si enim deum intellegerent Christum, nihil de lege factorum sperarent, id est de numeniis, sabbato, circumcisione et discretione escarum, quia qui deum et dominum legis colit, supra legem est nec potest iudicari a lege qui cum legislatore concordat.” Cf. *ad Gal.*, 3, 19; CSEL 81/3, 38, 11-13:

effectively excludes the moral law from any of Paul's statements regarding the *abrogatio legis*. Since the moral law in the Decalogue simply reflects the law which is by nature eternally valid, the coming of the gospel does not bring it to an end, but appears as the ongoing and perfect expression of it.³⁹ As such, Ambrosiaster prefers to describe the cessation of the law as the "shortening" or "condensing" of the law, taking his cue from Isaiah 10:22 (Romans 9:28): "*verbum enim consummans et brevians,*" etc.⁴⁰ This shortening of the law involves only those onerous commandments given to Israel on account of the hardness of their hearts.⁴¹ In the

"lex tamen factorum ideo dicitur, quia docet quae deo iubente fiant corporaliter de sacrificiis, de prinogenitis, de decimis et ceteris talibus"; *ad Rom.*, 3, 20; CSEL 81/1, 114, 26f.: "duplex (triplex) quidem lex est ita ut prima pars de sacramento divinitatis sit dei secunda autem quae congruit legi naturali et quae interdicat peccatum, tertia vero lex factorum, id est sabbati, neomeniae, circumcisionis et cetera"; *Quaestiones veteris et novi testamenti* [hereafter *Quaest.*] 75, 2; CSEL 50, 468, 21f.: "... 'in legem' dico, non eam quae naturalis est... sed eandem, quae factorem appellatur, ut circumciderentur, sabbatum observarent et neomenias, discernere escas, circa mundada nasa essent solliciti, et cetera." See also Wilhelm Geerlings, "Das Verständnis von Gesetz im Galaterbriefkommentar des Ambrosiaster," in *Die Weltlichkeit des Glaubens in der Alten Kirche. Festschrift für Ulrich Wickert*, ed. Dietmar Wyrwa (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1997): 101-113.

³⁹ *Quaest.*, 75, 5; CSEL 50, 469, 28f.: "Spiritualis ergo hanc legem dicit... haec est, quam naturalem diximus, quae prohibet peccari; dux est enim bonae vitae. huic addita lex fidei perfectum hominem facit. nam quia communi nomine nuncupatur lex haec, quam naturalem dixi, et illa, quae factorum lex dicitur, contra legem loqui videtur apostolus"; Cf. *Quaest.*, 19; CSEL 50, 435, 28f.: "Legis quidem unum nomen est, sed tripertitam habet intellegentiam. prima enim pars legis de deo est... secunda autem legis pars haec est quae sex praeceptis continetur, quae sic incipit: honora patrem et matrem. tertia vero in *neomeniis* et in *sabbato* est et in *escis discernendis* ac *eligendis* et in *circumcione* et in *hostiis pecudum offerendis*. hanc itaque legem dicit usque ad Iohannem, non ultra seruandam... nec enim fuit ab initio, sed ex causa data ad tempus est, ut adueniente salvatore cessaret lex. *ergo de deo manet tam lex praeceptorum quam natura eius, quae sine dubio ab ipso est et aboleri non potest*" [emphasis mine].

⁴⁰ *ad Gal.*, Arg., 2-3; CSEL 81/3, 1, 16—2, 5: "unde et Galatae vel hi qui eos subvertebant, adhuc erroris nebula contextum cor habentes, non cernunt sensum Esariae profetae inter cetera dicentis: *verbum enim consummans et brevians in aequitate, quia verbum breviatum faciet dominus super terram. si ergo haec dicta intellegerent, a lege recederent, scientes a praedicatione Iohannis baptistae legem iam cessare, ut sola fide sufficiat ad salutem abbreviata ex lege.*"

⁴¹ Cf. *ad Rom.*, Arg., 5; CSEL 81/1, 7, 21f.: "ostendit enim sic promissum Christum, ut adveniente illo lex cessaret, non tota, quia abbreviatio facta legis est, quae compendio daret salutem. multa enim veteribus tradita sunt propter duritiam cordis illorum, ut oneri esset, quae misericordia dei abbreviavit per Christum, data praeteritorum remissione"; *Quaest.*, 44, 9; CSEL 50, 77, 6-11: "post haec tamen, quia pius est deus, nouum testamentum daturum se promisit, in quo abbreviatio facta legis iustificaret credentes, sicut iustificatus est Abraham, ut cessantibus neomeniis et sabbato et circumcisione et ceteris praeceptis—non quae naturalis legis sunt, id est homicidium, adulterium et talia—ita iustificarentur, sicut et Abraham."

preaching of the gospel, Christ graciously pares down these laws which, by their sheer number, had formerly made it impossible for Israel to fulfill the law.⁴²

The importance that this distinction between the ceremonial and moral law had for the early church can even be traced in the Latin version of Galatians that Ambrosiaster follows. The phrase “*lex factorum*” is not to be identified here with Romans 3:27, “*per quam legem? factorum? non, sed per legem fidei*,”⁴³ nor is it, as some later commentators had thought, Ambrosiaster’s own expression.⁴⁴ Rather, it originates from an old Latin version of Galatians 3:19, *Quid ergo lex factorum? posita est, donec veniret semen cui promissum est*—“Why then the law of deeds? It was added until the seed should come to whom the promise had been made.”⁴⁵ Yet even more striking is the fact that standing behind this text lurks an original Greek

⁴² These are the laws given to Israel which, according to Ezekiel 20:25, were “not good”; cf. Ambrosiaster, CSEL 50, 76, 16-77, 13; 428, 25-429, 13; 469, 24-470, 14; CSEL 81/1, 339, 13f.; CSEL 81/3, 326, 20f. The practical impossibility of fulfilling these innumerable Jewish “works of the law” made Israel’s “yoke” simultaneously its “curse”; cf. *ad Gal.*, 3, 9; CSEL 81/3, 33, 12-27.

⁴³ A variation to Rom. 3:27 among the old Latin versions, “*legem operum*,” is reflected in the text of Rufinus and a corrector of Ambrosiaster. See H. J. Vogels, *Untersuchungen zum Text paulinischer Briefe bei Rufin und Ambrosiaster* (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1955).

⁴⁴ Cf. Wendelin Steinbach, *Opera exegetica quae supersunt omnia*, vol. 1, *Commentarius in Epistolam S. Pauli ad Galatas* 1513, ed. Helmut Feld (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1976), 164, 1-4 (lectio 20; Gal. 3:19-20): “...non legis littera sive lex factorum, ut Ambrosius inquit, qui legem Mosaicam factorum nominat, quia docet facta corporalia, que Deo iubente per legem sunt facienda, ut sacramenta, decimationes etc.”

⁴⁵ This text is also used by Marius Victorinus and “Anonymous” in their commentaries. Galatians 3:10-19 are missing from Victorinus, but the phrase does appear in his comments to 3:20f.; CSEL 83/2, 131, 16-17: “Ita nullo modo lex iustificat, nullo modo lex factorum hereditatem consequitur”; 132, 34-38: “Quod si ita est, vana spes est de factorum lege credere iustificationem et salvationem, quae, ut diximus, non mediator est. Solus enim Christus mediator, qui iungit illa inter quae mediator est. Ergo per Christum iustificatio et liberatio, non per legem factorum”; 133, 3-4: “lex enim per Moysen data factorum iustitiam tenet.” For “Anonymous” see, Frede, *Eine neuer Paulustext*, vol. 2, 224. Cf. Tyconius, *Liber Regularum*, III, 26. For the history and relationships of the various old Latin versions of Paul, see Hermann Josef Frede, *Altlateinische Paulus-Handschriften*. *Vetus Latina: Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel*, vol. 4 (Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 1964). For the text of Galatians see Karl Th. Schäfer, “Der griechisch-lateinische Text des Galaterbriefes in der Handschriftengruppe D E F G” in *Scientia Sacra. Theologische Festgabe zugeeignet Karl Joseph Kardinal Schulte*, ed. Carl Feckes (Köln: J. P. Bachem, 1935), 41-70.

text, “νομος των πραξεων,” the earliest witness dating from around 200 AD.⁴⁶ Given the nature of the variant in the manuscripts, coupled with its second-century context, this remarkable reading may quite possibly represent an intentional *theological* alteration of the text, undertaken to discourage a Marcionite reading of Paul.⁴⁷ In other places in Paul, the phrase “works of the law” (εργα νομου; *opera legis*) lent itself more easily to the already common distinction of the ceremonial and moral law. Changing the text in Galatians to “law of deeds” would not only bring such a distinction to mind, but it would simultaneously circumvent the troubling notion that the law was somehow responsible for sin by entirely removing the phrase “on account of transgressions.” This is, at least, the direction that Ambrosiaster and others took when interpreting this passage and suggests the antecedent probability of such a scenario.

Textual variant or no, the variations in interpretation were nonetheless slight. Jerome, who had a different text before him, interpreted Galatians 3:19 in the same manner as Ambrosiaster: as the function of the ceremonial law. The stated reason for the giving of the law, “on account of transgressions,” referred to the transgressions of Israel in the wilderness when they worshiped the golden calf and murmured against the Lord. In response to their infidelity,

⁴⁶ This manuscript is P⁴⁶ which is corroborated by the important ninth century manuscripts, F and G. This same Greek reading also stands behind the Latin translation of Irenaeus’ citations of Galatians, *Adv. Haer.* III, 7, 2; V, 21, 1.

⁴⁷ P⁴⁶ is clearly corrupt, missing the verb entirely. While F and G supply a verb (ετεθη), all three texts, F, G, and P⁴⁶, are without the preposition “on account of” (χαρις), which forces “law” (νομος) to be read in construct with the genitive, “the deeds” (των πραξεων). Because the change of των παραβασεων to των πραξεων coincides in every case with the absence of χαρις, it is unlikely that such a corruption was accidental. While there is nothing in the textual context of Galatians that might foster an explanation for the alteration (indeed, νομος των πραξεων is entirely without precedent in the New Testament), the Marcion controversy of the second century does provide a possible theological context for such a drastic change to the text. Replacing the ambiguous and problematic “on account of transgressions” with a phrase that could more easily be construed as a designation for the ceremonial law rather than the moral does provide some possible motivation for textual corruption, especially since making this distinction was the common method for handling such suggestive Pauline texts. Nonetheless, the evidence for this explanation remains largely circumstantial and therefore we must, at this time, be satisfied with a reasonable conjecture. My thanks to Dr. Jeffrey Kloha, whose expertise in these manuscripts was of great help.

God gave the people the law as a kind of “yoke” to restrain them from such sin.⁴⁸ Such restraint is vividly described in the next verses where the law is compared to a prison (*carcer*). The people of Israel were kept under guard (*custodierunt*), “fettered in the chains of the law,” until the advent of Christ. Left to themselves, they would have freely acted upon their sinful inclinations and remained wholly unprepared to receive the promised Christ.⁴⁹

The figure of the pedagogue in Galatians 3:24-5 had the same connotations of restraint and preparation. Just as a boy, filled with the passions of youth, needs the strict discipline and elementary instruction of a pedagogue to prepare him for the maturation of philosophy and responsible civic life, so also the law of Moses was added to a lascivious people to keep them in custody and prepare them for a future faith. The coming of Christ marks Israel’s “coming of age” and thus the end of the law’s pedagogy.⁵⁰ Hence, returning to the law, as the Galatians had

⁴⁸ Jerome, PL 26, 391, C—392, B: “*propter transgressionem, inquit, Post offensam enim in eremo populi, post adoratum vitulum, et murmur in Dominum, lex transgressionem, prohibitura succedisset. . . illa quae per Moysen duro populo quasi jugum legis imposita sunt.*”

⁴⁹ Jerome, PL 26, 393, C: “Nunc autem propter transgressionem, ut supra diximus, posita, magis arguit eos peccatores, quibus post repromissionem in custodiam, et, ut ita dicam, in carcerem data est, ut quia arbitrii libertatem noluerant innocentes expectare promissum, legalibus vinculis praepediti, et in servitutem mandatorum redacti, custodierunt in adventum futurae in Christo fidei, quae finem repromissionis afferret.” Cf. Victorinus, *ad Gal.*, 3, 23; CSEL 83/2, 134, 5-12: “...custodiebamur, id est quodammodo duce lege atque custode vitam colebamus integram ex vitato peccato et ex cognito, ut, cum Christus veniret, nos velut conclusi in illam fidem quae futura erat, expectaremus adventum; in cuius fidem credentes, praeparati per legem, cum peccata vitaremus atque opera legis efficeremus, facile promissum ex adventu, fidem scilicet in Christum, habere possemus”; Ambrosiaster, *ad Gal.*, 3, 23; CSEL 81/3; 41, 12-15: “...sub legis custodia agebamus, ne peccaremus, ut venienti promissioni digni essemus. hac ergo (enim) spe lex tutos praestabat nos, ut venienti Christo offerret nos {id est Iudaeos}.”

⁵⁰ Jerome, PL 26, 393, D—394, B: “Paedagogus parvulis assignatur, ut lascivens refrenetur aetas, et prona vitia corda teneantur, dum tenera studiis eruditur infantia et ad majores philosophiae ac regendae reipublicae disciplinas, metu poenae coercita praeparatur. . . Itaque et Moysi lex, populo lascivienti, ad instar paedagogi severioris apposita est, ut custodiret eos, et futurae fidei praepararet, quae postquam venit, et credidimus in Christum, jam non sumus sub paedagogo, tutor a nobis curatorque discedunt, et legitimum aetatis tempus ineuntes, veri Dei filii nominamur.” Cf. Victorinus, *ad Gal.*, 3, 24; CSEL 83/2, 134, 16f.: “Quomodo enim qui pueros docent, monent, viam quantum possunt vivendi ostendunt, non tamen ipsi magistri sunt pleni vitae, sic et lex quasi paedagogus fuit, sed non sibi profuturus neque plenus paedagogus ad vitam docendam, sed in Christo, inquit, id est usque ad Christum”; Ambrosiaster, *ad Gal.*, 4, 3; CSEL 81/3; 43, 4f.: “in elementis numenias significat et sabbatum. . . antequam veniret ergo promissio, id est donum gratiae dei, et purificans iustificaret credentes, quasi imperfecti et parvuli {per legem dei} subiecti eramus conservis quasi paedagogis.”

done, was a failure to recognize the change in the times and the didactic significance of *Heilsgeschichte*.

However, in the next chapter, Jerome offers a rather striking discourse on salvation history, stressing the fundamental continuity of the testaments. The heir that is “under tutors and guardians until the time appointed by the father” (Galatians 4:2), is an analogy that, for Jerome, applies to “the whole human race until the advent of Christ and until the consummation of the world.” He explains further: Because Adam’s sin has brought death to all people, even those who are not yet born may rightly be said to have already “died.” On the other hand, Christ, the second Adam, brings life even to those born before his advent. In the same way, law and grace transgress their temporal boundaries: law has its place in the New Testament as the proper form of Christian service to the Father, while grace is found in the Old Testament among those saved in the Son. In this, the testaments are united; for the church “does not distinguish in time, what it shares in common.”⁵¹

Nonetheless, Jerome’s interpretation still maintains the distinctive features of the *tempus legis* and the *tempus gratiae*. The former is an age of infancy in which the spirit of fear is the dominant characteristic. Like the pedagogy of the law, the tutors and guardians restrained the people from sins. It is important to note that Jerome does not say that these people have the same faith as Christians. The unity of faith lay with the patriarchs and prophets, those who were

⁵¹ Jerome, PL 26, 396, A-B: “...sed sub tutoribus et actoribus est, usque ad praefinitum tempus a patre, totum humanum genus usque ad adventum Christi, et, ut amplius dicam, usque ad mundi consummationem significat. Quomodo enim omnes in protoplasto Adam, necdum nati moriuntur: ita et omnes etiam hi, ante adventum Christi nati sunt in secundo Adam vivificantur. Atque ita fit, ut et nos legi servierimus in patribus: et illi gratia salventur in filiis. Iste intellectus Ecclesiae catholicae convenit, quae et veteris et novi Testamenti unam asserit providentiam: nec distinguit in tempore, quos conditione sociavit.”

spiritually enlightened regarding the coming of Christ.⁵² Such a view is held throughout the commentary. The Old Testament saints that are righteous by faith are those who know Christ. Abraham saw the day of Christ and was glad. Moses considered abuse for the sake of Christ more valuable than all the treasures of Egypt. Isaiah saw the glory of Christ.⁵³ Given the gift of *caritas*, they fulfill the law which is spiritual. By this “spiritual” and “evangelical law,” they as well as we are righteous, dying to the law of works, the *lex litterae*, which enjoined Sabbaths, new moon festivals, typological sacrifices, and the like. The commandments of the former are “holy and righteous and good” (Romans 7:12). They are written in the heart by nature, and it was through such a law and the “hearing of faith” that the saints of old were justified. But the precepts of the latter were “not good” (Ezekiel 20:25) and those who were justified in the Old Testament could never be made righteous by them.⁵⁴

⁵² Ibid., 396, C: “Tutores autem et actores, possunt et prophetae accipi, quorum verbis quotidie in adventum Salvatoris erudiebamur: sicut paedagoga Moysi lex supra disserta est; et angeli parvulorum qui quotidie vident faciem Patris, et interpellant pro eis.... Possunt intelligi et sacerdotes et principes, qui tum populo dominati, nunc formam praebere censentur. Et recte hi sub tutoribus et actoribus esse dicuntur, qui habentes spiritum timoris, necdum meruere spiritum libertatis et adoptionis accipere. Aetas enim infantiae ad peccata formidat, paedagogum metuit, non confidit esse se liberam, licet per naturam domina sit. Et secundum utramque intelligentiam qua tutores et actores, vel prophetas, vel angelos diximus, parvulus iste tandiu sub actoribus est atque tutoribus, donec legitimum perfecti viri tempus impleverit... ad humani generis perfectionem Christi reputatur adventus.”

⁵³ Jerome, PL 26, 368, Df.: “Aiunt quidam si verum hoc sit quod Paulus affirmat, ex operibus legis, neminem justificari, sed ex fide Jesu Christi, patriarchas et prophetas, et sanctos, qui ante Christi adventum fuerunt imperfectos fuisse.... Sanctos autem, qui antiquitus fuerint, ex fide Christi justificatos. Siquidem Abraham vidit diem Christi, et laetatus est. Et Moyses majores divinitas aestimavit thesauro Aegyptiorum, improprium Christi. Aspicebat enim in remunerationem. Et Isaias vidit gloriam Christi.”

⁵⁴ Ibid., 369, Df.: “Qui legi moritur, vivebat ei antequam moreretur, observans Sabbata et neomenias, et dies festes, et victimarum typicam curiositatem, et fabulas Judaicas, et genealogias. Postquam autem venit Christus et lex, de qua scriptum est: *Scimus autem quia lex spiritualis est*, per evangelicam legem, legi pristinae mortuus est.... Esse autem legem aliam spiritualem extra legem litterae, et alibi Apostolus docet, dicens: *Itaque lex quidem sancta, et mandatum sanctum, et justum, et bonum* [Rom. 7:12]... De ea vero lege quae iram operatur, cui et Apostolus mortuus est postea infert: *Et ego dedi eis praecepta non bona, et justificationes in quibus non vivent in eis* [Ezek. 20:25].” Ibid., 374, B: “Sciebat enim et Cornelium centurionem Spiritum ex operibus accepisse; sed non ex operibus Legis, quam nesciebat... sed ex auditu fidei, et naturali lege, quae loquitur in cordibus nostris, bona quaeque facienda, et vitanda mala: per quam dudum quoque Abraham, Moysen, et caeteros sanctos justificatos retulimus, quam augere deinceps potest operum observatio, legisque justitia: non tamen carnalis legis, quae praeteriit, sed spiritualis, quia lex spiritualis est.” Cf. Victorinus, *ad Gal.*, 2, 19; CSEL 83/2, 123, 2-6: “Potest videri duas leges dixisse Paulus, unam Christi, alteram Moysi, ut ipsi legi mortuum se dicat quae fuit Iudaeis data,

In addition to this distinction between different kinds of laws, the opposition of the *lex litterae* and the *lex spiritualis* indicated contrasting dispositions at work when one rendered obedience to the law, whether moral or ceremonial. The Old Testament Jews obeyed the letter of the law out of *fear*, but those of the New Testament—both Christians and the spiritually sagacious of antiquity—obeyed the law on account of *love*. The former were slaves, compelled to perform the good; the latter are sons, pining after the good.⁵⁵ Finally, the distinction also turned on the issue of revelation: those who followed the *lex litterae* remained ignorant of the law’s spiritual signification which was not openly taught until Christ preached the gospel.⁵⁶

Having a general picture of the interpretation of Galatians in the most important Latin commentaries of the early church, we now consider the writings of Augustine. His interpretation of Paul is more complex, developing over a long period of time within several different polemical contexts. While his early commentary on Galatians certainly exerts its influence on the medieval interpretation of Paul, it is his dispute with Jerome and his long battle with the Pelagians that will have a more lasting impact on the history of interpretation.

per legem quae a Christo data sit, ut hoc sit: *per legem legi mortuus sum*, id est per legem Chrsiti mortuus sum legi Iudaeorum ante datae.” Ambrosiaster, *ad Gal.*, 2, 19; CSEL 81/3, 28, 21-23: “hoc dicit quia per legem fiei mortuus est legi Moysi. moritur enim qui liberatur ab ea, et vivit deo, cuius fit servus emptus a Christo.”

⁵⁵ Jerome, PL 26, 374 C: “Dicimusque, quod Judaei propter metum faciunt, id nos facere propter charitatem. Illos servos esse, nos filios: illos cogi ad bonum, nos bonum suscipere.”

⁵⁶ Jerome, PL 26, 375, C-D: “Diligenter attendite quod qui Scripturas juxta litteram sequitur, consummari carne dicatur...sic per Legis iter ad Evangelium pergere, ut omnia illa quae ibi scripta sunt, de sabbato, de azymis, de circumcissione, de victimis, digne Deo intelligat, et deinceps post Evangelii lectionem a Judaeo aliquo, aut Judaeorum socio persuaderi, et umbras et allegoriae nubila derelinquens, sic Scripturas interpretetur, ut scriptae sunt...”; 410, A-C; 417, Df.; 423 C—424, B. Cf. Victorinus, *ad Gal.*, 2, 19; CSEL 83/2, 123, 6f.: Potest autem videri, quod frequenter ait Paulus, sed et ipse salvator, ut idcirco duas leges hic nominaverit, quoniam eadem ipsa velut duplex est: una cum carnaliter, altera cum spiritualiter. Ante autem carnaliter intellegebatur, et ex operibus et ex circumcissione et ceteris observationibus carnaliter intellectis legi serviebatur. At postea quam salvator verum et spirituale lumen apparuit, intellegi lex coepit spiritualiter, facta velut alia, cum eadem ipsa lex sit... Sic enim deo quis vivit cum praecepta illa in lege posita non carnaliter intellegit, sed spiritualiter, id est quid sit vere circumcidi, quid sit verum sabbatum, quid cetera, quae multis locis et tractata sunt et tractabuntur.”

Augustine

Shortly after being ordained a priest, Augustine lamented in a letter to his bishop that his knowledge of Scripture was insufficient for his new task of ministry, and that he wished to take a sabbatical in order to devote himself to such study.⁵⁷ Whether or not he was granted leave, the period that followed was indeed a time of intense biblical study which in several years culminated with a concentration in the writings of the Apostle Paul. His *Exposition on Galatians* is one of the earliest expressions of this labor—his only complete exegetical work. According to his own testimony, Augustine commented on Romans and then and in a more complete fashion on Galatians during a visit to Carthage, probably around A.D. 394/5.⁵⁸

The commentary also arose out of a time when Augustine was increasingly engaged in combating the ideas put forth by the Manicheans. In this period, the writings of Paul became one of the major fields of battle in Augustine's anti-Manichean campaign, especially where Paul appeared to disparage the law in light of its value for justification. The interpretation of Romans and Galatians was therefore highly relevant for his ongoing disputes with the heretical

⁵⁷ *Epistula*, 21, [hereafter *ep./epp.*; all subsequent abbreviations will follow the accepted form in *Augustinus-Lexikon*, ed. Cornelius Mayer, vol. 1 (Basel: Schwabe & Co., 1986-94), xliii-xlv]; Letter to Valerius, bishop of Hippo, AD 391.

⁵⁸ For the most recent treatment on the background and significance of Augustine's exposition of Galatians see the introduction of Eric Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians*, 1-121. See also Maria Grazia Mara, "Storia ed esegesi nella Expositio epistulae ad Galatas di Agostino," *Annali di Storia dell'Esegesi*, 2 (1998): 93-102, as well as Johannes Divjak's introduction in CSEL 84, vii-xxxiii. Augustine's testimonies on his commentaries are found in his *Retractions* 1, 23 [hereafter *retr.*]; CCSL 57, 66, 3-67, 7: "Cum presbyter adhuc essem, contigit ut apud Carthaginem inter nos qui simul eramus ad Romanos apostoli epistula legeretur, et quaedam interrogabar a fatribus; quibus cum sicut poteram responderem, uoluerunt scribi potius quae dicebam quam sine litteris fundi"; *retr.* 1, 24; CCSL 57, 71, 1-5: "Post hunc librum exposui eiusdem apostoli epistulam ad Galatas non carptim, id est aliqua praetermittens, sed continueret et totam. Hanc autem expositionem uno uolumine comprehendere."

movement. Here Augustine was able to address the divine intention and purpose of the law as laid out in Scripture, defending both its goodness and its limitations.⁵⁹

Nevertheless, one senses a certain ambiguity in his early commentary which in his later writings gives way to a more consistent interpretation. At times the law's role is depicted as a negative one, preparing God's people through the burdens of excessive legislation to long for grace. In other places the law is depicted as a beneficial teacher, nurturing a piety among the people of Israel which would find unique expression in the Jerusalem church's care for the poor. Likewise, Augustine is not always clear on how he perceives this role in relation to his distinction between the law's ceremonial precepts and the moral law, especially when he speaks of the law enslaving, humbling, and pointing out sins. This ambiguity may in part be due to the influence of several different Galatians commentators which he in all probability consulted for his own interpretation. The likely sources are the commentaries of Marius Victorinus, Jerome, and Ambrosiaster.⁶⁰ At times he appears to follow one or the other; at other times he takes his own path.

⁵⁹ Cf. Augustine's interpretation of Galatians in *De utilitate credendi*, 9, a short treatise written to a Manichee friend in 391. On Augustine's Manichean background see Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 46-60. For a helpful introduction to the use of Paul in both Augustine and the Manicheans see Caroline P. Bammel, "Pauline Exegesis, Manichaeism and Philosophy in the Early Augustine" in *Christian Faith and Greek Philosophy in Late Antiquity, Essays in Tribute to George Christopher Stead*, eds. Lionel R. Wickham and Caroline P. Bammel (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993): 1-25.

⁶⁰ There are various scholarly opinions upon the type and extent of influence that each of these commentators may have had on Augustine. Since Augustine cites no one directly the question is probably without any definitive solution. We know from a letter to Jerome, *ep.* 28, that Augustine had read his commentary around the time he was composing his own. Because he particularly objected to Jerome's interpretation of Gal. 2:11-14, Jerome's influence was primarily negative. Augustine does not avail himself of the vast lexical and grammatical resources which Jerome provides in his commentary. Souter, *The Earliest Latin Commentaries*, 199, finds little evidence of Ambrosiaster but argues that "nothing is more antecedently probable" than that Augustine consulted Victorinus. Most recently, Plumer, *Augustine's Commentary on Galatians*, 7-33, has provided additional substance to Souter's intuition by demonstrating that Victorinus was indeed influential but more important as a model of clarity and simplicity for Augustine's commentary rather than a source for a particular interpretation. He also finds sufficient evidence for Augustine's acquaintance with Ambrosiaster's work, though in all probability he did not know the identity of the author (53-6). On the relationship of Ambrosiaster to Augustine, see also A. Bastiaensen, "Augustine's Pauline Exegesis and Ambrosiaster" in *Augustine: Biblical Exegete*, ed. Frederick Van Fleteren and

Notwithstanding, it is still possible to present an overall picture of Augustine's understanding of Galatians at this time. Unlike his earlier comments on Romans, Augustine interprets the thrust of Paul's argument in Galatians as the place and function of the ceremonial law rather than the moral precepts of the Decalogue. Jewish Christians were trying to impose the "burdens of the law" (*onera legis*) on the Gentile Galatians, "claiming that the gospel would be of no benefit to them unless they were circumcised and submitted to other carnal observances of Jewish custom."⁶¹ But these ceremonies, or *sacramenta*, were only useful as signs of the spiritual works in Christ—of love of God and neighbor.⁶² Now that the signs had been fulfilled and were explained openly to Christians, there was certainly no need to require Gentile Christians to observe them. Through the gracious infusion of divine love, they now performed these works spiritually.⁶³ But the Jews were under the false assumption that their obedience to these ceremonial works of circumcision, Sabbaths, and sacrifices had somehow merited God's gift of grace and were thus "unwilling to entrust the gospel to the Gentiles unless they were circumcised."⁶⁴ Paul's response to his opponents was a sharp one, and according to Augustine's

Joseph C. Schnaubelt, OSA (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 33-54. Another more tentative source is Tyconius and his *Liber Regularum*. Augustine had most certainly read Tyconius by 397, as he enthusiastically reports in *ep.* 41. But because there is such a striking similarity in Augustine's interpretation of the law in his early Romans and Galatians with that of Tyconius in his third rule, *de promissis et lege*, Paula Fredriksen has argued for an earlier encounter. See Paula Fredriksen, "Beyond the Body/Soul Dichotomy: Augustine on Paul Against the Manichees and the Pelagians," *Recherches augustiniennes*, 23 (1988): 87-114.

⁶¹ *Expositio epistulae ad Galatas liber unus*, 1, 2 [hereafter *exp. Gal.*]; CSEL 84, 55, 12-16: "...sub hac ergo gratia iam Galatas constitutos illi volebant constituere sub oneribus legis asseverantes nihil eis prodesse evangelium, nisi circumciderentur et cetereas carnales Iudaici ritus observationes subirent." [Plumer's translation].

⁶² *exp. Gal.*, 19, 9-10; CSEL 84, 77, 16-20: "Omne autem sacramentum cum intelligitur, aut ad contemplationem ueritatis refertur aut ad bonos mores. Contemplatio ueritatis in solius dei dilectione fundata est, boni mores in dilectione dei et proximi"; *exp. Gal.*, 44, 2; CSEL 84, 118, 4-7: "...quia et illa, quae sunt in sacramentis, cum bene a liberis intelliguntur nec carnaliter obseruantur a seruis, ad illa duo praecepta referantur necesse est, dilectionis dei et proximi."

⁶³ Cf. *exp. Gal.*, 15, 13-15; 19, 6.

⁶⁴ *exp. Gal.*, 16, 5 [Plumer's translation]; see also 15, 13-17; 25, 1.

understanding the riposte was double-pronged: everyone—even the ancient saints living *sub lege*—were justified by God’s grace through faith; and secondly, “the law was not given to take away sin but to imprison all under sin...so that having been humbled in this way they might recognize that their salvation does not rest in their own hands.”⁶⁵

It is especially this second point which characterizes Augustine’s interpretation of the question posed in Galatians 3:19, “Why then the law?” For Augustine, the law was given to the proud Jews who, boasting in their circumcision, needed to be humbled so that they might seek after grace and no longer assume that they could be saved by their own merits.⁶⁶ This was done especially through the “countless observances” prescribed. Through these, all were made transgressors, for as Peter had said in Acts 15, neither the Jews themselves nor their ancestors were able to fulfill them all.⁶⁷ The Old Testament saints, however, are not to be numbered among these, for through a special revelation they believed in Christ with a *fide prophetica*, and thus obtaining the salvation of grace, they fulfilled the law through love.⁶⁸

Nevertheless, those who were without such a revelation still benefited from the law’s pedagogy. For the very law under which they were “shut up” and “confined” inculcated such a

⁶⁵ *exp. Gal.*, 25, 9; CSEL 84, 90, 12-16: “Non ergo lex data est, ut peccatum auferret sed ut sub peccato omnia concluderet... ut hoc modo humiliati cognoscerent non in sua manu esse salutem suam” [Plumer’s translation]; see 15, 17.

⁶⁶ *exp. Gal.*, 24, 14; CSEL 84, 88, 6-10: “Superbienti ergo populo lex posita est, ut quoniam gratiam caritatis nisi humiliatus accipere non posset et sine hac gratia nullo modo praecepta legis impleret, transgressione humiliaretur, ut quaereret gratiam nec se suis meritis salvum fieri, quod superbum est, opinaretur”; 25, 1; 25, 9-10.

⁶⁷ *exp. Gal.*, 41, 8; CSEL 84, 113, 6-11: “Quod ideo ait, ut vel terror tam *innumerabilium observationum*, quae in legis operibus scriptae sunt, ne omnes implere cogentur, *quod nec ipsi Iudaei nec parentes eorum implere potuerunt*, sicut Petrus in Actibus apostolorum dicit, abstinerent se ab his, quibus eos isti subiugare cupiebant” [emphasis mine].

⁶⁸ *exp. Gal.*, 24, 10-11; CSEL 84, 87, 12-19: “Sanati sunt ergo ab impietate superbiae, ut reconciliarentur deo, quicumque homines humilitatem Christi et per revelationem, antequam fieret, et per euangelium, posteaquam facta est, credendo dilexerunt, diligendo imitati sunt. Sed haec iustitia fidei... non erat popularis, antequam dominus homo inter homines nasceretur”; *exp. Gal.*, 24, 13; CSEL 84, 88, 3-5: “...paucissimis, qui ex fide domini, fide prophetica ante ambos aduentus eius salutem gratiae perceperunt...”; cf. *exp. Gal.*, 19, 7.

piety and fear of God that, when Christ did come, they were the first to perform such great acts of charity which we see recorded in the book of Acts.⁶⁹ Being found transgressors of the law also served to benefit those who believed, for “recognition of the greater illness made them both desire the physician more urgently and love him more ardently.”⁷⁰

According to Augustine, the entire passage of Galatians 3:19-25 concerns the purpose and limitations of the *ceremonial law* in the Old Testament. He is very hesitant to include the moral law in such a discussion, given its lasting value for the Christian.⁷¹ Rather, the moral law—summarized in the love of God and neighbor—is the ultimate significance of the ceremonial law, now fulfilled through grace, or better, “the grace of faith which works through love.”⁷² The moral law is not explicitly considered until Galatians 5:13, where Augustine notes a clear shift in Paul’s argument. “Undoubtedly these works belong to the New Testament as well as to the Old, but in the New Testament they are directed towards a different end, appropriate for

⁶⁹ *exp. Gal.*, 26, 2; CSEL 84, 90, 23-5: “Quae enim gentium ecclesiae venditarum rerum suarum pretia ad pedes apostolorum posuerunt, quod tot milia hominum tam repente fecerunt?”; *exp. Gal.*, 26, 8; CSEL 84, 91, 15-20: “Ut enim tam prope invenirentur et tam de proximo ad deum venditis suis rebus accederent... lege ipsa factum est, sub qua custodiebantur conclusi in eam fidem, id est in adventum eius fidei, quae postea revelata est, conclusio enim eorum erat timor unius dei.” The reference here is to Acts 4:34-5.

⁷⁰ *exp. Gal.*, 26, 9; CSEL 84, 91, 21- 92, 2: “Et quod praevaricatores ipsius legis inventi sunt, non ad perniciem sed ad utilitatem valuit eis, qui crediderunt, cognitio enim maioris aegritudinis et desiderari medicum vehementius fecit et diligi ardentius.” [Plumer’s translation]

⁷¹ In *exp. Gal.*, 19, 1, Augustine sets out clearly that Paul’s argument throughout this portion of the letter is limited to the ceremonial law for “surely, it is impossible that the Apostle does not care whether a Christian is a murderer and an adulterer or chaste and innocent, in the same way that he does not care whether a man is circumcised or uncircumcised in the flesh. At present, therefore, he is dealing mainly with these latter, sacramental works” [Plumer’s translation]. Likewise, commenting on Gal. 3:11 (21, 5-7; CSEL 84, 80, 9-20), “no one is justified in the law,” he is quick to gloss “*in lege*” with “*in operibus legis*,” in order to exclude the moral law from Paul’s assertion, for earlier (17, 4-6; CSEL 84, 73, 19- 74, 4) Augustine had distinguished *in lege* from *sub lege*, so that the former was to fulfill the law through love. Distinguishing between the two divisions of the law so that the moral law might be excluded from Paul’s disparaging statements was an important part of Augustine’s polemic against the Manicheans. See especially *Contra Faustum*, Books 6, 10, and 19 [hereafter *c. Faust.*].

⁷² The “grace of faith” is an important phrase throughout the commentary established at the very beginning (1, 2) with reference to Gal. 5:6, *gratia fidei, quae per dilectionem operatur* (Cf. Plumer, 124, n. 4). For the fulfillment of the ceremonial law through the moral law see *exp. Gal.*, 19, 19-10 and 44, 2.

the people who are set free. These are the works of the love that hopes for eternal rewards and waits in faith. Such was not the case with the Jews, who were driven to fulfill them by fear.”⁷³

In this last section of the commentary, Augustine brings in some of his earlier insights from his exposition of Romans. In order to combat the Manichean reproach of the law and denial of free will, Augustine had suggested in his exposition of Romans 3:20 that the history of salvation reflected the moral progress of the individual, being divided into four stages: *ante legem, sub lege, sub gratia, in pacem*.⁷⁴ One ought not to scorn the Old Testament law, for it had its place in God’s plan of salvation even as “law” has its place in the growth and experience of every human being. In both cases, the law forces one to face his moral impotency so that, desiring the gift of grace, his will might be made free, no longer enslaved to the desires of the flesh. So now in Galatians, commenting on 5:17, “For the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, so that you cannot do what you want,” Augustine introduces these four stages to counter those who think the Apostle denies free will. It is Christ’s gift of grace that frees the will; only in forsaking life *sub gratia* does one return to bondage.⁷⁵

⁷³ *exp. Gal.*, 43, 2-3; [Plumer’s translation].

⁷⁴ Or as Eugene TeSelle has put it, Augustine’s understanding of salvation history is “*the life of the self writ large*.” See “Exploring the Inner Conflict: Augustine’s Sermons on Romans 7 and 8” in *Augustine: Biblical Exegete*, eds. Frederick Van Fleteren and Joseph C. Schnaubelt, OSA (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 314. The four ages of history/man are introduced in Augustine’s *Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistula Apostoli ad Romanos*, Q. 13-18. In roughly the same time period similar statements are also found in *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, Q. 44, 53, 61, 66; and implicitly in *Ad Simplicianum* I, 1. On its significance for Augustine’s early exegesis see Paula Fredriksen, “Exaecati Occulta Justitia Dei: Augustine on Jews and Judaism,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 3 (1995): 299-324; idem, “Paul and Augustine: Conversion Narratives, Orthodox Traditions, and the Retrospective Self,” *Journal of Theological Studies* NS 37 (1986): 3-34; idem, “Beyond the Body/Soul Dichotomy,” 87-114. Augustine continued to find the four stages useful as evidenced several decades later in his *Enchiridion*, 118-19, noting this one exception: that on a personal level some individuals never experience the *sub lege* category, “but have received the divine assistance as soon as they received the commandment.”

⁷⁵ *exp. Gal.*, 46, 1f.

Here we see the more personal, existential dimension to Augustine's doctrine of the law. Modern Pauline scholarship has criticized Augustine's interpretation as one which psychologized what for Paul was essentially a historical-eschatological view of the law.⁷⁶ Yet as we have seen so far, Augustine upheld the *heilsgeschichtlich* character of Paul's theology of the law. That he saw a correspondence between the progression of salvation history and that of the individual is not so much the result of an introspective individualism than an expression of his view of history in general. It served as an important polemic against the Manichean rejection of the Old Testament when Augustine could point out that Divine Providence had chosen to bring about the conversion and salvation of the human race in such a way that it mirrored the conversion and salvation of the individual.⁷⁷

Augustine's interpretation of Galatians in the years immediately following his commentary can still move in several different directions. So for example, in *De continentia* (A.D. 395), after citing Romans 3:20, "through the law comes knowledge of sin"; Romans 5:20, "the law entered that sin might abound"; and Romans 7:7, "I would not have known coveting unless the law had said, 'do not covet'," Augustine then refers to this law as a *pedagogue* which led the offender to grace, even as one grievously wounded desires a physician.⁷⁸ Certainly here

⁷⁶ See especially Krister Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," *Harvard Theological Review* 56 (1960): 199-215.

⁷⁷ See Mario Mendoza, "Introduzione al *Commento della Lettera ai Galati*" in *Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana*, vol. 10/2 (Rome: Città Nuova, 1997), 480-3. In "Exploring the Inner Conflict," 315, TeSelle notes, "As *De civitate dei* abundantly demonstrates, he was responsive to the whole scope of human life as he knew it. His own conviction was that everything in human history is to be understood as the expression of desires and fears and potentialities that we also experience with ourselves." For Augustine's view of human history and the cosmos in his anti-Manichean commentary on Genesis see Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 197-223.

⁷⁸ *De continentia*, iii, 7; CSEL 41, 148,16-19: "si autem lex factum praeuaricatore, tamquam ad hoc grauius uulneratum, ut desideret medicum, tamquam *paedagogus* perducit ad gratiam, contra suauitatem noxiam, qua uincebat concupiscentia..." [emphasis mine].

Augustine is applying Galatians 3:24 to the moral law. But in book three of *De doctrina christiana* (A.D. 397), he describes the pedagogical function of the law not in terms of revealing and increasing sin, but as a prophetic guide, leading Israel through its sacramental signs to worship the one true God and to expect the future spiritual realities revealed at Christ's coming.⁷⁹ As we approach the turn of the century, however, there is an increasing tendency in Augustine's writings to interpret Galatians in terms of the whole law with a special emphasis on the moral precepts of the Decalogue. This is evident in his most extensive anti-Manichean treatise, *Contra Faustum*, but even more so in his famous correspondence with Jerome.

Already in 395, Augustine had objected to Jerome's interpretation of the dispute between Peter and Paul in Galatians 2:11-14 which turned it into a sort of ruse rather than a real confrontation over the law. In the ensuing epistolary exchange—which lasted for almost a decade—Augustine argued that Jerome's interpretation undermined the truthfulness of the Apostle and the authority of the Scriptures. Paul's rebuke of Peter was a real rebuke. Peter was wrong to observe the ceremonial rites of the law in front of the Gentiles as if they were still necessary for salvation. If Jerome wanted to preserve Peter's integrity by presenting the scenario as a staged event, he did so at the expense of Scripture.⁸⁰ However, in Augustine's final letter on the subject, the argument took a decisive turn and concentrated on Paul's theology of the law.

⁷⁹ *De doctrina Christiana* III, vi, 10; CSEL, 80, 85, 4-19: "Et quamquam signa rerum spiritualium pro ipsis rebus observarent, nescientes quo referrentur, id tamen insitum habebant, quod tali servitute uni omnium, quem non videbant, placerent deo. Quam custodiam tamquam sub paedagogo parvulorum fuisse scribit apostolus. . . . qui crediderunt, ex quibus facta est prima ecclesia Hierosolimitana, satis ostenderunt quanta utilitas fuerit eo modo sub paedagogo custodiri, ut signa quae temporaliter inposita erant servientibus, ad unius dei cultum qui fecit caelum et terram, opinionem observantium religarent."

⁸⁰ See *epp.* 28; 40; and 82 (CSEL 34). The integrity of the apostles and the scriptural witness was a special sore spot for Augustine who had to constantly defend the Scriptures against the attacks and abuses of the Manicheans. For the anti-Manichean and anti-Donatist background to Augustine's letters on this issue, see R. Cole-Turner, "Anti-Heretical Issues and the Debate over Galatians 2:11-14 in the Letters of St. Augustine to Jerome," *Augustinian Studies* 11 (1980): 155-66.

Quite different from his earlier commentary, Augustine now argued that Paul's rebuke of Peter was not merely concerning the ceremonial law but was directed much more to the significance of the moral law:

What it is to be "*sub lege*" in the sense in which the apostle reproaches it, strikes me as an important question. For I do not think that he said this on account of circumcision or those sacrifices that were then offered by the patriarchs, but are not now offered by Christians, and other things of this sort, but on account of *this very command* that the law gives: "do not covet." We certainly admit that Christians ought to observe this and proclaim it especially by the light of the gospel.⁸¹

Augustine then went on to quote Romans 7:13 and 5:20 together with Galatians 3:19,⁸² concluding that Paul designates

...those worthy of condemnation, those whom the law makes guilty because they do not fulfill the law—"sub lege." Since they do not understand the benefit of grace for accomplishing God's commandments, in proud arrogance they presume upon their own strength.... Therefore, if that which the law says, "do not covet," holds one guilty under it when human weakness is not aided by the grace of God and condemns the transgressor rather than sets the sinner free, *how much more* was it impossible for that which was commanded for the sake of what was signified—circumcision and the rest...to justify!⁸³

⁸¹ *ep.* 82, 20; CSEL 34, 371, 14-20: "Magna mihi uidetur quaestio, quid sit esse sub lege sic, quem ad modum apostolus culpat. neque enim hoc eum propter circumcisionem arbitror dicere aut illa sacrificia, quae tunc facta a patribus nunc a Christianis non fiunt, et cetera eius modi, sed hoc ipsum etiam, quod lex dicit: *Non concupisces*, quod fatemur certe Christianos obseruare debere atque euangelica maxime inlustratione praedicare" [emphasis mine].

⁸² Rom. 7:13, "Did that which is good, then, bring death to me? By no means! It was sin, working death in me through what is good, in order that sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure"; Rom. 5:20, "Law came in, to increase the trespass; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more"; Gal. 3:19, "Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made."

⁸³ *ep.* 82, 20; CSEL 34, 372, 13- 373, 4: "hos ergo damnabiliter dicit esse sub lege, quos reos facit lex non implentes legem, dum non intellegendo gratiae beneficium ad facienda dei praecepta quasi de suis uiribus superba elatione praesumunt.... si ergo illud, quod lex ait: *Non concupisces*, si humana infirmitas gratia dei adiuta non fuerit, sub se reum tenet et praevaricatorem potius damnat, quam liberat peccatorem, quanto magis illa, quae significationis causa praecepta sunt, circumcisio et cetera, quae gratiae reuelatione latius innotescente necesse fuerat aboleri, iustificare neminem poterant!"

Augustine no longer used the division of ceremonial and moral precepts to qualify Paul's statements regarding the law's value for justification. It is Paul's theology of the law in general which determines how one ought to regard the particular ceremonial rites and observances prescribed by Moses. The moral law sets the precedent: since it cannot justify or be fulfilled unless aided by grace, even less should such temporary, figural laws such as circumcision and dietary codes be regarded as necessary for salvation. This concentration on the moral law would, henceforth, remain Augustine's understanding of Galatians.⁸⁴ Apparently, this final letter also convinced Jerome who later abandoned his former interpretation of the text when writing against the Pelagians.⁸⁵

The most important period of Augustine's Pauline exegesis is arguably during his conflict with the Pelagians; at the very least, it is the most prolific.⁸⁶ We cannot here treat all of the issues which were raised in this debate, intertwined though they may be. Besides, from Augustine's perspective there was only one main issue: *causa gratiae*. Thus, for as much as Augustine talks about the purpose and function of the law in these writings, he is *not* trying to expound a comprehensive theology of the law. Rather, he is responding to a whole list of assertions and accusations made by the Pelagians which in one way or another undermine the sovereignty of grace.

⁸⁴ Cf. *ep.* 196, written to Asellicus in 418.

⁸⁵ See Jerome's *Dialogus adversus Pelagianos*, I, 23. Cf. Augustine's letter to Oceanus, *ep.* 180, 4-5.

⁸⁶ See Gerald Bonner, "Augustine, the Bible and the Pelagians" in *Augustine and the Bible*, ed. and trans. Pamela Bright (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 227-42, who describes the Pelagian conflict in part as a clash between two exegetical traditions: the flowering Latin Pauline exegesis in Rome and the African tradition.

It is not entirely certain what Augustine had initially read or gleaned from the buzz in North Africa which informed his first picture of the Pelagian teaching.⁸⁷ It appears that his earliest concrete encounter with the doctrine was through the theses of Caelestius, a young disciple of Pelagius who was condemned in Carthage for his teachings in 411; Rufinus the Syrian's *Liber de fide*; and Pelagius' own exposition of the Pauline epistles. A theme found especially in Caelestius and Pelagius, which appeared again and again throughout the controversy, was an appeal to the righteous saints of the Old Testament as a *precedent* for man's natural capacity to obey the commandments. Since the grace of Christ had not yet appeared, if any were regarded righteous in the Old Testament (something undoubtedly affirmed by the testimony of Scripture), then it could only be through their own natural powers. Thus, if such moral resources were available to those who lived by the law of reason or later by the law of Moses, how much more ought this to be the case for Christians who live by the clear light of Christ's law and example.⁸⁸ Otherwise, the law was given for no reason and the entire age before Christ is to be consigned to unrighteousness and condemnation!⁸⁹

The Pelagians were quite shrewd on this point. Without necessarily making an explicit

⁸⁷ Brown, *Augustine*, 345, notes that even in Augustine's earliest assessment of the Pelagian doctrine he "shows a quite astonishing grasp of the new problem. What had appeared in Carthage as disquieting and disparate straws in the wind, came together for the first time in this work of Augustine's to form a coherent system: 'See where it leads to...' is a constant refrain."

⁸⁸ For Pelagius, history was divided into three epochs: *ante legem, sub lege, sub gratia*. Each stage was a renewed attempt to inform the human race of its moral obligation, for knowledge of the divine will was repeatedly obscured through the habit of sinning. Thus Pelagius can say that all have been saved by grace as long as "grace" is understood as knowledge of the commandments. Whether one comes to this knowledge through natural reason, through the old law, or through the precepts and example of Christ, the ability to obey the commandments still lies within one's natural resources. See Pelagius' *Expositiones in epistolas sancti Pauli*, Rom. 4:9 and Eph. 1:10 (PL, Supp. 1, 1131; 1290); *Epistula ad sacram Christi virginem Demetriadem*, 4-8 (PL 30, 19C-23D; PL 33, 1101-05). See also *De gratia Christi et de peccato originali*, II, xxvi, 30 [hereafter *gr. et pecc. or.*]; *Contra duas epistulas Pelagianorum*, I, xxi, 39 [hereafter *c. ep. Pel.*]. Robert F. Evans, *Pelagius. Inquiries and Reappraisals* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1968), 96-113, has a helpful summary of Pelagius' theology of redemptive history.

accusation of Manichaeism against the Catholics, the form of such affirmative propositions as “There were men without sin before the advent of Christ” and “The kingdom of heaven is also promised in the Old Testament” insinuated as much. After all, who could condemn without qualification such propositions without treading dangerously close to the error of Marcion and the like? Such an accusation, which Julian of Eclanum later made explicit, lay implicitly within the Pelagian polemic from the beginning.⁹⁰

One can imagine that Augustine had little patience for such insinuations. He had spent several decades defending the righteousness of the patriarchs against the Manicheans. His response to the Pelagians was essentially the same, though now it served a new purpose: those who were righteous before the advent of Christ were, like Christians today, only righteous by the gift of God’s grace. They lived holy lives in accordance with God’s commandments because, despairing of their own powers, they had faith in the one who was to come—faith in the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ. Through this faith the Holy Spirit poured love into their hearts by which they could fulfill the law freely and with joy. Indeed, every righteous saint in the Old Testament was proleptically a member of the New.⁹¹

In defining the purpose of the law, Augustine had to once again show how the law could be both good and holy and yet without the power to justify. The Pelagians objected to the idea of

⁸⁹ The theses of Caelestius are enumerated in *de gestis Pelagii* [hereafter *gest. Pel.*], 11, 23-24. Pelagius’ “Testimonies” are cited in *gest. Pel.*, 5, 13.

⁹⁰ For Julian of Eclanum see especially *c. ep. Pel.*, I, vii, 12; I, xxi, 39; III, i, 2; III, ix, 25. See also Brown, *Augustine*, 370 and 386.

⁹¹ Cf. *De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvulorum*, I, xi, 13 [hereafter *pecc. mer.*]; *De natura et gratia*, xlv, 51 [hereafter *nat. et gr.*]; *De perfectione iustitiae hominis*, xix, 42 [hereafter *perf. iust.*]; *gest. Pel.*, v, 14; *gr. et pecc. or.*, I, xxxviii, 42; II, xxiv, 28-xxix, 34; *c. ep. Pel.*, I, vii, 12; I, xxi, 39; III, iv, 6, 11, 13; III, viii, 24-ix, 25; IV, v, 10. For the ancients’ explicit knowledge and faith in Christ’s incarnation, death and resurrection, and thus in reality members of the New Testament see especially: *gr. et pecc. or.*, II, xxiv, 28-xxv, 29; *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*, II, xi, 24; *c. ep. Pel.*, III, iv, 6 and 11; *ep.* 190, ii, 6-8.

a law given that was impossible to fulfill. A “should” implied a “could,” lest human beings escape culpability for their moral failures.⁹² Augustine did not have difficulty with this point in principle, even as he could grant the possibility of a sinless life. The question, however, is not *whether* one can fulfill the law but *by what means?*⁹³ For Augustine, only one kind of answer is permissible: by Christ the physician, by the medicine of grace, by the love of the Holy Spirit shed abroad in our hearts. While Pelagius had argued that the only “grace” necessary for salvation was God’s gracious creation of our free will and his instruction through the commandments, Augustine replied that free choice without knowledge avails nothing but sin, and knowledge alone is likewise useless unless it is delighted and loved.⁹⁴ The mere giving of the Mosaic law need not entail the resources for its fulfillment. Paul actually teaches the very opposite: the law was given to *make transgressors*, to *increase sin* by turning sin into an explicit violation of the law.

Not surprisingly, Romans and Galatians provided the lion’s share of citations in Augustine’s anti-Pelagian writings: Romans 3:20; 5:20; 7:7; 7:13; 10:4; Galatians 2:16; 3:11; 3:19-26.⁹⁵ The purpose of the law, indeed its *divine* purpose, was to confine the proud Jews under sin, to make them sinners and thus impart to them true knowledge of themselves. In this

⁹² Cf. *perf. iust.*, iii, 5-6; *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, xvi, 32 [hereafter *gr. et lib. arb.*]

⁹³ cf. *nat. et gr.*, xliv, 51; *perf. iust.*, iii, 5-6; *c. ep. Pel.*, III, vii, 20.

⁹⁴ This is in fact the precise issue which Augustine seeks to address in *De spiritu et littera* [hereafter *spir. et litt.*], defined at the outset, ii, 4- iii, 5. Augustine uses 2 Cor. 3:6, “The letter kills, but the spirit gives life,” as the Apostle’s definitive separation of knowledge and action. Mere knowledge of a command cannot penetrate the heart; it is only an external letter which by itself leads to death. One needs the help of the life-giving Spirit who grants us the love needed to fulfill what the law demands. For Pelagius’ definition of ‘grace’ see especially *spir. et litt.* 32; *gr. et pecc. or.*, I, vi, 7-vii, 8; *c. ep. Pel.* IV, v, 11; *gr. et lib. arb.* 22-27.

⁹⁵ For Galatians see especially, *pecc. mer.*, III, xi, 20; *spir. et litt.*, x, 16; xviii, 31; xix, 34; *nat. et gr.*, i, 1-2; xii, 13; *perf. iust.*, v, 11; xix, 42; *gr. et pecc. or.*, I, viii, 9- ix, 10; II, xxiv, 29; *c. ep. Pel.*, I, vi, 12; III, ii, 3; iv, 7; viii, 24; IV, v, 10-11; *ep.* 190, ii, 7.

manner they were “under a pedagogue,” “shut up unto that faith yet to be revealed.” Humbled by the fear of the law and having their weakness exposed, they then sought the help of a Savior. For Augustine the law-as-pedagogue was a fearful image, “leading” by terrorizing. It could extort a superficial external obedience by threats, but its final demand, “do not covet,” brought all to their knees.⁹⁶ Yet this was precisely the role that God had intended for the law. The law was thus good and useful because through its terrors it led men to seek grace: “the law was given that grace might be sought, grace was given that the law might be fulfilled.”⁹⁷ This is for Augustine the fundamental difference between the law of the Old Testament and the law of the New. The Pelagians wished to limit the difference to degrees of clarity, but Augustine saw the difference in more radical terms: fear of punishment/love of righteousness, slavery/freedom, external/internal, temporal/eternal, killing letter/quickenning spirit.⁹⁸ Both laws contained the same commandment, “do not covet,” but only the law of faith could grant what was demanded.

Although Augustine understood Galatians primarily according to this pattern of salvation history, his interpretation was not without a more personal dimension. We saw earlier that the great “introspective conscience of the West” could also see the stages of salvation history

⁹⁶ Augustine introduces a psychology of coercion which will later be taken up by Luther, namely, that coerced obedience implies that one would *prefer* the law not to exist in order to do what is really desired (cf. *spir. et litt.*, viii, 13; *nat. et gr.*, lvii, 67; *c. ep. Pel.*, III, iv, 9). This, then, demonstrates why it is utterly impossible to fulfill the commandment “do not covet” when motivated by anything but love for the commandment itself. Cf. *pecc. mer.*, v, 5; *spir. et litt.*, xiii, 22; xxxii, 56; *perf. iust.*, v, 11, where Augustine cites Wis. 8:21, “non possum esse continens nisi Deus det” in connection with this commandment.

⁹⁷ *spir. et litt.*, xix, 34; CSEL 60, 187, 16-23: “quod enim ait: conclusit scriptura omnia sub peccato, ut promissio ex fide Iesu Christi daretur credentibus [Gal. 3:22], ipsius conclusionis utilitas dicta est. nam ‘conclusit’ ad quos usus, nisi quemadmodum alibi dicit: prius autem quam ueniret fides, sub lege custodiebamur conclusi in eam fidem quae postea reuelata est [Gal. 3:23]? lex ergo data est, ut gratia quaereretur, gratia data est, ut lex inpleretur.”

⁹⁸ See for example, *spir. et litt.*, xiii, 21-22; xvii, 29- xix, 32; xxiv, 41; and xxv, 42. Augustine had already made these fundamental distinctions between the old and new law in his anti-Manichean writings, e.g. *contra Adimantum*, 17. These distinctions set the table for scholastic debate in the Middle Ages. See Reinhard Schwarz,

mirrored in the salvation of the individual. The law as it now appeared to the man living *anno domini* might also imprison him under sin, so that, recognizing himself to be a sinner and transgressor, he might feel his utter weakness and impotency in the face of that sin. Being thus driven from himself, such a man cries out for a Savior who has come for just such a person—humbled and longing for grace. *Conversion* is, therefore, a movement from life under the law to life under grace.⁹⁹ Certainly this is how Augustine perceived his own conversion.¹⁰⁰ However, this dialectical movement is limited to the singularity of the conversion moment; Augustine does not conceive of law and grace as a continual tension throughout the Christian life. This is the implication of his famous reinterpretation of Romans 7: the Christian’s ongoing struggle against the flesh is a battle waged *sub gratia*.¹⁰¹ One may continually recall the commandments of God and confess the need for grace—“give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt”—but this is not characterized as a particular ongoing function of the law. If anything, it is life in the *new law* of Christ, a law which simultaneously bestows what it demands.¹⁰²

Fides, Spes, und Caritas beim jungen Luther: unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der mittelalterlichen Tradition, Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 34 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1962), 180, n. 321; 191-211.

⁹⁹ See especially *Sermones* 151-156, and 26—all preached in Carthage, October 417 or 419.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *Confessiones*, III, v, 12, which describes his pre-conversion condition in the words of Rom. 7:22-4, which at that time he interpreted as the voice of one *sub lege*.

¹⁰¹ His earlier interpretation of Romans 7:14f. was, as noted above, to understand Paul speaking in the person of one *sub lege*. Later, especially during the anti-Pelagian controversy, Augustine would stress that the struggle there described was actually the struggle of every Christian. The man who delighted in God’s law with his mind could only be one *sub gratia*. Even so, he had to continue to battle against the concupiscence to which he no longer gave consent but which nevertheless remained in his flesh until death.

¹⁰² See Bernhard Lohse, “Gesetz und Gnade—Gesetz und Evangelium. Die reformatorische Neuformulierung eines Themas der patristischen Theologie” in *Evangelium in der Geschichte*, vol. 2, eds. Gabriele Borger, Corinna Dahlgrün, Otto Hermann Pesch, and Markus Wriedt (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 240-5. Lohse is right to point out the personal dimension to Augustine’s *heilsgeschichtlich* labels of *sub lege* and *sub gratia*, even as it relates to his own conversion, yet Lohse seems to conclude too much when he wishes to see *law* and *grace* as two poles of an ongoing dialectical tension throughout the Christian life: “...der Mensch in die Dialektik zwischen Gesetz und Gnade oder Gesetz und Evangelium hineingezogen ist und aus eigener Kraft dieser Spannung nicht entrinnen kann... an dieser Stelle die augustianische und die reformatorische Theologie außerordentlich nahe beieinander sind” (242-3). As we have noted, Augustine’s movement from *sub lege* to *sub*

Medieval Tradition

The manner in which Augustine's interpretation of Paul was transmitted to the subsequent generations of biblical exegetes prevented any significant appreciation for the development which we have just observed. Augustine's mature understanding of Paul's doctrine of the law was indiscriminately received along with his earlier views. Moreover, Augustine's interpretation was often placed alongside comments from Jerome and Ambrosiaster, so that what had been distinctive was now blurred by juxtaposition into consensus.

This was especially true of early medieval commentaries which were more like exegetical *florilegia* than original compositions. "To study the commentaries of Alcuin, Claudius of Turin, Raban Maur and Walafrid Strabo his pupil, to mention outstanding names, is simply to study their sources."¹⁰³ We might add to Beryl Smalley's list Florus of Lyon, Sedulius Scotus, Haimo of Auxerre, and Atto of Vercelli, all commentators on Pauline epistles during the Carolingian period.¹⁰⁴ Their exegesis of Galatians largely reproduced verbatim that of Jerome, Augustine, and "Ambrose." Haimo of Auxerre stands out as somewhat more original, though his thought reflects, in substance, the interpretation of Jerome.¹⁰⁵ To detail their commentaries here would therefore serve little purpose.

gratia is limited to conversion. The ongoing struggle of the Christian—as particularly expressed in Romans 7:14f.—is that between the will renewed by grace and the flesh enslaved to concupiscence—all within the status *sub gratia*.

¹⁰³ Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), 37-8.

¹⁰⁴ For Galatians see Claude of Turin (d. 827), PL 104, 841-912; Raban Maur (d. 856), PL 112, 245-382; Florus of Lyon (d. 860), PL 119, 363-74; Haimo of Auxerre (d. 865), PL 117, 669-700; Atto of Vercelli (d. 961), PL 134, 491-546; Anonymous from Abbey of Mount St. Michael (c. 800-900), CCCM 151. Sedulius Scotus (d. 860), *Collectaneum in Apostolum*, eds. Hermann Josef Frede and Herbert Stanjek, 2 vols., *Vetus Latina: Die reste der altlateinischen Bibel*, 32 (Freiburg: Herder, 1997), utilized Pelagius' glosses on the Pauline epistles extensively.

¹⁰⁵ Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, 40: "Haimo stands on the line that divides the compiler of select extracts from the author of a commentary. His method is to give a choice of explanations for each text, and occasionally to raise and answer questions."

1. Early Scholasticism: The Sign, the Scourge, and the Pedagogue

When one turns to the beginning of scholastic theology in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, there is again a recognizable consensus on the doctrine of the law, owing much to the interpretation advanced in the early church. While the problem of Paul's doctrine of the law occasioned a diversity of approaches, one can still conceive of a common medieval interpretation which rightly merits the unifying *Oberbegriff*, "tradition." Artur Michael Landgraf, in his diverse studies on early scholastic theology, has shown this to be the case, the various trends and developments within this period notwithstanding.¹⁰⁶

However, it is important to recognize that the question of the law's purpose and its relationship to salvation and the gospel had a different focus in the early Middle Ages than it did in the early church. Rather than a response to Marcionite, Manichean, or Pelagian abuses of Paul, one considered the problem of salvation in the *tempus legis* as a way in which to clarify the doctrine of the sacraments.¹⁰⁷ To understand the role and function of Christian sacraments, it

¹⁰⁶ See especially Artur Michael Landgraf, "Die Gnadenökonomie des Alten Bundes nach der Lehre der Frühscholastik," "Die Wirkungen der Beschneidung," and "Beiträge der Frühscholastik zur Terminologie der allgemeinen Sakramentenlehre" in *Dogmengeschichte der Frühscholastik*, vol. 3/1 (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1954), 19-168. Studies on individual schoolmen have also demonstrated an essential unanimity in the *heilsgeschichtlich* interpretation of law and gospel; see Ulrich Horst, *Gesetz und Evangelium. Das Alte Testament in der Theologie des Robert von Melun*. Veröffentlichungen des Grabmann-Institutes zur Erforschung der mittelalterlichen Theologie und Philosophie, ed. Michael Schmaus, Werner Dettloff, Richard Heinzmann, ns 13 (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1971); Rolf Peppermüller, *Abaelards Auslegung des Römerbriefes*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, ns., vol. 10 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1972), 147-170; Elisabeth Gössmann, *Metaphysik und Heilsgeschichte. Eine theologische Untersuchung der Summa Halensis* (München: Max Hueber, 1964); Venicio Marcolino, *Das Alte Testament in der Heilsgeschichte: Untersuchug zum dogmatischen Verständnis des Alten Testaments als Heilsgeschichtliche Periode nach Alexander von Hales*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, vol. 2 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1970).

¹⁰⁷ The distinction between *opera operans* and *opera operatum* emerged from such consideration. See especially Landgraf, "Die Gnadenökonomie," 19f. It is for this reason that most of the thought on the doctrine of the law in the 12th and 13th centuries occur in sections in *Sententiae* and *Quaestiones* that deal with the sacraments. William of Auvergne ("de legibus" in *Magisterium divinale*) and John of la Rochelle (*Tractatus de praeceptis et legibus*), who revisit the older hermeneutical problem inherent in the doctrine of the law, appear to be exceptions. See Beryl Smalley, "William of Auvergne, John of la Rochelle and St. Thomas Aquinas on the Old Law" in *St. Thomas Aquinas, 1274-1974: Commemorative Studies*, vol. 2 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974), 11-71. Robert Grosseteste's treatise, *De cessatione legalium*, is quite closely related to his *Expositio ad*

was thought necessary to consider the ways in which they differed from the sacraments commanded in the Old Testament law, that is, the ceremonial law. Were these Old Testament sacraments efficacious and saving? If so, on what basis? Surely the blood of goats and bulls was not in itself efficacious. It only prefigured the blood of Christ and his sacrifice. Even circumcision was called a “sign” at its institution, indicative of its prefigurement of the New Testament sacrament of baptism. But did one need to recognize the spiritual significance of these figural signs and sacrifices, or could a pious yet ignorant participation in the sacrament be sufficient for salvation? Both the unity of the testaments and the distinctiveness of the Christian faith were at stake in the answering. To be sure, a rise in Christian conversions to Judaism coupled with the Muslim victories over Jerusalem in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries contributed to the complexity of issues that were addressed by the early scholastics.¹⁰⁸

While various answers were offered and opinions differed in the particulars, a broad range of consensus is nevertheless evident. One facet of this consensus is reflected in an interesting dictum premeating the writings of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: *The law was given as a sign for the perfect, a scourge for the proud, and a pedagogue for the simple*. This aphorism, which summarizes well the medieval position on the law’s purpose and utility, appears to have originated from the school of Anselm of Laon.¹⁰⁹ The earliest examples are found in the

Galatas, and is a probable outgrowth and thematic exposition of his interpretation of Paul’s doctrine of the law. He refers explicitly to his earlier commentary throughout, noting “*tota epistola ad Galathas cessationem legalium ostendere intendit*” (I, xi, 4). For more on the relationship of the two works see James McEvoy’s introduction in CCCM 130, 15-19.

¹⁰⁸ See Ben Zion Wacholder, “Cases of Proselytizing in the Tosafist Responsa,” *Jewish Quarterly Review*, n.s. 51 (1961): 288-315; Siegfried Stein, *Jewish-Christian Disputations in Thirteenth Century Narbonne* (London: H. K. Lewis, 1969); Marianne Awerbuch, *Christlich-jüdische Begegnung im Zeitalter der Frühscholastik* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1980); Samuel Krauss, *The Jewish-Christian Controversy: From the Earliest Times to 1789*, ed. William Horbury, vol. 1 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1995).

¹⁰⁹ The saying was later attributed to Augustine, though such can only be true as reflecting his doctrine of the law overall rather than an actual quotation. See William of Auxerre, *Summa Aurea* IV, tr. 2, c. 1; 19, 121-23: “Ut

Sententie Anselmi and the *Sententie divine pagine*, in both cases taking a rather long discursive form.¹¹⁰ The authorship of these “sentences” remains uncertain, though most scholars agree that they were the work of Anselm’s disciples, perhaps the posthumous compilation and systematic arrangement of the master’s exegetical lectures.¹¹¹ In any event, this interpretation of the law’s *raison d’être* was variously repeated among the Paris *magistri* in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, eventually taking on a more terse, axiomatic form.¹¹²

dicit beatus Augustinus: ‘Lex fuit data in signum perfectis; duris et superbis in honus et flagellum; rudibus et ma[m]motrectis in pedagogum.’” Ibid., c. 2; 20, 9-10: “Dicit Augustinus quod ‘lex data fuit Iudeis quasi mammotrectis et parvis et infirmis.’” Thomas, *Sent.* IV, d. 1, q. 1, a. 5, qc. 2, ad 3: “lex secundum Augustinum data est quantum ad hujusmodi sacramenta duris et superbis in flagellum et onus, ut oneratis divinis sacrificiis non liberet eis ad idolatriam declinare; sed perfectis in signum, et parvulis in paedagogum: et quantum ad hoc poterat esse eorum usus meritorius.” Cf. Gabriel Biel, *Sent.* IV, d. 1, q. 1, a. 2, c. 3: “secundum beatum Augustinum lex, inquantum ad huiusmodi sacramenta datur, est duris et superbis in flagellum et onus—ut oneratis divinis sacrificiis non liceret eis ad idolatriam declinare—, sed perfectis in signum et parvulis in paedagogum.”

¹¹⁰ Franz Pl. Bliemetzrieder, ed., *Anselms von Laon Systematische Sentenzen*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters, vol. 18/2-3 (Münster, Verlag der Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1919), *Sententie Anselmi*, 92-3: “Quare [lex data est]? *Perfectis* data est in *signum* future ueritatis, non ideo, ut hos qui iam iusti erant iustificaret, sed ad maiorem promoueret perfectionem, et custodia humilitatis in eis esset. *Mediocribus* danda est in *pedagogum*, ut facienda doceret, uitanda prohiberet, errata puniendo corrigeret. *Pessimis* ab irato iudice data est in *uindictam et flagellum*, ut amplius preuaricatores faceret, ut qui in sordibus erant sordescerent, sicut econtra bonis quasi a pio patre prouisa est, ut iustos amplius iustificaret” [emphasis mine]. *Sententie divine pagine*, 37: “...Inter eos autem quibus data est, quidam erant ualde *boni*, quidam *mediocres*, quidam ualde *mali*. Ualde *bonis* data est in *signum* et in figuram noue legis, ut in ea scirent noua prefigurari; *mediocribus* in *pedagogum*, ut eos instrueret et non desineret, ut male agerent, lex interdiceret dicens: non occides; ualde *malis* in *perditionem*, ut postquam non obedirent et qui in sordibus erat, magis adhuc sordesceret, hoc exigente iustitia, quia, postea quam homo se subtraxit gratie dei, iustum est, ut gratia ei subtrahatur, et ita magis sordescit... [38] quare fuerit lex data, ut scilicet uidendo eius insufficientiam desideraretur medicus, uel *bonis* in *signum*, *mediocribus* in *pedagogum*, ualde *malis* in *perditionem*” [emphasis mine]. If the *Expositio in epistolas Pauli* attributed to Bruno of Chartreux (d. 1101) is genuine—something that is no longer held certain—then his comments to Rom. 5:20 may have precedent over Anselm; PL 153, 55 A-B: “Lex tribus modis habebatur in tempore suo. Quibusdam enim erat solummodo in *signum*, ut Abrahæ: qui circumcisus est, non ut per hoc iustificaretur, sed in signum justificationis jam acceptæ per fidem. Aliis lex erat *paedagogus*: ut quemadmodum puerum ne insolescat vagando paedagogi coercet custodia; sic lex minando poenam coercerat quosdam ab actu peccati. Aliis autem erat lex causa praevaricationis” [emphasis mine]. For a similar threefold use of the law in Ireneus, see note 24, above.

¹¹¹ The thesis that these sentences stem from Anselm’s lectures on the *sacra pagina* was put forward by Odon Lottin in “Nouveaux fragments théologiques de l’école d’Anselme de Laon,” *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale*, 11 (1939): 159-65, cited by Beryl Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, 73. The fact that this dictum is consistently repeated in glosses to Rom. 5:20 (or, less frequently, Gal. 3:19) perhaps also testifies to the saying’s original exegetical context.

¹¹² Ulrich Horst, *Gesetz und Evangelium*, compares Robert of Melun’s doctrine of the law and the testaments with that of his contemporaries and stresses his overall uniqueness. However, with respect to the broader question

The threefold function of the law here expressed once again emphasizes its essentially positive purpose in salvation history. The law as “scourge” (*flagellum*, sometimes also *vindictam*) preserves its punitive aspect and corresponds best to the notion that much of the law was given in response to Israel’s idolatry at Mount Sinai. Hugh of St. Victor calls these laws a “burden (*onus*) for the arrogant,” while Peter the Cantor replaces “scourge” with “yoke” (*iugum*), hearkening back to the Apostle Peter’s remark in Acts 15:10, “Why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers or we have been able to bear?”¹¹³ Nevertheless, the burden of these countless laws ultimately had a benign intention, imposed so that in the face of its utter impossibility, the people might flee to grace.

However, those who were already righteous in the Old Testament did not need the law for this reason—“the law is not laid down for the just, but the unjust” (1 Timothy 1:9). Rather, for them it functioned as a sign, a figure of the future redemption of Christ and the new law of the gospel.¹¹⁴ But these *perfecti* were few, a spiritual élite of patriarchs and prophets who were

that we are asking, he is at one with the tradition. Consequently, he too embraces the same dictum on the law’s purpose; cited by Landgraf, “Die Gnadenökonomie,” 40.

¹¹³ Hugh of St. Victor, ed. Odon Lottin, “Questions inédites de Hugues de Saint-Victor” *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale* 26 (1959), 202, no. 27: “Multis de causis data est lex... Quibusdam de se presumentibus data est in onus, ut uidentes se non posse legem ad litteram implere nec posse iustificari obseruantis et iustificationibus suis conuincerentur a sua temeritate et confugerent ad gratiam.” Peter the Cantor, *Summa*, ed. J.-A. Dugauquier, *Analecta mediaevalia Namurcensia* 4 (1954), 13: “Queritur de sacramentis legalibus que data sunt in signum perfectorum et iugum superbiorum et pedagogum infirmorum.” Peter of Poitiers cites the Cantor in *Summa de Confessione*, 55; CCCM 51, 76, 24-28: “...consultius est recurrere ad scripta piae recordationis Petri Cantoris Parisiensis, ad illam praecipue ipsius *Summam*, quae sic incipit: Quaeritur de sacramentis legalibus quae data sunt perfectis in signum, superbis in iugum, infirmis in paedagogum.” Cf. William of Auxerre, *Summa Aurea* IV, tr. 2, c. 1; 19, 122: “...duris et superbis in honus et flagellum”; Thomas, *Sent.* IV, d. 1, q. 1, a. 5, qc. 2, ad 3: “lex... data est quantum ad huiusmodi sacramenta duris et superbis in flagellum et onus, ut oneratis diuinis sacrificiis non liberet eis ad idolatriam declinare.”

¹¹⁴ *Sententia Anselmi*, 92: “Perfectis data est in signum future ueritatis.” *Sententia diuinae pagine*, 37: “Ualde bonis data est in signum et in figuram noue legis, ut in ea scirent noua prefigurari.” Hugh of St. Victor, “Questions inédites,” 202, no. 27: “Quibusdam, scilicet perfectis, ut Moysi et Aaron et aliis iustis, data est in signum, ut scilicet scirent circumcisionem interiori significari exteriori circumcisione et alia spiritualia aliis uisibilibus.” *Ysagoge in theologiam*, II, c.2; ed. Artur Landgraf, *Écrits théologiques de l’école d’Abélard* (Louvain: Spicilegium Sacram Lovaniense, 1934), 132: “Lex predictis idcirco superaddita est, ut legem naturalem per

proleptically granted insight into the spiritual significance of the *caeremonialia*. The vast majority of the people had no idea that circumcision, sacrifices, and the like, pointed to Christ.

And so we come to the “simple” (*mediocres; rudes*), “weak” (*infirmi*), and “foolish” (*insipientes*) rabble.¹¹⁵ Like children, they needed constant guidance and supervision. For them the law acted as a pedagogue, teaching what they ought to do and what they ought to avoid, coercing and cajoling with threats and promises along the way. Some of the schoolmen preferred to understand this as another function of the ceremonial law, while others seemed to indicate that this pedagogy was primarily the work of the law’s *moralia*.¹¹⁶ Either way, its

peccatum corruptam repararet et ut itidem populum ad futuram veritatem figuris legalibus prepararet... Cum autem populus ille perfectos haberet, mediocres atque pessimos, perfectis ut Abrahae circumcisio data est in signum, mediocribus in pedagogum, ut doceret faciendam, prohiberet vitanda, pena etiam corrigeret errata. Pessimis vero in vindictam data est ab irato iudice... Figurativa, que ad tempus data sunt et quia futuram veritatem presignarunt, veritate completa cessaverunt.” *Quaestiones et decisiones in Epistolas divi Pauli*, Gal. 3:19; PL 175, 559 D: “Data est ergo ut superbos humiliaret, et infirmitatem proderet, et duris in flagellum et in signum futurorum.” Lombard, Rom. 5:20; PL 191, 1400 C: “Lex autem data est ad domandum superbum, ad flagellandum durum... ad manifestationem et testimonium gratiae, et futurorum significationem.” Idem, Gal. 3:19; PL 192, 127 C: “Data est etiam duris in flagellum, data est etiam in signum futurorum, ut futura figuris attestaretur.” *Glossa*, Gal. 3:19 (obviously Lombard’s contribution): “Data est etiam duris in flagellum. Data est etiam in signum futurorum, vt futura figuris attestaretur.” Alexander of Hales, *Sent.* III, d. 37, 1 (again, taken from Lombard): “Utilitates praeceptorum sunt huiusmodi... ad domandum superbiam, et ad flagellandum durum... et ad gratiae manifestationem, et ad futurorum significationem.”

¹¹⁵ *Summa Sententiarum*, tr. 4, 2; PL 176, 120 C: “Et cum essent in populo illo perfecti aliqui, mediocres, pessimi, perfectis in signum fuit data, sicut circumcisio Abrahae; mediocribus in paedagogum, ut faciendam doceret, vitanda prohiberet, errata puniendo corrigeret; pessimis ab irato iudice in vindictam data est ut *qui in sordibus est sordescat adhuc*.” Hugh of St. Victor, “Questions inédites,” 202, no. 27: “Quibusdam, scilicet mediocribus et mansuetis, data est in pedagogum, ut timore pene a malo abstinerent et bono assuererent.” Lombard, Rom. 5:20; PL 191, 1400 D: “His omnibus data est lex, sed non pro omnibus data est, duris in flagellum, insipientibus in paedagogum, justis in signum.” Ibid., Gal. 3:19; PL 192, 127 C: “Data est ergo lex ad domandam eorum superbiam illorumque prodendam infirmitatem.” Peter of Poitiers, *Sententiarum libri quinque*, IV, 3; PL 211, 1146 B: “Si vero quaeras rationem quare illa opera non justificarent, audi quod dictum est: Caeremonialia data sunt duris in flagellum, insipientibus in paedagogum, justis in signum.” Peter the Cantor, *Summa*, 13: “Queritur de sacramentis legalibus que data sunt in... pedagogum infirmorum.” William of Auxerre, *Summa Aurea* IV, tr. 2, c. 1; 19, 121-23 ‘Lex fuit data in... rudibus et ma[m]motrectis in pedagogum.”

¹¹⁶ Lombard, Peter the Cantor, and Peter of Poitiers clearly interpret the entire phrase as a description of the ceremonial law or *legalia*, while the *Sententie divine pagine* and Hugh of St. Victor seem to equate the pedagogue with the moral law. In the *Summa Theologica* of Alexander of Hales, the *Tractatus de praeceptis et legibus*, which was actually authored earlier by John of la Rochelle (see Smalley, “The Old Law,” 47), cites the dictum from Lombard and then names the threefold division of *moralia*, *iudicialia*, and *caerimonialia* as its correlative; *Summa Theologica* III, pars. 2, inq. 3, tr. 1, q. 1, c. 1: “Et secundum hoc tria erant in Lege, scilicet moralia, quae erant ad dilucidandam legem naturae, et quantum ad hoc haec erat ad instruendum insipientes. Item, habuit Lex iudicialia, ad

purpose was to prepare an otherwise immature people for the mature doctrine of Christ. For everyone in the early Middle Ages, the “pedagogue unto Christ” was solely a figure of the past, traversing the *heilsgeschichtlich* path from the Old Testament to the New until the advent of a new and better teacher along with a new and more perfect law.

So, what of the faith of these “simple” people? In what sense could it be said that their faith was a saving faith? In the patristic period, most ink was spilt describing the faith of the patriarchs and prophets. In combating detractors of the Old Testament, it was important to maintain that the likes of Abraham, Moses, and David possessed the same faith in Christ as those in the New Testament.¹¹⁷ Grace was present in them as well, since they were given special knowledge of Christ, his incarnation, death and resurrection, ahead of time. Rejoicing in their vision of Christ, they were in reality members of the New Testament. But with questions on the Old Testament’s law shifting to the efficacy of the sacraments, more thought was being given to the genuine inhabitants of the Old Testament.

Here, it would seem that the law still played an important part. While few had the special spiritual insight into the Christological significance of the sacrifices and ceremonial rites, participation in these old sacraments could engender a faith that might still be rightly regarded as a *fides Christi*. The distinction lay between “veiled” and “revealed.” The simple had no explicit revelation of the future redemption, but they did possess a faith in Christ “veiled in mystery”

coercendum legem concupiscentiae vel fomitis, et quantum ad hoc erat duris in flagellum. Item, habuit figuralia sive caerimonialia ad significandam legem gratiae, quia figurae erant figurae futurorum, et quantum ad hoc fuit iustus in signum.”

¹¹⁷ Augustine probably wrote about this the most, having to argue against both the Manicheans and Pelagians. Against the former he had to defend the righteousness of the Old Testament saints. Against the latter he needed to base their righteousness on New Testament grace, so that they could not be used as a precedent for a morality arising from purely natural powers. Cf. *exp. Gal.*, 24, 10-11 and 13; *nat. et gr.*, xlv, 51; *perf. iust.*, xix, 42; *gr. et pecc. or.*, II, xxiv, 28—xxv, 29; *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*, II, xi, 24; *c. ep. Pel.*, III, iv, 6 and 11; *ep.* 190, ii,

(*fides Christi velata in mysterio*).¹¹⁸ Believing that “God exists and rewards those who seek him” (Hebrews 11:6), living in expectation of his gracious promise of salvation, and adhering to those to whom such salvation had been revealed, typified the vast majority of the Old Testament faithful. Such an “implicit” faith was therefore deemed saving, even as this distinction between the simple and the learned holds true in the church.¹¹⁹ This, too, would appear to be part of the

6-8; *enchir.* c. 118; *Contra Faustum*, IV, 2; IX, 14. See Yves Congar, “Ecclesia ab Abel,” in *Abhandlungen über Theologie und Kirche: Festschrift für Karl Adam*, ed. Marcel Reding (Dusseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1952), 79-108.

¹¹⁸ *Sententie Anselmi*, 80: “...omnibus fidem Christi patenter reuelatam fuisse. Sed dici potest non esse dictum nisi de sanctis, qui sub scripta erant. Non enim cuiquam ante Abraham incarnationis fidem reuelatam legimus...Potuit tamen esse quod et ante eum et post eum quibusdam bonis reuelata fuisset sed non omnibus. Habebant autem omnes boni fidem de Christo, etsi quibusdam clausa esset in misterio. Nam, ut dicit apostolus: Oportet omnes accedentes ad eum credere, quia est et quod est remunerator omnibus eum inquiringibus. Modum autem remunerationis et saluationis nulli nisi pauci quibus deus reuelare uoluit cognouerunt.” *Summa Sententiarum*, tr. 1, c. 3; PL 176, 46 B—47 A: “Semper tamen et ante legem et in tempore legis fuerunt aliqui quibus fides incarnationis reuelata fuit, qui velut eolumnae Ecclesiae essent. Quaeritur de illis simplicibus quibus non erat facta reuelatio (credebant tamen Deum esse et remuneratorem sperantium in se) utrum salvati sint?...Alii, quibus magis assentimus, dicunt eos fidem Christi velatam in mysterio habuisse; et quod alii quibus reuelatio facta erat sciebant et credebant, hoc isti (et si nescirent) credebant: commiserant enim illis fidem suam. Unde in Job: *Boves arabant et asinae pascebantur juxta eos.*” *Ysagoge in theologiam* I, c. 1; 82: “Sciendum est autem simplices ante Legem vel sub Lege habuisse fidem Christi in misterio velatam. Fidem ita habere est credere Deum esse et remuneratorem sperantium in se, et insuper fidem suam sapientibus, qui redemptionis future reuelationem habebant, committere. Quot itaque maiores sciebant et credebant, idem credebant simplices, etsi nescirent.” Hugh of St. Victor, *De Sacramentis* I, pars 10, c. 6; PL 176, 338 C: “...multi ante Salvatoris adventum, Deum omnipotentem tenentes et diligentes, suae salutis gratuitum promissorem credentes in promissione fidelem, sperantes certissimum redditorem, in hac fide et expectatione salvati sunt; licet quando et qualiter et quo ordine salus repromissa fieret, ignorarent.” Lombard, *Sent.* III, d. 35, c. 2: “Dici potest nullum fuisse iustum vel saluum, cui non esset facta reuelatio, vel distincta, vel velata: in aperto, vel in mysterio. Distincta, ut Abrahae et Moysi aliisque maioribus, qui distinctionem articulorum fidei habebant. Velata, ut simplicibus quibus reuelatum erat ea esse credenda, quae credebant illi maiores et docebant, sed eorum distinctionem apertam non habebant.” Cf. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 103, a. 2: “Poterat autem mens fidelium, tempore legis, per fidem conjungi Christo incarnato et passo: et ita ex fide Christi justificabantur. Cuius fidei quaedam protestatio erat huiusmodi caeremoniarum observatio, in quantum erant figura Christi. Et ideo pro peccatis offerebantur sacrificia quaedam in veteri lege, non quia ipsa sacrificia a peccato emundarent, sed quia erant quaedam protestationes fidei, quae a peccato mundabat... Sciendum est tamen quod hoc ipsum quod veteris legis caeremoniae a corporalibus immunditiis expiabant erat in figura expiationis a peccatis quae fit per Christum.”

¹¹⁹ *Summa Sententiarum*, tr. 1, c. 3; PL 176, 47 A: “Sicut hodie in Ecclesia multi simplices, etsi ita distinctae nesciant Trinitatem assignare, credunt tamen quia in fide et humilitate adhaerent illis qui et hoc sciunt et credunt.” *Ysagoge in theologiam* I, c. 1; 82: “Sicut etiam hodie quam plurimos vides, qui licet distinctionem Trinitatis nesciant assignare, fideles tamen sunt, quia fide et humilitate adherent scientibus et credentibus; ita et antiquitus suffecit habere fidem redemptionis, sicut habuit eam vidua Sarephana.” Lombard, *Sent.* III, d. 35, c. 2: “Sicut et in Ecclesia aliqui minus capaces sunt, qui articulos Symboli distinguere et assignare non valent, omnia tamen credunt quae in Symbolo continentur: credunt enim quae ignorant, habentes fidem velatam in mysterio; ita et tunc minus capaces ex reuelatione sibi facta, maioribus credendo inhaerebant, quibus fidem suam quasi committebant.” Alexander of Hales, *Summa Theologica* III, pars. 2, inq. 3, tr. 2, sec. 3, q. 5, c. 4, a. 2: “Sicut nos debemus intelligere articulos fidei implicite et explicite, et intelligere explicite articulos fidei tenentur proveci et

law's intended pedagogy, a notion that would receive various expressions among later exegetes, including Luther.

2. Thomas Aquinas

The next generation of scholasticism did not fundamentally differ in its theology of the law. Thomas Aquinas is probably the most famous example from the medieval scholastic tradition, in part because he has been the most thoroughly studied. His theology of the law is well known and well documented, and confirms the thesis presented here: law and gospel represent for Thomas, as for the rest of the tradition, the historical unfolding of *lex* from one age of salvation history to another.¹²⁰ This constancy of *lex* is woven into the fabric of *Heilsgeschichte*, changing its hue only by greater degrees of brightness, clarity, and perfection. “Testament” and “law” are the constants, while the adjectives “old” and “new” bear witness to the progressive nature of redemptive history.

Thomas' lectures on Galatians are no exception. The opening words of the prologue are those of Leviticus 26:10: *Vetera, novis supervenientibus, proiicietis*—“The new coming in, you shall cast away the old.” Thomas continues,

praelati...implicite vero tenentur intelligere simplices solum, ita in Veteri Testamento proveci, ut doctores et sacerdotes, tenebantur intelligere significationem sacrificiorum, hoc est ut intelligerent ipsa sacrificia esse signa futuri sacrificii Redemptionis; simplices vero solum tenebantur intelligere quia sacrificia erant Deo ea ratione qua sibi placuit offerenda, et in hoc implicite continebatur quod essent signa, quia ratione significationis futuri sacrificii voluit ea Deus sibi offerri.”

¹²⁰ Thomas' most important treatment of the law is, of course, the *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 90-108. Studies on this topic include Ulrich Kuhn, *Via Caritatis: Theologie des Gesetzes bei Thomas von Aquin* Kirche und Konfession, vol. 9 (Göttingen: Vanenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965); Reinhold Weier, “Das Evangelium als ‘neues Gesetz’. Überlegungen zu einem umstrittenen Begriff bei Thomas von Aquin” *Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift* 97 (1988): 39-51; Beryl Smalley, “The Old Law”; Otto Hermann Pesch, “Gesetz und Gnade oder: Theologie der Geschichte,” in *Thomas von Aquin: Grenze und Größe mittelalterlicher Theologie: eine Einführung* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald, 1988), 284-317; idem, *Theologie der Rechtfertigung bei Martin Luther und Thomas von Aquin: Versuch eines systematisch-theologischen Dialogs* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald, 1967), 399-467; Yves Congar, “Le sens de l’‘économie’ salutaire dans la ‘théologie’ de S. Thomas d’Aquain” in *Glaube und Geschichte. Festgabe Joseph Lortz*, ed. E. Iserloh and Peter Manns (Baden-Baden: Verlag Bruno Grimm, 1957), 73-122.

These words suit the present epistle in which the apostle reproves the Galatians who had been so greatly seduced by false [apostles] as to observe the *legalia* and the gospel at the same time, for which the apostle upbraids them with the words stated above: *the new coming in, you shall cast away the old.*¹²¹

Aquinas then identifies a fourfold translation of old to new, corresponding, it would seem, to the *quadriga*: from error to the doctrine of Christ; from *figura* to *gratia* and *veritas*; from guilt to *iustitia*; from punishment to glory.¹²²

He then moves on to summarize the argument of the epistle proper. Paul is writing to the Galatians to demonstrate that with the coming of New Testament grace, the Old Testament ought to be cast aside, so that by truth fulfilled, the figure might be forsaken. Only by abandoning the observance of *legalia* to observe the gospel of Christ does one attain this grace and truth and the *veritas iustitiae et gloriae*. Even the place of Galatians in the canon testifies to its message: the two epistles to the Corinthians deal with the sacraments of the church and its ministers; it necessarily follows that Galatians would then treat the cessation of the sacraments of the Old Testament.¹²³

¹²¹ Thomas, *Super Galat.*, pr.: “*Vetera, novis supervenientibus, proiicietis*. Haec verba competunt praesenti epistolae, in qua apostolus redarguit Galatas, qui intantum seducti fuerant a pseudo, ut simul servarent legalia et Evangelium, quod apostolus improperat eis in verbis praemissis, dicens *vetera, novis supervenientibus, proiicietis*. In quibus verbis innuit dominus quadruplicem vetustatem.”

¹²² Ibid.: “In quibus verbis innuit dominus quadruplicem vetustatem. Prima vetustas est erroris, de qua Is.: *vetus error abiit*, et haec remota est per novitatem doctrinae Christi: *quae est haec nova doctrina?* Secunda vetustas est figurae, de qua Hebr.: *consummabo super domum David, et super Iuda testamentum novum, non secundum testamentum quod feci patribus eorum*. Ubi primo ostendit primum testamentum esse vetustum, et hoc renovari per novitatem gratiae, seu veritatis praesentiae Christi. *novum faciet dominus super terram*, et cetera. Tertia est vetustas culpa, de qua Ps.: *quoniam tacui* (confitendo scilicet peccata mea), *inveteraverunt*, et cetera. Et haec renovatur per novitatem iustitiae. *in novitate vitae ambulemus*, et cetera. Quarta est vetustas poenae. *vetustam feci pellem meam*. Et haec renovabitur per novitatem gloriae, de qua novitate Is.: *ecce ego creo caelum novum*, etc.; *dixit, qui sedebat in throno: ecce nova facio omnia*.”

¹²³ Thomas, *Super Galat.*, c. 1, lec. 1: “Scribit ergo apostolus Galatis hanc epistolam, in qua ostendit, quod, veniente gratia novi testamenti, debet proiici vetus testamentum, ut impleta veritate deseratur figura, quibus duabus, scilicet gratia et veritate, adeptis, perveniatur ad veritatem iustitiae et gloriae. Acquiruntur autem illa duo, si observantia legalium dimissa, observantiae Evangelii Christi ferventer insistamus. Ordo autem huius epistolae congruus est, ut post duas epistolas ad Corinthios, in quarum prima agitur de sacramentis Ecclesiae, in secunda de

In Galatians 3:19, Thomas enumerates four general reasons why the old law was instituted, corresponding to Bede's four consequences of sin: wickedness, weakness, concupiscence, and ignorance. With respect to wickedness, "on account of transgressions" (3:19) indicates that the law was given to suppress and prevent sin. Through its prohibitions and penalties, the law restrained those with wicked dispositions from wrongdoing.¹²⁴

But the law was also laid down to reveal sin and human weakness. By imparting knowledge of what was sin and what was not, the law forced man to confront his own moral impotency in his effort to keep the law. Since the law did not confer grace, man was ultimately unable to avoid sin. In fact, sin actually increased, because evil deeds now violated a written law, turning them into transgressions. Introduced between the *lex naturae* and the *lex gratiae*, this *lex scripta* made known man's imperfection; his need for grace was now pointedly exposed.¹²⁵

On the other hand, the third reason for the law—concupiscence—refers to the lasciviousness of the Jewish people at Sinai. This was then tempered by the burden of excessive

ministris horum sacramentorum, necessarie sequatur epistola ad Galatas, in qua agitur de cessatione sacramentorum veteris testamenti."

¹²⁴ Thomas, *Super Galat.*, c. 3, lec. 7: "lex vetus data est propter quatuor, secundum quatuor ex peccato consecuta, quae enumerat Beda, scilicet propter malitiam, infirmitatem, concupiscentiam et ignorantiam. Est ergo lex primo data ad reprimendam malitiam, dum scilicet prohibendo peccatum et puniendo, retrahebantur homines a peccato, et hoc tangit dicens *propter transgressiones posita est lex*, id est, ad transgressiones cohibendas: et de hoc habetur: *iusto lex non est posita, sed iniustus*. . . . Sed homines male dispositi indigent retrahi a peccatis per poenas. Et ideo quantum ad istos fuit necessaria legis positio, quae habet coarctativam virtutem." Cf. *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 85, a. 3.

¹²⁵ Ibid.: "Secundo, lex data est ad infirmitatem manifestandam. Homines enim de duobus praesumebant. Primo quidem de scientia, secundo de potentia. Et ideo Deus reliquit homines absque doctrina legis, tempore legis naturae, in quo dum in errores inciderunt, convicta est eorum superbia de defectu scientiae, sed adhuc restabat praesumptio de potentia. . . . Et ideo data est lex, quae cognitionem peccati faceret. . . . Quae tamen auxilium gratiae non dabat ad vitandum peccata, ut sic homo sub lege constitutus et vires suas experiretur, et infirmitatem suam recognosceret, inveniens se sine gratia peccatum vitare non posse, et sic avidius quaereret gratiam. . . . quia lege subintrante, abundavit delictum, et transgressiones sunt multiplicatae, dum concupiscentia nondum per gratiam sanata, in id quod prohibebatur, magis exarsit, et factum est peccatum gravius, addita praevaricatione legis scriptae.

ceremonial laws, a burden “that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear,” (Acts 15:10). Worn out by constant occupation with such rites, the people were kept from exercising their proclivity towards idolatry and profanity. Finally, because of the ignorance of these same people, the law was given as *umbra* and *figura futurae gratiae*, a shadow and figure of future grace.¹²⁶

In all of these things, the law served the promise of God by preparing the Jews for Christ. Even though to be “under the law” was to live under a heavy burden, and its “confinement” produced among the Jews a slavish fear, the law was still of great benefit to them. They were preserved from idolatry and made ready for the future revelation of faith, which at that time lay hidden under many signs.¹²⁷ The Jews were like “helpless children” (*imbecilles pueri*), needing a pedagogue to restrain them from evil as well as lure them into the good through the love and promise of temporal rewards: “Israel was a child and I loved him” (Hos. 11:1), “You chastised me, O Lord, and I was instructed” (Jer. 31:18). Confinement was, therefore, protection and guidance. But when Christ came, then too came adulthood, and the law ceased in its pedagogy. “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I

Et hoc Deus permittebat, ut homines imperfectionem suam cognoscentes, quaerent mediatoris gratiam. Unde signanter dicit *posita est*, quasi debito ordine collocata inter legem naturae et legem gratiae.”

¹²⁶ Ibid.: “Tertio, data est lex ad domandam concupiscentiam populi lascivientis, ut diversis caeremoniis fatigati neque ad idololatriam, neque ad lascivias declinarent. Unde dicit Petrus: *hoc est onus, quod neque nos, et cetera*. Quarto, ad instruendum ignorantiam data est lex in figuram futurae gratiae, secundum illud Hebr: *umbram habens lex, et cetera*.” Cf. Thomas, *Super Galat.*, c. 3, lec. 8: “Vel *in eam fidem, quae revelanda erat* tempore gratiae, in antiquis temporibus multis signis latens.”

¹²⁷ Thomas, *Super Galat.* c. 3, lec. 8: “Dicit ergo: si Scriptura, id est, lex scripta, detinuit omnia sub peccato, quas utilitates habebant Iudaei ex lege antequam veniret fides ex gratia? Respondet et dicit: nos Iudaei, ante adventum fidei, *custodiebamur sub lege*, in quantum faciebat nos vitare idololatriam et multa alia mala; *custodiebamur*, inquam, non sicut liberi, sed quasi servi sub timore, et hoc *sub lege*, id est, sub onere legis et dominio... Et *custodiebamur conclusi*, id est, servati ne deflueremus a vita, sed praepararemur *in eam*, id est, tam bonam *fidem, quae revelanda erat*... Et dicit *revelanda*, quia cum fides excedat omne humanum ingenium, non potest per proprium sensum haberi, sed ex revelatione et dono Dei... Vel *in eam fidem, quae revelanda erat* tempore gratiae, in antiquis temporibus multis signis latens.”

became a man, I put away childish things.”¹²⁸

For Thomas, the entirety of salvation history can be seen as this process of maturation. The old law had its part to play with the Jews, but even in this present life, we Christians are like children when compared to the future life where knowledge of God is perfect.¹²⁹ Still, the present status is far better than that of the old dispensation. Christians live in the “time of fullness” (Gal. 4:4)—“full” because of the fullness of graces bestowed and the fulfillment of the *figura* from the old law.¹³⁰

For the remainder of this chapter, we will look to those commentaries on Galatians that were known to Luther and used by him in his own exegetical work. These are the *Glossa ordinaria*, Nicholas of Lyra, and Faber Stapulensis.¹³¹ As its name implies, the *Glossa ordinaria*

¹²⁸ Ibid.: “Officium autem legis fuit officium paedagogi, et ideo dicit *lex paedagogus noster*, et cetera. . . . Per legem enim Iudaei tamquam imbecilles pueri, per timorem poenae retrahebantur a malo, et promovebantur amore et promissione temporariorum ad bonum. Iudaeis autem promissa erat benedictio futuri seminis de haereditate obtinenda, sed nondum advenerat tempus ipsius haereditatis consequendae. Et ideo necessarium erat, quod conservarentur usque ad tempus futuri seminis et cohiberentur ab illicitis, quod factum est per legem. Et ideo dicit *itaque*, etc., quasi dicat: ex quo sub lege custodiebamur, *lex fuit noster paedagogus*, id est, dirigens et conservans in Christo, id est in via Christi. Et hoc ideo, *ut ex fide Christi iustificaremur. puer Israel, et dilexi eum; castigasti me, domine, et eruditus sum*, et cetera. . . . Sed hoc officium cessavit postquam venit fides. Et hoc est quod dicit *at ubi venit fides*, scilicet Christi, *iam non sumus sub paedagogo*, id est sub coactione, quae non est necessaria liberis. *cum essem parvulus*, et cetera. *Cum autem factus sum vir*, et cetera.”

¹²⁹ Thomas, *Super Galat.*, c. 4, lec. 1: “Unde dicit *parvulus est*, quia et Iudaei parvuli erant secundum statum legis. . . . Cuius ratio est, quia status veteris legis est sicut parvulus, propter imperfectionem cognitionis, in ipsa comparatione ad statum gratiae et veritatis, quae per Christum facta est. Sic et status praesentis vitae, in qua videmus per speculum in aenigmate, est sicut parvulus, comparatus statui futurae vitae, in qua est perfecta Dei cognitio, quia videtur sicuti est.”

¹³⁰ Thomas, *Super Galat.*, c. 4, lec. 2: “Dicitur autem plenum tempus illud propter plenitudinem gratiarum, quae in eo dantur. . . . Item propter impletionem figurarum veteris legis. . . . Item, propter impletionem promissorum.”

¹³¹ While Erasmus’ *Novum instrumentum*, 1516, was eagerly utilized by Luther, the annotations are mostly technical comments on syntax and translation, and the points of interpretation are too brief to merit a separate discussion. With respect to Paul’s doctrine of the law, Erasmus follows Jerome’s interpretation, limiting Paul’s more disparaging remarks to the ceremonial law. For Luther’s negative reaction to Erasmus on this point, see the discussion below in Chapter Three, pages 166f. Other commentators on Galatians during the period leading up to the time of Luther include Nicholas von Dinkelsbühl (d. 1433) who lectured on Galatians at the university of Vienna; Denys the Carthusian (d. 1471), a fairly well known mystic whose commentary, *In omnes beati Pauli epistolae enarratio*, was quite popular in the sixteenth century; and Wendelin Steinbach (d. 1519), *Commentarius in Epistolam S. Pauli ad Galatas*, a contemporary of Luther who lectured on Galatians in Tübingen even as the new

was the standard biblical gloss of the Middle Ages. How it came to be is a story that is still filled with many gaps, but scholarship has agreed that the school of Anselm of Laon in the twelfth century is to be credited with its inception, though roots reach back to the various *apparatus* of the eleventh century.¹³² Additions and emendations were made by various others, including Peter Lombard, whose own glosses on the Pauline epistles made a significant contribution to the *Gloss*'s present form. As a product of interpretive trends in the Middle Ages, an instrument for the transmission of the early Fathers, and a source for exegetical consensus, it is difficult to imagine a more important work than the *Gloss* for the history of exegesis.

Next to the *Gloss*, the *Postilla* of Nicholas of Lyra, written in the fourteenth century, was probably the most influential biblical medieval commentary. When the two were printed together at the close of the fifteenth century, Lyra became the definitive exegetical tool.¹³³ Lyra's dedication to expounding the literal sense of Scripture, his use of rabbinic sources, and his knowledge of the Hebrew text made him both a controversial and invaluable source. Luther's use of Lyra goes back at least to his lectures on the *Sentences* in 1509-10,¹³⁴ and then consistently, though quite critically, throughout his early lectures.

Wittenberg professor began his first course on the Psalms. None of them, however, exhibit anything outside of the same traditional ideas that we have observed thus far.

¹³² For the development of the *Gloss* see Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, 46-66; idem, "Glossa Ordinaria," in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, ed. Gerhard Müller, vol. 13 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), 452-57; M. T. Gibson, "The Place of the *Glossa ordinaria* in Medieval Exegesis," in *Ad Litteram: Authoritative Texts and their Medieval Readers*, ed. M. D. Jordan and K. Emery (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 5-27.

¹³³ Karl Froehlich, "The Fate of the *Glossa Ordinaria* in the Sixteenth Century" in *Die Patristik in der Bibelexegese des 16. Jahrhunderts*, ed. David Steinmetz (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1999): 19-48. For the significance of Nicholas of Lyra see especially Herman Hailperin, *Rashi and the Christian Scholars* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963), 137-264; Wolfgang Bunte, *Rabbinische Traditionen bei Nikolaus von Lyra*, *Judentum und Umwelt*, 58 (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994); Philip D. W. Krey and Lesley Smith, eds., *Nicholas of Lyra: The Senses of Scripture* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

¹³⁴ E.g. WA 9, 90, 10f.

Faber Stapulensis, on the other hand, was an older contemporary of Luther.¹³⁵ In 1512, the French humanist had published an edition of the Pauline epistles that placed in parallel columns the Vulgate text and his own version, “*intelligentia ex graeco*,” intended to reflect the Greek more faithfully. This was then followed by a commentary, explicating Paul’s argument as well as touching on technical textual issues. Faber’s method was influenced by the humanist desire for simplicity and the mystic’s longing for spiritual illumination.¹³⁶ Much has been made of Faber’s abandonment of the *quadriga* in favor of a single literal-spiritual, christological sense.¹³⁷ Of course, this kind of thing made more sense when dealing with the Psalms, which were unanimously regarded as prophecies of Christ—and it was in fact his preface to his Psalms commentary of 1509 that first proposed this hermeneutical theory. Yet regardless of such an innovative proposition, Faber sounds quite traditional when it comes to his interpretation of Paul and his doctrine of law and gospel: an important point to keep in mind when discussing the kind of influence that either Faber or Lyra had on Luther.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ For studies on Faber’s Pauline exegesis see Jean P. Massaut, “Lefèvre d’Etaples et l’exégèse au 16^e siècle” *Revue d’Histoire Ecclesiastique* 78 (1983): 73-78; John Payne, “Erasmus and Lefèvre d’Etaples as Interpreters of Paul” *Archive für Reformationsgeschichte* 66 (1974): 54-83; Jean de Savignac, “Commentaires de Lefèvre d’Etaples sur certains textes de Paul” *Études Théologiques et Religieuses* 59 (1984): 301-16; Helmut Feld, “Die Wiedergeburt des Paulinismus im europäischen Humanismus” *Catholica* 36 (1982): 294-327.

¹³⁶ See Fritz Hahn, “Faber Stapulensis und Luther,” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 57 (1938): 356-432. For the humanist value of clear and simple presentation see Neil Gilbert, *Renaissance Concepts of Method* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960).

¹³⁷ See, for example, Fritz Hahn, “Luthers Auslegungsgrundsätze und ihre theologischen Voraussetzungen” *Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie* 12 (1934): 165-218; idem, “Faber Stapulensis und Luther.”

¹³⁸ See Erdmann Schott, “Lex paedagogus noster fuit in Christo Jesu,” which briefly compares the interpretations of Gal. 3:19f. in the *Gloss*, Lyra and Faber—as well as in Aquinas—with Luther’s Galatians commentaries of 1519 and 1535.

3. Glossa Ordinaria, Nicholas of Lyra, and Faber Stapulensis

Because the *Gloss* on the Pauline epistles was primarily the work of Anselm of Laon and Peter Lombard, its interpretation of Galatians has already been alluded to above.¹³⁹ The dictum on the law's threefold use was reproduced in the *Gloss* at Romans 5:20 and then briefly again at Galatians 3:19.¹⁴⁰ In this second passage, the dictum stands beside several other answers to the purpose and function of the law. Such a presentation is typical of the *Gloss*: an intentional collage of traditional exegesis rather than a running commentary. Lombard's explanation to Paul's answer, "*propter transgressionem*" is reproduced and emphasizes the more positive, didactic purpose of the law: "that the people of God might be instructed under the fear of God, so that they would be worthy to receive the promise which is Christ."¹⁴¹ But the next explanation, which is that of Augustine, points to the law's ability to increase sin and make transgressors, thereby humbling the proud so that they might see a need for a Savior.¹⁴² The interlinear glosses present the same contrasting options: "that it might cause one to transgress so that the physician might be desired; or that through fear they may cease to transgress."¹⁴³

¹³⁹ For the relationship of Anselm and Lombard to the development of the *Glossa ordinaria* see Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, 60-66.

¹⁴⁰ *Glossa*, Rom. 5:20: "Ut scilicet qui in sordibus erat praevaricando magis sordesceret, ut mediocri pedagogo haberet, perfectus signum, et durus sentiret flagellum." *Glossa*, Gal. 3:19: "Data est ergo lex ad domandam honorem superbiam eiusque prodendam infirmitatem. Data est etiam duris in flagellum. Data est etiam in signum futurorum, ut futura figuris attestaretur. Ecce quattuor causas datae legis breviter distinctas, quae in epistola ad Romanos plenius explicantur ubi dicitur: lex subintravit etc."

¹⁴¹ *Glossa*, Gal. 3:19: "...ut populum dei erudiret sub timore dei: ut dignus fieret excipere promissionem quae est Christus."

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, "Vel, propter transgressionem, id est, ut homo superbe de suis viribus fidens acciperet praecepta, in quibus deficiens et factus praevaricator, liberatorem salvatoremque requireret." In addition to Lombard, PL 192, 127 B, see Augustine, *perf. iust.*, xix, 42.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, "Quid igitur lex? Propter transgressionem posita est vel faceret transgredi ut optaretur medicum vel ut timore cessarent transgredi: ut quandoque idem facerent voluntate."

In the subsequent verses Augustine’s interpretation seems to dominate, following variations on the same theme: “the law is given, so that one might seek grace.” Still, the pedagogue image of 3:24 capitalizes on the educational motif—the Jews were simple children needing the law to curb their illicit behavior by means of fear. The coming “unto Christ” was the maturation of God’s people, “like boys unto perfection.”¹⁴⁴

In this section, there is no overt indication whether the ceremonial or moral law is meant, though “*sub lege*” in 3:23 is glossed with “*onere legis*,” usually indicating the burden of the ceremonial laws. This then corresponds to 4:4, where Ambrosiaster’s definition of “*sub elementis*” is cited, and Christ’s birth “*sub lege*” is understood as his submission to circumcision and the ceremonial precepts.¹⁴⁵ Thus, as to be expected, the moral law is not in an absolute sense the object of Paul’s antithesis of law and faith. Perhaps, this is why the *Gloss*, following the unfortunate translation of 3:24, has no difficulty interpreting “*lex pedagogus noster fuit in Christo*” as “following the precepts of Christ.”¹⁴⁶

Overall, the *Gloss* paints a traditional picture: the law was given to prepare the ancient Jews for the coming of Christ, and it did so in several ways. But upon the arrival of the *tempus Christi*, the burden and restraint of the law ceased, and that which was obscure and hidden in the

¹⁴⁴ *Glossa*, Gal. 3:23: “quia lex custodiebat ad fidem: itaque pueros ab illicitis reprimens et ad recta dirigens: timore penarum.” *Glossa*, Gal. 3:24: “Ecce honor legis, quia custodiuit ut pedagogus: sed hoc non magnum est, quia puerorum est, non adutorum. Pedagogum in Christo, in institutione Christi, qui ideo instituit, vt sic venientes ad fidem quasi pueri ad perfectionem.”

¹⁴⁵ *Glossa*, Gal. 4:4: “Sub elementis. Ambro. In elementis neomenias, id est, lunares dies et sabbatum significat, non quod in elementis sperarent, vt pagani: sed in his deum venerabantur. . . . Factum sub lege. Ut appareat circumciscus quasi filius abrahamae cui promissus erat: signum habens eius cui promissus fuerat, in quo impleta est circumcisio, et ideo iam signum cessat.” Likewise the interlinear: “sub onere legis sicut sub aliis penis.” Cf. Lombard, PL 192, 134 C-D; 137 B.

¹⁴⁶ *Glossa*, Gal. 3:24: “Vel in Christo, id est, in exequendis praeceptis christi.” Rather than the ablative “in Christo,” to properly reflect the Greek εἰς Χριστόν the accusative ought to have been used—a correction made by Valla, Faber, and Erasmus and picked up by Luther.

Old Testament was opened and revealed.¹⁴⁷ In the *Gloss*, law and gospel denote the graduated progression of *Offenbarungsgeschichte*, the grand historical movement from ignorance and immaturity to adulthood and understanding.

Like the *Gloss*, Lyra identifies several reasons for why the law was given. In Galatians 3:19, he argues that in the following verses Paul delineates three uses for the Mosaic law (“*triplicem legis vtilitatem*”). The first reflects its punitive function. “On account of transgressions” means that the law was given to punish and reprimand transgressions. By exacting severe penalties on particular sins, the law acted as a deterrent: afraid of the terrible consequences, people were driven to avoid sin. Obedience because of fear is, of course, one of the key characteristics of the old law, and Lyra is sure to tell us that this has been superseded in the New Testament by the evangelical law, the law of love.¹⁴⁸

For the law’s second function, Lyra turns to Galatians 3:22, “But the Scripture concluded all under sin, so that the promise might be given by faith in Jesus Christ to those who believe.” Here, the revealing of sin is meant. The “Scripture,” that is, the *lex scripta*, consigned all people to sin by manifesting their sin. But without being able to offer grace, the law could not justify; it could only move people to long for the time when grace would be given, the time of Christ’s advent.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ *Glossa*, Gal. 3:23: “in eam fidem quae reuelanda quia occulta in antiquis.... Quae. Tempore Christi erat. Reuelanda. Ubi multa aperta sunt, quae prius obscura.”

¹⁴⁸ Lyra, *Biblia*, Gal. 3:19: “Propter transgressiones. Hic respondet ad questionem ostendens triplicem legis vtilitatem. Prima est punitio peccatorum: quia in lege determinantur certe et graves pene pro determinatis peccatis. quarum terrore cohibebantur homines a peccatis vsque ad tempus legis euangelice quae est lex amoris.”

¹⁴⁹ Lyra, *Biblia*, Gal. 3:21: “Hic ponitur secunda vtilitas quae est hominem conclusio sub peccato, quia lex peccatum ostendebat: nec tamen gratiam iustificationem est oferebat, et sic homines mouebantur ad desiderandum aduentu Christi per quae erant iustificandi.” And further down the page: “sub conclusit scriptura, id est, lex moysi quam est lex scripta.”

But the revelation of sin was not the only way in which the people of the Old Testament were directed towards Christ. The law had another use which prepared them for his arrival, the “*introductio hominem ad fidem Christi.*” This function is indicated in Galatians 3:23: “But before faith came we were kept under the law, confined unto that faith which was to be revealed (*in eam fidem quae revelanda erat*).” In this verse, Lyra contrasts two kinds of faith—an implicit faith veiled in figures (*fides implicita et figuris velata*), and a revealed and explicit faith (*fides revelata et explicata*). One is of the Old Testament and the other is of the New. The purpose of the law was thus to lead the people of God through the former unto the latter. Through the figures of the *cultus*, the old law inculcated a veiled, implicit faith as a kind of disposition for the faith that would be revealed in the new law. In such a figural faith Israel was “confined” (*concludit*). Imperfect though it may have been, these *figura* led to recognition of the spiritual reality foreshadowed.¹⁵⁰

The rest of the text is interpreted along these same lines. Having to observe *legalia*, the Jews were like children under the discipline of a pedagogue. They were “under the elements of the world,” directed towards Christ through figures. But “when faith came,” that is, the *tempus fidei revelatae*, then the *legalia* ceased, exchanged for the far superior doctrine of the gospel. The nursery of the Old Testament was no longer needed; the New Testament had ushered in the age of perfected men.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Lyra, *Biblia*, Gal. 3:23: “Prius autem. Hic ponitur tertia vtilitas quae est introductio hominem ad fidem Christi: ad quam lex vetus fuit quedam dispositio in quam tum lex illa fuit figura noue legis: et totus ille status noui testamenti fuit figuratiuus, 1 Cor x., Quia in figura contingebant illis. figura vero ducit licet imperfecte in cognitionem rei figurate....Prius autem quam veniret fides, scilicet, reuelata et explicata in euangelio. Sub lege custodiebamur per cultum vnus veri dei. Conclusi in eam fidem quae reuelanda erat. Est enim eadem fides in nouo et veteri testamento, sed in veteri erat implicita et figuris velata, in nouo vero est explicata et reuelata, ex quo concludit.”

¹⁵¹ Lyra, *Biblia*, Gal. 3:24: “...disponentes ad Christum sicut pedagogus disponit puerum ad virtutem tempore futuro habendam....[Gal. 3:25] At vbi venit fides, id est, tempus fidei reuelate. jam non sumus

The educational motif also dominates Faber’s interpretation. Christ is the “*summus magister*,” the definitive teacher, while the old law was merely a pedagogue, given to infants as simple elementary lessons. Through this “pre-instruction,” the law prepared the Jews for the arrival of a superior master and a superior law, the *lex nova* or the *lex fidei*. The relationship of the old law to the new law is compared to the difference between early lessons in grammar and the wisdom that comes with maturity. Such lessons are beneficial for a time, but lose their usefulness and purpose when the teacher of true wisdom has come.¹⁵²

Faber limits this preparatory function of the law to its ceremonies and rites. In them, the Jews were kept and confined, disposed to the worship of the one true God until the advent of Christ. One could also speak of pagan ceremonies and rituals as a “pedagogue,” though it did not direct people to such works of piety as the divinely given law. Nonetheless, before the advent of Christ, all were like children under discipline—no better than slaves, really. But when the age of perfection came, then came the age of freedom and the inheritance of sons.¹⁵³ Such is

sub pedagogo, id est, sub obseruationibus legalibus, sicut puer adueniente etate adulta iam non est sub pedagogi disciplina sed superioris doctrina et eadem ratione adueniente euangelio cessant legalia et sicut in naturalibus cessat dispositio ad introductionem forme... [Gal. 4:1] status autem legi fuit quasi status pueritia: vt sunt dictum est, ideo fuit ibi seruitus sub multis obseruantiis legalibus a quibus liberamur in nouum testamentum, in quo est status quasi viri perfecti... [Gal. 4:2-3] Usque ad prefinitum tempus a patre, id est, vsque ad etatem adultam. Ita et nos, scilicet, iudei. cum essemus paruuli, id est, in statu vetere testamento sub elementis mundi eramus seruientes, id est, sub legalibus obseruantiis que dicuntur elementa... ita legales obseruantie fuerunt quedam figure disponentes ad Christum vt dictum est propter quod in eius aduentu sunt dismisae.”

¹⁵² Faber, *S. Pauli*, 156v: “Non igitur lex loco promissiorum data est: sed solum vt praeparans/ vt potiones & dietae: quarum/ perfecta sanitate non amplius opus est. lex vetus data est vt infantium in rudibus literarum elementis pedagogus/ cuius vbi virilis perfectaque etas aduenit non amplius est opus... Paedagogus est: qui pueros praeinstruit qui eos ad literas ducit, qui vbi sufficiunt excellentem audire magistrum: non eis amplius opus est paedagogo. Quando autem Christus venit: summus magister venit, quare qui ad eum venerunt: non amplius opus habuerunt paedagogo. Lex autem paedagogus: quae praeinstruebat et ducebat ad Christum, non igitur amplius fuit lege opus: sed fide, quae lege superior est: vt sapientia/ grammatica superior.”

¹⁵³ Faber, *S. Pauli*, 157r-v: “Omnes ante Christi aduentum cum gentes/ tum Iudaei: vt paruuli erant sub paedagogis/ vicarijs/ et oeconomis paedagogi gentium: sophistae erant/ ad falsum cultum daemonum instruente... sed Iudaeorum paedagogi: legitime instruebant/ praeparantes ad verum dei cultum/ veri dei commissarij/ et domum dei recte dispensantes. Et tam populus gentium quam Iudaeorum/ vt seruus erat: quibus paedagogi/ vicarij/ et oeconomi dominabantur... enim ea quae paedagogi pueris tradunt/ non sunt nisi quaedam

the age which Christ brings. The old law had been ordained through angels. But Christ is far superior to angels and so too is his law, the new law of liberty and sonship.¹⁵⁴

Summary

So ends our brief survey of the exegetical tradition. The problem that Paul's doctrine of the law posed for theology in the church's early conflict with Marcion did not disappear with the heretic from Pontus. The context of Pauline interpretation changed, but the attempt to balance the evolution of salvation history with its continuity ensured a consensus among the tradition. Paul's opposition of law and gospel simply could not be understood as the radical antithesis advanced by so many detractors of the Old Testament. For the early church, such an antinomism was not only theologically unsatisfactory, it was conceptually impossible. The apologetic demonstration of Christian ethics was essential not only in the face of civic suspicions, but even more so because reality itself was conceived in nomistic terms. Even Marcion was not exempt from such a world view, his asceticism bearing witness to this fact.

In this context, Augustine's interpretation of Paul does appear all the more striking. Yet faced with the Pelagian argument, it is understandable that Augustine would use Paul's theology of the law as an all encompassing judgment upon the potential of human nature and morality. Rather than confirmation of man's moral capacity, the law was the most powerful witness against it. Reacting against this perceived "enemy of grace," Augustine's opposition of law and

elementa et rudimenta ad ea quae adulta aetate quae plena est aetas/ sunt cognoscenda: ita caeremoniae et ritus tantum gentium quam Iudaeorum/ elementa erant adultam praecurrentia aetatem... At cum aetas perfecta venit/ quae aetas est libertatis et agnitae filiationis: nichil amplius studium carnis et corporalium rerum iuuat/ sed doctrina spiritus et aeternarum rerum."

¹⁵⁴ Faber, *S. Pauli*, 156v: "Lex vetus per angelos Moysi disposita... Noua autem lex: per Christum qui omnibus angelis superior est/ disposita est... ergo lex vetus: erat a disponentibus angelica/ a mediatore humana/ et a suscipientibus lex erat seruitutis... At vero lex noua: ab ordinante et mediatore diuina et superangelica est/ et a suscipientibus lex libertatis et filiorum. lex vetus: non iustificans/ sed praeparans seruos ad iustificationem. lex noua: iam iustificans/ seruitutem tollens et liberos/ filiosque faciens."

grace stands closer to antithesis than that found in any other Christian writer of this period. On the other hand, one still had to guard against the Manichean heresy. Augustine, therefore, continued to uphold the law's essential goodness by placing it both at the beginning and at the end of salvation: "The law was given that grace might be sought, grace was given that the law might be fulfilled."

The medieval context combined the effort to preserve the exegetical tradition with the need to address new questions. As the sacraments took center stage in ecclesiastical life, theological reflection turned to the Old Testament and its *legalia* as a locus for the church's own distinctive sacramental doctrines. Again, continuity and distinction needed to be held in tension; fortunately, the Pauline interpretation of the fathers was well suited to the task. Thus, Paul tended to look the same as before. If the law was without value for justification, then Paul was speaking primarily of the ceremonial law. Perhaps, the moral law was also included in the apostle's indictment, but its form was "old" and thus directed to *carnalia* and *temporalia*. The coming of the gospel could never mean the end of *lex*, for the gospel itself was a "*nova lex*."

The argument in Galatians was therefore an argument about *Heilsgeschichte*; Paul's theology of the law was interpreted as a theology of the Old Testament. Those who had submitted to the Judaizers had not paid attention to the right calendars. The times had changed, the human race had "come of age," and the school of the old law had finished its task. Yet the law was not against the promise of Christ, even as the Old Testament did not stand against the New. The relationship was one of growth. As the tree is contained in the seed, so the gospel lay hidden in the law. In graduated continuity, salvation history ran its course from law to gospel.

It is this overwhelming consensus in Pauline interpretation that comes down to Luther, and he receives it as a faithful heir. He is perhaps too faithful: the rigor with which he applies

the traditional *heilsgeschichtlich* and *offenbarungsgeschichtlich* distinctions in his first exegetical lectures makes the problem of Paul's theology of the law more acute. His own creativity produces further tension, and yet throughout his lectures on the Psalms he continues to exhibit the spirit of the exegetical tradition. Any inclinations toward a different understanding of Paul remains latent until, after a fresh reading of Augustine, they are brought out into the open. We now turn our attention to these developments.

CHAPTER TWO

GALATIANS IN THE DICTATA SUPER PSALTERIUM 1513-1515

Introduction

From the beginning of his formal theological training Luther was engaged in the interpretation of Scripture. He began as an auditor in theological studies where he listened to various lectures on biblical books, church fathers, and scholastic theology.¹⁵⁵ As was usual, part of this time was also devoted to teaching on the arts faculty, since a *magister artium* was a prerequisite for the study of theology. From 1508 to 1509 Luther taught philosophy in Wittenberg, lecturing on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. But Aristotle seemed to him an empty shell. Shortly after advancing to *baccalaureus biblicus* he expressed his distaste for philosophy in a letter to an old friend. His heart was for theology, a theology which got at the "meat of the nut."¹⁵⁶ After a brief time giving cursory lectures on biblical books, he was promoted to *baccalaureus sententiarus* and was now obligated to lecture on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. Here too he was occupied with the interpretation of Scripture, for the theological textbook of the Middle Ages was less a "dogmatics" in the modern sense of the word than a systematic

¹⁵⁵ For Luther's early study of theology see Otto Scheel, *Martin Luther: vom Katholizismus zur Reformation*, vol. 2 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1930), 127-142; Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: His Road to Reformation, 1483-1521*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1981), 90-98; Helmar Junghans, *Der junge Luther und Humanisten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985), 94f.

¹⁵⁶ In a letter to Johannes Braun in March 1509, Luther wrote, "Sum itaque nunc iubente vel permittente Deo Wittenbergae. Quod si statum meum nosse desideres, bene habeo Dei gratia, nisi quod violentum est studium, maxime philosophiae, quam ego ab initio libentissime mutarim theologia, ea inquam theologia, quae nucleum nicis et medullam tritici et medullam ossium scrutatur." WABr 1, 17, 39-44, (Nr. 5).

arrangement of the questions and problems that arose in the history of exegesis.¹⁵⁷ Finally in 1512, as a called and sworn *doctor in biblia* at the University of Wittenberg, Luther embarked on a lifelong journey of biblical interpretation.

His earliest interpretation of Galatians first appears in his inaugural lectures on the Psalms, the *Dictata super Psalterium*, 1513-1515.¹⁵⁸ Choosing the Psalter as the subject of his first lecture may appear a bit overambitious, large and sundry as it is. On the other hand, for Luther the Augustinian, the Psalter was the most familiar of biblical books, prayed in its entirety at least once a week in the monastery. In the face of the usual trepidation which accompanies inaugural lectures, it is reasonable to think that a young scholar might prefer to begin with familiar subject matter—i.e., go with what you know. But beyond such practical issues, the theological value which Luther placed upon the Psalms was probably most decisive. The Psalter was and continued to be for Luther the entire Bible in microcosm. Such was the opinion of the tradition as well. It was Cassiodorus who observed that the Psalter was the most appropriate

¹⁵⁷ Lombard's *Sentences* were intended as an expansion and explanation of the *Gloss* compiled by Anselm of Laon. Lombard's additions to Anselm on the Psalter and Pauline Epistles, known as the *Magna Glosatura*, are represented in what later became the *Glossa Ordinaria*. Furthermore, it is quite possible that Lombard envisioned his glosses on Paul as a companion text for the *Sentences*. See Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible*, 64-65; Marcia L. Colish, *Peter Lombard*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 24-25. Also, it is clear that Luther was working with biblical commentaries in his study of Lombard, especially those of Paul. In his marginal comments to Lombard he demonstrates familiarity with Nicholas Lyra, Paul of Burgos, and the *Glossa Ordinaria* on the interpretation of Rom 1:17.

¹⁵⁸ In Luther's letter to Spalatin in 1516 he refers to his first lectures on the Psalms as "dictata mea super psalterium." WABr 1, 56, 6, (Nr. 21). The possibility raised by Heinrich Boehmer of an earlier lecture on Genesis was first argued against by Johannes Ficker. The time spent between his reception of the Wittenberg Professorship (October 22, 1512) and his first academic lectures (August 1513) can sufficiently be explained by his extensive preparation of the Psalm text to be printed for the lectures. Through a comparison of other text preparations, Gerhard Ebeling has shown that much of Luther's preparation was original, "Luthers Psalterdruck vom Jahre 1513," in *Lutherstudien* 1 (Tübingen: Mohr/Siebeck, 1971), 69-131. See Heinrich Boehmer, *Luthers erste Vorlesung. Berichte über die Verhandlung die Sächsischen Akademie die Wissenschaft zu Leipzig, Philologisch-Historische Klasse*, vol. 75, no. 1 (1923), 4 and 10; and Johannes Ficker, "Luthers erste Vorlesung—welche?" *Theologischen Studien und Kritiken* 100 (1928), 348-53.

book for novices: the Psalms were the entry point into the Scriptures.¹⁵⁹ If the whole of Scripture was contained therein, where else ought one who longed for the theological “meat of the nut” begin?

1. Scholasticism, Monasticism, and Humanism

As a consequence of Luther’s theological training, we can expect his earliest exegesis to bear the marks of scholasticism. So for example, it is often pointed out that Luther followed the typical scholastic approach of providing *glosses* and extended *scholia* to the text, rather than the *expositio continua* preferred by humanists.¹⁶⁰ Likewise, scholastic questions and distinctions can be found peppered throughout his lectures. On the other hand, criticisms of the schoolmen and their method are also present in the *Dictata*, though these are not as glaring as in his later lectures. This is especially the case when it comes to the use of philosophy. If speculations and alien definitions appear to distort the sense of the biblical text and its application, Luther is not afraid to speak of “*nostrī scolastici*” with ironic disapproval.¹⁶¹

It is indeed true that Luther was trained philosophically in the *via moderna*, and as evidenced in the earliest witness of Luther’s theology—his marginal notes to Lombard’s *Sentences*—he is thoroughly conversant with scholastic terminology, theological problems, and method. It is, however, another matter with regard to the interpretation of Scripture. Here we

¹⁵⁹ Cassiodorus: “Psalterii quoque proprium est quod per eum legis diuinae sanctitas introitur. Non enim tirones incohant a Genesi, non ab apostolo, non inter ipsa initia auctoritas euangelica sancta pulsatur; sed, licet psalterium quartus codex sit auctoritatis diuinae, primum tamen tirones incohantes scripturas sanctas, inde legendi faciunt decenter initium”; cited by Ebeling, “Luthers Psalterdruck,” 69. Cf. Jerome, *ep.* 107, 12.

¹⁶⁰ See Ebeling “Luthers Psalterdruck,” 69-131; AWA, 1, 43f.; and Christopher Ocker’s recent discussion of the form of medieval commentaries in *Biblical Poetics before Humanism and Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 8-15.

¹⁶¹ See for example, WA 55II, 294, 15f.; 353, 152- 354, 171; 554, 596-600; 571, 1076-79. See also Leif Grane, *Martinus Noster: The German Reform Movement, 1518-1521* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1994), 3 which identifies an ironic “*magistri nostri*” as a polemical phrase styled by the humanists during the Reuchlin affair.

get the sense that we are not dealing with a scholastic theologian dissecting the biblical text with the precision of Aristotelian logic.¹⁶² Rather, his approach to the text reflects the attitude of one who has drunk deeply from the wells of monastic culture and piety. The turning over of every phrase and word for the purpose of spiritual application, the concern for the struggle against the flesh, the prominence which is accorded to the disposition of humility—all concentrated on Christ and his cross—reflect the spirituality of traditional monastic exegesis or what has been sometimes referred to as a “monastic theology.”¹⁶³ Luther did not sharply separate his effort to interpret the text in the classroom from the purpose for which it was read in the cloister or sung in the choir. His exegesis was not oriented towards subtle problems as expressed in *quaestio*, but towards the meaning of the text for the personal spiritual experiences typified in the monastic life.¹⁶⁴ This is not to say that Luther received the monastic tradition uncritically or that it provided him satisfying answers to the spiritual questions it simultaneously raised within him.¹⁶⁵ Rather, we are here describing Luther’s debt to monasticism primarily as a way of *thinking theologically*; a distinctive approach to reading the Scriptures.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² See Leif Grane, *Contra Gabrielem: Luthers Auseinandersetzung mit Gabriel Biel in der Disputatio Contra Scholasticam Theologiam 1517* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1962), 283f.

¹⁶³ Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. Catharine Misrahi (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982).

¹⁶⁴ See Reinhard Schwarz, “Luthers unveräußerte Erbschaft an der monastischen Theologie” in *Kloster Amelungsborn 1135-1985*, ed. Gerhard Ruhbach and Kurt Schmidt-Clausen (Amelungsborn, 1985), 210. Leclercq expresses this contrast throughout his book, *Love of Learning*, 5: “The important word is no longer *quaeritur*, but *desideratur*; no longer *sciendum* but *experiendum*.”

¹⁶⁵ See Bernhard Lohse’s cautious and conservative assessment of Luther’s debt to monasticism in “Luther und Bernhard von Clairvaux” in *Bernhard von Clairvaux. Rezeption und Wirkung im Mittelalter und in der Neuzeit*, ed. K. Elm (Weisbaden, 1994): 271-301. On Luther’s criticism of monasticism see Lohse, *Mönchtum und Reformation: Luthers Auseinandersetzung mit dem Mönchsideal des Mittelalters* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963).

¹⁶⁶ There have been several important studies which focus on the positive contribution of monastic culture to Luther’s theology. See Peter Manns, “Zum Gespräch zwischen M. Luther und der katholischen Theologie. Begegnung zwischen patristisch-monastischer und reformatorischer Theologie an der Scholastik vorbei” in *Thesaurus*

Jean Leclercq has given us the most comprehensive treatment of monastic culture and theology. He has especially characterized the monastic method of exegesis as one which works on the level of *grammar*, finding the words of Scripture to bear a relevance which draws the reader into the text itself. Rather than a textbook for doctrine, the sacred page was a window into communion with God. Such was the approach of the early Fathers, a constant source of inspiration to monastic exegesis.

It has been suggested that this more existential approach to the Bible along with the use and value accorded to the Fathers may lead to a natural connection between monastic and humanist culture in the work of the young Luther.¹⁶⁷ Though not necessarily part of its defining characteristics, humanism could likewise have a certain anti-scholastic bent in its rallying cry of *ad fontes*.¹⁶⁸ Certainly the scholastic tendency to impose philosophical definitions on an inherently theological text could raise the ire of humanist and monk alike. Theo Bell has noted in his study of Luther and Bernhard that, because of the common interest in the *sources* of theology—the text of Scripture and the writings of the Fathers, “monastic theology and

Lutheri: Auf der Such nach neuen Paradigmen der Luther-Forschung, eds Tuomo Mannermaa, Anja Ghiselli, and Simo Peura (Helsinki: Vammala, 1987), 63-154; Ulrich Köpf, “Martin Luthers Lebensgang als Mönch” in *Kloster Amelungsborn 1135-1985*, 187-208; idem, “Martin Luther als Mönch” *Luther* 55 (1984): 66-84; idem, “Monastische Traditionen bei Martin Luther” in *Luther—zwischen den Zeiten*, ed. Christoph Marksches and Michael Trowitzsch (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1999), 17-36; Schwarz, “Luthers unveräußerte Erbschaft”; Kurt-Victor Selge, “Mittelalterliche Traditionsbezüge in Luthers früher Theologie” in *Die frühe Reformation in Deutschland als Umbruch*, ed. B. Moeller (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1998):149-56; Franz Posset, *Pater Bernhardus: Martin Luther and Bernard of Clairvaux*. Cistercian Studies Series, vol. 168 (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1999); Erich Kleineidam, “Ursprung und Gegenstand der Theologie bei Bernhard von Clairvaux und Martin Luther” in *Dienst der Vermittlung: Festschrift zum 25-jährigen Bestehen des philosophische-theologischen Studiums im Priesterseminar Erfurt*, eds. W. Ernst, K. Feiereis, F. Hoffman (Leipzig: St. Benno Verlag, 1977), 221-47; Theo Bell, *Divus Bernhardus: Bernhard von Clairvaux in Martin Luthers Schriften* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1993).

¹⁶⁷ Junghans, *Der junge Luther*, 136.

¹⁶⁸ See Paul Oskar Kristeller, “Humanism and Scholasticism in the Italian Renaissance,” in *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanist Strains* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1955), 92-119; Erika Rummel, *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and Reformation* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1995).

humanism could indeed go hand in hand, so that one could speak with some legitimacy of monastic humanism.”¹⁶⁹ A similar notion is expressed in Leif Grane’s remark that Luther’s first exegetical lectures sent him “behind *and* beyond scholasticism—*behind*, meaning the Church Fathers; *beyond*, meaning the use of humanist biblical studies.”¹⁷⁰

Luther’s early encounter with humanism at Erfurt has been well documented in several studies.¹⁷¹ His interaction with its sources and methods only increased in his lecture activity at Wittenberg, a young university which from its inception had given significant place to humanism in both faculty and curriculum.¹⁷² It is thus not surprising when, in addition to the patristic sources, Luther makes use of humanist scholarship in his lectures on the Psalms.¹⁷³ Johannes Reuchlin’s *De rudimentis hebraicis libri tres*, which had appeared in Erfurt in 1506, was already known to Luther when he lectured on Lombard’s *Sentences*. Luther brought the Hebrew grammar with him to Wittenberg and used it regularly throughout his Psalms lectures.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁹ Theo Bell, *Divus Bernhardus*, 28-29. See also Leclercq, *Love of Learning*, 133-34; and Posset “Monastic Influence on Martin Luther” in *Monastic Studies* 18 (Montreal: The Benedictine Priory, 1988), 163, n. 66.

¹⁷⁰ Grane, “Luther and Scholasticism” in *Luther and Learning*, ed. Marilyn Harran (Selinsgrove, N.J.: Susquehanna University Press, 1985), 54; see also Lewis Spitz, “Luther and Humanism,” in *Luther and Learning*, 69-94, idem, *The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1963), 237-66.

¹⁷¹ See especially Martin Burgdorf, *Der Einfluß der Erfurter Humanisten auf Luthers Entwicklung bis 1510* (Leipzig: 1928); Junghans, *Der junge Luther*; and most recently, Timothy Dost, *Renaissance Humanism in Support of the Gospel in Luther's Early Correspondence: Taking All Things Captive* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2001).

¹⁷² See Karl Bauer, *Die Wittenberger Universitätstheologie und die Anfänge der Deutschen Reformation* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1928); Max Steinmetz, “Die Universität Wittenberg und der Humanismus (1502-1521),” in *450 Jahre Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg*, vol. 1 (Halle: 1952), 103-39; Maria Grossmann, *Humanism in Wittenberg, 1485-1517* (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1975); Jens-Martin Kruse, *Universitätstheologie und Kirchenreform: die Anfänge der Reformation in Wittenberg 1516-1522* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 2002).

¹⁷³ In addition to the use of humanist sources, Junghans has shown that Luther was quite aware of the concepts of classical rhetoric, and employed them in his exegesis as an aid to understanding the psalmist’s intention; “Rhetorische Bemerkungen Luthers in seinen ‘Dictata super Psalterium’,” in *Der junge Luther*, 240-73.

¹⁷⁴ For Luther’s knowledge and use of Hebrew at this time see Siegfried Raeder, *Das Hebräische bei Luther: Untersucht bis zum Ende der ersten Psalmenvorlesung* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1961).

Reuchlin's *Septem Psalmos poenitentialies hebraicos interpretatio*, appearing in 1512, was cited by Luther as well.

The most important humanist source for Luther's lectures was arguably Faber Stapulensis' *Quincuplex Psalterium*, which compared Jerome's so-called "Gallican" and "Hebrew" Psalter with the old "Roman" Psalter in three parallel columns. This was also accompanied by a version of the "old" Latin text along with Faber's own personal conflated text. But Faber's importance for Luther lay more in his hermeneutics than his textual criticism. Faber stressed a strict christological reading of the Psalms based on their spiritual and prophetic character; a view with which Luther was in fundamental agreement.¹⁷⁵ Faber's influence is most evident in Luther's own preface to his lectures.

Finally, Nicholas of Lyra's *Postillae* also needs mention. Lyra, a fourteenth century Franciscan and biblical exegete, is no humanist in the proper sense of the word. Nevertheless, he was very popular among biblical scholars in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries especially for his insights into the Hebrew text. Arguably the definitive biblical commentary of its day, humanist printers competed by printing expanded editions of the *Glossa ordinaria* to include Lyra's *Postillae literales*, then his *Postillae morales*, Paul of Burgos' *Additiones*, and Matthew Doering's *Responsiones*.¹⁷⁶ Luther's use of Lyra was frequent but often critical, especially regarding what he considered to be the 'literal' interpretation of the Psalms.

¹⁷⁵ See Guy Bedouelle, "La lecture christologique du psautier dans le Quincuplex Psalterium de Lefèvre d'Étaples" in *Histoire de l'exégèse au XVI^e siècle*, ed. O. Fatio (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1978), 133-43; Fritz Hahn, "Faber Stapulensis und Luther."

¹⁷⁶ Karl Froehlich, "The Fate of the *Glossa Ordinaria*."

2. Letter and Spirit

In the attempt to define the Pauline distinction of letter and spirit (2 Cor. 3:6)—“the letter kills but the spirit gives life”—the Western exegetical tradition inherited and elaborated the interpretation of Origen, so that it was commonly understood in terms of the four-fold sense of Scripture: the *letter* was the *literal sense* while the *spirit* consisted of the proceeding three *spiritual senses* of *allegory*, *tropology*, and *anagogy*.¹⁷⁷ This did not mean that *littera occidens* = *ad litteram* in every case. Only when the literal sense contained absurdities or failed to edifyingly apply, was it the “killing letter.” Yet for this very reason much of the Old Testament was thought to require a spiritual interpretation. That said, it immediately becomes apparent that inseparable from the distinction of letter and spirit was the deeper problem of how one conceived the relationship of the Old and New Testaments. This in part arose from Paul himself who identified the ministry of the quickening spirit as the ministry of the *novi testamenti* (καὶ νῆς διαθήκης). The implications of Paul’s doctrine of letter and spirit for the hermeneutical problem of Scripture’s unity and applicability were obfuscated by the fact that another Pauline doctrine—the figural/typological nature of salvation history—was the interpretive framework in which the tradition chose to understand the former doctrine.¹⁷⁸ Letter and spirit thus related to each other as figure and fulfillment, as Old and New Testament. As such, the Scriptures of the Old Testament were only relevant as a witness to the New, but only the revelation of the New could

¹⁷⁷ See Gerhard Ebeling, “Die Anfänge von Luthers Hermeneutik,” 12-17; idem, “Geist und Buchstabe,” in RGG³, II, 1290-96; Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, 27f.; Hanson, *Allegory and Event*; P. Ceslaus Spicq, *Esquisse d’une Histoire de l’Exégèse Latine au Moyen Age* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1944), 202-88; Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, vol. 1, trans. Mark Sebanc (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 117-224; Wai-Shing Chau, *The Letter and the Spirit: A History of Interpretation from Origen to Luther* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995).

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Erich Auerbach, “Figura,” *Archivum romanicum* 22 (1938): 436-89; idem, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Thought*, trans. Willard Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953);

unlock such a testimony which was hidden under the types and figures of the Old. The history of salvation (*Heilsgeschichte*) was simultaneously the history of revelation (*Offenbarungsgeschichte*), inseparably enmeshed to form the driving framework for the traditional hermeneutic. Indeed, the four spiritual senses followed this pattern of redemptive history. Old Testament types were fulfilled in Christ and in his mystical body, the church (*allegory*), exhibited in the life of the present day believer (*tropology*), and consummated in all fullness on the Last Day (*anagogy*).

However, Augustine popularized another interpretation of letter and spirit, which he developed extensively during the Pelagian controversy. In *De spiritu et littera* and then later in the third book of *De doctrina christiana*, Augustine pointed out that Paul's distinction of letter and spirit was, properly speaking, *not* the hermeneutical distinction of the literal and spiritual senses. Rather, the letter was the *law without grace* while the spirit was the gift of *grace* and the fulfillment of the law thereby. Yet this too was understood primarily according to redemptive history: grace was first made universally available with the advent of Christ. In addition, Augustine did not deny the former distinction of literal and spiritual; the letter was still said to kill the soul if one adhered to a literal interpretation of Scripture when it demanded a spiritual one. Hence, what appeared to be two opposing interpretations of letter and spirit came together amicably in the tradition. Their conflation was really the consistent application of the traditional hermeneutic: law and letter end with the Old Testament as grace and spiritual understanding are meted out upon the arrival of the New. As James Preus put it so often throughout his survey of

Jean Daniélou, *Sacramentum Futuri: Études sur les origines de la typologie biblique* (Paris: Beauchêne, 1950); Leonhard Goppelt, "Apokalyptik und Typologie bei Paulus" *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 89 (1964): 321-44.

medieval hermeneutics, the “hermeneutical divide” between letter and spirit was between the Old and New Testaments.¹⁷⁹

We should keep in mind that this basic *heils- offenbarungsgeschichtlich* perspective in the traditional hermeneutic remained intact even as other developments continued within biblical exegesis. This was the case even when the definitions of what actually ought to be included in the literal or spiritual senses varied. For example, the place of prophecy became increasingly problematic. If the prophet “literally” and plainly spoke of the coming of Christ, is this then a literal or spiritual interpretation? What role did the intention of the author play and should one make a distinction between the intention of the human author and that of the Holy Spirit? Such questions continued to be raised throughout the late Middle Ages as prophecies—as well as parables, metaphors and other figurative speech—were increasingly regarded as true expressions of the literal sense.¹⁸⁰ This did not mean, however, that the spiritual sense was supplanted. The greater precision with which exegetes defined the literal sense did not undercut the fundamental basis for spiritual exegesis: the Old Testament related to the New as figure and fulfillment.

It is against this background that we come to Luther’s own prefatory remarks regarding the letter and the spirit. In his printed preface to the Glosses, PRAEFATIO IHESV CHRISTI, the “killing letter” is the interpretation of the Psalms which ignores their prophetic character and explains them “historically.” Rather, “every prophecy and every prophet ought to with respect to

¹⁷⁹ See James S. Preus, *From Shadow to Promise: Old Testament Interpretation from Augustine to the Young Luther* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), 36: “For Augustine, ‘letter’ and ‘spirit’ meant law and grace, and the hermeneutical transposition into the Old Testament-New Testament terms was quite natural: what was really meant and intended in the Old Testament law was that very grace which has now appeared, which allows both spiritual understanding of the law (reflected in allegorical exegesis), and its true fulfillment in Christian life (reflected in tropological application).”

Christ the Lord, except where it is plain from clear words that it is spoken of someone else....some expound very many psalms not prophetically but historically, following certain Hebrew rabbis—falsifiers and fashioners of Jewish vanities.”¹⁸¹ These prophetic utterances of Christ are the intended meaning of the words and are thus the *literal* meaning of the Psalms.

Likewise in his *Konzept* for the inaugural lecture, Luther stresses that David is speaking in the Psalms as a prophet. In contrast to the expositions of the Psalter by “Greek, Latin, and Hebrew” scholars, which “in many places...need more interpretation than the text itself,” Luther suggests by way of Psalm 72 and Matthew 19 that the proper approach is “to enter into the sanctuary of the Lord and understand concerning their end, so that the *Sensus* which is first might become last, and that which is last first.”¹⁸² This “*sensus primus*” seems to be that which concerns the historical circumstances of the prophet, while the “*sensus nouissimus*” is the prophetic-christological sense of the Psalms. The historical meaning of the words that first presents itself is to be pushed back in favor of their intended prophetic sense which the Spirit has now revealed. Thus Luther goes on to say that he will not “recite the glory of his [David’s] reign and the brilliant military campaigns he waged in his youth, nor the uncommon humility, marvelous patience, and intense piety of him who was the first king and lion of the tribe of Judah, since *as he says*, his soul does not want to make its boast in these matters, *but in the*

¹⁸⁰ See especially Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, 83f.; Alastair J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Scholar Press, 1984); and Ocker, *Biblical Poetics*.

¹⁸¹ WA 55I, 6, 25f.: “Omnis prophetia et omnis propheta / de Christo domino debet intelligi / nisi ubi manifestis uerbis appareat de alio loqui.... Quapropter quidam nimis multos psalmos exponunt. non propheticæ. sed hystorice. Secuti quosdam Rabim hebraeos falsigraphos et figulos Iudaicarum vanitatum.”

¹⁸² WA 55II, 25, 14f.: “Laboratum est sane in exponendo psalterio a Graecis, Latinis et Hebreis multipliciter, et plus puto quam in quocunque alio diuinarum Scripturarum libro, Sed necdum elaboratum, atque adeo non elaboratum, vt in frequentibus locis interpretationes magis Indigere videantur Interpretatione quam textus ipse...Et nos quoque ‘existimauimus, vt cognosceremus’. Et Ecce ‘labor vtique est ante nos’. Nisi forte hec sit lux nostra, ‘intrare scil. in sanctuarium Domini et intelligere in nouissimis eorum’, vt scil. Sensus, qui est primus, fiat nouissimus, et qui nouissimus, fiat primus.”

Lord.” He then concludes by following the preface of Faber in citing 2 Samuel 23 as a hermeneutical key for interpreting the Psalter: “The man to whom it was appointed *concerning the Christ* of the God of Jacob, the excellent psalmist of Israel said: ‘The Spirit of the Lord has spoken by me, and his word by my tongue.’” David is a prophet because through him the Spirit spoke of the coming Christ.

In reading the Psalms as prophecies about Christ, Luther is of course expressing an entirely traditional view. When he argues that these prophecies are the *literal sense* of the Psalm, he is also standing in continuity with the trend of recent biblical exegesis. On the one hand, Luther can argue for the christological sense of the Psalter on the basis of *genre*—it is a prophecy, which *de facto* refers to the future. The text itself contains clues which indicate this, providing key words like “*eruditio*” and “*intellectus*.” Also the obscurity and disconnectedness of the historical facts related indicate that the Psalms are to be understood as prophecy rather than poetic descriptions of ancient history.¹⁸³ On the other hand, the conviction that the Spirit of Christ saturates the Scriptures, that Jesus is its center, and that the text actually mediates the presence of the Savior to the pious reader is a natural expression of traditional patristic and monastic spirituality.

Luther’s polemical remarks against “some” who explain the psalms “historically” and follow Hebrew rabbis are no doubt directed against Nicholas of Lyra. Lyra made extensive use of rabbinic sources and often interpreted the Old Testament prophecies *ad litteram* with

¹⁸³ Cf. Luther’s marginal notes to Faber, WA 4, 476, 11-20: “Verum simul prophetat sub istis verbis hystorice dictis. Unde literalis sensus propheticus principalis bene concurrat cum literalis hystoriae recitatae. Et in huius signum hystoriae in psalmis praeurte et obscure narrantur, ut dent intelligere, quia propheticus sensus ad litteram potior est. Alioquin quis dixerit David prophetam ex hoc, quia veteres hystorias in metra redegit. Sicut quis Iuvenum Hispanum dicat prophetam ex eo, quia Euangelia in leges versuum reduxit? Alius igitur est sensus hystoriae, alius prophetiae in hoc et multis psalmis aliis. Alias quis non possit similis esse David? Nam et ego aliquam hystoriam possum in versus breviter disponere.”

reference to ancient Israel rather than Christ. His justification for doing so was similar to a theory expressed most clearly by Thomas Aquinas; namely, that in Holy Scripture words not only signify things, but things—according to God’s providence—can signify other things.

Whereas Aquinas attributed this second signification to the spiritual sense, Lyra could label both as “literal” since both were according to the intention of the Divine Author: the famous *duplex sensus literalis*.

For Luther, this “double literal sense” was particularly offensive. It is not that he disagreed with its theoretical basis, that in Scripture “things were signs of other things”; indeed he notes later in the lectures that all the works of creation are figures and signs of God’s spiritual works in redemption.¹⁸⁴ But to maintain the validity of *two* literal interpretations, one “historical” and one “christological,” is to give legitimacy to the figure apart from its fulfillment, to regard the sign as the reality. It is to be satisfied with the carnal shell in place of the sweet spiritual fruit of Christ. As Luther explains later in a scholion to Ps. 110, when one adheres to the sign after the fulfillment has come, the letter ceases to be *figura*. It is now vanity and a lie, for it is against the truth.¹⁸⁵ It is this *misuse* of the created thing, this devotion to the sign rather than to that which it points that, for Luther, merits the rubric *littera occidens*.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. WA 55I, 468 (Ps. 65:5; *Rgl.* 7): “Quia opera significatiua sunt creatio totius mundi et omnia figuralia veteris legis, ‘facta’ autem sunt impletiones eorundem, quod in Christo inceptum est impleri et nunc Impletur et in fine implebitur.” WA 55I, 547 (Ps. 77:2; *Rgl.* 5): “Creatio rerum corporalium Est initium et figura et vmbra redemptionis et spiritualium rerum, que sunt finis illarum, sine quibus sunt vanae ille; ideo assumantur pro parabolis spiritualium.” WA 55II, 536, 38-40 (Ps. 77:2): “Ergo Creaturas inspicere oportet tanquam locutiones Dei. Atque ideo ponere cor in res creatas Est in signum et non rem ponere, que est Deus solus.” WA 55II, 692, 188-89 (Ps. 89:9): “...res significatas per verbum alias res, scil. futuras, significare.” See Leif Grane, “Christus finis omnium. Eine Studie zu Luthers erster Psalmenvorlesung” in *Caritas Dei. Beiträge zum Verständnis Luthers und der gegenwärtigen Ökumene. Festschrift für Tuomo Mannermaa zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Oswald Bayer, Robert Jensen, and Simo Knuutila (Helsinki: Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft, 1997): 170-91.

¹⁸⁵ WA 55II, 862, 284-86 (Ps. 110:7): “Sed Iudaei volentes literam et figuram manere pugnant vsque hodie contra hanc veritatem. Et ideo litera iam non est figura, Sed vanitas et mendacium, quia contra veritatem.”

On the verso of the printed title page, Luther sketches out in a striking manner what he considers to be the theological implications of such an approach. Two literal senses imply two directions of application: a *duplex quadriga*. Unfolding the four senses of Scripture according to the *killing letter*, Luther illustrates that the danger of Lyra's method goes beyond an inordinate interest in ancient histories. Allegorically one gives theological legitimacy to the existence of the synagogue alongside the church. Tropologically one fixes his heart on the shell of righteousness, the superficial obedience demanded by the old law, rather than the inner righteousness of faith. Anagogically one seeks the carnal glory of this world rather than the eternal glory of heaven. In other words, to read the Old Testament as if it were not yet fulfilled by the New Testament is to cause a fundamental misunderstanding in the message and application of Scripture. The interpretation is of the "killing letter" because of its disastrous effects on faith and piety.

While Luther's *duplex quadriga* is without precedent in the tradition, we should keep in mind that the basic framework of redemptive history is still the guiding presupposition of his remarks. Thus after the two-fold *quadriga* he notes that Psalm 73, "May he have dominion from sea to sea," could have never been correctly understood as a spiritual dominion before the Spirit revealed it to be so. Indeed, the literal sense of the text, with its reference to earthly "seas," actually steers one away from the correct understanding. It is no wonder then that, before the advent of Christ, the true meaning of this text was utterly hidden. It is thus not crass anti-Semitic rhetoric when Luther uses the "killing letter" and "carnal" understanding interchangeably with the "Jewish" interpretation. In a very real sense the people of the Old Testament did not understand their own Scriptures. Only a select few—the prophets and patriarchs—were proleptically given the grace of New Testament revelation and had explicit knowledge of Christ.

More could be said by way of introduction, but it is perhaps better to observe Luther's presuppositions in action.

Galatians 3:23-24, 4:4

As with many of the New Testament citations in the Psalms lectures, Luther offers no extended commentary on Galatians three or four. He is like most medieval commentators on the Bible, in which New Testament texts are placed alongside the Old, woven into its fabric, so to speak. They are not really “proof texts” or “cross references” but what Jean Leclercq calls *réminiscence*, “verbal echoes” which naturally evoke words and entire quotations from other parts of Scripture. This is especially true for biblical interpreters within in the monastic tradition. For them “each word is like a hook, so to speak; it catches hold of one or several others which become linked together and make up the fabric of the exposé... quotations by means of the ‘hook-words’ group themselves together in their minds and under their pen, like variations on the same theme.”¹⁸⁶

There is a certain difficulty with evaluating such exegesis. Sometimes the words or passage cited from another part of Scripture can be understood as an intentional application and interpretation of the text, having some sense of the original context. Other times, the “verbal echoes” are nothing more than that—texts with superficial similarity placed beside one another. When the latter is the case, then one should be cautious about drawing any hard and fast conclusions about its interpretation.

Fortunately, most of Luther's references to Galatians fall into the first category. At times Luther will intentionally cite the full text, perhaps even giving the chapter number. In other

¹⁸⁶ Leclercq, *Love of Learning*, 73-74.

places only a word or two suffices, as we will see with “*paedagogus*” which, even standing alone, can bear the whole weight of the Galatians passage. However, to get an accurate sense for how Luther understands the passage, one needs to read it within the context of his entire exposition. More often than not, what appear to be digressions are actually quite related to the theme of the whole Psalm, usually brought out at the very beginning.

We focus this chapter on three separate texts: Galatians 3:23, 3:24, and 4:4. In the epistle itself, they are obviously to be taken as a unit, but here Luther cites them all separately and in different contexts. Each one will thus be considered individually followed by a summary at the end.

1. Fides Revelanda—Fides Revelata. Galatians 3:23

Because Luther interprets the Psalms as prophecies directed to the time of Christ—indeed, the very turning point of salvation history—we are continually confronted with his thoughts on the relationship of the Old Testament and the New, of synagogue and church, of *tempus legis* and *tempus gratiae*. Questions of continuity and discontinuity, knowledge and faith, the centrality of Christ, and the progression of God’s revelation through redemptive history loom large for Luther. It is in such a context that he often finds Galatians 3:23 relevant: *Prius autem quam veniret fides sub lege custodiebamur conclusi in eam fidem quae revelanda erat*—“But before faith came we were kept under the law, confined unto that faith which was to be revealed.”

We begin with Luther’s interpretation of Psalm 73 which serves as a nice introduction to these questions. In accordance with his stated hermeneutic, Luther interprets this psalm as a literal prophecy of the time of Christ. More precisely, he regards it as a prophetic prayer looking ahead to Israel’s future unbelief and rejection of the Christ. The psalmist foresees that at that

time the Jewish scribes will treacherously seduce God's people away from their faith in the coming Messiah by corrupting the Scriptures *and falsely interpreting the law*. They will destroy the "spiritual understanding of the law" (*spirituali intelligentia legis*) and replace it with their own "carnal sense" (*sensum carnalem*).¹⁸⁷ "Formerly there was in the synagogue a known God and spiritual understanding, which, nearing the advent of Christ was completely changed by the interpretation of the scribes into the bare letter (*nudam literam*), as the Lord accuses them in the Gospel."¹⁸⁸ Therefore, as the psalmist's name indicates, "Asaph" speaks on behalf of the *synagogue* and prays that they might be delivered from this treachery and the ensuing spiritual destruction.¹⁸⁹

What then is the proper spiritual understanding of the law and how is this related to faith in the coming Christ? Here Luther provides only a brief indication. The faithful synagogue did not yet possess an explicit faith in Christ, but was sanctified by a peculiar Old Testament faith, a "*fidem in fidem*" (Rom. 1:17). At one point he refers to it as a *fides informis*, an "unformed faith."¹⁹⁰ It is to this faith that Gal 3:23 speaks, for the people of the synagogue were "*tenebantur conclusi in eam fidem, quae erat reuelanda*."¹⁹¹ The implication

¹⁸⁷ WA 55II, 464, 5-9: "Quia titulus indicat intellectualem esse psalmum Et de intellectuali seu mystica vastatione loqui, Ideo meo sensu abundans puto, quod loquatur de destructione perfidie, Qua impii interpretes Iudaei Scripturam corrumpunt Et spirituali intelligentia legis destructa suum sensum carnalem erigunt."

¹⁸⁸ WA 55II, 476, 360-3: "Fuit enim in Synagoga quondam notus Deus et intelligentia spiritualis, que accedente aduentu Christi per Scribarum interpretationem valde mutabatur in nudam literam, vt eos Domnius in Euangelio arguit." The notion that God's people were deceived through a false interpretation of the law is common throughout the lectures; see for example, 55I, 92, *RGI* 8; 55II, 141, 11-15; 731, 1-23; 733, 89f.

¹⁸⁹ WA 55II, 481, 489-91: "Orat ergo Asaph pro populo Israel, ne in finem repellatur, Sed recordetur eius Deus, quem ab initio possedit. Vidit enim futuram Iudaeorum perfidiam tam grauiter synagogam destructuram."

¹⁹⁰ WA 55II, 468, 127-133: "Ideo tu, queso, **Leua manus tuas in superbias eorum in finem**.... Sed non sic in *fidelibus* etiam peccantibus, qui saltem *fidem informem*, spem quoque eodem modo retinent et sic velut vltima fimbria eum adhuc tenent, quam diu sunt in hac vita."

¹⁹¹ That Luther uses *teneo* in place of *custodio* throughout the lectures is probably without significance. There is certainly no need to seek another Latin version or source standing behind the text; Luther is simply quoting

then is that the law “held and confined” the synagogue in a faith which was directed towards a future faith yet to be revealed. On this basis the synagogue was a “holy people.” Just as *we* are sanctified through “*fidem factae incarnationis et future gloriae*,” so also the people of the synagogue were holy through “*fidem futurae incarnationis*.”¹⁹² The perfidious doctrine of the scribes, therefore, directed the synagogue’s faith away from this future faith. The “carnal” interpretation of the law had effected a false expectation and hope, so that when the Christ finally did come they did not recognize or believe in him.

Many of the same ideas and vocabulary appear a little later in Luther’s comments to Psalm 96:11, “Light has risen to the righteous and joy to the upright in heart.” Once again this concerns the time of Christ, especially when those who did expect the Messiah received him with joy and a new faith. However, before the coming of Christ “the ancient righteous were righteous by a faith in our faith (*per fidem fidei nostrae*), for they believed and put their hope in that future faith, just as Gal. 3: ‘*Tenebatur conclusi in eam fidem, quae reuelanda erat*.’” Their transgressions were overlooked for the sake of their faith in the future propitiation of Christ. Nevertheless, because Christ had not yet been revealed, their faith was a *fides informis*. They were righteous *ex fide fidei*. It is this expectation of a future faith which for Luther distinguishes the Old Testament faithful. As the citation of Galatians indicates, it is the law which “keeps” them in this faith until another faith is revealed.

from memory. If anything, *teneo* is more neutral and flexible than *custodio* which has strong “imprisonment” associations (quis custodiet ipsos custodes?). Still, Luther’s choice is made with no apparent intention.

¹⁹² WA 55II, 481, 501-505: “Synagoga enim habuit ‘fidem in fidem’, Rom. 1., unde fuit populus sanctus. *Quia tenebantur conclusi in eam fidem, quae erat reuelanda*. Et Ro. 13. dicit: ‘Nunc propior est nostra salus, quam cum credidimus.’ Sicut ergo nos per fidem factae incarnationis et future gloriae sanctificamur, Sic tunc populus synagoge sanctus erat per fidem futurae incarnationis” [emphasis mine].

But those who did not direct their hearts to this future faith, were—as in the earlier psalm—“only wise according to the *flesh*”; they became blind and fell.¹⁹³

These first two passages have introduced some important ideas. Luther clearly distinguishes between two kinds of faith, the faith of the Old and the faith of the New Testament. In contrast to the church’s faith in Christ, there is a sense of imperfection and incompleteness in the faith of the people *ante Christum*. Their lack of knowledge about Christ almost removes the object of their faith so that rather than faith in Christ it is a “faith in faith.”¹⁹⁴ And then there is Luther’s unusual *fides informis*. In scholastic theology the term denotes a faith that exists without the infusion of habitual love (*caritas*). Only a faith “formed” by such love (*fides formata*) can merit salvation. But this is only possible through the gift of justifying grace and thus technically only in the “time of grace,” the New Testament. Hence, designating faith in the Old Testament as “unformed faith,” a faith devoid of New Testament *caritas*, is theologically possible. Still, looking at the context of these two passages, this doesn’t really seem to be Luther’s point.¹⁹⁵ The emphasis is on *hope* and *expectation*, not on *caritas*. The saints of old

¹⁹³ WA 55II, 755, 52-756, 59 (Ps. 96:11): “Antiqui Iusti erant Iusti *per fidem fidei nostrae*, Quia crediderunt et sperauerunt in fidem istam futuram, sicut Galat. 3: ‘*Tenebamur conclusi in eam fidem, que reuelanda erat.*’ Et Ro. 3. dicit, Quod ‘in sustentatione Dei precedentium delictorum ad ostensionem Iustitiae eius in hoc tempore propositus sit Christus propiciatorium.’ Ergo illis Iustis *ex fide informi*, i.e. *ex fide fidei*, orta est lux ista fides, que nunc est. Sed Alii, qui non nisi carnem sapiebant Et erant non recti corde, quia non expectabant fidem futuram, excaecati sunt et ceciderunt” [emphasis mine].

¹⁹⁴ That Romans 1:17, “ex fide in fidem,” is cited in this connection has precedent in the tradition. The *Glossa Ordinaria*, interprets the passage as “from the faith of the fathers of the *antiquae legis* to the faith of the *novae legis*.” Likewise, Paul of Burgos says it is “from the faith of the synagogue to faith of the church.” Cf. Luther’s similar remarks in his glosses to Lombard in 1510, WA 9, 90, 10f.

¹⁹⁵ In his gloss on Psalm 73, he does relate unformed faith to a lack of *virtue*, WA 55I, 528, *RGI* 17: “Et hic est ‘sinus Abrahe’, i.e. fides eius, quando fidem informem et mortuam relinquit. Sicut hodie pro dolor est, Quia est inefficax fides, fides informis, Quando solum sciuntur credenda, Sed virtutem fidei non operantur, i.e. quando regnum Dei in sermone et non in virtute collocant.” But Luther has already demonstrated in his marginal comments to Lombard (III, d 23, c 1-3) an understanding of faith and virtue different from that found in scholasticism (WA 9, 90, 22f.). There Luther identifies *fides informis* with *fides acquisita*, the faith which arises from one’s natural moral abilities. The virtue of *caritas* does not complete this *fides informis*, but is inseparably joined to another faith (*fides*

had *fides* because they hoped and looked for the object of faith which was one day to be revealed to them (*crediderunt et speraverunt in fidem istam futuram*); it was *informis* because they did not yet possess that object, namely Christ.¹⁹⁶ Thus, those who were “wise according to the flesh” are specifically described as the ones who “were not waiting for the future faith” (*non expectabant fidem futuram*).

Based solely on these two passages the specific role of the law is still ambiguous. By citing Galatians, Luther indicates that the law “keeps” and “concludes” Israel in anticipation of Christ’s advent, but we are still left wondering about the precise nature and manner of that guardianship. Is the law merely a “hedge” preventing the people from sin and idolatry so as not to lose their faith, or does it do more than that? The next passages will give us a fuller picture.

Commenting on Psalm 110: 3, “His work is praise and magnificence, and his righteousness endures forever and ever,” Luther contrasts the righteousness which Christ works in the believer with the righteousness of the “carnal Jews and hypocrites.” The former is *true* righteousness and consists of our confession and self-accusation before God, but the latter—the observance of the ceremonies and rites prescribed in the law—came to an end because it was only a *figural righteousness* and a *shadow*.¹⁹⁷ On the other hand, the Jews in the

infusa) which supercedes the former. See Schwarz, *Fides, Spes und Caritas*, 40-9, for a detailed discussion of this passage.

¹⁹⁶ This interpretation of *fides informis* was already suggested in Luther’s notes to Lombard in connection with Rom 1:17; see WA 9, 90, 10f., “Possetne dici ‘in fidem’ id quod creditur, i.e. *objectum fidei* scilicet *in futurum habendum* secundum acceptionem magistri?” [emphasis mine]. Likewise, in his lectures on Romans, WA 56, 172, 21f.: “*fides enim informis non est fides, Sed potius obiectum fidei. Non enim credo, quod quis fide informi possit credere, Sed hoc potest bene sc. Videre, que sint credenda, Et ita suspensus manere*” [emphasis mine].

¹⁹⁷ WA 55II, 857, 165-858, 173: “...omne opus in nobis, quod Deo placet, Est confessio et accusatio sui et glorificatio Dei. Et ideo credo, quod contra Carnales Iudaeos et hypocritas loquatur in suas Iustitias confidentes, reprobans eorum opera et distinguens Iustitias eorum a vera Iustitia, q.d. Vos estimatis, Quod hoc sit opus Dei, edificare templum et ornare, mactare pecus et aues in sacrificia, Lauare et carnes non comedere. Non sic, Non sic, Sed *spiritum istius literae volo*, que erit *Iustitia futura* perseuerans in saeculum saeculi. Ista autem vestra *figuralis* cessabit, eo quod sit *vmbra*.”

Old Testament were once regarded righteous by these figural works, but only until the coming of another age (*usque ad alterum saeculum futurum in Christo*) in which a future righteousness (*iustitia futura*) would be revealed. Though Israel was engaged in God's "work," it was still just the letter of the spirit. Formerly they were justified by a faith veiled in the letter (*fide velata in litera*), but now since the coming of Christ one is only justified by a faith revealed and fulfilled (*revelata et impleta*). "Then you will no longer be *tenebmini conclusi in fidem reuelandam*, Gal 3., but you will be free in a faith open and free (*in fide aperta et libera*)."¹⁹⁸

Notice the collation of terms which Luther uses to contrast the faith of the Old Testament with that of the New: *littera/spiritus, figura/impleta, umbra/vera, velata (revelanda)/revelata, conclusa/aperta, tenta/libera*. Distinction and continuity are both clearly portrayed. The two faiths are very different yet they are not set in antithesis; they relate to one another as prophecy and fulfillment, as preparation and completion, as two stages in God's economy for man's salvation. In this economy, the law has a clear, positive but temporary role. In this psalm, Luther specifically identifies the rites and the ceremonies of the law (the rites of the temple, food laws, purity laws, etc.) as that which safeguarded Israel until the advent of Christ. As figures pointing to a future righteousness and faith, the ceremonies of the law inculcated a pre-incarnation faith (*fides revelanda*). Such a faith would suffice only until the coming of Christ when it would be replaced with a faith which revealed the spiritual righteousness signified by the former (*fides revelata*).¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ WA 55II, 858, 177-85: "...Igitur Opus eius tunc erit spiriutale, cuius Vos modo *agitis figuram*... Vos estis Iusti quidem ex isto opere, Sed non amplius quam vsque ad alterum saeculum futurum in Christo, Vbi ii, *qui fide velata in litera Iustificabuntur*, ammodo non tali, Sed *reuelata et impleta Iustificabuntur*. Tunc amplius non *tenebimini conclusi in fidem reuelandam*, Gal. 3., Sed liberi eritis *in fide aperta et libera*" [emphasis mine].

¹⁹⁹ See Joseph Vercruyse, *Fidelis Populus*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte Mainz, Abteilung Religionsgeschichte, vol. 48 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1968); and Scott Hendrix,

This distinction between the “veiled” faith of Old Testament believers and the “revealed” faith of Christians is entirely traditional.²⁰⁰ However, as an interpretation of Galatians 3:23, Luther stands closest in both thought and vocabulary to Nicholas of Lyra.²⁰¹ This verse was, for Lyra, a description of the old law’s given purpose to prefigure the new law of the gospel. As such, to be “confined under the law” was to be held in a *fides implicita et figuris velata*. This implicit faith, veiled in the figures of the law, served as kind of “disposition” (*dispositio*) for the faith that would come with the New Testament, the *fides revelata et explicata* taught in the gospel. Since we know that Luther was already familiar with Lyra’s interpretation of Paul during his lectures on the *Sentences*, it is quite likely that his influence is reflected in the form of Luther’s exegesis here.

We should note that although Luther does not make any explicit distinctions between the ceremonial and moral law, he undoubtedly sees the preparatory function of the law as described in Galatians in terms of the former. The law prepared Israel for Christ not by revealing sin but by teaching through figures. The ceremonial laws may *foreshadow* the confession of sins, but they do not actually produce such confession; this is the spiritual work of the faith to come.²⁰² When Luther does speak of the moral law, the notion of preparation for Christ disappears. Instead, he follows the traditional distinction of the old and new law: the old law commanded

Ecclesia in Via: Ecclesiological Developments in the Medieval Psalms Exegesis and the Dictata super Psalterium (1513-1515) of Martin Luther (Leiden: Brill, 1974).

²⁰⁰ See pages 50-52, above.

²⁰¹ See pages 61f., above.

²⁰² WA 55II, 858, 173f.: “Nam quid aliud significat detractio pellis, Concrematio corporum extra castra, effusio sanguinis ante altare et exportatio cinerum, Nisi spiritualiter Confessionem peccatorum et malorum nostrorum?...Igitur Opus eius tunc erit spirituale, cuius Vos modo agitis figuram.”

only the *hand*, while the new law enjoins both the hand and the *will*; obedience in the former arose from a *fear of punishment* but in the latter from a *love of righteousness*.

Such is the case in the very next psalm. Commenting on the first verse of Psalm 111, “Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, he will delight exceedingly in his commandments,” Luther draws the distinction sharply: the law could only produce servile fear while the Spirit instills a childlike loving fear, the kind which only fears to offend a friend or father. The law created unwilling adherents, forced into obedience through threats of punishment—“only the hand was in the Lord’s commandments, but not the will.” But grace causes man to love the law so that his heart is eager to do even more than required.²⁰³

In the next verse, however, Luther returns to a positive assessment of the people of the old law. He interprets verse two, “The generation of the upright will be blessed” as referring to the spiritual benediction of Christ which came to those living at the time of his advent. The “upright” (*recti*) are thus first the faithful in the synagogue, those who would become disciples and apostles. They are called *recti* because their hearts were directed (*directi*) to the future and invisible things (*futura et Inuisibilia*) which would one day be revealed. They did not yet have the *fides revelata* which would come with Christ, but neither did they have faith in the bare letter (*nudam literam*). They were conscious of the fact that the letter was hiding the things of the spirit and so with a simple literal faith (*simplici fide literali*) they anticipated the

²⁰³ WA 55II, 865, 13-17: “Ita miser est et puer, qui timet seruum. Nam ista est differentia timoris, Quod illi timent timore filiali et amicabili, qualiter timet amicus amicum offendere, aut filius patrem, qui timor prerequirit eximiam Charitatem et amicitiam, Que est causa huius timoris. Et hunc timorem lex non habuit, Sed spiritus timoris dedit illum... [866, 30-34] Hoc sola gratia prestat, que quia diligere facit, ideo voluntarium facit ad mandata. Igitur sensus est: In mandatis eius Voluntarius, promptus et delectabiliter operarius, non coactus aut Inuitus seu per penam impulsus, Sed amore allectus. Vnde lex faciebat, vt Manus tantum esset in mandatis Domini, Sed non voluntas.”

future grace promised by God.²⁰⁴ Thus, they were *simul* “upright” and not yet enlightened, *simul* “upright” and still in darkness, *simul* “upright” and not yet righteous with the perfect righteousness of faith (*Iustitia fidei perfecta*). But when the promised blessing came in Christ then they would receive another faith (*aliam fidem*), a faith directed to the future glory.²⁰⁵ The wicked, however, were those “who established the letter to the exclusion of the spirit,” that is, they no longer expected any spiritual blessings from the future but were content with present and temporal things. Rather than “*recti*” with upward turned hearts, they became “*pravi*” and curved in on themselves—*curvi ad se*.²⁰⁶

Without mentioning Galatians directly, Luther’s description of the faith of the “upright” echoes much that has already been encountered. The purpose of the law was to direct the hearts of its observants beyond itself. Even though the “simple literal faith” of the faithful synagogue was exercised “*carnaliter*,” that is, they continued in the literal observance of the law, their hearts were not satisfied with the letter but looked forward to its future spiritual fulfillment. And, as in the previous passages, the wicked are those who fail to regard the temporal things of

²⁰⁴ WA 55II, 866, 45f.: “Ista est Benedictio spiritualis, qua nos benedixit Deus pater in Christo in caelestibus, que olim Abrahe promissa fuit, Sed non omnibus data nisi rectis. ‘Recti’ isti dicuntur fideles primo in synagoga, Vt Apostoli et discipuli. Qui licet nondum haberent fidem reuelatam, que immediate in Deum dirigit per Christum, tamen habuerunt non nudam literam, Sed literam abscondentem ea, que sunt spiritus, Quia simplici fide literali expectabant promissa Dei.”

²⁰⁵ WA 55II, 867, 55f.: “Quare simul verum est, Quod erant recti et tamen nondum illustrati, simul recti et adhuc in tenebris, simul recti et nondum Iusti Iustitia fidei perfecta. . . [64-66] Vnde Liqueat, quod ideo ‘recti’ dicuntur, Quia corde sunt directi ad futura et Inuisibilia expectantes, non contenti presentibus et temporalibus, Licet tunc hoc carnaliter facerent. . . [73-75] Sed cum venisset promissio in Christo, Et iam aliam fidem accipere deberent, secundum quam dirigerent cor suum ad futuram gloriam. . .”

²⁰⁶ WA 55II, 867, 51-55: “Sed hypocritae, qui literam extruso spiritu statuebant, pravi facti sunt. Et non nisi temporalia, sicut litera sonat, expectabant; immo iliqui nihil amplius expectabant, Sed carnem tantum sapiebant. Et hii non sunt consecuti benedictionem, Quia non sunt ‘generatio rectorum’ . . . [66-68] ‘Pravi’ autem, qui hanc directionem omittentes ad presentia sese conferunt et in iis manent, Ideo quia sunt increduli, nihil de futuris expectantes. . . [71-77] Sic illi pravi facti sunt et conuersi in arcum prauum, quia habebant fidem de futura gratia et promissione Dei, in qua tamen multi increduli fuerunt. Sed cum venisset promissio in Christo, Et iam aliam fidem accipere deberent, secundum quam dirigerent cor suum ad futuram gloriam, hic primum facti sunt pravi et curui ad se et sua et temporalia, literalia atque carnalia; ideo non possunt benedici nec exoriri eis Lumen.”

the law as a figure of future spiritual things. They ignore the prophetic intention of the letter and direct their faith to the law as an end in itself.²⁰⁷

In spite of differences between the faith of the two peoples before and after Christ, Luther does see a point of common experience which he describes with the word “*simul*.” This *simul* is grounded—and this is important—in the progression of revelation in salvation history; we are all *in via* moving upward from one knowledge to the next, from a present faith to a future one. The path of *homo viator* is marked by the key events of *Heilsgeschichte*. As the people of the old covenant were *recti* because they directed their hearts towards the promised *grace*, we are *recti* in so far as we direct our hearts towards *future glory*.²⁰⁸ “Yet, we too are ‘upright’ as long as we

²⁰⁷ Here we have come into conflict with the interpretation put forward by James S. Preus in his study on Luther’s early hermeneutics, *From Shadow to Promise* (esp. chapter 13, pp. 200-11). Preus wishes to see two kinds of promises emerging in Luther’s understanding of the Old Testament situation: the temporal promises of the law and the eternal promise of Christ given first to Abraham. In placing these two in opposition to one another Luther is thought to create a “new hermeneutical divide” so that the distinction of law and promise is now found within the Old Testament itself rather than at the traditional dividing point of the two testaments. Preus cites both this passage (Ps. 111) and Luther’s gloss to Ps. 104 as early examples of this new distinction. However, what has actually been emerging in our examination of Galatians is the character of the *law as promise*. Thus when in Ps. 104:10 the blessing promised to Abraham is said to be given to Israel in *praecipuum*, Luther glosses “quia credere in Christum tenentur,” i.e. observance of the “precept” entailed belief in Christ; WA 55I, 694. The eternal promise of Abraham is figured in Israel’s law until its fulfillment in Christ—thus the marginal explanation; 695, *RGI* 14: “*In libro Exodi hoc faecit, cum populum doceret expectare promissum patribus eorum.*” The law is not the same as the promise of Abraham, but neither is it “opposed” to it. It is a witness to it. When the ceremonial laws were regarded as figures of future things they *functioned as promises*, keeping the people of Israel in expectation of their future fulfillment. Likewise, in Ps. 111 the “letter which hides the things of the spirit” is not, as Preus would have it, the bare promise in contrast to the law, but the *law as figure*. When regarded as such and not as something to be sought and desired for its own sake, then it was not a mere letter but a *sign* pointing to a spiritual fulfillment beyond itself. Luther can be quite explicit about this point. See, for example, his scholia to Ps. 118:1 (WA 55II, 892, 37-39), “For the law of Moses has both, namely the signifying letter and the spirit signified by the letter. And all who have accepted it as signifying and as a figure of future things are and were truly blessed.” Cf. WA 55I, 584 (Ps. 77:5): “**testimonium** i.e. legem futurae fidei et Iustitiae testem et preconem”; and its marginal comment (*RGI* 9): “...His autem, qui ea recte vtuntur, [testimonium,] quia demonstratur eis Christus in ea, ad quem fugere debeant, vt liberentur. Vnde Ro. 3.: ‘Nunc autem sine lege Iustitia manifesta est, testificata a lege et prophetis’”; Ibid., (Ps. 77:10): “**testamentum dei** legem, qua testatus est gratiam futuram in fide, vel ‘legem Christi’”; WA 55I, 834 (Ps. 129:4): “**et propter legem tuam** in qua promisisti misericordiam expectantibus te.”

²⁰⁸ WA 55II, 867, 57-60: “Sicut et nos modo sumus recti in iis, que habemus, et tamen ad ea, que nondum habemus, in tenebris. Nam sicut Nos ad gloriam futuram dirigimus cor nostrum Et ita sumus recti, Ita illi ad gratiam et ita erant recti.” Notice that it is not the object of faith which we share but only its posture—its future orientation. Faith directed to the gracious advent of Christ is *not* the faith of the New Testament which is instead directed to the *second advent*. Cf. Luther’s important remarks on Psalm 71; WA 55II, 440, 189f.: “*Judgment and righteousness in the Scriptures of the veteris legis* are very rarely taken *ad litteram de futuro* [Last Day]... The reason for this is that

sigh from strength to strength (*virtute in virtutem*), strive from the imperfect to the perfect, and nevertheless what we seek has not yet risen to us (*nondum exortum est nobis*). Just as it has not yet appeared to us what we shall be, so also it did not yet appear to them what they were to become.”²⁰⁹

Similar expressions appear again in connection with Galatians in Psalm 118.

Commenting on verse 146 Luther notes, “...we are always saved with respect to things which we have and which we completed by beginning: but with respect to things which are before us and toward which we have to be stretched out by progressing (*proficiendo*) we are not yet saved, but weak, captive, and wretched.”²¹⁰ In the same way, this psalm cries out in the voice of the faithful synagogue for future salvation, even though with respect to the law its members were not without “salvation and light and grace.” “But they did not yet have what was to come and what was promised, to which they were held (*tenebatur*) as that which was to be had, sought and desired. *Tenebatur enim clausus in fide reuelanda.*”²¹¹ The application of Gal. 3:23 is the same here as in the previous passages: the law kept and preserved Israel in a preparatory faith, “*in fide revelanda*,” which was characterized by a seeking and longing for future grace. It

the *vetus lex* prophesied properly only the *first advent of Christ*, in which Christ rules with kind and salutary judgment, because it is an *adventus gratiae et benignitatis*. Hence the apostle, Rom 3: ‘The righteousness of God manifest apart from the law and prophets, but the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ.’ The *noua lex* prophesies properly only the *future Judgment and righteousness*, since it prophesies the *second advent of Christ*, which will be severe judgment and eternal punishment” [emphasis mine].

²⁰⁹ WA 55II, 867, 60-64: “Immo et nos dum de virtute in virtutem suspiramus, ab imperfecto ad perfectum tendimus, sumus recti et tamen nondum exortum est nobis, quod querimus. Sicut enim nobis nondum apparuit quod erimus, Ita et illis nondum apparuit, quod futuri facti sunt.”

²¹⁰ WA 55II, 988, 2779-82: “Sed semper sumus salui quidem ad ea, que habemus et peregrimus incipiendo; Sed ad ea, que ante nos sunt et in quae extendi habemus proficiendo, nondum salui sumus, Sed infirmi, captiui, miseri.”

²¹¹ WA 55II, 988, 2782-85: “Nam et iste populus, qui hic clamat, Non erat sine salute et luce et gratia. Sed futuram nondum habuit, promissam, ad quam tenebatur habendam, querendam, desiderandam. Tenebatur enim clausus in fide reuelanda.”

is this future-facing faith—this longing for what is promised but not yet possessed throughout the various stages of salvation history—that is the common point of experience between us and the Old Testament faithful. “Thus we are all in the midst of the *grace that is already possessed and that which is to be had* so that there may always be in us grace for grace and progress from clarity to clarity.”²¹²

Progress (*profectus*) is a dominant theme throughout the *Dictata*, reflecting especially the influence of Bernard of Clairvaux, whom Luther regularly cites in this connection.²¹³ It often arises in the context of penance so that the progress of the Christian life is most clearly identified by the humble confession of sins. But Luther also describes this progress in terms of the various stages and events of salvation. Existence in one stage is marked by a longing for the next. The object of one’s desire and faith changes throughout the progression but one’s posture of faith does not. This means, however, that faith’s common experience is not the movement from law to gospel, which is only one stage of *Offenbarungsgeschichte*, but from revelation to revelation—or to use Luther’s *Lieblingsgedanke*, from *letter* to *spirit*.²¹⁴ In this sense, Luther’s distinction of letter and spirit is a much broader concept than that of law and gospel. One should therefore be cautious when relating or equating the two. In the *Dictata* the difference between

²¹² WA 55II, 988, 2785-87: “Ita omnes sumus in medio gratie habite et habende, vt sic semper sit gratia pro gratia et profectus in nobis de claritate in claritatem.”

²¹³ See Theo Bell, *Divus Bernhardus*, 71-75; Lennart Pinomaa, “Die profectio bei Luther” in *Gedenkschrift für Werner Elert: Beiträge zur historischen und systematischen Theologie*, ed. Friedrich Hübner (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1955), 119-27.

²¹⁴ Cf. WA 55II, 910, 569-73: “Therefore refuse to be proud, but desire to forget the letter and to follow (i.e. to stretch out towards) the spirit, i.e. do not stop with the second or third step, but also take this one to yourself, from the letter to the spirit. And so the preceding ignorance is always the letter to subsequent knowledge, which becomes spirit. And this again is the letter for what follows, etc.”; WA 55II, 913, 662-69; 974, 2378f.

law and gospel is certainly the difference between letter and spirit, but the reverse is *not* necessarily the case.²¹⁵

We complete our survey of Luther's interpretation of Gal. 3:23 with a final passage from Psalm 118. Given both the size and subject matter of this psalm, it is not surprising that Luther refers to Galatians several times throughout its exposition. This one occurs at the very beginning of the Psalm, but because it summarizes nicely what has been observed, we have left it for the end.

The unbroken theme of this grand acrostic psalm is the praise and desire of the *lex Domini*, which is of course *Christ's law*—the *new law* or the *gospel*. According to Luther's particular application of the "prophetic sense" this psalm is to be understood as the synagogue's prayer for Christ's advent, i.e., the unveiling of this new law. "Therefore the prophet looks with *spiritual eyes* at the *legem Mosi* and sees latent and shut up (*latere et clausam esse*) in it the *legem fidei*, the *Euangelium gratiae*, and the *Inuisibilia* promised, like a kernel under a shell (*sub cortice nucleum*) or the treasure under the ground."²¹⁶ As a petition for the revelation of the gospel hidden in the law the whole psalm serves as an extended commentary on the distinction of the *old and new law*.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Ebeling and others have pointed to the *Dictata's* letter/spirit distinction as an incipient form of Luther's later distinction of law and gospel, yet this thesis really ought to be qualified by attending to the interaction of the two pairs in the *Dictata*. They are both present and function differently throughout. It is my inclination to see the later distinction as a substantially new framework, rather than merely the mature form of an earlier idea. This should become apparent throughout this chapter, but see also my remarks in Chapter Five, especially note 595.

²¹⁶ WA 55II, 892, 20-22. Cf. WA 55II, 324, 395-405; WA 55I, 344, *RGI* 9. Luther's use of *claudio* is reminiscent of Galatians' *conclusi*. Not only are the Old Testament faithful "shut up" under the law until the revelation of the gospel, but the gospel itself is "shut up" in the law of Moses, waiting to be opened and brought forth at the advent of Christ. For "*sub cortice nucleum*" see especially Luther's preface, WA 55I, 6, *RGI* 2.

²¹⁷ WA 55II, 892, 24-26: "...petit hoc absconsum auferri et absconditum proferri in lucem, *per totum psalmum* relatiue loquens et comparatiue inter *veterem et nouam legem* loquens ac distinguens" [emphasis mine]. Cf. WA 55II, 919, 815-816: "Semper prosequitur differentiam legis veteris et nouae, seu litere et spiritus."

Verse one immediately throws Luther into such consideration: “Blessed are they whose way is blameless who walk in the law of the Lord.” He notes that the “blameless” (*immaculati*), the *spirituales Israel*, are those who do not walk in the law of Moses and the letter, but those who possess the righteousness of faith and the law of the spirit.²¹⁸ But this does not mean that the law of Moses is evil or that those who observed it before the advent of the gospel are without salvation and cannot be blessed. “For the law of Moses has both, namely the *signifying letter* and the *spirit signified* by the letter. And all who have accepted it as signifying and as a *figure of future things* are and were truly blessed. Thus says Gal 3: ‘*Tenebatur conclusi in eam fidem, que reuelanda erat.*’” But before the coming of Christ, the scribes corrupted its understanding so that it was no longer regarded merely as *figura*, but as fulfilling and sufficient in itself. Those who followed their teaching are not “blameless” but defiled (*maculati*). For Paul does not say in Galatians that the Jews were confined “*in legem, quae data erat,*” but “*in fidem, que promittebatur per legem reuelanda.*”²¹⁹ The law was not given for its own sake but only as a temporary preparation for the faith which Christ would reveal. The ceremonial works prescribed in the law preserved the synagogue for

²¹⁸ WA 55II, 892, 27-33: “Sumus quidem omnes in via quadam, scil. Mosi et litera et humana Iustitia, secundum quam coram hominibus sine macula apparemus; Sed tamen intus pleni omni macula, quia Iustitiam fidei et legem spiritus non habemus, secundum quam essemus immaculati. . . . Beati omnes spirituales Israel, quia ii sunt immaculati in via sua.”

²¹⁹ WA 55II, 892, 35-893, 44: “Est autem hic primo Notandum, Quod lex Mosi non est mala nec maculata in se, Sed Quia Scribe, qui eam non cum spiritu intelligebant et docebant, faciunt eam maculatam. Nam lex Mosi habet vtrunque, Scil. literam significantem et spiritum significatum per literam. Et omnes qui eam susceperunt vt significantem et figuram futurorum, bene beati sunt et fuerunt. *Sicut Gal. 3.: ‘Tenebatur conclusi in eam fidem, que reuelanda erat’.* Non ait ‘in legem, quae data erat’, Sed ‘in fidem, que promittebatur per legem reuelanda’. Igitur Quia Iudaei hunc spiritum separant et abiiciunt ac legem non vt significantem suscipiunt, Sed vt implentem et sufficientem, ideo sunt maculati in via. . . .” [emphasis mine].

the Savior's advent, for implicit in the law's observance was its future fulfillment and perfection in Christ.²²⁰

2. *Lex Pedagogus* – *Meritum de Congruo*. Galatians 3:24

When Paul compared the office of the law to that of a *pedagogus* (παιδαγωγός), his first century hearers would have immediately recognized the well known household figure. Yet because of the various associations one could make, there has not been a consensus on the meaning of the illustration, save that the pedagogue served only in a *temporary* capacity. As we have seen in our survey of the tradition, two basic interpretations of the pedagogue were dominant. One was generally positive: the law educated and nurtured Israel in preparation for the definitive teacher, Christ. The other stressed the negative role of the pedagogue: restraining and revealing, and even increasing Israel's sin. It was the former which was by far the most popular, though text and tradition compelled the acknowledgment of both.

So far, Luther's treatment of Galatians has underscored the positive but limited role of the law in salvation history. His explicit references to the *pedagogue* image of Gal. 3:24 are no exception. Glossing Psalm 35:11, "Continue your mercy to those who know you," Luther wonders why the psalmist seeks mercy for those who already know the Lord, since they obviously already have mercy. The answer is that the psalmist is speaking about the "simple and good" people of the *old law*. On the one hand, they do not yet know anything about the grace of Christ, but because they live *in pedagogo*, which is an *umbra fidei* and a *figura iustitiae Christi*, they are made ready to receive the new mercy of Christ. Thus the prayer of the psalmist is really

²²⁰ WA 55II, 894, 73-76: "...Synagoga tenebatur opera sua in ceremoniis, sacrificiis, lotionibus facere in respectu Christi venturi ea perficientis, saltem implicate, Et non excludere Christum, tanquam ex suis operibus Iusti et sufficientes essent coram Deo..."

a prayer for Christ's advent—the desire that the letter of the law be removed so that Christ and his grace might be revealed.²²¹

For Luther, the pedagogical role of the law was one of preparation through adumbration. Living simply and piously, the people of the Old Testament observed the letter of the law which pointed beyond itself to a future spiritual fulfillment.²²² Imperfect in their understanding, imperfect in their faith, and imperfect in their law, they were nevertheless without pride and longed for the perfection to come. “*Nam imperfectio ad perfectionem est sicut lex vetus ad novam.*”

The same point is made by Luther in his comments to Psalm 96:11, “Light dawns for the righteous.” How can this be, he asks, if it is the light of Christ which makes one righteous in the first place? The answer once again is that the psalmist is speaking of the *populo pedagogico*. They do not possess an explicit faith in Christ as Christians do, but rather live in expectation of that faith—in *fide fidei futurae*. “For whoever desires Christ, is now righteous. And nevertheless Christ comes to him and dawns for him.” The Old Testament people are preserved for salvation and the advent of Christ through their pre-incarnation faith, their “faith in faith,” which has been inculcated by the law.²²³

²²¹ WA 55I, 316, *Rgl* 13 (Ps. 35:11): “Queritur: Quomodo optat ‘misericordiam’ his, qui ‘sciunt’, et non his, qui nesciunt, cum illi iam habeant, hii autem careant et magis indigeant? Respondetur: quia loquitur *de populo veteris legis simplici et bono*, qui nondum intelligebant gratiam Christi, Sed tantum *in ‘pedagogo’ et ‘vmbra’ fidei et figura Iustitiae Christi viuebant*; istis optat amota litera Christum et gratiam eius reuelari, quia tales sunt ad eam apti, Non autem alii superbi, pharisei etc. Allegorice autem et tropologice Est Imperfectis semper magis ac magis ad perfectionem gratie optare. *Nam Imperfectio ad perfectionem Est sicut lex vetus ad nouam*” [emphasis mine].

²²² Cf. WA 55II, 867, 78f., where Luther similarly interprets the faith of Job who is described as “simple and upright”: “Sic de Iob dicitur, quod fuit ‘simplex et rectus.’ ‘Rectus’, quia in gratiam et gloriam futuram corde intentus et directus, quam per fidem cognouit in spiritu futuram, ‘Simplex’ autem, quia non simul terrenis sese miscuit, Sed purum se in fide futurorum per rectitudinem custodiuit.”

²²³ WA 55I, 653, *Rgl* 14: “Quaeritur hic, quomodo oriatur Iustus lux, cum Iusti nequeant esse, nisi prius lux oriatur eis?... Quia populo pedagogico in fide fidei futurae orta est.... Qui enim Christum desiderat, iam Iustus est.

In stressing this didactic, nurturing role of the pedagogue, the difference between law and gospel appears as the relative difference between a child and an adult. In the scheme of salvation history, God gradually brings the human race to a point of maturity for full redemption: “human nature was thus prepared through the law of Moses, because the law prepared but did not give, just as a boy is prepared, fit for his inheritance *a pedagogo*, but the father gives it.”²²⁴ Israel is thus compared to a child who is only capable of digesting the “milk” of the law’s doctrine in preparation for the solid food of Christ and the gospel. Luther offers this as one of the explanations to the “curdled mountains” (*montes coagulatos*) of Psalm 67:17, so that “curdling” refers to the hardening of the Jews who continue to prefer the milk of the law though its time has passed. Originally, the law was a “mild teaching about *temporal things*, which the little children have hitherto been given to eat *in pedagogo*,” but now through long use the Jews have become hardened just as old milk hardens into cheese.²²⁵

The difference between the law and the gospel as the difference between temporal and eternal promises is common property of the tradition. The distinction entails both positive and negative connotations: the promises of the old law are in graduated continuity with those of the new but they are also drastically inferior. The pejorative use of “*temporalia*” in the *Dictata* is certainly more common. These remarks, however, are not expressions of a categorical, Neo-

Et tamen venit ei et oritur ei Christus.” We have already looked at Luther’s scholion to this verse in which he cites Gal. 3:23, WA 55II, 755, 52-756, 59. Cf. WA 55II, 751, 111f.

²²⁴ WA 55II, 236, 304-07: “Sic autem ‘preparata’ fuit natura humana per legem Mosi, Quia lex parabat quidem, Sed non dabat, Sicut puer a pedagogo paratur ad hereditatem dignus, Sed pater illam dat. Ideo Christus vel populus fidelis in lege petit iam intrare in gratiam et Ecclesiam Christi.”

²²⁵ WA 55II, 369, 389f.: “Quia lac est mollior eruditio siue in bono siue malo. Coagulatum autem est, quod iam inceptit indurescere ad caseum et proficere in tali eruditione. Sic Iudei iam sunt [in] durissimos caseos coagulati et incomestibiles prorsus facti. Quia Mollem istam doctrinam de rebus temporalibus, qua adhuc paruuli in pedagogo vescuntur, iam in vsu longo omnino durauerunt in caseum. Ideo recte Montes propter superbiam, Coagulati propter pertinaciam suae doctrine lacteae de rebus huius mundi.”

platonian dualism, but are directed to the spiritual condition of those who desire the temporal promises more than the God who gives them. The fault lies in a false use and understanding of the law's promises rather than in the character and function of the law itself. When it comes to the law's intended purpose in the history of salvation, Luther recognizes its positive pedagogical role. So for example, in Luther's comments on Psalm 77:7, "That they should set their hope in God," he notes that God "first sent the law, in which he promised and gave *temporalia* so that, thus nourishing them with milk, they might discern from *temporalibus* to have hope in the Lord."²²⁶ The law's purpose was thus to foster a general disposition of expectation and trust in God in anticipation of the *futura spe et fide* which Christ would teach—a bare hope (*nudam spem*) in God and eternal spiritual benefits (*futura bona*). Until then, the law was to be a "testimony" bearing witness to this future faith and righteousness.²²⁷

Luther's most direct citation of Gal 3:24 is found in the scholion to Psalm 118:17, "Render (*Retribue*) to your servant, quicken me, and I will keep your words." Here once again the prophet's petition is directed to the coming of Christ, praying that the *lex spiritualis* would come. He prays, "Give *grace* instead of the *law*, the *spirit* instead of the *letter*." The psalmist asks for this even though the people of his day were to continue serving

²²⁶ WA 55II, 536, 46-51: "...futurum enim erat, vt Christus veniens doceret paupertatem et humilitatem et nudam spem futurorum bonorum. Ideo premisit legem, in qua temporalia promisit et dedit, vt sic lacte eos nutriens, a temporalibus discerent spem in Domino habere. Vnde dicit 'Testimonium suscitauit in Iacob', scil. quo testificaretur de tali futura spe et fide."

²²⁷ See WA 55I, 548 (Ps. 77:5), his gloss on "testimonium": "i.e. legem futurae fidei et Iustitiae testem et preconem" and the marginal comment (*RGI* 9): "...His autem, qui ea recte vtuntur, [testimonium,] quia demonstratur eis Christus in ea, ad quem fugere debeant, vt liberentur. Vnde Ro. 3.: 'Nunc autem sine lege Iustitia manifesta est, testificata a lege et prophetis'."

the law *literally*. For this literal observance of the law was a *dispositio* and a *pedagogus in Christo*.²²⁸

Again, the law is called a pedagogue because it prepares and preserves Israel for the coming Christ. Its precepts and ceremonies are figures and signs and as such teach the Old Testament people a primitive faith which anticipates the new faith and the new law revealed at Christ's advent. When compared to Luther's other citations of Galatians, nothing stated here is essentially new, with one exception: taking his cue from *retribue*, he introduces the concept of *merit* into the discussion. By employing the scholastic distinction of congruent and condign merit Luther argues that God accepted Israel's service to the law, not because it bore any intrinsic worth (*meritum de condigno*), but because of God's covenant (*pactum*) with Israel. Solely on the basis of his promise God deemed their literal observance of the law meritorious, but *meritum de congruo*. In this way the imperfect faith of the Old Testament believer was regarded as saving until they were led over to "another faith" (*aliam fidem*), i.e. the faith of the New Testament.²²⁹

It is a bit of an odd pairing, but there was some precedent in late scholastic theology for connecting the distinction of *meritum de congruo* – *condigno* with the Old Testament observance to the law. Because, properly speaking, grace was not offered until the coming of Christ and the revelation of the gospel, there was a certain theological similarity between existence in the Old

²²⁸ WA 55II, 901, 300-6: "Primo Literali sensu generaliter propheta petit, Vt dixi, Spiritualem legem venire dicens: *Retribue*. Quod potest pro 'retribues' propheticè dici, sicut et omnia caetera inferius sequentia et supra precedentia. Vel vt sit oratio eius, quod prophetat, scil.: *Retribue gratiam pro lege, spiritum pro litera, vt supra*. Petit autem retribui, Quia ii qui *legem literaliter seruabant*...quia erat *dispositio et pedagogus in Christo*..." [emphasis mine].

²²⁹ WA 55II, 901, 304-8: "Petit autem retribui, Quia ii qui *legem literaliter seruabant*, licet *non de condigno* mererentur, tamen quia erat *dispositio et pedagogus in Christo*, Sicut fides Christi ad gloriam, ideo *de congruo* fuit meritum ex pacto et promissione Dei et fide, que erat in *aliam fidem* traducenda" [emphasis mine].

Testament and the man in need of justifying grace (especially the penitent). The interest was not really in the Old Testament people *per se*, but in the extent of man's natural capacity to approach God, and thus receive ("merit") grace. The Old Testament situation *ante tempus gratiae* served at times as a useful point of comparison. So for example, William Durand of St.-Pourçain (d. 1332) made the observation that, even as natural man is able to merit *de congruo* God's grace by doing what is in him (*facit enim quod in se est*), likewise the "good observers of the law were of such a kind, and therefore they used to merit *de congruo* the grace conferred on them by God, without which there is no salvation."²³⁰

The technical terminology for the scholastic distinction of merit (*meritum de congruo – condigno*) is actually quite rare in the *Dictata*, appearing rather late in the lectures and dropping out shortly thereafter. The reasons for this are not entirely clear though one can infer that the distinction is not essential to Luther's early theology. Its relevance for our present investigation, however, lies in its connection to the law's role in redemptive history. In the few places that Luther does use the distinction, the Old Testament preparation for Christ is always the starting point for the discussion.

The most extensive treatment occurs in an earlier passage, the much discussed scholion of Psalm 113b:1, "Not to us O Lord, not to us but to your name give glory."²³¹

²³⁰ Cited by Preus, *Shadow to Promise*, 129: *Sent.* III, d. 40, q. 3, n. 8, "...qui bene utitur actibus liberi arbitrii in his quae sunt ad Deum et ad proximum meretur saltem de congruo divinum adiutorium sibi necessarium ad salutem, facit enim quod in se est, et Deus talibus non deficit; sed *boni observatores legis* erant huiusmodi, ergo *merebantur de congruo* conferri sibi gratiam a Deo sine qua non est salus" [emphasis mine]. Cf. Gabriel Biel, *Sent.* IV, d. 1, q. 3, a. 2, c. 3: "Usus sacramentorum veteris legis relatus ad Dei honorem communes, qui non habuerunt caritatem, *disponit de congruo ad gratiae susceptionem*, quia per quemlibet bonum motum animi in Deum *disponitur homo de congruo ad susceptionem gratiae*"; Wendelin Steinbach, *Commentarius in Epistolam S. Pauli ad Galatas*, 144, 2f. (lectio 18; Gal. 3:12): "Iustus ex fide vivit formaliter, quia fide informi meretur de congruo gratiae vitalis infusionem, qua dicitur formaliter vivere vita gratiae et actionis meritorie.... Sed qui fecerit ea, que in lege precepta sunt, vivet in illis, quia meretur de congruo sibi dari vitam gratiae."

²³¹ See Grane, *Contra Gabrielem*, 296-301; Heiko Oberman, "Facientibus quod in se est Deus denegat gratiam. Robert Holcot, O.P. and the Beginnings of Luther's Theology," *Harvard Theological Review* 55 (1962):

Here Luther finds a parallel between the Old Testament faithful who await Christ and the scholastic notion that God will not fail to give his grace to those who rightly use the powers available to them (*facere quod in se est*). As usual, the literal sense of the psalm refers to the time of Christ. His coming in the flesh was given without consideration of merit or demerit but solely as a gracious fulfillment of God's promise. Still, in order that Israel might be capable (*capaces*) of receiving Christ it was necessary that a preparation and disposition (*preparationem et dispositionem*) be made. Such was the task of the law, "the *figura* and *preparatio* of the people for receiving Christ," which directed the people's hopes and expectations towards the future.²³² It is this character of future oriented expectation that Luther finds analogous to the New Testament preparation for Christ's advent; namely, his *spiritual advent* of grace and the *future advent* of glory.²³³ In each case man can only prepare himself *de congruo*. His "doing what is in him" is never sufficient *de condigno* but only acceptable because of God's promise and covenant of mercy (*promissionem istam dei et pactum misericordie*). Therefore, just as the law prepared Israel for Christ's first advent so also "our doing as much as is in us (*factio*

317-42; Reinhard Schwarz, *Vorgeschichte der reformatorischen Busstheologie* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968), 252-59; Oswald Bayer, *Promissio: Geschichte der reformatorischen Wende in Luthers Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 128-35.

²³² WA 55II, 876, 72f.: "Sicut aduentus Christi in carnem ex mera misericordia Dei promittentis datus est, nec meritis humane naturae donatus, Nec demeritis negatus; Nihilominus tamen preparationem et dispositionem oportuit fieri ad eum suscipiendum, sicut factum est in toto veteri testamento per lineam Christi... Nihil enim nisi preparationem requisivit, vt essemus capacs doni illius... [877, 102] lex figura fuit et preparatio populi ad Christum suscipiendum."

²³³ WA 55II, 876, 88f.: "Ita et spiritualis aduentus est per gratiam et futurs per gloriam, Quia non ex meritis nostris, Sed ex mera promissione miserentis Dei... Hinc recte dicunt Doctores, quod homini facienti quod in se est, Deus infallibiliter dat gratiam, Et licet non de condigno sese possit ad gratiam preparare, quia est incomparabilis, tamen bene de congruo propter promissionem istam Dei et pactum misericordiae... Quia quantumuis sancte hic vixerimus, vix est dispositio et preparatio ad futruam gloriam, que reuelabitur in nobis, Adeo vt Apostolus dicat: 'Non sunt condignae passionis huius temporis' etc. Sed bene congrue." For the "spiritual advent" see pages 111-34 below.

quantum in nobis est) disposes us towards grace (*disponit nos ad gratiam*). And the whole time of grace is the preparation for the future glory and the second advent.”²³⁴

Over the course of the next several years Luther would explicitly reject the scholastic doctrine of merit. There could be no *dispositio ad gratiam*, neither *de congruo* nor *de condigno*. To “do what is in one” merits nothing, but instead is a mortal sin.²³⁵ This fact makes the *Dictata*’s brief connection between one’s disposition towards grace and the pedagogical function of the law all the more interesting. This is not to say that there is some formal theological link between Luther’s early view of the law and his qualified acceptance of the nominalist doctrine in his first lectures. Still, the connection here is illuminating in this sense: the theological foundation upon which Luther would subsequently attack the scholastic doctrine of merit would also be the fundamental basis for his changing view of the law and interpretation of Galatians: the radical nature of sin. As Luther later refused the *facere quod in se est* any positive contribution or preparation for grace, so also would he drop the positive nurturing image of the pedagogue as a preparation for Christ. Only through the knowledge of sin could one be led to the gospel.

²³⁴ WA 55II, 877, 101-04: “Vnde sicut lex figura fuit et preparatio populi ad Christum suscipiendum, Ita nostra factio quantum in nobis est, disponit nos ad gratiam. Atque totum tempus gratie preparatio est ad futuram gloriam et aduentum secundum.”

²³⁵ See *Romans*, WA 56, 502, 16f.: “Vt sunt, Qui nisi Libertati arbitrii tribuant facere, quod in se est, ante gratiam, putant sese cogi a Deo ad peccatum et necessario peccare... Non enim timent, Quod eo ipso forte male agant, Sed certi sunt, quod bene agant... [503, 1-3] Ideo absurdissima est et Pelagiano errori vehementer patrona Sententia Vsitata, Qua dicitur: ‘Facienti, quod in se est, Infallibiliter Deus infundit gratiam’”; *Quaestio de viribus et voluntate hominis sine gratia* 1516, WA 1, 147, 10-12: “Homo Dei gratia exclusa praecepta eius servare nequaquam potest neque se vel de congruo vel de condigno ad gratiam praeparare, verum necessario sub peccato manet”; WA 1, 148, 14-15: “Homo, quando facit quod in se est, peccat, cum nec velle aut cogitare ex seipso possit.” *Disputatio contra scholasticam* 1517, WA 1, 225, 27-36: “Optima et infallibilis ad gratiam praeparatio et unica dispositio est aeterna dei electio et praedestinatio; Ex parte autem hominis nihil nisi indispositio, immo rebellio gratiae gratiam praecedat... Falsum et illud est, quod facere quod est in se sit remove obstackula gratiae”; WA 1, 227, 14: “Ergo assidue peccat, qui extra gratiam dei est.” *Disputatio Heidelbergae habita*, 1518; WA 1, 354, 5-6: “Liberum arbitrium post peccatum res est de solo titulo, et dum facit quod in se est, peccat mortaliter.”

There is one final reference to the pedagogue image in the *Dictata* which needs mention. It bears a slightly different emphasis though the basic *heilsgeschichtlich* framework remains intact. In Luther's gloss on Psalm 83:6, "Blessed is the man whose help is from you; in his heart he has arranged upward paths," he contrasts "man" who is "strong and manly *in fide*" to the "boy *in litera*." We then meet the familiar distinction between the old and new law: the old law can only coerce *servile* obedience by *fear*, but the man who lives in the faith granted in the new law acts "voluntarily from the heart."²³⁶

His extended explanation in the scholia follows the same pattern, but now with a reference to the pedagogue of Galatians three. Luther continues to describe those who are "blessed": "They are those to whom the Lord Christ is help and strength, which comes about through their faith in him...For in Christ they are strong and manly and blessed through faith. Therefore he says 'blessed is the man,' because *through faith he is made a man*, while the Jew remains a little boy in the *litera et pedagogo*."²³⁷ Again Luther draws the traditional heart and hand distinction: "Hence he wants to say that he who is *in fide et spiritu* serves God out of the heart freely and joyfully and walks in his ways. Because they are 'in his heart,' i.e., *in affectu, in voluntate*, his ways please him, and he loves them, for he walks in them *ex amore* and from the bottom of his heart. On the contrary, those who are *sub lege et litera*, since they do not have *spiritum et gratiam*, act out of coercion and unwillingly, *ex timore* and not *ex corde*, because

²³⁶ WA 55I, 584: "Beatus in spe vir fortis et virilis in fide, non puer in litera." WA 55I, 586, *RGI* 7: "Voluntarie ex corde, non Inuite sicut seruili timore acti, quia vias Di non in corde, Sed in ore et superficie tantum habent, psal. 36: 'Lex Dei eius in corde eius', non in tabulis sicut olim."

²³⁷ WA 55II, 638, 249f.: "Sensus huius meo Iudicio est iste: Quod quibus Dominus Christus est auxilium et virtus, quod fit per fidem eius in illum...Sic enim in Christo per fidem fortes et viri et beati sunt. Ideo dicit 'Beatus vir', quia vir per fidem efficitur, vbi Iudaeus paruulus remanet in litera et 'pedagogo'."

they would prefer to omit what should be done and to do what should be omitted, if the choice were up to them. Therefore a hatred of the commandments is in their heart.”²³⁸

Here the law-as-pedagogue is seen in a much less favorable light. Rather than the nurturing servant that cares for its juvenile charge, the pedagogue is depicted as a severe taskmaster working by coercion and threats to produce reluctant obedience. The traditional *timor poenae—amor iustitiae* is applied specifically to the pedagogical function of the law. Life under the law and the letter is not characterized by an incipient faith directed to the future revelation but by hypocrisy. In contrast to the new law, the old law is devoid of the Spirit and grace necessary for spontaneous and joyful obedience. Instead it fosters only inner hatred for the commandments.²³⁹

The important thing to notice is not that *sub lege* is used disparagingly. This is common throughout the lectures. It is that for the first time such is the case in an *interpretation of Galatians*. Because the pedagogue can only force external obedience, the heart remains untouched. It is rather the opposite: such forced obedience elicits *hatred* in the heart towards the commandments—it effects the *increase of sin*. Still, there is no indication that the proper pedagogical function of the law is to *reveal sin*, as we find for instance in Augustine’s *De spiritu et littera* or in Luther’s later interpretation. The boy under the pedagogue remains entirely contrary to the man in faith—they are neither positively nor dialectically related. There is no theological leading or driving to Christ. Nevertheless, it appears that Luther has shifted his

²³⁸ WA 55II, 639, 257-64: “Vult ergo dicere, Quod qui in fide et spiritu est, ipse ex corde et libertate et hilaritate Deo seruit et ias eius ambulat. Quia ‘in corde’ i.e. in affectu sunt, in voluntate, placent semitae ei et amat illas, quia ex amore et radice cordis illas ambulat. Econtra autem qui sub lege et littera sunt, quia spiritum et gratiam non habent, coacti et Inuiti faciunt et ex timore et non ex corde, quia mallent omittere facienda et facere omittenda, si in eorum staret electione. Ideo odium preceptorum est in corde eorum.”

²³⁹ Cf. WA 55II, 640, 1-3. See also WA 55I, 586-587, *RGl* 9, where the difference between Moses and “*Christus Euangelice legis author*,” is that Christ also gives *grace*, the “*potestatem*” to fulfill the law he enjoins.

discussion of the pedagogue from the *figura* of the ceremonial law to the commands of the moral law. The external righteousness exacted from the law can never lead to a true righteousness which must instead arise from the free and joyful obedience of the will.

Yet such external obedience is not what Luther perceives to be the proper theological purpose of the law, but its *misunderstanding and abuse*. It is the *Jews*—those at the time of Christ but also those today—who are the object of Luther’s polemic. They have rejected the true fulfillment of the law which the Spirit and grace of the New Testament makes possible. Instead of recognizing the law’s limited preparatory purpose, they are satisfied with its superficial righteousness and “remain *in litera et pedagogo*”—a tutor that has outstayed its welcome and use.

3. Plenitudo Temporis – Tempus Plenitudinis. Galatians 4:4

The last Galatians citation to be considered is only a brief phrase, “the fullness of time,” arising from Gal. 4:4, “but when came the fullness of time (*plenitudo temporis*), God sent his Son, born from a woman, born under the law.” It appears only a handful of times throughout the lectures and is less intentional than the other references to Galatians. Still, we include it here in part for the sake of completeness. Luther’s understanding of this passage is in keeping with the rest. But it also reflects an interpretation found in the tradition which at this time Luther accepts but later will explicitly reject. It thus serves as important background for our subsequent chapters.²⁴⁰

Instead of “fullness of time,” Luther often writes “the time of fullness” (*tempus plenitudinis*). This strange reversal of the genitive comes from Peter Lombard (d. 1160), who

²⁴⁰ See Chapter Four, pages 217-25.

introduced Book III of the *Sentences* by commenting on Galatians 4:4, “But the ‘time of fullness’ (*tempus plenitudinis*) is called the ‘time of grace’ (*tempus gratiae*), because from the advent of the Savior it took up its beginning.”²⁴¹ Through Lombard the phrase became part of the *termini technici* for the New Testament dispensation.²⁴² It was the “time of fullness” because with the coming of Christ the fullness of the Spirit and grace was revealed and given. In contrast to the *tempus legis*, the time of the incarnation was brimming with spiritual plenitude and abundance.

²⁴¹ Lombard, *Sent.* III, d. 1: “**Cum venit igitur plenitudo temporis, ut ait Apostolus, misit Deus Filium suum, factum de muliere, factum sub Lege, ut eos qui sub Lege erant redimeret, in adoptionem filiorum Dei.** Tempus autem plenitudinis dicitur tempus gratiae, quod ab adventu Salvatoris exordium sumpsit. Hoc est *tempus miserendi* (Ps. 101:14) et *annus benignitatis* (Ps. 64:12), in quo *gratia et veritas per Iesum Christum facta est* (John 1:17): *gratia*, quia per caritatem impletur quod in Lege praecipiebatur; *veritas*, quia per Christi adventum exhibetur atque perficitur humanae redemptionis sponsio facta ab antiquo. Filii ergo missio est ipsa incarnatio: eo enim missus est quod in forma hominis mundo visibilis apparuit. De quo supra sufficienter dictum est.” Lombard introduces this idea earlier in his glosses to Galatians, PL 192, 135B: “...plenitudo temporis dicitur tempus gratiae, ideo quia in eo plene dantur dona Spiritus sancti, et quae praedicta fuerant de Christo implentur.”

²⁴² The idea behind it is there before Lombard: Marius Victorinus, CSEL 83/2, 139, 45-47: “Ut rebus est plenitudo ita et temporibus. Est enim plenitudo sua cuiusque omnibus abundans et plena et copiosa perfectio.” Gueric of Igny, *In Nat. Dom.*, Sermo 4, 1; SC 166, 204, 2-6: “*Ecce iam venit plenitudo temporis.* Plenitudo ista temporis apud Paulum accipitur seu propter abundantiam gratiae, seu propter adimpletionem praecedentis prophetiae, seu propter pleniora aetate fide adultae.” Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Adv.*, Sermo 1, 9; SBO IV, 167, 17-168, 10, interprets “fullness of time” as fullness of temporal things in opposition to eternal, i.e. Christ came when the world was at its worst. Bruno of Chartreux (if genuine), *Expositio in epistolas Pauli*; PL 153, 302 D: “*venit plenitudo temporis, sive tempus plenitudinis: plenitudo ideo, quia quaecumque exspectata fuerant in anteactis saeculis, tunc fuere completa; tunc enim perfecta justificatio, quae antea non fuerat; tunc praesens et plena salvatio, quam ante diem illum exspectabat Abraham cum caeteris sanctis.*” Some examples after Lombard include: *Quaestiones et decisiones in Epistolas divi Pauli*, q. 28; PL 175, 561 D: “Quaeritur cur adventus Salvatoris dicatur plenitudo temporis? Solutio. Ideo quia hoc tempore adimplentur quae praecedentibus temporibus erant praenuntiata, et magis proprie videretur dictum tempus plenitudinis, quam plenitudo temporis, et finis saeculi idem dicitur.” *Glossa*, Gal. 4:4 (probably originating from Lombard himself): “postquam tempus praecedens adimpletum est vel quia *in eo plene spiritus dona datur.*” Alexander of Hales, *Sent.* III, d. 1: “Tempus incarnationis Filii dicitur plenitudo temporis: primo quoniam in illo tempore est abundantia pacis...Et propter charismatum largitatem affluentem...propter figurarum adimpletionem...propter promissorum redditionem...propter temporis consummationem...propter misericordiae effusionem...propter creaturarum adimpletionem...propter pretii solutionem.” Robert Grosseteste, *Ad Galatas*; CCCM 130, 99, 76-82: “*Plenitudo autem temporis dicitur tempus incarnationis multis rationibus. Tunc enim dabatur nobis ipse Filius Dei...quo nihil posset amplius dari...Vnde igitur est plenitudo temporis tempus plenissimae donationis omnium et maximorum bonorum.*” Thomas, *Super Galat.*, c. 4, lec. 2: “Dicitur autem plenum tempus illud propter *plenitudinem gratiarum*, quae in eo dantur...Item propter *impletionem figurarum* veteris legis...Item, propter *impletionem promissorum.*” Bonaventura, *Sent.* III, d. 1, dub. 1, resp.: “Dicendum quod tempus incarnationis dicitur *tempus plenitudinis* multiplici de causa. Primo, quia Deus implevit quod praefinierat...Alia ratio est propter *impletionem promissionis*, quia ille nobis datus est qui fuerat repromissus...Tertia ratio est quantum ad *completionem figurarum*, quia in Christi adventu figurae illae, quae erant in Veteri Testamento, impletae sunt veritate...Quarta ratio est propter *plenitudinem gratiae* quae fuit in Christo, quae fuit principium omnium plenitudinum.” Lyra, *Biblia*, Gal. 4:4: “i.e. tempus Christi in quae data est plenitudo spiritus sancti” [emphasis mine].

It was also the time of completion and *fulfillment*—from the fulfillment of the ancient figures to the fulfillment of the law through the gift of *caritas*. Though Lombard was not the first to understand the text in this way, its inclusion in the *Sentences* gave it a broader range of influence in subsequent exegesis. The *Sentences* is in all probability where Luther first encountered it.

There was also another interpretation found throughout the tradition which simply regarded “the fullness of time” as a temporal clause. It corresponded to what Paul had said in the previous sentence: “the time fixed beforehand by the Father.” Whereas this may seem to be the most obvious meaning, one can see how for Lombard and others the connotations of *plenus* might also evoke those things which were traditionally held to distinguish the New Testament from the Old. Often both interpretations were held together, as evidenced in Lombard’s own glosses on Galatians.²⁴³

It is not surprising then that Luther’s application of the phrase simply reinforces the *heilsgeschichtlich*—*offenbarungsgeschichtlich* difference of law and gospel seen throughout the lectures. Luther’s scholia to Psalm 77:2 serves as a good example: “I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old.” Given that Christ’s work is characterized by fulfilling and revealing the figures of the Old Testament, Luther wonders why the psalmist says of Christ, “I will open my mouth in parables” instead of “I will *open parables* in my mouth.” Even though he acknowledges that Matthew’s Gospel specifically applies this psalm to the hidden nature of Christ’s discourse, Luther associates Christ’s ministry much more strongly with *unveiling* that which was formerly concealed. “This [opening of parables] Christ did likewise and arranged for his own to do it after the sending of the Holy Spirit. For in the

²⁴³ PL 192, 135B: “Plenitudo enim temporis est completum tempus quod praefinitum fuit a Deo Patre quando mitteret Filium. Vel, plenitudo temporis dicitur tempus gratiae, ideo quia in eo plene dantur dona Spiritus sancti, et quae praedicta fuerant de Christo implentur.”

‘time of fullness’ (*tempus plenitudinis*), he who formerly opened only the mouth of the prophets opened his own mouth. For he was not in the habit of speaking to the people with his own mouth, but he did so with the mouth of Moses and the prophets.”²⁴⁴ Before, evangelical grace and the righteousness of faith existed only as riddles and sayings; they were not yet revealed. Thus Jeremiah prophesied, “In these latter days you will understand his counsel.”²⁴⁵

The “time of fullness” was thus the time when the fullness of revelation was given. Indeed, this is the point of the entire psalm: to teach that the sayings and events of the Old Testament ought to be interpreted spiritually—figures fulfilled in the works and words of Christ.²⁴⁶ His earlier glosses on this verse reflect the same thought as the scholia. “Moses has an alien mouth, namely Aaron. But now I open my own mouth, so as not to speak through another in *vmbra et figura*... I will preach openly and [I will open] the revealed spirit of the letter.”²⁴⁷

We do not meet any new ideas here. Letter and spirit, law and gospel, Old and New Testament are all roughly equivalent. Their relationship is determined by the course of revelation in salvation history. Though the expression *tempus plenitudinis* bears a sense of obvious superiority over the time preceding it, the traditional sense of continuity is not thereby

²⁴⁴ WA 55II, 534, 5-535, 10: “Ergo de Christo psalmus loquitur, immo Christus eum loquitur, etiam auctoritate tanti euangeliste. Sed Cur non dicit: Aperiam parabolis in ore meo? Hoc autem similiter fecit et suos facere disposuit post missionem spiritus sancti. In *tempore* enim *plenitudinis* aperuit os suum proprium, qui prius solum aperuit os prophetarum. Non enim Ipse ad populum loquebatur ore suo, Sed ore Mosi et prophetarum” [emphasis mine].

²⁴⁵ WA 55II, 535, 20-22: “Vnde sequitur, Quod Gratia Euangelica et Iustitia fidei semper quidem fuit, Sed non erat reuelata, posita enim fuit in enygma et propositiones. Sic Iere. 23.: ‘in nouissimis diebus intelligetis consilium eius’.” Cf. WA 55II, 262, 127f.

²⁴⁶ See especially his remarks in the initial glosses to the title, WA 55I, 546: “Tit. Eruditio Asaph intellectualis, Ideo omnia, que recitat ex antiquis gestis, spiritaliter intellexit... [RGI 1] Gesta antiqua fuerunt figurae. Et quid prodest figuram tenere sine spiritu? Multo melius est spiritum sine figura tenere.”

²⁴⁷ WA 55I, 546 (Ps. 77:2): “Quia **Aperiam** aperte predicabo et reuelatum spiritum literae **in parabolis** similitudinibus vt patet in euangelio **os meum**”; 547, RGI 4: “Moses habet os alienum, scil. Aaron, Sed nunc ego aperiam os meum proprium, vt non per alium loquar in *vmbra et figura*.”

overturned. The gospel was present in the Old Testament like the water in the wilderness, hidden deep within the rock of the law—*Euangelium latuit in lege*. It was not seen until the cross of Christ would cleave it and burst it asunder. Then “he opened the extremely hard law according to the letter into spiritual, abundantly flowing understanding.”²⁴⁸

4. Summary

Luther has consistently understood Galatians 3:23-24 as a description of the *vetus lex* and its function in the *Old Testament*. Its role ceased with the advent of Christ who gives his people a *nova lex*. Furthermore, the law’s intended purpose was a positive and constructive one. Through the literal observance of its ceremonies and precepts, the people were directed beyond the law and their present existence to a future one. As *figura* and *umbra*, the law taught the Old Testament faithful a *fides revelanda*: an imperfect, unformed, figural faith—a preparatory faith directed to another future faith, the *fides revelata* of Christ. They were just and sanctified because they had “faith in our faith” or “faith in faith.” In this way the law was said to protect and guard Israel—*tenebamur conclusi*—until that which was veiled would be revealed by the gospel. It was the nurturing and protective *pedagogue* which provided rudimentary training in

²⁴⁸ WA 55II, 549, 450-457: “**Interrupit petram in Eremo, et adaquavit eos velut in abyso multa.** Hoc fecit, Quando legem resoluit durissimam secundum literam in spiriutalem intelligentiam copiosissime effluentem. Sic enim per passionem Christi scissa est petra Oreb et dedit aquas copiosissime. Vt experientia patet, Quia tot expositiones super vetus testamentum quis numeret? Inde enim et Euangelium totum emanauit. Quia Euangelium latuit in lege nec videbatur, sicut Aquae in petra, vsque dum Crux Christi eam Scinderet et interrumperet.” The few remaining allusions to Gal. 4:4 contain the same ideas. WA 55II, 644, 409-10: “**Dies vna in atris tuis.** Est dies gratiae et tempus plenitudinis et fidei, que est ‘vna’, quia nescit noctem.” WA 55II, 696, 303-4: “Christus autem est misericordia ista mane nobis data in principio diei gratie plenitudinis temporum, vt notum est.” WA 55II, 871, 3-6: “Maxime autem filium Dei Laudat, qui est verbum Domini et nomen Domini, quod ceptum est Magnificari, reuelari, benedici ex tempore plenitudinis, quod est ‘hoc nunc’, et vere hoc nunc et singulare monstrabile quoque nunc.” WA 55I, 812, *RGI* 2: “Q.d. ‘Veniet tanta temporis plenitudo’, Vt etiam gratia et spiritus detur per homines, Cum hucusque non nisi litera et onus, i.e. ‘cognitio peccati’ tantum datum sit per homines, scil. ‘per legem’ Mosi et prophetas.” In this last reference the basic *heilsgeschichtlich* contrast of law and gospel is the same but with one addition: the law and the prophets give “cognitio peccati.” There is nothing in the text which indicates that this function extends into the New Testament, but we will deal with this topic more closely in the last section of this chapter.

anticipation of Christ, the definitive teacher and legislator.

Each of Luther's references to Galatians takes place in what he considers to be the *literal interpretation* of the Psalms—the prophetic sense which addresses the *tempus Christi*. This is the moment in history when the law's guardianship ceases and the evangelical faith is revealed. Yet when Luther goes on to make contemporary applications through tropology, *he sheds the distinction of law and gospel*. The general dynamic that characterized the *heilsgeschichtlich* progression from law to gospel—the imperfect to perfection, the carnal to the spiritual, is still applicable to the progression of the church and the individual soul. But since the categories of law and gospel are limited to a period of salvation history now past, their actual relevance for present Christian existence is found wanting.

When contrasted to the bright light of the Spirit-illuminated gospel, the letter of the law looks pretty dim. And when Luther considers the false use and understanding of the law, exhibited especially in the Jews who rejected Christ, his remarks can be particularly disparaging. Nevertheless, we should not overlook the fact that Luther has demonstrated a basically positive assessment of the law according to its intended theological role in salvation history. The *tempus legis* was certainly an inferior existence to the *tempus gratiae*, but it was not without salvation. In addition to those select few who possessed the revelation of the Spirit ahead of time, Luther also recognized a genuine Old Testament existence before God in which the literal observance of the law found a central place. Only when the law was regarded as the goal of *Heilsgeschichte* rather than a temporary preparatory stage did its observance merit the label *littera occidens*.

Adventus Spiritualis

In the last section we saw that Luther could describe the pedagogical role of the law as a *preparatio* and *dispositio* for the advent of Christ in the flesh. The law as *figura* prepared the

faithful of the Old Testament for the coming of Christ by directing their hopes and expectations to the future fulfillment of God's promise. But Luther also found such a disposition analogous to the New Testament situation, for its members also await Christ's advent: his *spiritual advent* of grace and his *future advent* of glory. This threefold advent reflects well the traditional *quadrige*, and Luther explicitly makes this connection as he associates the unfolding of Christ's work in history with the various senses of Scripture. Christ's first advent in the flesh is the *prophetic-literal* sense of the Psalms, the spiritual advent the *tropological*, and the future advent the *anagogical*.²⁴⁹ It is the tropological application—Christ's spiritual advent to the individual believer—that holds the most interesting possibilities for Luther's understanding of the law.

However, the spiritual advent of Christ is not original to Luther. The doctrine has a long and rich history, especially within the monastic tradition. Some background into its origins and development may therefore be helpful, not only to appreciate the variety of forms that this doctrine received throughout the tradition, but also to determine which were most decisive for Luther.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ Though the *allegorical* sense is missing from this scheme (as it often is throughout the lectures), Luther does at times also apply Christ's advent allegorically to the church, which he calls the "mystical advent." This concerns the revelation and preservation of the truth of faith against the false doctrine of the heretics. See, for example, WA 55II, 970, 2252-55 (Ps. 118:116): "Loquitur enim primo sensu, Vt dixi, ad literam de aduentu Christi... Sed mystice de hereticis et mystico aduentu per reuelationem veritatis fidei." It is thus strange that Preus would find in Luther's triple advent of Christ a new "hermeneutical schema" that "began to threaten the traditional four-fold structure"; see, *From Shadow to Promise*, 191-99, 267f.

²⁵⁰ The traditional origins of the "spiritual advent" have not always been fully appreciated in studies on Luther. Bernard of Clairvaux is sometimes acknowledged as an important precedent, but with little further discussion. Erich Vogelsang, *Die Anfänge von Luthers Christologie nach der ersten Psalmenvorlesung, Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 15 (Berlin und Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter & Co, 1929), 62-87; Preus, *From Shadow to Promise*, 174, 191-99; and Steven Ozment, *Homo Spiritualis. A Comparative Study of the Anthropology of Johannes Tauler, Jean Gerson and Martin Luther (1509-1516) in the Context of Their Theological Thought*, *Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought*, vol. 6 (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 127-30, have all referred to the "spiritual advent" in their respective studies on Luther's *Dictata*, investing it with a significance approaching theological breakthrough. At the end of this section it should become apparent that both Luther's understanding and use of the "spiritual advent" in the *Dictata* is entirely traditional. If there is indeed a breakthrough with the "spiritual advent" then it happened long before Luther.

1. Triplex Nativitas—Triplex Adventus

In the history of Christian thought the spiritual advent of Christ was only one expression of a much broader doctrine concerning the believer's union with Christ. Certainly this direction of thought received some of its earliest formulations in Paul's description of the believer being "in Christ," along with his more expanded statements: "you are the body of Christ"; "baptized into Christ, you have all clothed yourselves in Christ"; "Christ in you"; "Christ be formed in you"; "that Christ may dwell in your hearts"; "not I who live but Christ who lives in me."²⁵¹ Likewise, the sacramental life of the church continually reinforced the central idea that believers were united to their Savior. Participation in baptism and the Eucharist was a participation in the central events of Christ's life, especially his death and resurrection.²⁵² The movement to extend this participation to Christ's *incarnation* and *birth* would soon follow, especially in the notion of baptismal "rebirth" coupled with further reflections on the mystery of the nativity.²⁵³ In the Middle Ages, Christ's spiritual birth or advent would find classic liturgical and homiletical expression as the *triplex nativitas* and the *triplex adventus*.

The results of Hugo Rahner's detailed study on this topic, "Die Gottesgeburt," have demonstrated that the early development of this doctrine must be seen within the context of ancient Greek Logos-thought.²⁵⁴ The heart (*καρδία*) was regarded as the source of wisdom and

²⁵¹ 1 Cor. 12:27; Gal. 3:27; Col. 1:27, Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 4:19; Eph. 3:17; Gal. 2:20.

²⁵² Again we have Paul's statements in Rom. 6:3f. and 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:23f, but with the indication that he is merely reminding his readers of a doctrine with which they are already familiar.

²⁵³ We may see the Gospel of John's connection of baptism to (re)birth reflecting this development: "to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; who were born...of God" (1:12-13); "unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (3:5). Likewise Titus 3:5.

²⁵⁴ Hugo Rahner, "Die Gottesgeburt. Die Lehre der Kirchenväter von der Geburt Christi im Herzen des Gläubigen" in *Symbole der Kirche. Die Ekklesiologie der Väter* (Salzburg: Otto Müller Verlag, 1964), 13-87 (reprinted from *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 59 (1935): 333-418); [cited hereafter as Rahner]. For the Greek

understanding, the birth place of the human λόγος. The first chapter of John’s Gospel seemed to echo this thought, so that, in similar fashion, the eternal Logos was generated from the bosom and heart of the Father.²⁵⁵ Very early on we can find the church making connections between the Logos’ eternal birth from the Father, our rebirth in the church through baptism, and the resulting conformity to the image of the Logos in the heart.²⁵⁶ Similarly, the temporal birth of the Logos, conceived in the womb of the Virgin, was seen as a *type* of Christ’s presence in the church and its individual members.²⁵⁷

Origen was the first to bring many of these early thoughts together, weighing heavily on the ethical implications of Christ’s incarnation. In his tenth homily on Exodus, Origen remarks, “The soul which has just *conceived the word of God* is said to be a ‘woman with child’ [Exo. 21:22]...They, therefore, are perfect men and strong who immediately when they conceive give birth, that is, who *bring forth into works* the word of faith which has been conceived....But

philosophical-psychological background see pages 13-18. For another overview of this doctrine’s history see Rudolf Haubst, *Die Christologie des Nikolaus von Kues* (Freiburg: Herder, 1956), 30-38.

²⁵⁵ Rahner, 16-18, cites examples from Justin Martyr, Theophilus of Antioch, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Dionysius of Alexandria, Methodius of Philippi, Origen, Ambrose, and Gregory of Elvira. The classic texts include not only John 1 but Psalm 44:2 (LXX): “My heart overflows with a good word (λόγον αγαθόν),” and Ps. 109:3 (LXX): “I have begotten you from the womb before the morning.”

²⁵⁶ Irenaeus provides a good example. In *Adv. Haer.* V, 11, 2, he applies to baptism 1 Cor. 15, “Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven”; SC, 153, 138, 52-54: “Quando autem iterum imaginem caelestis? Scilicet quando, ait, *abluti estis credentes in nomine Domini et accipientes ejus Spiritum*”—“But again, when [do we bear] the image of the heavenly [man]? Namely when he says, ‘you have been washed’, believing in the name of the Lord and receiving his Spirit.” Rahner, 19-22, also cites the Epistle of Barnabas, Tatian, and Clement of Alexandria as advancing similar expressions.

²⁵⁷ The vision in the twelfth chapter of Revelation is probably the earliest example. This is the sense in which Hippolytus of Rome interprets the passage, *Antichristo*, 61; GCS I, 2, 41, 11f.: “τὴν μὲν οὖν γυναῖκα τὴν περιβεβλημένην τὸν ἥλιον σαφέστατα τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἐδήλωσεν ἐνδεδυμένην τὸν λόγον τὸν πατρῶον ὅτι αἰεὶ οὐ παύεται ἡ ἐκκλησία γεννώσα ἐκ καρδίας τὸν λόγον καίτοι ἐν κόσμῳ ὑπὸ ἀπίστων διωκομένη. καὶ ἔτεκεν, φησὶν, υἱὸν ἄρσενά, ὃς μέλλει ποιμαίνειν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τὸν ἄρσενά καὶ τέλειον Χριστόν”—“By the ‘woman then clothed with the sun,’ [Rev. 12:1] he most clearly indicated the Church, having been clothed with the Word of the Father...for the church will not ever cease to *bear from her heart the Word* that is persecuted by unbelievers in the world. ‘And she brought forth,’ he says, ‘a male child, who is destined to rule all the nations;’ [Rev. 12:5] by which is meant that *the church always brings forth Christ*”; cited by Rahner, 27.

Christ is the Word of God.”²⁵⁸ This spiritual conception of Christ begins in baptism and continues through hearing the word: “‘The infant which is formed’ can be seen as the word of God in the heart of his soul which has followed the grace of baptism or which has manifestly and clearly conceived the word of faith.”²⁵⁹ Origen capitalizes on the double sense of “word” (λόγος) so that through the preaching of God’s word, Christ the “Word” is born in the hearts of those who hear and believe: “...to them let them speak the word of God and the secrets of the faith, so that in them ‘Christ may be formed’ [Gal. 4:19] through faith. Or, do you not know that from this seed of the word of God which is sown Christ is born in the heart of the hearers?...Therefore, the soul conceives from this seed of the word and the Word forms a fetus in it until it brings forth a spirit of the fear of God.”²⁶⁰ For Origen the significance of the Christ’s first coming lay especially in his *daily* spiritual coming to the believer which manifests itself in good works; without this the first coming is of no use: “...through the advent of Christ, which has happened to our souls, whatever was crooked is now straight. For, what does it profit you, if Christ once came in the flesh, unless he also comes to your soul? We should pray that he will *daily come to us* and that we might be able to say, ‘I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me’ [Gal 2:20].”²⁶¹

²⁵⁸ *Homilies on Exodus* 10; SC 321, 314, 26-7; 316, 41-3; 318, 58: “Mulier praegnans dicitur anima quae nuper concepit Dei uerbum...Perfecti ergo sunt et uiri fortes, qui statim ut concipiunt, pariunt, id est qui conceptum fidei uerbum in opera producunt...Christus autem est Verbum Dei”; cited by Rahner, 32.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*; SC 321, 320, 15-17: “*Formatus infans* potest uideri sermo Dei in corde eius animae quae gratiam baptismi consecuta est, uel quae euidentius et clarius uerbum fidei concepit”; cited by Rahner, 32.

²⁶⁰ *Homilies on Leviticus* 12; SC 287, 194, 33-39: “...ipsis uerbum Dei et arcana fidei proloquantur, ut in ipsis *Christus formetur* per fidem. Aut nescis quia ex isto semine uerbi Dei, quod seminatur, Christus nascitur in corde auditorum?...Concipit ergo anima ex hoc uerbi semine et conceptum format in se Verbum, donec pariat spiritum timoris Dei”; cited by Rahner, 33. Galatians 4:19 and Isaiah 26:18 became classic texts for Christ’s spiritual birth.

²⁶¹ *Homilies on Luke* 22; SC 87, 302: “...per aduentum Christi, qui factus est ad animam nostram, prava quaeque directa sunt. Quid enim tibi prodest, si Christus quondam uenit in carne, nisi ad tuam quoque animam

Greek theologians continued to develop the idea of the spiritual birth, weighing heavily on one's conformity to the divine image of the Logos in the process of divinization.²⁶² This more dogmatic-soteriological direction remained peculiar to Eastern Christianity. Latin Christianity, on the other hand, would retain its affinity to Origen by emphasizing the ethical implications of the doctrine. Ambrose and Augustine served as the great conduits for these ideas, setting the pattern and piety of the spiritual birth of Christ for the rest of the Latin West.²⁶³

Ambrose's ability to read the Greek Christian authors made him especially important in this regard, and his familiarity with some of Origen's writings may very well be reflected in this doctrine.²⁶⁴ We see this for example in Ambrose's frequent use of Is. 26:18 and Gal. 4:19—Origen's favorite texts for the spiritual birth and indwelling of Christ. Such is in the following excerpt of Ambrose's commentary on Luke. Both texts are brought together along with the same ethical interpretation that we found in Origen:

For they are also those who conceive by the fear of God of which they say: 'by your fear we conceived and travailed' [Isa. 26:18]. But not all bring forth, not all are perfect, not all are able to say: "we brought forth the Spirit of salvation in the earth," not all are Maries, who would conceive Christ by the Holy Spirit, and bring forth the Word. For they are those who reject the Word, aborted before they bring forth. They are those who have Christ in the womb, but will not yet have formed him, to which is said, "My little children, for whom I am again in travail, until Christ be formed in you" [Gal 4:19]....Do the will of the Father, so that you

venerit? Oremus, ut illius cotidie nobis adventus fiat et possimus dicere: *Vivo autem, iam non ego, vivit autem in me Christus.*" See also sermon 21: "The Lord wants to find in you a path by which he can enter into your souls and make his journey.... Prepare the way for the Lord by good living, and smooth out a path with outstanding works, so that the Word of God can walk in you without stumbling at all, and give you knowledge of his mysteries and his coming," cited by Rahner, 30-1.

²⁶² See Rahner, 40-56, for a detailed examination of this development in Greek thought.

²⁶³ This does not mean that the spiritual birth cannot be found in other Latin Fathers as well. E.g., see Jerome, *In Amos*; PL 25, 1090 B: "...licet secundum tropologiam quotidie de anima virginali nascatur sermo divina"; cited by de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis* 2, 139.

²⁶⁴ In addition to Origen, Ambrose's teachings may also be significantly indebted to Hippolytus of Rome; see Rahner, 56f.

might be a mother of Christ. Many conceived Christ and did not give birth. Therefore the one who bears righteousness, bears Christ; the one who bears wisdom, bears Christ; the one who travails for the word, travails for Christ.²⁶⁵

Notice in this example that it is not the eternal birth of the Logos but the temporal birth from the Virgin Mary that serves as type and exemplar for the believing soul.²⁶⁶ This shift of emphasis is characteristic of both Ambrose and Augustine, the celebration of the Nativity being an obvious focal point. Thus Ambrose can find a similar application to the mystery of Bethlehem, the “house of bread”: “To every soul therefore which receives this bread descending from heaven is a house of bread...thus the soul begins to conceive and to form in it Christ to those who receive his advent.”²⁶⁷

Augustine’s sermons on the Nativity follow along the same lines. The redemptive goal of Christ’s birth from the Virgin was our spiritual rebirth: “Unless he had a human birth, we would not come to the divine rebirth; he was born that we might be reborn....And so let his mercy come to be in our hearts. His mother bore him in the womb; let us bear him in our hearts.

²⁶⁵ *Commentary on Luke* 10, 24; CSEL 32, 4, 464f.: “sunt enim et quae de dei timore concipiunt, quae dicunt: de timore tuo concepimus et parturivimus. sed non omnes pariunt, non omnes perfecti, non omnes possunt dicere: peperimus spiritum salutis in terra, non omnes Mariae, quae de spiritu sancto Christum concipiant, uerbum pariant. sunt enim qua abortivum excludant uerbum, antequam pariant, sunt quae in utero Christum habeant, sed nondum formauerint, quibus dicitur: filioli mei, quos iterum parturio, donec formetur Christus in uobis....fac uoluntatem patris, ut Christi mater sis. multae conceperunt Christum et non generauerunt. ergo quae parit iustitiam Christum parit, quae parit sapientiam Christum parit, quae parturit uerbum Christum parturit”; cited by Rahner, 59.

²⁶⁶ The two ideas are not necessarily incompatible; Ambrose can emphasize both, e.g. *Exposition of Ps. 118*, Sermo 6, 6; CSEL 62, 112, 1f.: “Verbum de corde Patris saliens...ergo et nunc salit et currit de corde Patris super sanctos suos”; cited by Rahner, 17. Furthermore, examples of the Mary-type can also be found in Greek theology. Cf. Origen, *Homily on Song of Songs* 2, 6; SC 37, 91: “Nativitas Christi ab ‘umbra’ sumpsit exordium; non solum autem in Maria ab ‘umbra’ eius nativitas coepit, sed et in te, si dignus fueris, nascitur sermo Dei”—“The birth of Christ took its inception from the shadow; yet not only in Mary did his nativity begin from the shadow, but also in you, if you are worthy, the Word of God is born”; cited by Rahner, 32. Likewise, an anonymous Christmas sermon from Cappodocia; PG, 59, 605: “πᾶσα ψυχὴ ὠδίλει ἐν αὐτῇ τὸν Χριστόν, ἐὰν δὲ μὴ μεταμορφωθῇ τῇ εὐσεβείᾳ μήτηρ Χριστοῦ καλεῖσθαι οὐ δύναται”—“Every soul labors to bring forth Christ in itself, but if is not formed by piety, it cannot be called the mother of Christ”; cited by Rahner, 43.

The virgin was heavy-laden with the incarnation of Christ; let our bosoms be heavy-laden with the faith of Christ. The virgin gave birth to the Savior; she bears the salvation of our souls; let us also give birth to praise. We must not be barren; our souls ought to be fruitful with God.”²⁶⁸ As in Ambrose, Mary serves as a type of the soul. As she believed the word of God and thus conceived, so we conceive Christ in our hearts through faith in him.²⁶⁹ “What you marvel at in the flesh of Mary, perform in the depths of your souls. When you believe with the heart unto justice, you conceive Christ; when with the mouth you confess unto salvation, you give birth to Christ.”²⁷⁰ Augustine likewise stresses the moral significance of Christ’s spiritual birth, a birth which manifests itself in good works: “So then, because Christ is truth and peace and righteousness, conceive him in faith, give birth to him in works, so that what Mary’s womb did in the flesh of Christ, your hearts may do in the law of Christ.”²⁷¹

Augustine’s great influence on so much of the medieval tradition can also be felt here through his Nativity sermons. Many of the same themes found in these sermons were taken up

²⁶⁷ Ep. 70, 13, 16; PL 16, 1237 B; 1238 A: “omnis itaque anima quae recipit panem illum descendentem de caelo domus panis est...incipit ergo concipere anima et formari in ea Christus quae receipt adventum eius”; cited by Rahner, 59.

²⁶⁸ Sermo 189, 3; PL 38, 1006: “nisi haberet humanam generationem, nos ad divinam non perveniremus regenerationem, natus est, ut renasceremur... Fiat itaque in cordibus nostris misericordia ejus. Portavit eum mater in utero: portemus et nos in corde. Gravidata est virgo incarnatione Christi : gravidentur pectora nostra fide Christi. Peperit virgo Salvatorem : pariat anima nostra salutem, pariamus et laudem. Non simus steriles : animae nostrae Deo sint fecundae.”

²⁶⁹ Sermo 196, 1: “The angel makes the announcement, the virgin hears, believes, and conceives; faith in the soul (in mente), Christ in the womb (in ventre)”; cited by Rahner, 61.

²⁷⁰ Sermo 191, 4; PL 38, 1011: “Quod miramini in carne Mariae, agite in penetralibus animae. Qui corde credit ad justitiam, concipit Christum. Qui ore confitetur ad salutem, parit Christum”; cited by Rahner, 62.

²⁷¹ Sermo 192, 2; PL 38, 1012: “Proinde quia veritas et pax et justitia Christus est, hunc fide concipite, operibus edite; ut quod egit uterus Mariae in carne Christi, agat cor vestrum in lege Christi.”

and elaborated by later theologians.²⁷² This reached a high point in the twelfth century when the three masses of Christmas were associated with a *threefold* birth of Christ: his eternal birth from the Father, his temporal birth from the Virgin, and his spiritual birth in the believer's soul.²⁷³ An early example of this *triplex nativitas* can be found in a Christmas sermon by Innocent III (d. 1216): "*divinam ex Patre, carnalem ex matre, spiritualem in mente. Ex Patre nascitur Deus, de matre natus est caro, in mente nascitur spiritus.*"²⁷⁴ The mass at night signifies the eternal birth from the Father which is hidden in darkness; the mass at dawn points to the physical birth which was partly hidden and partly visible, but the mass in full daylight signifies the manifest clarity of Christ's spiritual birth through devotion and spiritual progress.²⁷⁵ This "progress" is the path towards justification furthered by the continual gift of grace: "In the soul he is born repeatedly...for justification, that he might give grace."²⁷⁶

Similar references to the *triplex nativitas* can be found from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries in a wide representation of medieval authors, monastic and scholastic alike: Hélinand of Froidmont (d. 1229), Hugo Ripelin (d. 1270), Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), Bonaventura

²⁷² For the early reception of Augustine, Rahner cites the various pseudo-augustinian Christmas sermons, probably from Caesarius of Arles (d. 542) or Maximus of Turin (d. 408/23); *Gottesgeburt*, 64-65. Rahner notes that Bede is the most important transmitter of Augustine's Mary-as-type-of-the-soul to the Middle Ages; *Exp. in Luc.* I; PL 92, 320 B: "Typicum pariter exemplum tribuens, quod omnis anima quae Verbum Dei mente concipit statim excelsa cacumina gressu conscendat amoris"; cited by Rahner, 67.

²⁷³ Already by the time of Gregory the Great (d. 604), the Feast of the Nativity was divided into three masses—one at midnight, one at dawn, and one in the day. See *Hom. in Evang.* I, 8, Nat. Dom.; PL 76, 1103 D: "Quia largiente Domino Missarum solemnia ter hodie celebraturi sumus, loqui diu de Evangelica lectione non possemus"; cited by Haubst, *Christologie*, 33.

²⁷⁴ Innocent III, Sermo 3, *In Nat. Dom.*; PL 217, 459 C; cited by Rahner, 79. It is doubtful whether Innocent is the inceptor of this expression, but most likely became familiar with it during his theological studies in Paris. He seems to indicate a tradition already well established; 460 D-461 A: "Today the church represents these three births of Christ with the three masses."

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*; PL 217, 461 AB: "Spiritualis autem nativitas est clarius manifesta...Christus enim per affectum concipitur, per affectum nascitur, per profectum nutritur. Ad quod significandum tertia missa celebratur in die."

(d. 1274), Meister Eckhart (d. 1328), John Tauler (d. 1361), Jean Gerson (d. 1429), Bernard of Sienna (d. 1444), Nicholas of Cusa (d. 1464), Dionysius the Carthusian (d. 1471)—to name a few of the more significant.²⁷⁷ Most follow the same basic pattern reflected in the sermon of Innocent III, stressing the recurrent if not daily birth of Christ in the soul of the believer. In some, mystical elements overshadow what has been principally a moral interpretation of the spiritual birth. This is especially the case in the writings of Meister Eckhart and his disciple John Tauler who emphasized the affinity between the spiritual birth in the soul and the eternal birth of the uncreated Logos, almost marginalizing the significance of the incarnation.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁶ Ibid., (459 CD): “Ex Patre nascitur semper, de matre natus est semel, in mente nascitur saepe”; (461 B): “*Puer ergo natus est nobis...in mente...ad justificationem, ut daret gratiam.*”

²⁷⁷ E.g. Bonaventura, Sermo 96; *Sermones de Tempore*. Reportations du manuscrit Milan, Ambrosienne A 11 sup., ed. Jacques Guy Bougerol (Paris: Éditions Franciscaines, 1990), 154-55: “Sacer Moyses, sacro inspiratus afflamine, in verbis his describit Chrsiti nativatem tripliciter, scilicet: ut nobilissimam sive pretiosissimam, ut deliciosissimam sive gratiosissimam, ut uberrimam sive fructuosissimam. Primum nota in nomine fluvii egredientis; secundum in nomine loci voluptatis qui quidem est Vergo, Mater Christi...tertium nota in nomine irrigationis paradisi, hoc est universalis Ecclesiae, sive animae.” John Gerson, *In Nat. Dom.; Oeuvres Complètes*, vol 5 (Tournai, Belgium: Desclée & Co., 1963), 252, 597: “Quoniam triplicem Verbi Domini nativatem evangelica haec continet particula, ad sui commemorationem meum inflexit animum, quatenus verbum creatum sententiosissimum assumerum qui de Verbo increato quod sententiosissimum est fueram locuturus...intueris postremo quod in corde humano nascitur spiritualiter; quamobrem subjungitur; et habitavit in nobis”; cf. 602-604. A perusal of J. B. Schneyer’s *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones des Mittelalters für die Zeit von 1350-1500*, ed. L. Hödl and W. Knoch (Münster: Aschendorff, 2001), further indicates the popularity of this theme for medieval preaching: Michael Lochmair (*floruit* ca. 1496): “Pro introductione thematis nota, quod in sacra scriptura triplex reperitur Christi nativitas”; Johannes Keck (d. 1450): “Christi triplex nativitas scilicet divina, humana, gratuita”; Henry Heinbuche of Langestein (d. 1397): “Nota, quod triplex est nativitas Christi, a patre sine matre, a matre sine patre”; Denys the Carthusian (d. 1471): “Sicut praedictum est, triplex est Christi nativitas, una aeternalis ... aeternitas tua...non finietur”; “Triplex assignatur generatio Christii, tam admiranda, ut de unaquaque earum verificetur ... ferventiores afficiores simus in omni eius obsequio”; Paulus Wann (d. 1489): “In die natalis Salvatoris nostri audistis de triplici eius nativitate, et quare tres missae dicantur eodem die”; “Audistis in die nativitatis Salvatoris nostri Domini Jesu Christi ea, quae erant gaudio plena de triplici eius nativitate”; Nicholas of Cusa (d. 1464): “Est Christi nativitas, qua in nobis nascitur spiritualiter sive in spiritu cotidie.”

²⁷⁸ Luther recognized this difference in his marginal comments (1516) to Tauler’s Christmas sermon on the *triplex nativitas*: “Hence this whole sermon proceeds out of mystical theology (*theologia mystica*), which is experimental wisdom, not doctrinal. For no one knows except one who accepts this hidden business. It speaks concerning the spiritual birth of the *uncreated Word*. But proper theology (*theologia propria*), concerning the spiritual birth of the *incarnate Word*, has the ‘one thing needful’ and the ‘best part’.” (W 9, 98, 14f). For Luther’s relationship to Tauler see especially Alphons Victor Müller, *Luther und Tauler auf ihren theologischen Zusammenhang neu untersucht* (Bern: F. Wyss, 1918); Otto Scheel, “Taulers Mystik und Luthers reformatorische Entdeckung,” in *Festgabe für Julius Kaftan zu seinem 70. Geburtstag* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1920), 298-318; Karl-Heinz zur Mühlen, *Nos extra nos: Luthers Theologie zwischen Mystik und Scholastik*

There is, however, another variation of the traditional theme which has not yet been mentioned: the *triplex adventus*. The threefold advent of Christ was especially common among the early Cistercians, following Bernard of Clairvaux's (d. 1153) sermons on Advent. Its importance for our study lies not in its originality—for it is undoubtedly related to what we have seen so far—but in its agreement with Luther's language in the *Dictata* who likewise prefers to speak of Christ's spiritual *advent* rather than birth. Given Luther's familiarity with Bernard's Advent sermons and the great value accorded to Bernard's writings in general, it would appear that the first abbot of Clairvaux was the most important precedent for Luther's *adventus spiritualis*.

The early Cistercians were clearly heirs of the traditional doctrine of the spiritual birth.²⁷⁹ Thus, in one Christmas sermon Bernard can exclaim, "Oh that we would be found to be a Bethlehem of Judea, so that he might deign to be born also in us!"²⁸⁰ For such a birth we must make *preparation*. We must disregard the earthly things in favor of the heavenly, forsake things

(Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1972); Ozment, *Homo Spiritualis*; Henrik Otto, *Vor- und frühreformatorische Tauler-Rezeption: Annotationen in Drucken des späten 15. und frühen 16. Jahrhunderts*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte, vol. 75 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2003), esp. 175-214.

²⁷⁹ It is a separate question regarding the actual historical relationship between sermons on the *triplex nativitas* and Bernard's *triplex adventus*, and one which I will not pursue here. As an interesting aside, Innocent III also had an Advent sermon which spoke of *four advents*: in the flesh, in grace, in death, in judgment. In connection with the advent in grace Innocent cites John 14:23, Bernard's text for the spiritual advent.

²⁸⁰ *In Vig. Nat.*, Sermo 6, 8; *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, ed. Jean Leclercq, O.S.B. (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957f.); [hereafter SBO] IV, 240, 1-4: "Utinam autem inveniamur et nos Bethlehem Iudae, ut in nobis quoque dignetur nasci...Forte enim hoc est quod supra meminimus, ad videndam in nobis Domini maiestatem, et sanctificatione opus esse, et praeparatione." Cf. *In Vig. Nat.*, Sermo 1, Sermo 1, 6; SBO IV, 201, 20-22; 202, 6-7: "Considera denique quod IN BETHLEHEM IUDAE NASCITUR, et sollicitus esto, quomodo Bethlehem Iudae inveniaris, et iam ne in te quidem suscipi dedignatur...Bethlehem factus es, dignus plane susceptione Dominica, si tamen confessio non defuerit."

present and long for the things of the future.²⁸¹ “He is prepared...who forgets those things which lay behind and strains forward to what lies ahead.”²⁸² Only through faith and confession of sins can Christ be born in the heart, the soul now a “fruitful virgin” and “full of grace.”²⁸³

These same traditional ideas appear in the Christmas sermons of Bernard’s disciple, Gueric of Igny (d. 1157). “Certainly, you are also mothers of the child who was born for you and in you, that is, since by the fear of the Lord you conceived and gave birth to the spirit of salvation [Isa. 26:18]. Keep watch therefore, O holy mother, keep watch over the new-born in your care until Christ is formed in you [Gal. 4:19] who was born for you.”²⁸⁴ The example of Mary for the soul consists of her humility and especially her faith. In a sermon on the Annunciation, Gueric extols Mary’s faith in the angel’s message—her faith *ex auditu*—as the pattern for those who would spiritually conceive Christ: “For she who conceived God by faith promises the same to you, if you have faith. Surely, if you will faithfully receive the Word from the mouth of the heavenly nuncio, you also shall conceive the God himself, whom the whole world is not able to contain. But conceive him in the heart, not in the body.... Open an ear that

²⁸¹ *In Vig. Nat.*, Sermo 6, 8; SBO IV, 240, 22-24: “Et ille quidem caelestia obliviscitur, hic vero quae sunt super terram: iste praesentia, ille futura; iste quae videntur, ille quae non videntur; postremo iste quae sua sunt, ille quae Iesu Christi.”

²⁸² *In Vig. Nat.*, Sermo 6, 8; SBO IV, 240, 16-17: “Est autem paratus...qui, oblitus ea quae retro sunt, in ea quae ante sunt se extendit.”

²⁸³ *In Vig. Nat.*, Sermo 6, 10; SBO IV, 242, 10-13: “Non ergo in huiusmodi corde nascitur Christus, cui deest fidei fortitudo, utique panis vitae, Scriptura teste, quoniam IUSTUS EX FIDE VIVIT, quod videlicet vera animae vita, quae ipse est, non nisi per fidem interim habitet in cordibus nostris.” *In Vig. Nat.*, Sermo 6, 10-11; SBO IV, 242, 23-243, 1-10: “...quamlibet fortes in fide, quamlibet parati...necesse habemus addere consequenter: DIMITTE NOBIS DEBITA NOSTRA...Praeoccupemus igitur faciem Domini *in confessione*, ut sanctificati pariter et parati inveniamur et nos Bethlehem Iudae, atque ita nascentem Dominum videre mereamur in nobis. Ceterum si qua anima eo usque profecerit, quod quidem multum est ad nos, ut sit *fecunda virgo*, sit *stella maris*, sit *plena gratia*, et supervenientem habens in se Spiritum Sanctum.” [italics mine]

²⁸⁴ Sermo 3, 5; SC 166, 198: “Utique et vos matres Pueri, qui natus est vobis et in vobis, ex quo videlicet a timore Domini concepistis et parturistis spiritum salutis. Vigila igitur, o mater sancta, vigila super curam recens nati, *donec formetur in te Christus* qui natus est tibi.”

will hear to the Word of God. This is the way to the womb of your heart for the Spirit who causes conception.”²⁸⁵ Like Bernard, Guerric understands the spiritual birth as part of one’s progress towards the future redemption and glorification: “Accordingly, guard your heart with every care, for from it life will proceed, namely, when the offspring has reached the proper time and the life of Christ which is now hidden in your hearts will be made manifest in your mortal flesh....For he who is now conceived as God in our spirits, conforming them to the Spirit of his love, will then as a man be born in our bodies, conforming them to his glorious body.”²⁸⁶

These remarks on the spiritual birth—by now common property of the medieval tradition—were given a new form of expression in Bernard’s seven Advent sermons. The liturgy of Advent focused both on Christ’s past coming in the flesh and his future coming in glory. It was a time of *expectation* and *preparation*, for not only was one about to celebrate Christ’s birth and the advent of our salvation, but one also needed to make ready for the imminent return of Christ, our final judgment and full redemption. It is to this period between the times, this present Christian existence in the midst of two advents, that Bernard applies a “middle advent” of Christ (*medius adventus*)—his spiritual presence in the heart of the believer.²⁸⁷ Thus there are in reality

²⁸⁵ Sermo 2, 4; SC 202, 138-40: “Quae enim Deum fide concepit, si fidem habeas idem tibi promittit : quod videlicet si Verbum ex ore nuntii coelestis fideliter velis suscipere, Deum quem totus orbis non potest capere possis et ipse concipere, concipere autem corde non corpore...Aperi Verbo Dei aurem audiendi. Haec est ad uterum cordis via spiritus concipiendi.”

²⁸⁶ Sermo 2, 5; SC 202, 142-44: “*Omni itaque custodia servate corda vestra, quia ex ipso vita procedet; cum scilicet maturus se partus absolvat, et vita Christi quae nunc abscondita est in cordibus vestris manifestabitur in carne vestra mortali...* Qui enim nunc conceptus est Deus in spiritibus nostris, configurans eos spiritui caritatis suae, tunc velut homo nascetur incorporibus configurans ea corpori claritatis suae, in qua vivit et gloriatur Deus per omnia saecula saeculorum.” Cf. Isaac of Stella, Sermo 45, 2; SC 339, 96-98; Aelred of Rievaulx, *De Iesu Puero*, I, 4; CCCM 1, 252-53.

²⁸⁷ The term “*medius adventus*” first appears in what is now the fifth Advent sermon which, along with the fourth sermon, was written before the others, probably A.D. 1138-1139. Sermons 1-3 were written no later than 1139 and sermons 6-7 between 1148 and 1150. All seven were then revised as a whole collection. I am not, however, primarily concerned with the internal development of this theme in Bernard, but with the various ideas present in the final redaction which would have come to Luther. Thus, I am not giving a chronological picture of

three advents: one in the past, one in the future, and one *for the present*. “Truly, just as he came once for all in the flesh and visibly in order to work salvation in the midst of the earth, so *daily* he comes *in spirit* and *invisibly* to save individual souls.”²⁸⁸ This spiritual advent is hidden in the life of the faithful in which Christ’s “invisible power deigns to illuminate individual souls.”²⁸⁹ But how ought one to prepare for such an advent? Bernard answers that there is no need to undertake a great journey—to cross the seas, to penetrate clouds, or to pass over the mountains. Rather, the “word is near, in your mouth and in your heart.” Thus it is through “*compunction of the heart* and *confession of the mouth*” that you greet your God so that when Christ desires to enter, you are not wallowing in the swill of a miserable conscience.²⁹⁰

It is characteristic of Bernard to emphasize introspection, self-judgment, and confession of sins in his moral applications and the advent of Christ is no exception. In his third Advent sermon he considers more thoroughly how one ought “to prepare a seat for Christ in his soul,” taking his cue from Ps. 88:15, *iustitia et iudicium praeparatio sedis tuae*—“righteousness and judgment are the preparation of your throne.” Through these two virtues the soul is made ready

Bernard’s statements on the *triplex adventus*, but a thematic one. For details on the composition, redaction, and transmission of Bernard’s liturgical sermons see SBO IV, 125-159. For a detailed study on the development of the *medius adventus* in Bernard’s thought see Claudio Stercal, *Il ‘Medius Adventus’. Saggio di lettura degli scritti di Bernardo di Clairvaux*. Bibliotheca Cisterciensis 9 (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1992).

²⁸⁸ *In Adv.*, Sermo 1, 10; SBO IV, 168, 14-17: “Verumtamen, sicut ad operandam salutem in medio terrae semel venit in carne visibilis, ita quotidie ad salvandas animas singulorum in spiritu venit et invisibilis, sicut scriptum est: SPIRITUS ANTE FACIEM NOSTRAM CHRISTUS DOMINUS.” Cf. *In Adv.*, Sermo 3, 4; SBO IV, 177, 17-18: “Triplicem enim eius adventum novimus; ad homines, in homines, contra homines.”

²⁸⁹ *In Adv.*, Sermo 1, 10; SBO IV, 168, 17-19; 169, 4-5: “Et ut noveris occultum esse hunc spiritualement adventum: IN UMBRA EIUS, inquit, VIVEMUS INTER GENTES.... Et haec quidem de eo adventu sunt dicta, quo singulorum mentes invisibili dignatur illustrare potentia.”

²⁹⁰ *In Adv.*, Sermo 1, 10; SBO IV, 168, 21-169, 5: “Non te oportet, o homo, maria transfretare; non penetrare nubes, non transalpinare necesse est. Non grandis, inquam, tibi ostenditur via: usque ad temetispusm occurre Deo tuo. PROPE EST ENIM VERBUM IN ORE TUO ET IN CORDE TUO. Usque ad *cordis compunctionem* et *confessionem oris* occurre, ut saltem exeas de sterquilinio miserae conscientiae, quoniam indignum est illuc auctorem puritatis intrare. Et haec quidem de eo adventu sunt dicta, quo singulorum mentes invisibili dignatur illustrare potentia” [emphasis mine].

for Christ's coming. By *iustitia* we render what is due to each person, whether it be obedience and reverence, counsel and assistance, or vigilance and correction.²⁹¹ *Iudicium*, on the other hand, honors God through our repentance: "The honor of the King loves judgment. So far as concerns himself, there is nothing which he more requires from us. Only let us confess our iniquities, and he will justify us *gratis*, so that his grace might be commended. For he loves the soul which examines itself in his sight without ceasing and judges itself without pretence. And he requires this judgment from us only for our own sakes, because 'if we judge ourselves we shall not be judged.' ... With regard to man, the seat for the Lord of majesty is worthily prepared when he strives to observe the commandments of righteousness, and always judges himself unworthy and useless."²⁹²

There is a sense in these sermons that the spiritual advent not only requires a preparation of contrition and confession but *is itself this preparation*. The Christian life exists in a constant tension between two poles, between what has already been accomplished and received and what is promised still to come. Indeed, the Christian himself is *medius*. The presence of Christ to the believer in the here and now is thus the necessary source of strength and consolation for the Christian pilgrimage from the first advent to the last. This theme is especially developed in Bernard's fourth and fifth sermons where he compares the Christian life as one which "sleeps in

²⁹¹ *In Adv.*, Sermo 3, 4; SBO IV, 177, 25-178, 4: "Merito plane, quia IUSTITIA ET IUDICIUM PRAEPARATIO SEDIS TUAE. Quis in vobis est, fratres, qui desiderat in anima sua sedem parare Christo? Ecce quaenam illi serica, quae tapetia, quod pulvinar oporteat praeparari: IUSTITIA, inquit, ET IUDICIUM PRAEPARATIO SEDIS TUAE. Iustitia virtus est, quod suum est unicuique tribuens. Tribue ergo tribus quae sua sunt."

²⁹² *In Adv.*, Sermo 3, 7; SBO IV, 181, 2-14: "...HONOR REGIS IUDICIUM DILIGIT. Nihil quod in se est a nobis exigit amplius; tantum dicamus iniquitates nostras, et iustificabit nos gratis, ut gratia commendetur. Diligit enim animam, quae in conspectu eius et sine intermissione considerat, et sine dissimulatione diiudicat semetipsam. Idque iudicium non nisi propter nos a nobis exigit, quia si nosmetipsos iudicaverimus, non utique iudicabimur... Haec plane, quod in hominem est, digna sedis, praeparatio Domino maiestatis, ut et iustitiae mandata studeat observare, et semper indignum sese et inutilem arbitretur." This passage is cited favorably by Luther in the *Dictata*, WA 55I, 704, RGI 5.

the midst of lots” (Ps. 67:14), that is, between the first and last coming of Christ.²⁹³ This “sleeping” is to rest in the embrace of the Savior who has given us a pattern of humility and meekness to follow.²⁹⁴ Thus, this time between the advents is the time in which we should judge ourselves strictly, reforming our hearts in preparation for the final judgment when Christ will reform our bodies also. Only if “the heart is already reformed and made like the humility of his own heart” will he then refashion our bodies like his own glorious body.²⁹⁵ This is the hidden work of the *medius adventus*, recognized only by the elect within themselves. It is the path by which one progresses from the benefits won in Christ’s first advent to the fullness of salvation that Christ will bring in the last. “Therefore, in the first he came in the *flesh* and *weakness*, in this middle one he comes in *spirit* and *virtue*, and in the last he will come in *glory* and *majesty*. For it is through virtue that glory is reached. . . . Thus, this *adventus medius* is so to speak the ‘*via*’ by which one comes from the first to the last.”²⁹⁶

²⁹³ *In Adv.*, Sermo 4, 1; SBO IV, 182, 7-9: “Utinam circa hos duos adventus iugi meditatione versemini, ruminantes in cordibus vestris quantum in priore praestiterit, quantum promiserit in secundo. Utinam certe dormiatis inter medios cleros!”

²⁹⁴ *In Adv.*, Sermo 4, 1; SBO IV, 182, 10: “Haec sunt enim duo brachia sponsi, inter quae sponsa dormiens aiebat”; *In Adv.*, Sermo 4, 4; SBO IV, 185, 2-5: “Sint ergo, si dormire volumus inter medios cleros, id est duos adventus, pennae nostrae deargentatae, ut illam scilicet virtutum formam teneamus, quam et verbo et exemplo commendavit Christus praesens in carne.”

²⁹⁵ *In Adv.*, Sermo 4, 3-4; SBO IV, 184, 1, 5-8, 12-13: “TEMPUS EST, fratres, UT IUDICIUM INCIPIAT A DOMO DEI. . . . Nos autem, si perfecte iudicamur nunc, securi SALVATOREM EXPECTEMUS DOMINUM NOSTRUM IESUM CHRISTUM, QUI REFORMABIT CORPUS HUMILITATIS NOSTRAE, CONFIGURATUM CORPORI CLARITATIS SUAE. . . . si tamen prius fuerit cor reformatum et configuratum humilitati cordis ipsius.”

²⁹⁶ *In Adv.*, Sermo 5, 1; SBO IV, 188, 10- 189, 2: “Medius occultus est, in quo soli eum in seipsis vident electi, et salvae fiunt animae eorum. In primo ergo venit in carne et infirmitate, in hoc medio in spiritu et virtute, in ultimo in gloria et maiestate. Per virtutem enim pervenitur ad gloriam. . . . *Adventus siquidem iste medius, via quaedam est per quam a primo venit ad ultimum*: in primo Christus fuit redemptio nostra, in ultimo apparebit vita nostra, in isto, ut dormiamus inter medios cleros, requies est et consolatio nostra” [emphasis mine]. Before the final revision “*via*” was missing so that it initially read, “Ideo enim adventus iste medius est, quia per eum pervenitur a primo ad ultimum.” See Stercal, *Il ‘Medius Adventus’*, 41.

Bernard does not believe he is introducing something new, even though the notion of three advents has not been explicitly expressed before.²⁹⁷ For Bernard the spiritual advent is a logical result of the first. It is the daily participation in those things for which Christ first came: the healing and purification of the soul.²⁹⁸ As one confesses his lowliness and wretchedness, Christ conforms him to his own image of humility and meekness. It is only with such a heart and disposition that one can worthily receive the Lord on the last day.

The spiritual coming of Christ continued to be an important theme in Bernard's writings. We see this especially in his sermons on the Song of Songs with the "*adventus Sponsi*," the advent of the Bridegroom to the soul.²⁹⁹ But its legacy went far beyond Bernard's own writings. Certainly, its most immediate influence was on the early Cistercians. Once again, Gueric offers the most striking example, following closely the Bernardian language:

And indeed, whether it is for one's merit or zeal, that advent of the Lord to each person is frequent in this *middle time* between his first advent and the last, *conforming* us to his first advent, and *preparing* us for the last. To be sure, he comes to us in this way, lest his first advent come to us in vain or his last in wrath against us. Since indeed by this advent he fully works to reform our sense of pride, *conforming it to his humility* which he exhibited in his first coming, so that he might also reform our humble body, conforming it to his glorious body which he will exhibit upon his coming again for the second time. Certainly, that

²⁹⁷ *In Adv.*, Sermo 5, 2; SBO IV, 189, 3-5: "Sed ne cui forte inventitia videantur quae de hoc adventu medio dicimus, ipsum audite: SI QUIS DILIGIT ME, inquit, SERMONES MEOS SERVABIT ET PATER MEUS DILIGET EUM, ET AD EUM VENIEMUS [Jo. 14:23]." See Stercal, *Il 'Medius Adventus'*, on the issue of Bernard's innovation, 11-19 and 42-7.

²⁹⁸ *In Adv.*, Sermo 6, 1; SBO IV, 191, 3-12: "Volo vos, fratres, non ignorare tempus visitationis vestrae, sed ne illud quidem quid hoc tempore visitetur in vobis. Animabus enim hoc tempus est, non corporibus assignatum...Deinde si Christi membra volumus inveniri, sequendum nobis est sine dubio caput nostrum, ut videlicet prima nobis reparandum sit sollicitudo animarum, *pro quibus ipse iam venit, et quarum prius mederi studuit corruptioni*" [emphasis mine].

²⁹⁹ For the spiritual advent in the subsequent sermons on the Song of Songs, see Stercal, *Il 'Medius Adventus'*, 186-222. The same definition of preparation is given along with the reference to Ps. 88:15. *Sup. Cant.*, Sermo 57, 5; SBO II, 122, 16-21): "Si igitur admonitus fuero...de tuenda iustitia et servanda aequitate, istiusmodi salutaris suasio erit mihi profecto praenuntia imminentis *adventus Sponsi*, et *praeparatio* quaedam ad digne suscipiendum supernum visitatorem, Propheta id mihi indicante, dicendo quia IUSTITIA ANTE EUM AMBULABIT; et item loquitur Deo sic: IUSTITIA ET IUDICIUM, inquit, PRAEPARATIO SEDIS TUAE" [emphasis mine].

intimate advent which bestows to us the grace of the first advent and promises the glory of the last is to be desired with every wish and expected with eagerness.... Again, just as by the arrangement of time, so also, in proportion to its likeness, this *spiritual advent* is *medius* between both bodily advents, and as a mediator it participates in both.³⁰⁰

But it was not only among the Cistercians that Bernard's *triplex adventus* found acceptance and use. Bernard's sermons would be read by many, and a wide range of persons would preach on the threefold advent of Christ right up to the beginning of the sixteenth century.³⁰¹ Luther is also

³⁰⁰ *Adv.*, Sermo 2, 3-4; SC 166, 110-112: 'Et quidem pro merito cuiusque vel studio creber est ad unumquemque iste Domini adventus, hoc tempore medio inter adventum primum et novissimum, conformans nos adventui primo et praeparans novissimo. Ad hoc nempe venit modo in nos, ne primo adventu frustra venerit ad nos, vel ne in novissimo veniat iratus adversus nos. Hoc siquidem adventu satagit reformare sensum superbiae nostrae, configuratum sensui humilitatis suae, quam primo veniens exhibuit; ut perinde reformet *corpus humilitatis nostrae, configuratum corpori claritatis suae*, quam denuo rediens exhibebit. Prorsus optandus omnibus votis et expetendus studiis adventus iste familiaris, qui nobis gratiam impertiat adventus primi et gloriam promittat novissimi.... Porro sicut dispositione temporis, sic etiam proportione similitudinis, medius est adventus iste spiritualis inter adventum utrumque corporalem, et velut quidam mediator participat cum utroque.' Cf. Henry of Marcy (d. 1189), abbot of Clairvaux in 1176; PL 204, 259 C: "Secundum sensum vero spiritualem tota ipsa Scriptura veteris Testamenti futura prospiciens in anteriora se extendit, triplicem Christi praenuntians adventum; vel primum, qui occultus fuit et humilis...; vel secundum, qui praesens quotidie a sanctis intimus sentitur et dulcis; vel tertium, qui manifestus et terribilis in fine temporum expectatur"; cited by de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, vol. 2, 179. However, the Cistercian Hélinand of Froidmont (d. 1229) speaks of *four advents*, adding Christ's coming at our deaths; PL 212, 481.

³⁰¹ Pseudo-Hugh of St. Victor, *Miscellanea* III, tr. 35; PL 177, 655 Df.; *Quaestiones et decisiones in epistolas divi Pauli*, q. 4; PL 175, 587 D; Peter of Blois (d. 1211/12), PL 207, 571 A. Again, a glance over Schneyer's *Repertorium* yields many examples and variations: Albert Engelschalk of Straubing: "Postquam in praecedentibus tribus dominicis est determinatum de triplici adventu Christi"; Bartholomäus Turgelow of Gardiez: "Carissimi, sicut saepius dictum est, sancta mater ecclesia facit nobis mentionem de triplici adventu scilicet de adventu in carnem et de adventu in iudicium et de adventu in mentem"; Henry Heinbuch of Langenstein: "Nota triplex est adventus, ante nos in nos et post nos. Ante nos per incarnationem..."; Johannes Himmel: "Audiivistis in Christo dilectissimi de triplici adventu"; Johannes Ludovici of Würzburg: "Nota quod sicut Gregorius dixit triplex est adventus Domini ad hominem, in homine contra hominem" (note, the quotation is from Bernhard, not Gregory); Mattheus Zerbst of Saxony: "Postquam in praecedentibus tribus dominicis est determinatum de triplici adventu Christi" (cf. Engelschalk above); Nicholas Denise: "Possunt autem verba praedicta exponi de triplici Christi adventu"; Nicholas of Kmunden: "Omnis praedicator est paranymphus Christi missus nunc per eum sponsa ecclesia praeparatur sponso suo.. Dominicis tribus praecedentibus visum est de triplici adventu Christi scilicet in carnem, in iudicium et in mentem"; Vincent Ferrer of Valencia: "Adventus Filii Dei in hunc mundum est triplex principaliter, scilicet per incarnationem in ventre virginali, per justificationem...per retributionem"; Arnold of Cloethingen: "Sicut in praecedentibus dominicis sancta mater ecclesia in officio ecclesiastico versatur circa tres adventus...debemus eam per devotam orationem invitare"; Nicholas Trewnia of Waldpach: "In hac 4. dominica adventus Christi agit sancta mater ecclesia in mentem, qualiter autem nos debemus praeparare ad Christum, ut per gratiam veniat in nos"; Henry Herp: "Cum duabus dominicis praeteritis tactum sit de duplici adventu scilicet in carnem et ad iudicium, verba proposita congrue sumi possunt de adventu tertio spirituali...ad deificam similitudinem quam nobis adipisci concedat"; Johannes Herolt: "Ex quo in praesenti dominica agitur de spirituali adventu Christi in cor hominis ... septem sunt, quae praeparant hominem ad spiritualem adventum gratiae"; Bernard of Siena: "Quadruplex est Christi adventus. Primus...secundus in virgineum uterum, tertius in mentalem affectum, quartus ad iudicium"; Conrad Pincerna: "Adventus Christi quadruplex est in carne, in mente, in morte, in aere";

to be numbered among these persons, an heir to a 350-year-old tradition that has its roots stretching back over a millennium. How he actually understood and applied the three advents is the matter to which we now turn.

2. Luther and the *Adventus Spiritualis* in the *Dictata*

Luther's reception of Bernard has received the attention of several notable studies, the most thorough historical examination belonging to Theo Bell, *Divus Bernhardus*.³⁰² Bell's work is particularly helpful in his analysis of Luther's Bernard citations, even expanding and correcting those found in the Weimar *Namensregister*.³⁰³ However, as Bell notes, the attempt to determine when Luther first became acquainted with Bernard's writings is difficult for the researcher due to the lack of written sources from Luther's early years at the Erfurt cloister. Even if one could reconstruct the library of the Augustinian cloister at that time (a task which has its own set of difficulties), this can only demonstrate the availability of sources, not their use.³⁰⁴

Laurence of Naples: "Quoniam hodie est 2. dominica adventus ideo in hac collatione de 2. adventu scilicet in mentem"; Johannes Nigri: "In hac dominica agitur de adventu Christi in cuiuslibet fidelis mentem, qui se cum devotione cordis et puritate conscientiae ad eius adventum praeparavit"; Nicholas of Polonia: "Nota, quod adventus Jesu Christi sunt quattuor. Primus fuit in carne, secundus in mente, tertius in morte, quartus in majestate"; Peter Hieremiae: "Dicto supra proxima dominica de primo Christi adventu, scilicet per incarnationem in ventre virginali, nunc sequitur praedicare de secundo adventu, scilicet per justificationem in mente humanali"; Santius Porta: "Sancta mater ecclesia per istas quattuor hebdomadas recolit quadruplicem Christi adventum, scilicet in carnem, in mentem ... obtineamus hic gratiam et in futuro gloriam"; Virgilius Wallendorfer of Salzburg: "In praecedenti dominica agebatur de adventu Christi in mentem, nunc in animam per gratiam."

³⁰² For other studies see note 166 above.

³⁰³ WA 63, 93-98.

³⁰⁴ Bell notes that a copy of Bernard's *Sermones de tempore et de sanctis* (Basel, 1495) appears to have been in the Erfurt cloister library during Luther's time, *Divus Bernhardus*, 30. It is also difficult to determine what exactly was available to him in the Wittenberg library. Spalatin's catalog of the Wittenberg library from 1536 lists a copy of Bernard's *Opera* printed in Lyon, 1515—probably too late for the *Dictata*; see Sachiko Kusukawa, *A Wittenberg University Library Catalog of 1536* (Binghamton, New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1995), 30. For the library of the Augustinian cloister in Wittenberg see Erika Schulz, "Bücher aus den beiden Wittenberger Klosterbibliotheken in der Bibliothek des Evangelischen Predigerseminars" in *700 Jahre Wittenberg*, ed. Stefan Oehmig (Weimar: Verlag Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1995), 519-34.

Furthermore, one must also leave room for the verbal transmission of *dicta Bernardi*, a common source of instruction and edification within the spiritual life of the cloister.³⁰⁵

Nevertheless, by the time Luther began his first lectures on the Psalms it is clear that he was familiar with some of Bernard's writings from his own personal study. We may also assume that he had read the sermons on Advent, at least in part. In addition to making one direct citation from Bernard's third Advent sermon, Luther's numerous references to the threefold advent and Christ's spiritual advent betray the influence and inspiration of the abbot of Clairvaux.³⁰⁶

For Luther, recognizing the threefold advent is a hermeneutical enterprise: "Indeed, let this be the general rule, that wherever any verse is explained or is able to be explained concerning the *advent of Christ in the flesh*, it ought to be explained at the same time concerning his *advent through grace* and in the *future through glory*, according to which his *advent is triplex*."³⁰⁷ Here the deep connection between the traditional spiritual senses and the unfolding of redemptive history becomes most apparent. Like Bernard, Luther understands the spiritual advent as the necessary outcome of Christ's incarnation: "As for the tropology of the psalm, I believe that it is readily apparent from what has often been said. For whatever is said about the

³⁰⁵ See Schwarz, "Luthers unveräußerte Erbschaft."

³⁰⁶ WA 55I, 704, *RGI* 5, (Ps. 105:3): "Vnde b. Bernardus sermone de aduentu istum versum aliis verbis sic exprimit: 'O felix anima, que in conspectu Dei seipsam semper Iudicat et accusat. Si enim nos ipsos Iudicemus, non vtique a Domino Iudicemur'. hec ille." The citation comes from Bernard's description of the proper preparation for Christ's spiritual advent in which one must incessantly judge himself before God (*In Adv.*, Sermo 3, 7; SBO IV, 181, 2-14). Bernard's combination of Ps. 88:15 (96:2) and 1 Cor. 11:31 appears elsewhere in Luther, e.g. in WA 55II, 435, 64-436, 76; 55II, 751, 105-08. Franz Posset, "Bernard of Clairvaux as Luther's Source" *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 54 (1990), 294-5, wishes to see another reference to Bernard's Advent sermons in the scholion to Ps. 100:2, which Luther then mistakenly attributed to Bernard's *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum*. However, this interpretation seems to be less certain.

³⁰⁷ WA 55II, 945, 1537-41 (Ps. 118: 76): "Immo Lex generalis esto, Quod Vbicumque aliquis versus de aduentu Christi in carnem exponitur vel exponi potest, debet simul exponi de aduentu eius per gratiam et in futuro per gloriam, secundum quod triplex est Aduentus eius." Cf. WA 55I, 818, *RGI* 1 (Ps. 122:1): "...omnis Scriptura, que de aduentu Christi in carnem loquitur, potest optime, immo debet intelligi de aduentu eiusdem spirituali per gratiam."

first advent into the flesh is understood at the same time with respect to the *spiritual advent*. Indeed, the advent in the flesh is ordained and happens *because* of that spiritual advent; *otherwise it would be of no use*.... For what would it benefit for God to become man, unless believing this very fact we might be saved?”³⁰⁸ The spiritual advent is thus the *effectual goal* of the first advent mediated by faith.³⁰⁹ Tropologically, the Christ who came in the flesh to save us comes to bear that salvation to the individual soul. Through the spiritual advent of grace the eyes of faith are then directed forward to the future advent of glory—“So also the spiritual advent is by grace and the future advent by glory...*And the whole time of grace is the preparation for the future glory and the second advent.*”³¹⁰

We need to stress here the inherently *heilsgeschichtlich* orientation of the spiritual advent. It belongs to the prayer of one living *after* Christ’s incarnation from which it arises—the exclusive experience of the New Testament *viator* progressing from one stage to the next until he reaches his final redemption.³¹¹ The faith of the Old Testament is directed to Christ’s advent in the flesh, but the spiritual advent of grace belongs to the *time of grace*—“as they longed for Christ in the flesh, so we now long for him in the spirit.”³¹² As we saw in Bernard, the Christian is always *medius* between the two advents, and always *in via* from one to the other: “Therefore

³⁰⁸ WA 55II, 666, 653-59: “**Tropologiam autem psalmi credo ex sepe dictis facile apparere.** Nam quecunque de Aduentu primo in carnem ordinatur et fit propter istum spiritualem, Alioquin nihil profuisset... Quid enim prodesset Deum hominem fieri, Nisi idipsum credendo saluaremur?”

³⁰⁹ WA 55II, 666, 659-62: “Quocirca Christus non dicitur Iustitia, pax, misericordia, salus nostra in persona sua nisi effectiue; Sed fides Christi, qua Iustificamur, pacificamur, per quam in nobis regnat.”

³¹⁰ WA 55II, 876, 88 and 877, 103-4 (Ps. 113b:1): “Ita et spiritualis aduentus est per gratiam et futurus per gloriam... Atque totum tempus gratiae preparatio est ad futuram gloriam et aduentum secundum.”

³¹¹ Ozment, *Homo Spiritualis*, 127-30, argues for an Old Testament “spiritual advent,” but I have not found any support for this in *Dictata*.

³¹² WA 55II, 1010, 3461-62 (Ps. 118:174): “Sicut autem illi Christum Concupierunt in carne, Ita nos eundem in spiritu.”

we are always in the middle (*semper medii sumus*) between the goodness which we have from God and the evil which we have from ourselves, until in the future, all evil things are swallowed up... Therefore *Christ's advent* is our goodness, because he has removed the punishments, which are our evils, first from our conscience, and then he will also remove them from the body, and thus our goodness will be perfect."³¹³

Luther's spiritual advent also has the same emphasis on progress which we saw in Bernard. The need for progress is grounded in the virtue of humility which never admits perfection or attainment of the goal in this life. Nor can one ever assert that he has any good thing apart from God. Before God, one must always self-accuse, always confess sin. To those who humbly acknowledge their sin and worthlessness before God, Christ comes and bestows righteousness, peace of conscience, and strength against temptation in preparation for their final salvation on the last day. The prayer for the spiritual advent is thus the prayer of the *penitent*. Time and again Luther describes the soul that clamors for Christ's spiritual advent of grace as the demon-oppressed soul, the soul which feels its sin and captivity and fears its eternal damnation.³¹⁴ He makes this especially clear in his gloss to Ps. 142, the seventh penitential psalm: "This psalm according to the spirit and prophetic sense is the voice of the people of the

³¹³ WA 55II, 934, 1252-54, 1259-61 (Ps. 118:65): "Igitur semper medii sumus inter bonitatem, quam ex Deo habemus, et malitiam, quam ex nobis habemus, donec in futuro absorebeantur omnia mala... Igitur Christi aduentus Est bonitas nostra; quia penas, que sunt mala nostra, abstulit a conscientia primum, deinde etiam auferet a corpore, Et sic perfecte erit bonitas nostra."

³¹⁴ WA 55I, 667, *RGI* 1 (Ps. 101): "...Tropologice autem est oratio pro aduentu spirituali Christi, quando anima a demonibus oppressa viciis, etiam foris in carne a mundo vexatur." WA 55II, 666, 663-67 (Ps. 84): "Vnde deuotissima Est oratio huius psalmi, vbi dicit: 'Conuerte nos Deus' etc. Et illa vrgentissima: 'Nunquid inaeternum irasceris nobis?' Quia vehementer timet anima damnari, cum ceperit sentire peccatum suum et desiderare Iustitiam. Et sine dubio in hoc sensu Nunc Ecclesia istum psalmum cantit." WA 55II, 970, 2255-63 (Ps. 118:116): "...Et Moraliter de aduentu gratiae in animam contra tentationes exterioris hominis et mundi... Ita et Anima in tentationibus Expectat Visitationem gratiae eius, ne confundatur a carne victrice in peccatum seu diabolo per carnem vincente aut Impugnante." WA 55II, 1027, 49-52 (Ps. 125:4): "Sicut autem exponitur de aduentu Christi in Ecclesiam primo, ita de spirituali in animam, Cui redditur Laetitia salutaris, quando conuertitur eius Captiuitas per gratiam, et fit sicut consolatus et laetabunda et laudans."

faithful synagogue...praying...anxiously for the advent of Christ in the flesh...But because the church designates this psalm for penitents, therefore morally understood, it is about the spiritual advent of Christ in the soul through grace.”³¹⁵ On the other hand, the spiritual advent itself often creates a feeling of contrition and remorse, for after tasting its grace, sin is even more abhorrent and the fear of eternal wrath returns.³¹⁶ Christ’s spiritual presence both comforts the conscience for past sins and reveals present ones so that one always desires future consolation and deliverance. Hence one never ceases to be a penitent, one is always *in via*, always in preparation, always progressing and thus always a beginner with respect to what he does not yet have.

Always therefore we sin, always we are impure... we are always in motion, and we who are righteous always need to be made righteous. For this it comes that every righteousness for the present instant is sin with respect to that which must be added in the following instant. For in truth blessed Bernard says, “When you begin not to desire to become better, you cease to be good.” For there is no place to stop *in via Dei*. Delay is itself sin.³¹⁷

In the scholion to Ps. 113b:1, we saw that Luther could place the preparation for the spiritual advent (*facere quod in se est*) in parallel with the law’s preparation of Israel for Christ’s

³¹⁵ WA 55I, 878, *RGI* 1 (Ps. 142:1): “Iste psalmus in spiritu et prophetico sensu est vox populi fidelis synagogae iam pene extincti a Scribis et ‘senioribus’ (a quibus ‘egressa est iniquitas’ terrae et obscurata omnis dignitas spiritualis intelligentiae) petentis ob hoc anxie Christi aduentum in carnem, vt patet intuenti; et sic facilis est psalmus intellectu. Sed quia Ecclesia ipsum deputat pro paenitentibus, ideo moraliter intelligitur de aduentu Christi in animam spirituali per gratiam.”

³¹⁶ WA 55II, 650, 181- 651, 184 (Ps. 84:6): “Sic enim et in [spi]rituali aduentu [est], Quod cor contritum [ma]xime tamen timet aeter[nam] iram, quia caepit sa[pere] et desiderare g[rati]am et Christum et hor[re]re peccatum.” This pairs well with Luther’s definition of the gospel or the *lex Christi* as *iudicium* and *iustitia*. See especially the scholia in Ps 71, WA 55II, 437, 121f.

³¹⁷ WA 55II, 973, 2344-53: “Semper ergo peccamus, semper immundi sumus... semper sumus in motu, semper Iustificandi, qui Iusti sumus. Nam hinc venit, vt omnis Iustitia pro presenti instanti sit peccatum ad eam, que in sequenti instanti addenda est. Quia Vere dicit B. Bernardus: ‘Vbi incipis nolle fieri melior, desinis esse bonus.’ Quia non est status in via Dei, ipsa mora peccatum est.” This thought reflects why Luther could never conceive of one able to achieve merit beyond *meritum de congruo*. When Luther imposed the Bernardian *triplex adventus* on the nominalist doctrine of merit in his scholia to Ps. 113b:1, the monastic form of perpetual *preparatio* essentially undercuts the intention of the scholastic distinction. Merit *de condigno* is given no place.

first advent. It would seem that Luther is presented with the perfect opportunity to relate the preparatory function of the law to the revelation and confession of sin. The parallel suggests that since one's preparation for Christ's spiritual advent requires a knowledge and confession of sin, the law should likewise be vested with such an office. But Luther does not make this connection. The law's preparation of Israel for the coming of Christ remains above all one of figural adumbration, not revelation of sin. It was "the *figura* and *preparatio* of the people for receiving Christ."³¹⁸ It is true that there is also a recognition of moral impotence among the faithful of Israel—the need for grace to truly fulfill the commandments—but Luther does not here explicitly connect this to the law. The movement from law to gospel is not primarily the movement from sin to grace, but from figure to truth, prophecy to fulfillment.

Nor does Luther move in the other direction and extend the law's role beyond its Old Testament boundaries. Again, the analogy would seem to press Luther's rigorous *heilsgeschichtlich* framework to the breaking point, yet it remains intact: the movement from knowledge and confession of sin to Christ's spiritual coming is not the movement from law to gospel. The law's office remains the work of the past, the *praeparatio* of the Old Testament. The only parallel that Luther wishes to draw is that of *petere* and *expectare*. The problem, of course, is that since the law is now theologically irrelevant, grace has to perform contradictory offices. It is the gospel that brings both the revelation of sin and absolution. With the gospel as the only "law" in the New Testament, it is simultaneously a demand that stands over and against the believer, *iudiciam*, and that which fulfills the demand, *iustitia*—both the cause of angst and the only source of comfort. This equivocation of the gospel is continual, and thus any notion of progress remains relative and indeed uncertain.

³¹⁸ WA 55II, 877, 102.

However, the pressure that Luther's analogy exerts on the traditional structure does appear to have created a few stress cracks. We now turn to a few examples that seem to anticipate an understanding of the law which goes beyond its limited role in salvation history and therefore make room for a quite different understanding of law and gospel. It is precisely in the meeting of sin and the law where such a possibility occurs.

Sub Peccato—Sub Lege

It is important to recognize that in Luther's early lectures it is not possible to identify a cohesive theology without some inconsistencies and contradictions. This is especially the case with the *Dictata* where, as one might expect in his first major exegetical effort, traditional ideas are being worked out alongside his own creative impulses. To attempt a synthesis of Luther's thought in this early stage would not appreciate the nature of his theological development which is far more complex than an interpretation of a single biblical passage. On the other hand, neither should every new expression be lifted up to the level of a "little breakthrough." Seeking a balance between these two, we proceed with evaluating the following texts.

One of the most striking texts in the Psalm lectures on law and gospel can be found in Psalm 103. It would appear that Luther has extended the role of the Mosaic law beyond the Old Testament and into the spiritual life of the individual when he says that "the old law is not spiritually understood except by the crucifixion of the flesh...But the new law is salvation and liberation of the spirit. And so everything that pertains to the destruction of the old man comes together in the old law, while everything that pertains to the building up of the new man comes together in the new law. Therefore the former is judgment, the latter righteousness; the former

wrath, the latter mercy; the former hard, the latter sweet.”³¹⁹ A little later he goes on to say, “the church lives in this life in the midst of two mountains, that is, between the old and the new law, which are united.”³²⁰ What should we make of this? Does Luther, as Gerhard Ebeling maintains, now conceive of law and gospel according to existential rather than *heilsgeschichtlich* categories so that the Christian church exists in a continual tension “*zwischen den Zeiten, zwischen tempus legis und tempus gratiae*”?³²¹

The first thing to note is that in both of these passages Luther is not speaking according to tropology, but allegory; that is, he is not applying the text to the individual but to the church. Later, when he does go on to make the tropological application and relate the text to the daily life of the individual, *all discussion of law and gospel ceases*.

Second, in both of these passages the allegorical sense deals with the correct use of the Scriptures, i.e., the church’s teaching and preaching. The designations of old law and new law are, therefore, used in the sense of the two-part canon, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. So, in the first passage, which is a comment on verse 2—“Stretching out heaven like a tent, you cover its upper parts with water”—Luther interprets “heaven” as “the book of Scripture, by which the whole tabernacle of the church is covered.” It is especially the spiritual understanding of the Scriptures of the old law, because as a tent is made from an animal skin stripped of all its flesh, so the spiritual meaning of the Old Testament is

³¹⁹ WA 55II, 803, 101-8: “Quod lex vetus spiritualiter intellecta non est nisi Crucifixio carnis. . . . Sed lex noua est salus et liberatio spiritus. Et sic veteri conueniunt omnia, que ad destructionem veteris hominis pertinent, Noue autem omnia, que ad constructionem noui hominis. Ideo illa Iudicium, hec Iustitia, Illa ira, haec misericordia, Illa dura, haec dulcis.” Notice that the *dura—duclis* contrast reflects the relationship of letter and spirit held by Luther from the beginning: the hard shell of the letter cracked open on the rock of Christ to reveal the sweet kernel of the spirit, WA 55I, 6, *RGI* 2.

³²⁰ WA, 55II, 811, 326-7: “...Ecclesia intra medium duorum montium versatur in hac vita, i.e. inter veterem et nouam legem concordantes.”

stripped of the carnal letter.³²² This is nothing else than to recognize the New Testament fulfillment of the Old Testament figures, “for the figures indeed sound carnal, but nevertheless now they are taken spiritually.... wherefore, if you hear and see any figure of the law, it will appear as entirely flesh and fat, but when you have separated it from the spirit, you will hold the skin in which the flesh was, but the flesh has been emptied. This is to say: if you look at the law as a sign (*signum*) and not as the reality (*rem*), it is skin without the flesh, but if you look at it as the reality and not as a sign, it is flesh and not skin... i.e., the letter stripped off is the *lex spiritualis*.”³²³

In verse 10, from which the second passage arises, Luther is just as clear. “You make springs gush forth in the valleys; in the midst of mountains the waters will run” concerns the teachers of the church and their books (“springs”) which base their teaching on prophets and apostles (“mountains”), that is, the writings of the Old and New Testament. Only then will the living waters flow. The church lives in the midst of the old and new law because “these are the two testaments, the two lots, the two inheritances with which the church is instructed in this life... nothing is to be expounded in Scripture, unless it be proved by and agree with the authority of either testament.”³²⁴ The old law speaks of earthly glory and as

³²¹ Ebeling, “Die Anfänge von Luthers Hermeneutik,” 50.

³²² WA 55II, 802, 78-82: “Secundo Celum Est liber Scripturae, quo tegitur vniuersum tabernaculum Ecclesiae. ‘Sicut pellem’, non ‘sicut carnem’, Quia Scriptura, postquam extensa est per spiritualement intelligentiam, nihil iam carnalis et literalis intelligentiae habet, Sed extenuat et mortificat et separat a se omnem carnem. Maxime autem Scriptura veteris legis ‘pellis’ dicitur.”

³²³ WA 55II, 802, 85-6, 95-803, 100: “Quia figure quidem carnaliter sonant, Sed tamen spiritualiter nunc accipiuntur... Quare si audis et inspicias figuram legis aliquam, apparet totum caro et crassum, Sed vbi spiritu ipsum segregaueris, pellem tenes, in qua caro fuit, Sed caro eucata est. Hoc est: si legem inspicias vt signum et non rem, pellis est et sine carne, Si autem inspicias vt rem et non signum, caro est et non pellis... i.e. Litera exuta lex spiritualis est.”

³²⁴ WA 55II, 810, 304- 811, 334: “...sunt doctores et eorum libri, Qui oriuntur ex Apostoloum et prophetarum libris... Sic Vetus lex et noua lex faciunt eandem vallem... prophetae et Euangelium conueniunt in

such is only a figure of the heavenly glory taught in the new law, yet when the old law is expounded by the new—as a figure now fulfilled—then it is edifying. The Jews, however, look to the old law not as a figure but as the reality to be desired. They exist outside of this valley, so to speak, on the outward slope of the mountain of the law, but there the living waters cannot flow.

The ideas presented here are in line with the traditional distinction of law as figure and gospel as its fulfillment—the same framework in which he interpreted Galatians. The church is to find benefit in teaching from both testaments when the earthly figures of the old law are explained spiritually according to the new. However, Luther’s manner of expressing this traditional distinction is more distinctive, reflecting a theology of revelation rigorously centered on the cross. While the revelational significance of the cross is not in itself new, Luther’s application is more comprehensive for his theological method, as indicated in his later expression, *theologia crucis*.³²⁵ Throughout the *Dictata*, Luther sees the new law’s spiritual interpretation of the old concretely and definitively revealed on the cross. The fleshly figures of the old law are analogous to the flesh of Christ—beneath it, despite the appearance of the opposite, is the divinity, the *spiritualia*. By crucifying his flesh, Christ was in effect condemning all things carnal in so far as they are things to be desired in and of themselves. Christ spiritually

vna Ecclesia...Licet in vertice differeant, quia illa in gloria saeculi, ista in gloria caeli altissima est... Sic ergo Ecclesia intra medium duorum montium versatur in hac vita, i.e. inter veterem et nouam legem concordantes. Psal. 67.: ‘Si dormiatis inter medios cleros’ etc. Hec sunt duo testamenta, duae sortes, duae hereditates, quibus instruitur Ecclesia in hac vita... nihil in scriptura est exponendum, nisi auctoritate vtriusque testamenti probetur et consonet.” Luther’s earlier scholia on Ps. 67, to which we are here referred, gives the same interpretation, WA 55II, 363, 221f. Following Augustine (Ps. 67:13), “to sleep in the midst of lots” is to meditate and study the two testaments and thus learn to forsake temporal things and seek the eternal things.

³²⁵ See Walter von Loewenich, *Luther’s Theology of the Cross*, trans. Herbert Bouman (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976); Ebeling, “Die Anfänge von Luthers Hermeneutik,” 29-42; and for a helpful analysis limited to the Heidelberg Disputation itself see Gerhard Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross. Reflections on Luther’s Heidelberg Disputation, 1518* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997). For the tradition’s emphasis on the cross as hermeneutical event, see de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, vol. 1, 239-41.

interprets the figures of the old law by bringing them to an end in the cross; their vanity is now clearly revealed, they are “crucified” in him. Thus, as the cross of Christ itself, the *very act* of interpreting the old law spiritually is a moral lesson for us: “Therefore [the old law] is called skin, so that it might be empty of flesh and *teach that the flesh must be emptied with its fat and gross lusts.*”³²⁶ Hence the crucifixion of Christ’s flesh and the fleshly figures of the law is simultaneously the condemnation of all that the *old man* holds dear. It is likewise his crucifixion, his *iudicium*. In this way “everything that pertains to the destruction of the old man comes together in the old law.” It is not that the old law judges the old man; rather it is the old law which is judged by the revelation of the new, showing the old man likewise condemned and dead.³²⁷

From the perspective of its *fulfillment*, the figures of the old law testify to the vanity of all earthly and carnal things; that is, they all share the same fate. The end of the law of Moses signifies the end of all those who savor the things of the flesh: the carnal Jews and the synagogue, the heretics, the ungodly Christians, the old man. This does not mean, however, that Luther now considers the law to have a theological function beyond the Old Testament. It is precisely its *irrelevance* that is being worked out. The *res* has come, the *signum* is no longer needed. Forget the shadow and follow after the truth. To spiritually interpret the law is to see its

³²⁶ WA 55II, 803, 102-3: “Quia pellis ideo vocatur, quod sit vacua carne et doceat carnem euacuandam suis concupiscentiis pinguibus et crassis.”

³²⁷ This is in accord with Luther’s familiar definition of the gospel as both *iudicium* and *iustitia*, especially as he describes it in his scholia to Ps. 71. See also Luther’s comments to Ps. 100:2 (WA 55II, 769-72) which describe law and gospel in very similar terms and make clear that the *spiritual law and the gospel are the same* (770, 197-8: Quia lex spiritualis et euangelium idem sunt), that they do the *same works* (772, 254-5: sunt eadem quidem opera), and that the relationship of the gospel to the witness of the law is that of *judge* (770, 221- 771, 223: Sic lex et E[uangelium] Ro. 3.: ‘Iustitia [Dei] testificata a [lege] et prophetis’. E[diverso] mutuo se respiciunt, lex est testis, Euangelium Iudex).

death.³²⁸ The Christian is taught by the law in the same way one learns about mortality when staring at a corpse.

What is ambiguous here and noticeably missing throughout the rest of the *Dictata* is the law's explicit sin revealing function that is so characteristic of Luther's later theology. Not only is the theological purpose of the law limited to the time of the Old Testament, but even here it is not chiefly concerned with the revelation of sin but the figural adumbration of Christ and the gospel.³²⁹ Pauline passages which talk of the *lex peccati* (Rom. 7:23, 25; 8:2) or the law's *cognitio peccati* (Rom. 3:20, 7:7) pepper the lectures throughout, but without much indication of how Luther understands these passages.³³⁰ There are, however, two passages which stand out as

³²⁸ Cf. WA 55II, 682, 75- 683, 78 (Ps. 88:44): "Sicut enim Christus de vita ista et transitoria per mortem iuit ad aliam, Sic voluit, Vt lex et Synagoga de vita litere transitoriae et visibilis transiret in spiritum inuisibilem et Ecclesiam aeternam per occisionem et mortem litere et vmbrarum et figurarum"; WA 55I, 618 (Ps. 88:45): "Et omnia, que apud legem in gloria erant, mutauit in ignominiam, Quia figura erant internorum et spiritualium, que cessare debuerunt et polluta fieri et prophanari adueniente illo, quod figurabant. Sic hodie vsque omnia, que pulchra, munda, fortia et bona sunt in mundo, aptissime significant spiritualia."

³²⁹ Luther was certainly familiar with the idea from the tradition, but it appears very rarely and doesn't seem to have impacted his overall view of the law. So for example, glossing Ps. 18:9, Luther contrasts the *nova lex*, which brings joy to the heart, with the law of Moses, which "crucifies the heart because it increases knowledge of sin," WA 55I, 162, 11- 164, 1: "lex autem Mosi crucifigit corda, quia auget conscientiam peccati." Yet later in the psalm he notes that the law of Moses can only show external and carnal sins, not the hidden sins of the soul (Ibid., 168, *RGI* 14). Augustine's interpretation of the law is reproduced in a gloss to Ps. 77:5, WA 55I, 548: "et legem posuit in israel per quam peccatores ostenderet esse et sic ad gratiam suspirare faceret"; *RGI* 9: "Idem est 'lex et 'testimonium' secundum b. Augustinum, dicitur autem testimonium [legis] his, qui ea non 'legitime vtuntur', quia per legem conuincuntur esse peccatores. His autem, qui ea, ad quem fugere debeant, vt liberentur. Vnde Ro. 3.: 'Nunc autem sine lege Iustitia manifestata est, testificata a lege et prophetis.'" Nevertheless, the rest of the Psalm stresses the law as *figure* of the gospel.

³³⁰ WA 55I, 350 (Ps. 41:2); 502 (Ps. 70:2); 718, *RGI* 9 (Ps. 106:10); 816 (Ps. 121:4); WA 55II, 206, 30 (Ps. 36:6); 323, 360-3 (Ps. 59:3); 438, 128-9 (Ps. 71:2); 595, 136-7 (Ps. 79:17); 782, 105-10 (Ps. 101:5); 882, 62-9 (Ps. 115:10); 912, 618-19 (Ps. 118:25); 988, 2774-6 (Ps. 118:146). Luther's understanding of "lex peccati" in the *Dictata* has nothing to do with the law itself but is another name for *concupiscence*, i.e. the "lex membrorum" or "lex carnis"; cf. Luther's glosses on Lombard, WA 9, 73, 21f. It is not until his Romans lectures that "lex peccati" first appears as another name for the law; cf. WA 56, 335, 6. In a comment to Ps. 15:4 (WA 55II, 118, 11-7), Luther follows Hugo Cardinalis and cites both Rom. 5:20, "the law intervened to increase the trespass; but where it increased the trespass, grace also increased" and 7:7, "through the law is knowledge of sin," but then stresses that it is through *grace* by which one recognizes that sin abounds. Galatians 3:22, "Scripture has concluded all things under sin," cited three times in the lectures, is applied generally to the whole testimony of Scripture rather than the specific purpose and function of the law: WA 55I, 290 (Ps. 31:1); WA 55II, 267, 104-7 (Ps. 49:14); WA 55II, 889, 21-2 (Ps. 117:1). Cf. also Luther's comments to Faber's *Adnotationes*, WA 4, 497, 11-12.

having the potential to take Luther's thinking on the law into new directions. Towards the end of his scholia to Ps. 89 he remarks, "even until now the one who is under sin is under the law"; and in a gloss on Ps. 129 he says, "everyone who is in sin, is still under the law." It appears that Luther has extended the traditional *heilsgeschichtlich* designation "*sub lege*" beyond the temporal boundaries of the Old Testament and into the life of every sinner and penitent. Is this a mere analogy of circumstances, or does the law continue to confine the sinner *even until now*?

Perhaps it is just an interesting coincidence that the authorship of Ps. 89 was attributed to Moses himself, but the fact remains that Luther offers several important statements therein regarding the function of the law. The main theme of the psalm is Israel's turning away from a spiritual understanding of the law to that of the letter at the time of Christ. Moses, who foresees this event, prays for his people that they might be "rescued by the coming of Christ." Unless they cease to savor the carnal things of the law they will remain under wrath, sin, and the curse of the law.³³¹ Their rejection of Christ will bring about a great humiliation, one which is still manifest among the Jews to this day.³³²

Luther sticks to this theme throughout, contrasting the destiny of the carnal with that of the spiritual. Coming to verse 8, "You have set our iniquities before you; our age (*saeculum*) in the light of your face," he applies this contrast to knowledge of sin. Instead of "our age" (*saeculum nostrum*), the Hebrew has "our hidden things" (*abscondita*

³³¹ WA 55II, 686, 1-6: "Iste psalmus secundum b. Augustinum Est oratio pro populo Israel, ne per iram Dei cadat a spiritu in literam, Vel certe vt iam lapsus eruatur per aduentum Christi. Et merito; pro quo enim legislator oraret quam pro populo suo? Quem vidit in futurum deserta spiritus fide omnia carnaliter in lege sapere Et sic manere sub ira et peccato et maledicto legis."

³³² WA 55II, 688, 73-5: "Sed Moses de suis proprie loquitur, quos in grauissimam preuidit humilitatem auertendos, vt nunc omnes palam vident. Et quod peius est, de ista in aeternam contritionem ibunt."

nostra), that is, our hidden *sins*.³³³ Luther interprets these to be “mystical sin, which is in the spirit and not the letter.” These sins are not transgressions of the law, but *original sin* and *concupiscence*. “The Jews cared nothing of these, as the Lord argues in Matt. 5; they did not regard the will to do evil as sin, but only the act.”³³⁴ They judged little and legal sins (*legalia peccata*) but had no concern for the inner things of the soul.³³⁵ The implication is that such hidden sin cannot be revealed by the law. Luther’s reference to the Sermon on the Mount indicates that only the *new law* can bring about such knowledge.³³⁶ Here we have the traditional distinction of law and gospel once again: the old law commands only the hand, but the new touches even upon the will.

Bearing this in mind, we now turn to his comments on verse 15, “We have rejoiced for the days in which you humbled us; the years in which we saw evils.” Here too we have a Hebrew variant: “Make us glad for the days in which you *afflicted* us.”

³³³ Cf. his interpretation of this passage in the gloss, WA 55I, 622, *RGI* 10: “hebreus. ‘Abscondita nostra’, i.e. peccata occulta, que lex non potuit purgare, Sed tantum gratia. Et propter talia omne tempus dicitur ‘saeculum nostrum’ Et non tempus gratiae. Et ita concordant translationes. Quando enim in peccatis sumus, extra tempus gratiae sumus, Sed in tempore seu saeculo nostro.” Rather than a synonym for the New Testament era, *tempus gratiae* is here used in a more theological sense roughly equivalent to one’s state of grace. The corresponding *tempus legis*, however, is not used to describe one *in peccatis*.

³³⁴ WA 55II, 691, 159-64: “Et sic magis exprimitur peccatum mysticum, Quod est in spiritu et non in litera. Vt dixi Psal. 18.: ‘Ab occultis meis munda’, i.e. non tantum ab iis, quae ex lege contraxi, Sed quae ex originali et concupiscentia etc.; quae Iudaei nihil curabant, vt Matt. 5. Dominus disputat, Quod voluntatem mali non pro peccato reputabant, Sed tantum opus.” Cf. Luther’s gloss to Ps. 18, WA 55I, 168, *RGI* 14: “... ‘ab occultis’, i.e. etiam a delictis spiritualibus ‘munda me’ (non tantum a carnalibus [literalibus, q.d. veniat queso lex ista, que occulta emaculat]), que iam ex lege Domini predicta intellexit esse in anima [quia ista lex tantum aperta mundat], quia lex Domini animam obligat, quae est in occultis et coram Deo.”

³³⁵ WA 55II, 693, 204-5: “parua et legalia peccata Iudicant, interiora autem et in anima nihil curant.”

³³⁶ Cf. his gloss at the beginning of the psalm where, citing Rom. 1:18, he shows that only the gospel can reveal to man his sinful state before God, WA 55I, 620, *RGI* 2: “Ignoravit enim omnis homo se esse sub ira Dei, donec euangelium veniret et eam manifestaret. Ro. 1.: ‘Reuelatur enim (scil. in Euangelio) ira Dei de caelo’. Et hoc idem facit psalmus iste in spiritu loquens, primum gratias agens pro eo, quod infra futurum petit.” Cf. also WA 55I, 588 (Ps. 84:3): “operuisti...omnia peccata eorum non tantum legalia, que contra ‘Iustitias carnis’ sunt, Sed et spiritualia,” *RGI* 3: “Lex autem operiebat tantum ea, que erant contra ‘Iustitias carnis’, Sed Gratia etiam ea, que contra Iustitias Dei et spiritus fiunt, que relinquebat lex, sicut et omnis facit humana lex.”

What then are these days of humiliation and affliction? In typical fashion Luther elaborates in the voice of the psalmist, “These are the days and the time of guilt, when we were *sub lege* and *sub peccato*.” This is in line with the rest of the psalm, for the Jews who ran after the things of the letter and the things of the flesh were under wrath, under sin, and under the curse of the law. But the sentences which follow shift to a more universal thrust: “And even until now the one who is *sub peccato* is *sub lege*. And there [i.e. *sub peccato/lege*] are the afflictions of the conscience and its evils, for ‘many are the scourges of the sinner’.”³³⁷ It thus appears that to be “under the law” is not determined by the time in which one lives but by one’s spiritual condition, whether one is “under sin.”

Luther certainly knows that all are sinners, but does that mean that all are under the law in some sense? It is difficult to determine the implications one might draw from such a brief statement. Luther is not altogether clear on what it actually means to be under the law—whether under its curse, its obligations, or its accusations. The issue is further complicated by his reference to Ps. 31:10, “Many are the scourges of the sinner, but mercy will surround him who hopes in the Lord.” In every other place that Luther cites this passage the sinner is clearly the Jew or the heretic in contrast to the righteous who, surrounded by the mercy of God, have only one scourge in this life: the flesh. In other words, “sinners” are unbelievers.³³⁸ If this is the case here as well, then Luther’s use of *sub lege* is less a general statement about the theological role of the law than the status of those outside the church.

³³⁷ WA 55II, 697, 305-9 (Ps. 89:15): “**Laetati sumus pro diebus, quibus nos humiliasti; annis quibus vidimus mala.** Hebreus: ‘Letifica nos pro diebus, quibus nos afflixisti’. Et hii sunt dies et tempus culpe, quando sub lege fuimus sub peccato. Et vsque nunc quoque sub lege est, qui sub peccato est. Et ibi sunt afflictiones conscientie et mala. Quia ‘Multa flagella peccatoris’.”

³³⁸ WA 55I, 292 (Ps. 31:10); WA 55II, 181, 127-9 (Ps. 31:10); WA 55II, 768, 165-8 (Ps. 100:1). Cf. Luther’s sermon from 1514 which applies the passage to “impio iuxta Hebraicum,” WA 1, 40, 35.

The second passage, arising from Luther's gloss to Ps. 129, is much easier to explain, though one ought to be equally guarded in his conclusions. Luther first offers the prophetic-literal sense of the psalm: a petition for Christ's advent. He notes that one should not understand this psalm as a prayer for physical redemption from captivity, as the Jews do, but as the spiritual redemption of the whole human race from the captivity of sin.³³⁹ But because this psalm has also been designated as a penitential psalm, Luther is also quick to point out that "because everyone who is *in peccato*, is still *sub lege*, therefore morally, it is a prayer for any sins."³⁴⁰ Throughout the rest of the psalm, Luther takes in both meanings simultaneously. The prayer for propitiation is properly for Christ's first coming, but the death of Christ continues to be applied to us daily: "Until today no one is redeemed save by his blood, i.e., *by faith in his passion*."³⁴¹

In addition to his opening statement, Luther refers to the law three times in this psalm. The first is an explanation of verse 3: "on account of your law I wait for you, O Lord." In this place Luther puts forward the same interpretation of the law which we saw in the Galatians passages—the figures of the law direct Israel to God's future mercy in Christ, indeed, they in effect *promise* it.³⁴² Here Luther is speaking only about the law's function in the

³³⁹ WA 55I, 833, *RGI* 1: "Est autem Expressa petitio redemptionis populi a peccatis, non sicut Iudaei expectant, carnalis a captiuitate. Ideo primo intelligitur de redemptione per Christum facta toti generi humano..."; WA 55I, 835, *RGI* 10: "...iste versus exponit totum psalmum, cogens eum de spiritali redemptione intelligi."

³⁴⁰ WA 55I, 833, *RGI* 1: "Sed quia omnis, qui est in peccato, est adhuc sub lege, Ideo moraliter Est oratio pro quibuscunque peccatis."

³⁴¹ WA 55I, 835, *RGI* 7: "Quia Vsque hodie neminem redimit nisi sanguine suo, i.e. fide passionis suae"; WA 55I, 833, *RGI* 1: "Et totiens Moritur pro nobis Christus, quoties eius mors nobis applicatur ad vitam." Notice that the obvious connections to the Eucharist are entirely missing.

³⁴² WA 55I, 834: "**et propter legem tuam** in qua promisisti misericordiam expectantibus te." I find no basis for Preus' explanation, "Here, *lex* means God's promise of mercy (not the *lex Mosis*)," *From Shadow to Promise*, 210, n. 25. Cf. note 207 above.

Old Testament. A few verses later, however, *lex* and *peccatum* appear together and are now applied more generally. “Israel” is glossed with “his people,” and the iniquities from which they are redeemed are interior sins, “which neither the law nor man is able to take away.”³⁴³

How shall we interpret the significance of these statements? Here, nearing the end of his lectures, Luther is beginning to talk about the law apart from its role in salvation history.³⁴⁴ Moreover, it is the *Christian penitent* in need of forgiveness that is also said to exist *sub lege*. Indeed, Luther is already of the opinion that in some sense one is *semper paenitens*.³⁴⁵

Still, one should be cautious about attributing too much to this text. Rather than an intentional statement about the law’s theological function, it may be that this text merely reflects Luther’s effort to harmonize the liturgical/tropological use of this psalm with his prophetic-literal interpretation. That is to say, the correlation between existence *sub lege* and existence *sub peccato* is readily apparent to Luther as an *analogy*. After all, isn’t the *tempus legis* a time of revelational darkness and moral imperfection, a time when grace is absent but desperately needed and sought? Certainly, one who is plagued by temptations and sin can also be said to be in such darkness and in need of grace. The law’s purpose and function is therefore not extended across the temporal divide into the life of the Christian, but rather the situation of the penitent is “read back” into the historical category, *sub lege*.

³⁴³ WA 551, 834: “**Quia apud dominum... misericordia ‘gratia’, Sed apud nos lex et peccatum... Et ipse redimet** Christus in carne ‘per sanguinem’ suum **israel** populum suum : **ex omnibus iniquitatibus eius** interioribus etiam, que lex et homo non potuit auferre.”

³⁴⁴ In spite of the difficulty with dating the progress of the Psalm lectures, as well as the chronological relationship of the glosses to the scholia, we can still be fairly certain that the glosses to Ps. 129 were written well into 1515.

³⁴⁵ E.g. WA 55II, 632, 89-90. See especially Schwarz, *Vorgeschichte*, 167f.; and Bell, *Divus Bernhardus*, 62-74.

This much, however, we should say: this is the first place in which *lex*, in the sense of the law of Moses, is clearly part of Luther's tropological application to the individual. Whether or not Luther was aware of the direction such a statement could take him is ultimately beside the point. In a few months he would begin a very close study of Paul's letter to the Romans along with Augustine's *De spiritu et littera* with the result that *lex* would become one of the most important theological concepts in Luther's reformation theology.

CHAPTER THREE

GALATIANS LECTURES 1516-1517

Introduction

After he had lectured for two years on the Psalter, Luther began a new series of lectures, this time from the New Testament. His interest in Pauline themes was evident throughout the *Dictata*, so turning to the apostle next seemed like a logical choice. Not that he was unique in this. While Paul had certainly received attention throughout the Middle Ages, it appeared that the epistles were being studied with a renewed interest. Humanists, excelling in their own epistolary talents, were especially engaged with the writings of Paul.³⁴⁶ Soon new commentaries and annotations using the most recent humanist scholarship began to appear—a felicitous context for the young doctor of Wittenberg, who found several of these works useful. But Luther’s intense interest in Paul would yield a different kind of fruit than what could be harvested from these other works. Here, as he poured over commentary and text, Luther would come to a new understanding—of Paul to be sure, but also of the entire Scriptures.

Although Luther’s Galatians lectures of 1516-17 serve as the central text of this chapter, it is necessary to introduce them by giving some attention to his first major exposition of Paul,

³⁴⁶ Maybe not exactly a “Pauline Renaissance,” there was, nevertheless, a renewed interest in Pauline exegesis in the 15th and 16th centuries: Lorenzo Valla, *Collatio Novi Testamenti*, 1449 (edited and printed by Erasmus in 1505); John Colet, *Ennaratio in Epistolam S. Pauli ad Romanos*, 1497; Marsilio Ficino, *In Epistolas Pauli* (unfinished), 1499; Faber Stapulensis, *S. Pauli epistolae XIV ex vulgata adiecta intelligentia ex Graeco cum commentariis*, 1512; Wendelin Steinbach, *Commentarius in Epistolam S. Pauli ad Galatas*, 1513 and his *Commentarius in Epistolam ad Hebraeos*, 1516/17; Erasmus, *Novum Instrumentum*, 1516. See John Payne, “Erasmus and Lefèvre d’Etaples as Interpreters of Paul,” 54-83; Helmut Feld, “Die Wiedergeburt des Paulinismus,” 294-327; idem, ed., *Wendelini Steinbach: Opera exegetica*, xv-xx.

the lectures on Romans, 1515-16.³⁴⁷ While a detailed excursus on these lectures would distract us terribly from our question, some general observations still ought to be made to put Galatians in its context.

1. Lectures on Romans, 1515-1516

The significance of the Romans lectures is indisputable. Even apart from the long-suffered debate over Luther's "breakthrough" and the interpretation of Romans 1:17, the Romans lectures mark a key shift in Luther's theological development. To begin with, there are important changes in form. In comparison to the vast tangled forest of the *Dictata*, the Romans lectures are refreshingly navigable with an almost singularity of direction and theme. The four-fold application of Scripture, which could often take Luther down the confusing path of digression, is scarcely employed in Romans. Yet not only is there a greater coherence and clarity in these lectures than previously, but there are also new theological directions taken that move Luther considerably beyond the theology expressed in his first lectures. In Romans, key theological concepts are either deepened or recast entirely.

What could have precipitated such sudden and marked change? The differences between the lectures are largely dictated by two factors: the subject matter of the Pauline text itself, and

³⁴⁷ Some time between the spring and fall of 1515 Luther finished his first lectures on the Psalms and began lecturing on Romans. Greater precision on the dates has eluded scholarly consensus. Johannes Ficker cites the witness of John Oldecop, who matriculated at Wittenberg on 16 April 1515. In his reminiscences Oldecop indicated that Luther was already engaged in lecturing on Romans by that time. Furthermore, on the basis of the surviving manuscript and student notes, Ficker has determined that Luther's Romans lectures extended over three semesters (see WA 56, xii-xiii, xxvi-xxx; and WA 57I, xix-xxii). However, Heinrich Boehmer, *Luthers erste Vorlesung*, 7, questioned the reliability of Oldecop on this matter. Having found indications in the *Dictata* that the lectures continued on throughout the summer semester, he has placed the start of Romans in the fall of 1515. Likewise, Erich Vogelsang has followed Boehmer in dating the progression of Luther's early lectures. See Vogelsang, "Zur Datierung der frühesten Lutherpredigten," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 50 (1931): 112-45; idem, "Der junge Luther" in *Luthers Werke in Auswahl*, 3rd ed., vol. 5 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1963), 40, 222. More recently, however, Gabriele Schmidt-Lauber, *Luthers Vorlesung über den Römerbrief 1515/16. Ein Vergleich zwischen Luthers Manuskript und den studentischen Nachschriften*. Archiv zur Weimarer Ausgabe der Werke

Luther's new acquaintance with Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings. It is this shift in *texts* that is perhaps the greatest shift in Luther's early theological development. Thus, the Psalter was a protean text, unified only in its genre as prophecy, a mosaic of veiled utterances pointing to Christ through *figura*—truly a “dark and holy labyrinth.”³⁴⁸ Now in Romans, Luther was looking at a text that, though equally “prophetic” and christological, followed the form of a single sustained argument appearing in plain language, clear and straightforward. Consequently, the hermeneutical approach had changed. To interpret the Psalter one needed to delve beneath the figures of the letter in order to bring forth the hidden spiritual meaning. But with the epistles of Paul one had only to attend to the apostle's particular use of words within the context of the larger argument, to heed the *modus loquendi apostoli*.

What is more, Luther had a *new* Augustine before him.³⁴⁹ To be sure, Luther had already encountered some of Augustine's works and *dicta* through the *studium generale* of the Erfurt monastery.³⁵⁰ A more careful study of Augustine's writings had begun by 1509 and for his Psalm lectures he had used the *Ennarationes in Psalmos* extensively.³⁵¹ Nevertheless,

Martin Luthers, vol. 6 (Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1994), 12-13, has followed Ficker and opted for the earlier date.

³⁴⁸ WA 55I, 6, 22-24: “EX quibus tale educitur fil[i]um directorium in hoc caliginoso et sacro labyrintho.”

³⁴⁹ For the Romans lectures Luther used the edition of Augustine's works printed by the humanist Johannes Amerbach in 1506. Earlier he had used a 1489 edition of the *Augustini opuscula*. See Junghans, *Der junge Luther*, 109-15, for a discussion of the humanist editions of the Fathers.

³⁵⁰ See Hans-Ulrich Delius, *Augustin als Quelle Luthers: Eine Materialsammlung* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1984), 6; idem, “Zu Luthers Augustinrezeption,” in *Congresso Internazionale su S. Agostino nel XVI Centenario della Conversione*, III, *Studia Ephemeridis “Augustinianum”* 26 (Rome: Institutum Patristicum “Augustinianum,” 1987), 244-45.

³⁵¹ 1509 is the earliest documentation of Luther's engagement with Augustine's writings. Junghans has argued that Luther's lectures on Lombard's *Sentences* occasioned his deeper interest in Augustine, *Der junge Luther*, 130.

Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings were not yet part of Luther's working repertoire.³⁵² It was not until his lectures on Romans that Luther turned to these later writings and studied them intensively. From this point on the church father took on a new significance for Luther: Augustine became his most valuable exegetical tool, the premier interpreter of Paul—*interpres eius fidelissimus*.³⁵³

It is not possible to overestimate the importance that this simple change of texts had for Luther's own theological development.³⁵⁴ It is here in this convergence of Paul and Augustine

³⁵² Certain ideas from these writings were certainly known to Luther before his lectures on Romans, mediated through the tradition, both exegetical and scholastic. However, as was apparent in the previous chapter, Augustine's interpretation of Galatians was not one of them. It is generally agreed that Luther had not yet engaged in any significant study of Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings before 1515. Cf. WABr 1, 70, 19-21: "Non quod professionis meae studio ad B. Augustinum probandum trahar, qui apud me, antequam in libros eius incidissem, ne tantillum quidem favoris habuit." See Karl Bauer, *Universitätstheologie*, 31-3; Scheel, *Martin Luther*, vol. 2, 404f.; Adolf Hamel, *Der junge Luther und Augustin. Ihre Beziehungen in der Rechtfertigungslehre nach Luthers ersten Vorlesungen 1509-1518 untersucht*, vol. 1 (Gütersloh: Verlag C. Bertelsmann, 1934), 1-12; *ibid.*, vol. 2 (1936), 1-8; Ebeling, "Die Anfänge von Luthers Hermeneutik," 16; Heinrich Bornkamm, "Zur Frage der Iustitia Dei beim jungen Luther," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 53 (1962): 40, n. 193; Bernard Lohse, "Die Bedeutung Augustins für den jungen Luther (1965)" in *Evangelium in der Geschichte: Studien zu Luther und der Reformation*, ed. Leif Grane, Bernd Moeller and Otto Hermann Pesch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988), 11-30; Leif Grane, *Modus Loquendi Theologicus. Luthers Kampf um die Erneuerung der Theologie 1515-1518*, *Acta Theologica Danica*, vol. 12 (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 18, 26, 29-30.

³⁵³ Leif Grane's studies on the Romans lectures have argued that Luther's reception of Augustine was primarily—rather, *exclusively*—as an exegetical aid for the interpretation of Paul. He was not interested in the correct understanding of Augustine *per se*. It was his insight into the text of Scripture that Luther so greatly valued. See "Augustins 'Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistola ad Romanos' in Luthers Römerbriefvorlesung," *Die Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 69 (1972): 304-30; "Divus Paulus et S. Augustinus, interpres eius fidelissimus," in *Festschrift für Ernst Fuchs*, eds. Gerhard Ebeling, Eberhard Jüngel, Gerd Schunack (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1973), 133-46; and especially *Modus Loquendi*. On the one hand, Grane's thesis offers another important riposte against the now century old critique of P. Heinrich Denifle, *Luther und Luthertum*, 2d. ed., vol. 1/3 (Mainz: Verlag von Kirchheim & Co., 1906) that Luther's use of Augustine was either a manifestation of dishonesty or stupidity (in the end, they were not exclusive options for Denifle). On the other side of the spectrum, Grane challenges the thesis developed by Heiko Oberman, that Luther was a product of an *Augustinrevivel* or *Augustinerschule* initiated by Gregory of Rimini (d. 1358). See Oberman, "Headwaters of the Reformation: Initia Lutheri—Initia Reformationis," in *Luther and the Dawn of the Modern Era: Papers for the Fourth International Congress for Luther Research*, ed. Heiko Oberman (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 40-88; *idem*, *Masters of the Reformation: the Emergence of a New Intellectual Climate in Europe*, trans. Dennis Martin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 64-112.

³⁵⁴ This is not to undervalue the other influences on Luther during this time—his own particular Anfechtungen and the council and comfort of Johann von Staupitz certainly not the least of them. See especially David Steinmetz, *Luther and Staupitz: An Essay in the Intellectual Origins of the Protestant Reformation*, Duke Monographs in medieval and renaissance Studies 4 (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1980); and Markus Wriedt, *Gnade und Erwählung: Eine Untersuchung zu Johann von Staupitz und Martin Luther*, Veröffentlichungen

that Luther would first see with clarity the rift which stood between what he believed to be the correct understanding of the Scriptures and the scholastic theology in which he was trained. Repeatedly he would place the exegesis of the “ancient theologians” opposite “our modern theologians.” More pointedly, it was *Augustine against Aristotle*, a conflict between two kinds of theology.³⁵⁵ This is not say that Luther was not critical of certain aspects of scholasticism before. As early as his lectures on Lombard’s *Sentences*, Luther could express his dislike for Aristotle’s intrusion into theology quite sharply (“that rancid philosopher”).³⁵⁶ Nonetheless, during his lectures on Romans the contrast of Augustine and Aristotle served as a far more radical critique, going beyond disputes over the particulars of doctrine to express the fundamental incompatibility of philosophy and theology.³⁵⁷ In these lectures an entire revision

des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte Mainz, Abteilung Religionsgeschichte 141 (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1991). Yet possibly Staupitz’s more significant impact on Luther was to be found indirectly; namely, through the academic and theological climate which he fashioned in the establishment of Wittenberg’s theological faculty. Quite telling are the university statutes which stressed in the introductory chapter that *Holy Scripture* was to be the standard of all knowledge, that *Aurelius Augustinus* was to be regarded as “gymnasii nostri tutelaris deus”, and that *Saint Paul*, the “tuba Euangelii”, was to be the patron of the faculty. See Markus Wriedt, “Die Anfänge der Theologischen Fakultät Wittenberg 1502-1518” in *Die Theologische Fakultät Wittenberg 1502 bis 1602*, Leucorea-Studien zur Geschichte der Reformation und der Lutherischen Orthodoxie, vol. 5 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2002), 21-22.

³⁵⁵ E.g. WA 56, 172, 5-11; 273, 6-9; 350, 23f.; 354, 14f.

³⁵⁶ Cf. WA 9, 23, 7f.; 27, 22f.; 43, 4f.: “...ex verbis Aristotelis rancidi philosophi.” For philosophy and scholasticism in general see WA Br 1, 17, 40-44; WA 9, 24, 24f.; 29, 6f.; 29, 25-26; 31, 32f.; 43, 21f.; 47, 26f.; 54, 19-21; 74, 8-11; Willigis Eckermann, “Die Aristoteleskritik Luthers. Ihre Bedeutung für seine Theologie,” *Catholica* 32 (1978): 114-30; Junghans, *Der junge Luther*, 96-171.

³⁵⁷ See Grane, *Modus Loquendi*, 17-19. This fundamental incompatibility is an *exegetical* problem, which is, for Luther, the central task of theology. Thus, the set opposition of Augustine and Aristotle is not intended as a theoretical rejection of the medieval synthesis championed by Aquinas and others. Rather, Luther is concerned with the imposition of alien philosophical concepts on the biblical text; see pages 154f. and 163-67, below. The relationship of philosophy and theology in general is a problem that cannot be dealt with here. The following is some of the most significant literature on the topic as it relates to Luther’s conception of theology: Wilhelm Link, *Das Ringen Luthers um die Freiheit der Theologie von der Philosophie* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1940); Bengt Häggglund, *Theologie und Philosophie bei Luther und in der occamistischen Tradition* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1955); Bernhard Lohse, *Ratio und Fides* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958); Brian Gerrish, *Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1962); Wilfried Joest, *Ontologie der Person bei Luther* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), esp. 56-136; Reinhold Weier, *Das Theologieverständnis Martin Luthers* (Paderborn: Verlag Bonifacius-Druckerei, 1976); Gerhard Ebeling, “Disputatio de homine”, *Lutherstudien*, vol. 2 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1977-89); idem, “Fides

of theological method was emerging from which all of Luther's subsequent reforms and conflicts would receive their orientation.³⁵⁸

With regard to the particular question of Luther's interpretation of Galatians, the new direction taken in the Romans lectures is in many ways a turning point here as well. There is a distinctly new emphasis in his understanding of the law which is reflected throughout the lectures and in the few brief allusions to Galatians therein. Whereas before in the *Dictata*, Luther focused on the theological purpose of the ceremonial law and its prefiguration of Christ, he now speaks almost exclusively of its moral commands. In fact, Luther finds this key to the understanding of the entire epistle so that those who have limited Paul's statements to the ceremonial law have fundamentally misunderstood the apostle's thought.³⁵⁹ Although he does not deny that the ceremonies prefigured Christ, Paul's concern is with the law as it enjoins one to love God and neighbor. Obviously the Decalogue is the primary expression of this demand, yet even the ceremonies and rites prescribed in Moses can bear such moral signification when

occidit rationem. Ein Aspekt der theologia crucis in Luthers Auslegung von Gal 3,6" in *Lutherstudien*, vol. 3 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1985), 181-222.

³⁵⁸ This new "theologischen Standort" is in Leif Grane's opinion the most important "Entdeckung" of Luther—"Luther und das Luthertum" in *Reformationsstudien: Beiträge zu Luther und zu Dänischen Reformation*, ed. Rolf Decot, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte Mainz, Abteilung Religionsgeschichte 49 (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1999), 117-26. His anti-scholastic, pro-Pauline theology was the fundamental groundwork for all that would follow. More discoveries were certainly to be made, but all remained oriented to the new theological perspective gained in these first lectures on Paul. One of the clearest expressions of this programmatic shift can be found in Luther's scholia to Rom. 8:19; WA 56, 371, 20-24: "Indeed I myself believe that I owe to the Lord this duty to speak against philosophy and to persuade towards Holy Scripture.... But I have been worn out by them now many years, and likewise experiencing and hearing much, I see that it is the study of vanity and perdition. Therefore I warn all of you as much as I am able, so that you quickly finish these studies and only investigate it, not to establish and defend them, but rather as we learn bad skills that we might destroy them, and errors that we might renounce them."

³⁵⁹ Cf. WA 56, 67, *RG* 1; WABr 1, 70, 1f., no. 27.

spiritually understood. Paul's "*lex*," therefore, is that which applies to all people, Jew and Gentile alike. No one is to find excuse.³⁶⁰

This almost exclusive focus on the law as moral demand clearly reflects Augustine's distinction of letter and spirit. We have already seen in *De spiritu et littera* that the Pauline use of the term "letter" refers to the law void of the Spirit's grace, not to the portions of Scripture that ought to be taken figuratively. This means that when Paul says that the law does not justify, he is not simply speaking of the ceremonial laws (*sacramenta*) which can no longer be taken literally, but also and especially the Decalogue. "Do not covet" is truly the letter that kills. Luther explicitly quotes Augustine on this point several times throughout the lectures.³⁶¹

Along these same lines, Luther now speaks of the law's preparatory function in relation to revealing and increasing sin, rather than the more positive and didactic preparation offered through shadows and figures.³⁶² Here again, the interpretation of Augustine is clearly favored,³⁶³

³⁶⁰ WA 56, 197, 7-8, 15-26 (Rom. 2:12; *Sch*): " 'Lex' hoc Loco [i.e. toto capitulo] tota lex Mosi intelligitur, vbi et decem precepta et Charitas Dei et proximi precipitur. . . . Quamquam enim ritus et ceremonias legis Mosi Gentes non acceperint nec eis sint traditae, . . . Acceperunt tamen *legem spiritualem, quam ritus et ceremoniae (vltra quod Christum figurabant) moraliter significabant*, que est impressa omnibus, sc. Iudaeis et Gentibus, ad quam quoque omnes obligantur. . . . Ecce quomodo *tota lex tradita nihil aliud est quam haec lex naturalis*, quae nulli potest esse ignota, ac per hoc nullus excusabilis est" [emphasis mine]. Cf. Faber, *S. Pauli*, 71v: "De lege scripta: haec intellige. Sed quomodo qui legem non habent: factores legis erunt? Ex eo sane: quod quicumque rationis vsus sunt capaces / inscriptam habent in cordibus suis legem naturae. Quid enim aliud est scripta lex decalogum praeceptorum continens: nisi legis naturae expressio?" Leif Grane, in "Divus Paulus et S. Augustinus," 144, and "Luthers Auslegung von Röm 2,12-15 in der Römerbriefvorlesung" in *Reformationsstudien*, 25-36, has pointed out that Paul's use of law in this general sense is the key to understanding the difficulties with Luther's use of the *facere* in this passage. It is because Paul's use of "*lex*" is intended to condemn *all people* without distinction as sinners, that leads to Luther's final exposition of this text in which he ultimately rejects the *facere* and the possibility of a positive *preparatio ad gratiam*. The student notes contain no trace of the *facere*: they have only Luther's final interpretation; WA 57I, 144, 15f.

³⁶¹ *spir. et litt.*, iv, 6; xiv, 23; 24. See WA 56, 67, 18-22, *RGI* 1; 336, 25- 337, 9.

³⁶² The most notable exception is Luther's extended scholia to 9:28 in which the "*verbum breuiatum*" is the spiritual interpretation and fulfillment of the old figures and shadows given to the Jews; that is, the law spiritually understood (WA 56, 406, 16f.). The corollary then, is that the word of the new law and the old law is the same word ("*Idem est verbum Nouae et veteris Legis*"), the distinction residing only in one's understanding of it. In light of the rest of the lectures, this passage stands out as particularly odd, not only because Luther appears to revert to a view of the law which concentrates the theological value of the ceremonial laws as *figura*, but also because of the striking antithesis between law and gospel made elsewhere in the lectures, both before and after this passage (cf. WA 56,

although Luther finds Paul's own *modus loquendi* to be decisive.³⁶⁴ Rather than “*methaphysice*” or “*moraliter*,” the apostle's description of the law is concerned with its spiritual, theological function, its relationship to the inner man, that is, man as he is *coram deo*. Metaphysics and moral philosophy, on the other hand, know nothing of the law in this capacity but can only touch upon one's external behavior in this world. Hence, philosophy's definition of the law cannot contribute to an understanding of Paul's argument, but only leads one astray.

There are several points that should here be noted. First, such a contrast between the *modus loquendi Apostoli* and the *modus methaphysicus seu moralis* illustrates that Luther's polemic against scholastic theology is not some abstract methodological critique. The opposition of theology and philosophy is an *exegetical* one; it arises from an effort to interpret the Scriptures. It is also apparent from such statements that the proper understanding of the law has assumed a place of central importance in Luther's overall critique. Some of his harshest words directed against the scholastics—*O Sawtheologen!*—arise from their misunderstanding of the law and their consequent distortion of grace and the gospel. This will become quite plain in his subsequent disputations of 1516, 1517, and 1518.³⁶⁵ Furthermore, the difference between law

338, 13- 339, 3; 424, 8-17; 426, 5-9). Luther may just be relying on his exegetical sources here, for example Ambrosiaster, in which similar interpretations of the “*verbum breuiatum*” can be found. On the other hand, this interpretation is somewhat understandable since it is Isaiah 10:22-23 that is really being discussed, a prophetic description of Israel's great apostasy at the advent of the Messiah and the simultaneous salvation of a faithful remnant. Besides, Luther never denies that there is a specific *heilsgeschichtlich* function of the ceremonial law, nor its relative continuity, as such, with its spiritual fulfillment. This is simply not what Luther believes Paul is speaking about throughout Romans when he discusses the theological significance of the law. Cf. WA 55I, 220, RGI 9; WA 55II, 253, 368f.

³⁶³ Cf. WA 56, 36, 20-3, RGI 3; 56, 16-24, RGI 2; 69, 9-10; 257, 6-14; 291, 29-30; 319, 27-32; 356, 14-16.

³⁶⁴ WA 56, 334f. (Rom. 7:1f.; *Sch.*): “Patet itaque, Quod Apostolus non methaphysice neque moraliter de lege loquitur, Sed spiritualiter et theologice...Modus loquendi Apostoli et modus methaphysicus seu moralis sunt contrarii.”

³⁶⁵ Namely, *Quaestio subscripta de viribus et voluntate hominis sine gratia* (25 September 1516); *Disputatio contra scholasticum theologiam* (4 September 1517); *Disputatio Heidelbergae habita* (26 April 1518). See especially WA 1, 147, 10-19; WA 1 227, 6- 228, 19; WA 1, 353f.

and gospel can no longer be so neatly divided between the external and the internal as traditionally. The law—*as law*—has a spiritual dimension which has something to say about the inner man. It is found most clearly in the word, “do not covet” (*non concupisces*), which reveals that all people are sinners, are inclined toward evil, are inescapably curved in upon themselves and away from God.³⁶⁶ The law according to moral philosophy can speak about the shortcomings of human deeds and individual sins, but it is only the law of theology which can speak of *homo peccator*.³⁶⁷

We can see here that Luther’s understanding of the law is unfolding in close concert with his doctrine of human sin. By contrast, it is the great folly of the scholastic theologians that they know nothing of these matters—“O ignorance of sin! O ignorance of God! O ignorance of the law!”³⁶⁸ Working within the categories of moral philosophy—the *modus Aristotelis*—original sin and actual sin are hardly to be distinguished, and sin becomes merely a “minute activity of the soul.”³⁶⁹ The state of natural man is thus not so poor that he is unable to fulfill the law. On the contrary, *homo peccator* can indeed fulfill the law (*secundum substantiam facti*); even love God above all things! Yet, for Luther such formulations drastically underestimate the radical nature of sin. Original sin cannot be “entirely removed in the twinkling of an eye!” It is not to

³⁶⁶ Cf. WA 56, 290, 4-5; 312, 1f.

³⁶⁷ Cf. WA 56, 254, 15-16 (Rom. 3:20, *Sch*): “Vnde idem est dicere: per legem cognitio ‘peccati’ siue ‘peccatorum’. Quia per ipsum cognoscimus nos peccatores et peccatum in nobis esse, malos et malum in nobis esse.”

³⁶⁸ WA 56, 279, 9-10.

³⁶⁹ WA 56, 272, 3-9: “Quae cum ita sint, Aut ego nunquam intellexi, aut non bene satis de peccato et gratia theologi scolastici sunt locuti, Qui Originale totum auferri somniant sicut et actuale, quasi sint quedam amouibilia in ictu oculi, sicut tenebrae per lucem, Cum Antiqui sancti patres Augustinus, Ambrosius multum aliter sint locuti ad modum Scripture, ille autem ad modum Aristotelis in aethicorum, Qui peccata et Iustitiam collocauit in opera et eorum positionem et priuationem similiter.” WA 56, 275, 17-19: “Haec portenta omnia ex eo Venerunt, Quod peccatum, quid esset, ignorauerunt, nec quid remissio. Quia peccatum artauerunt vsque ad minutissimum quendam motum animi sicut et Iustitiam.” Cf. WA 56, 312, 1f.

be compared to actual sins which can come and go; it is rather man's enduring inclination toward evil and therefore utterly pervasive, continuing even in the baptized.³⁷⁰ Indeed, this proclivity to sin is sin itself (*peccatum ipsa*), the root sin (*peccatum radicale*)—the rest are merely its fruit.³⁷¹ This “most abysmal darkness of our heart” runs so deep in human nature that reason cannot fathom it; one can only know it by faith. Consequently, such highly theological knowledge of sin is the sole possession of the saints, for they alone hear and believe the depth of the law's condemnation. “These are *the most hidden things of the law*: knowledge [of sin], which is never perfectly understood, but is made manifest that it might be believed.”³⁷² Thus, the presence of sin and the work of the law are inextricably bound together: *Lex enim omne peccatum tangit*.³⁷³

³⁷⁰ In the scholia to Rom. 4:7 (WA 56, 273, 10f.) Luther cites Augustine's *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*, I, xxv, 28 which argues that although concupiscentia continues to exist after baptism, it is no longer imputed. However, it is clear from the context (esp. xxiii, 25) that Augustine precisely does *not* intend to equate concupiscentia with sin. For a helpful discussion of this passage and Luther's use of Augustine see Leif Grane, “Divus Paulus et S. Augustinus”, 141-3; idem, *Modus Loquendi*, 40-42. Cf. also Denifle, *Luther und Luthertum*, 482f.; Wilhelm Braun, *Die Bedeutung der Concupiscentia in Luthers Leben und Lehre* (Berlin: Trowitzsch & Sohn, 1908), 151f.; Karl Holl, “Die Rechtfertigungslehre in Luthers Vorlesung über den Römerbrief mit besonderer Rückblick auf die Frage der Heilsgewissheit,” in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 1: *Luther* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1932), 137f.; Link, *Das Ringen Luthers*, 252-55; Rudolf Hermann, *Luthers These “Gerecht und Sünder zugleich”* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1960), 39f.; Hamel, *Der junge Luther*, vol. 2, 13-34.

³⁷¹ See WA 56, 271, 7-8 and 277, 12; 285, 16, respectively. Cf. WA 56, 290, 4-5; 312, 1f.; WA 1, 86, 20f.

³⁷² WA 56, 68, 10- 69, 21 (Rom. 7:10; *RGI* 2): “Item nec loquitur de crassa ista obfuscatione mentis, quasi nec legem, saltem secundum superficiem, sciret. Sed loquitur in persona sua et *omnium sanctorum et de ipsa obfuscatione profundissima cordis nostri*, Qua etiam sancti et sapientissimi viri suiipsius cognitionem perfecte non habent ac per hoc nec legis. . . . Ergo et legem quis intelligit? *cum sit impossibile legem intelligere, quin omne peccatum intelligatur. Lex enim omne peccatum tangit*. . . . Ideo qui se putat hanc legem intelligere: ‘*Non concupisces*’, saltem de seipso, stultus et superbus est, vt haeretici faciunt. . . . Igitur *sola fide* dicitur: ‘Quoniam iniquitatem meam ego cognosco’, quia sequitur: ‘Incerta et occulta sapientiae tuae manifestasti mihi’. *Haec sunt absconsissima legis: cognitio, que nunquam perfecte cognoscitur, Sed manifestatur, Vt credatur*” [emphasis mine]. Cf. WA 56, 67, 13- 69, 1; 231, 5f.; 235, 30-38; 340, 31f.

³⁷³ *Ibid.* Cf. WA 56, 334, 9-13; 335, 6 (Rom. 7:1, *Sch*): “Peccatum et ira est per legem. Ergo legi nullus moritur, nisi qui peccato moritur, et quicumque peccato moritur, etiam legi moritur. Et quam primum fit liber a peccato, etiam a lege liber est. Et Vbi fit seruus peccati, etiam seruus fit legi, et ita dum peccatum dominatur et regnat, etiam lex dominatur et regnat. . . . Et ideo lex est lex peccati.” WA 56, 424, 8-16: “Nam lex non nisi peccatum ostendit et reos facit ac sic conscientiam angustat. . . . Lex conscientiam vrget peccatis.” WA 56, 426, 5-9: “Igitur duo et duo contraria: Lex – peccatum, Quod ostendit et reum facit ac aegrum, immo damnatum probat. Euangelium – gratiam, Quam offert et peccatum remittit ac morbo medetur ad salutem.”

This inseparability of the law and sin leads us to another implication: the extension of the law's function beyond the Old Testament. Because this radical sin continues to be part of human existence even after baptism, the Christian also continues in some respects to live under the law.³⁷⁴ The law which awakens sin and reveals the nature of man is not just the experience of the unconverted or the carnal but the *spiritual man*.³⁷⁵ The law, therefore, cannot be limited to one period of history or one group of people, for it seizes upon every sin and every sinner until the end of this life. Moreover, any doctrine which makes demands on human works—and this includes the evangelical commands and exhortations of Christ—is really a word of law. Consequently, this places the law's relationship to the gospel in a whole new light. Traditional language defined the gospel as the new law of Christ which spiritually interpreted the old. Luther now recasts this relationship so that the gospel can only be that spiritual word when it preaches what the law requires—namely, Jesus Christ.³⁷⁶ Thus, even though Luther continues to

³⁷⁴ WA 56, 66, 28-31 (Rom. 7:6; *RGI* 2): "...*Immo semper timendum, ne sub lege simus; ideo credendum semper et orandum pro charitate. Quia quis scit, si non timore pene Vel amore comodi sui agat etiam subtilissime, in devotionibus et operibus bonis querens quietem et premium magis quam voluntatem Dei?*" [emphasis mine]. WA 56, 367, 26-30 (Rom. 8:15; *Sch*): "Item 'Omnis, qui facit peccatum, seruus est peccati' ... Inuentur *omnibus* conuenire. Quia *omnes* sunt serui peccati, Quia *omnes* faciunt peccatum, si non opere, tamen *concupiscentia et pronitate*" [emphasis mine]; WA 56, 321, 1f.; 235, 30-38. There is a tension here which is identical to the tension of *simul iustus et peccator*. According to the law one is a sinner and outside of Christ; according to the gospel one is righteous in Christ.

³⁷⁵ Here, too, Luther goes beyond Augustine. The latter saw Rom. 7:14 as a transitional verse in which Paul began speaking in his own person as one under grace who, nevertheless, struggled against the flesh (*c. ep. Pel.*, x, 17; *Contra Julianum* II, v, 13-14; *retr.* I, 23). Luther, however, understands the entire passage, beginning with verse 7, as the experience of the apostle as a spiritual man and therefore every Christian (WA 56, 67, 13- 69, 1; 339, 5f.). While Augustine would have regarded the effects of the law depicted in these earlier verses—the stirring of concupiscence, the awakening and revelation of sin—as its role *before* conversion (*c. ep. Pel.*, viii, 14- ix, 15-16; *Contra Julianum* VI, xxiii, 70f.), Luther attributes these effects to the continuing function of the law in the Christian life. For Luther's use of Augustine in this place see Grane, *Modus Loquendi*, 52-60.

³⁷⁶ WA 56, 338, 13-20 (Rom. 7:6; *Sch*): "Queritur ergo, Quare Euangelium vocetur verbum spiritus, Spiritualis doctrina, verbum gratiae et declaratio sermonum veteris legis et intelligentia in mysterio abscondita etc. Respondetur, Quod ideo proprie, Quia docet, vbi et vnde gratia seu charitas habeatur, Scil. Ihesum Christum, quem lex promisit, Euangelium Exhibit. Lex precipit Charitatem et Ihesum Christum habendum, Sed Euangelium offert et exhibet vtrunque."

use the terms “old law” and “new law,” the traditional continuity of *lex* is undermined, indeed explicitly rejected.³⁷⁷

Therefore, if the gospel is not received for what it is, then it is like the letter. Properly speaking, it is gospel where it preaches Christ; but where it rebukes and reproves or commands, it does nothing else than destroy those who presume upon their own righteousness in order to prepare a place for grace... This is the real difference between the old and new law: the old law says to those proud in their own righteousness: “You must have Christ and his Spirit”; the new law says to those humble with such a poverty and who seek Christ: “Behold, here is Christ and his Spirit.” Therefore, they who interpret “gospel” other than “good news” do not understand the gospel, as they do who have *turned that very thing into law rather than grace and have made for us a Moses out of Christ.*³⁷⁸

There are only a few brief allusions to the selected Galatians text in Luther’s Romans lectures, but they likewise testify to a shift in his thinking on the law. First of all, Luther sees the purpose of the law as expressed in Gal. 3:19, “Why then the law? On account of transgressions,” in accord with the more explicit Romans 5:20, “The law came in that sin might abound.” The intended purpose of the law is still to prepare one for the gospel, but this is done by humbling the proud through the increase and revelation of sin.³⁷⁹ The law is indeed a *pedagogue* (Gal. 3:24),

³⁷⁷ Cf. WA 56, 203, 10-12, which describes the *lex Christi* as “...lex sine lege, sine modo, sine fine.”

³⁷⁸ WA 56, 338, 20-339, 3: “Ideo Euangelium, si non recipiatur, vt loquitur, similiter est Litera. Et proprie Euangelium est, Vbi Christum predicat; Vbi autem arguit et reprobatur aut precipit, nihil aliud facit, quam quod presumentes de propria Iustitia destruit, vt gratiae locum preparet... Haec est rata differentia veteris et noue legis, Quod vetus dicit superbis in sua Iustitia: tu debes habere Christum et spiritum eius; Noua dicit humiliatis in sua eiusmodi paupertate et Christum petentibus: Ecce hic est Christus et spiritus eius. Ideo qui aliter ‘Euangelium’ quam ‘bonum nuncium’ interpretantur, non intelligunt Euangelium, vt faciunt, qui ipsum in legem potius quam in gratiam mutauerunt et ex Christo nobis Mosen faecerunt” [emphasis mine]. Cf. WA 56, 336, 24f., where “letter” are all doctrines regarding a good life, whether they are found in the Gospel or in the Mosaic law. In the scholia to Rom. 4:7 (WA 56, 274, 14f. and WA 56, 279, 3f.), Luther makes a similar accusation against the scholastic doctrine of the law which turns grace into a “new exaction beyond the law.” This polemic is taken up again in his lectures on Galatians, WA 57II, 80, 6-20: “...nova exactio ultra legem.”

³⁷⁹ WA 56, 36, 10 (Rom. 3:20; *RGI* 2): “Ad quid ergo lex? Vt humiliet superbos.” WA 56, 319, 1f. (Rom. 5:20, *Sch*): “...Quia Subintrasse legem significat peccatum, quod intrauit, permansisse, immo auctum esse. Quia peccatum intrauit et peccatum lex secuta est ipsum irritans precipiendo contraria et prohibendo volita. Ideo ait: **Vt abundaret** peccatum. Quae oratio non est causalis, Sed consecutiua, Quia Coniunctio ‘Vt’ dicit sequelam, non causam finalem legis. Non enim lex propter peccatum, licet et hoc ipsum Gal. 3. dicat: ‘Quid igitur lex? propter transgressionem posita est, donec veniret semen, cui promiserat. Sic hic: ‘Vt abundaret’ i.e. propter peccatum etc.” Luther is careful to show that the law is not in itself the *cause* of sin (lest God be the cause of sin) nor is sin’s

but the image is now decidedly negative. No longer is it a protecting guardian, but a dreadful slave master. It does not gently instruct, but it frightens and threatens. It does not prevent sin but increases it.³⁸⁰ In the *Dictata*, the law led one to Christ through the understanding of *figura*. In Romans it does so through knowledge of self. Only when a person comes to recognize the extorted nature of his good works—that every good action has resulted from the law’s threats and terrors, does he finally understand “how deeply sin and evil are rooted in him,” namely, that his deepest desire is in reality against the law and every good thing. Through such experiences one comes to acknowledge and believe that he can never fulfill the law’s demand, “do not covet.”³⁸¹ Seeking respite, he is thus driven by the pedagogue unto Christ.

In his lectures on Romans, Luther’s understanding of the law revolves around its *function*, specifically the way in which it affects the individual conscience. The *heilsgeschichtlich* sphere of law and gospel has receded into the background having all but disappeared. For Luther, Paul is speaking in the broadest of terms, addressing the human condition common to all. There are no qualifications of time or place; there is simply sin and grace, law and gospel.

For the law shows nothing except sin, makes guilty, and thus distresses the conscience; but the gospel proclaims the desired remedy to those with anguish of this kind. Therefore the law is evil, the gospel good; the law announces wrath, the

increase its ultimate goal but rather the consecutive *result* of the law’s encounter with existing sin. The final goal of the law is that through the recognition of sin one might seek grace. One can find this distinction between *consecutive* and *causaliter* throughout the tradition.

³⁸⁰ WA 56, 368, 9-10: “Et dicit **Iterum in timore**, q.d. prius eratis in spiritu timoris et sub pedagogo, pellente scil. lege.” This is the only allusion to Gal. 3:24. In this passage Luther equates living in a “spirit of fear” with living “under a pedagogue” and “under the law.” A few lines before, WA 56, 367, 22f., Luther also notes that “Never, or rarely, are we without this fear, because no one is without concupiscence and his flesh or the old man.”

³⁸¹ Luther’s psychological description of how the law increases sin follows Augustine rather closely: prohibition inflames forbidden desires. WA 56, 200, 13-26 (citing both Augustine and Ovid!); 341, 19-25; 346, 3-8; 348, 1f. However, the way in which Luther describes such increase of sin as also the means by which a deeper knowledge of sin and self is gained appears to be uniquely his own; see WA 56, 253, 21- 254, 17.

gospel peace. The law says (as the apostle cites in Gal. 3): “Cursed be everyone who does not abide in all things written in the book of the law that he might do them”...But the gospel says: “Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.” The law burdens the conscience with sins, but the gospel frees it and brings peace through faith in Christ... Therefore there are two sets of contraries: *Law—Sin*; it shows sin and makes one guilty and sick; indeed proves him damned. *Gospel—Grace*; it offers grace and forgives sin and cures the sickness unto salvation.³⁸²

2. Impact and Reform

The new directions taken in Romans had a momentum that soon carried Luther’s ideas beyond the notes on his page and the students in his lecture hall. Johannes Lang, Luther’s colleague and friend, was also giving lectures on Titus and Romans as a *baccalaureus biblicus* during the spring of 1516.³⁸³ It is apparent from the lecture notes on Romans that Lang was influenced by Luther, reproducing some of his main ideas on faith, justification, and the law.³⁸⁴ Though Lang mentions neither Augustine nor Luther, his description of the law’s role echoes them both: “The law reveals sin and directs to the physician; the gospel truly manifests and

³⁸² WA 56, 424, 8-17: “Nam lex non nisi peccatum ostendit et reos facit ac sic conscientiam angustat, Euangelium autem angustatis eiusmodo optatum nunciat remedium. Ideo lex mala, Euangelium bona, lex iram, Euangelium pacem nunciat. Lex dicit (Vt Gal. 3 allegat Apostolus): ‘Maledictus omnis, qui non permanserit in omnibus, quae Scripta sunt in libro legis, vt faciat ea.’...Euangelium autem dicit: ‘Ecce agnus Dei, qui tollit peccata mundi.’ Lex conscientiam vrget peccatis, Sed Euangelium liberat eam et pacificat per fidem Christi... [426, 5-9] Igitur duo et duo contraria: Lex—peccatum, Quod ostendit et reum facit ac aegrum, immo damnatum probat. Euangelium—gratiam, Quam offert gratiam et peccatum remittit ac morbo medetur ad salutem.”

³⁸³ See Reinhold Weijenborg, “Die Wittenberger Titusbriefvorlesung des Erfürter Augustiners Johannes Lang. Erstausgabe nach dem Vat. Pal. Lat 132 mit Einleitung und Kommentar” in *Scientia Augustiniana: Studien über Augustinus, den Augustinismus und den Augustinerorden. Festschrift für Adolf Zumkeller zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Cornelius Petrus Mayer and Willigis Eckermann (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1975), 433-68; idem, “Die Wittenberger Römerbriefvorlesung des Erfürter Augustiners Johannes Lang. Erstausgabe nach dem Vat. Pal. Lat. 132 mit Einleitung und Kommentar,” *Antonianum* 52 (1976): 394-494.

³⁸⁴ For an analysis of Lang’s Romans lectures and its relationship to Luther see Jens-Martin Kruse, *Universitätstheologie*, 71-8; idem, “Paulus und die Wittenberger Theologie. Die Auslegung des Römerbriefs bei Luther, Lang und Melanchthon (1516-1522),” in *Die Theologische Fakultät Wittenberg 1502 bis 1602*, Leucorea-Studien zur Geschichte der Reformation und der Lutherischen Orthodoxie, vol. 5 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2002), 113-32.

bestows the righteousness of God.”³⁸⁵ The freedom that the Christian experiences through the grace of Christ is a freedom from sin, death, and the law—not in an absolute sense, but with respect to their domination, their enslavement, their coercion.³⁸⁶ Above all, Lang shares Luther’s clarion call for the reform of theological method. Like Luther, Lang pits the *modus loquendi scripturae* against the *philosophia moralis*.³⁸⁷ Having been strongly influenced by the humanistic studies at Erfurt, Lang had already expressed distaste for scholastic theology in some earlier writings such as his edition of *Enchiridion Sexti Philosophi Pythagorici* (1514), and more pointedly in a preface to several letters of Jerome which he had published in June of 1515.³⁸⁸ But in a letter to Georg Spalatin dated 10 March 1516, one gets the sense that such inclinations have taken on a more programmatic form, being now directed to the reform of theology in the university. Therein he briefly reports that the study of the Scriptures and the early Fathers (referred to in the beginning as “*bona studia*”) were now eagerly received by the Wittenberg

³⁸⁵ Weijnenborg, “Römerbriefvorlesung,” 440: “Lex peccatum indicat et ad medicum dirigit, Ewangeliū vero iusticiam Dei manifestat et tribuit” (cited by Kruse, *Universitätstheologie*, 75).

³⁸⁶ Weijnenborg, “Römerbriefvorlesung,” 461: “Ex hoc textu colligitur, quod christianus dupliciter liber est primo a peccato et morte, non quod non sciat ipsum, sed sic quod non regnet uel dominetur sibi; secundo a iugo legis scripte, non quod non seruet eam, sed sic quod non dominetur, cogat aut coerceat.” Ibid.: “Non autem sicut absoluitur per gratiam anima a lege, vt uiuat ad libitum, sed ne lex dominetur ei tanquam seruo dominus, sed potius traducatur sub iugum ‘alterius’ scilicet Christi, ex quo fructificet Deo, sicut coniux legitima” (cited by Kruse, *Universitätstheologie*, 76).

³⁸⁷ Weijnenborg, “Römerbriefvorlesung,” 462: “Ideo modus loquendi scripture contratrius est ei, quem tradi philosophia moralis” (cited by Kruse, *Universitätstheologie*, 76-7).

³⁸⁸ Grossmann, *Humanism*, 80-1; “...quales & hoc tempore sunt, qui praeter Guilhelmum, Scotum, Capreolum & caeteros eius farinae scriptores nihil vel legunt vel admittunt, apud quos maior Guilhelmi quam Hieronymi, maior Scoti quam Augustini, Capreoli quam Ambrosii est autoritas”; cited by Kruse, *Universitätstheologie*, 47. The once relatively peaceful coexistence of humanists and scholastics at the university of Erfurt had experienced growing tensions since the arrival of the humanist Nicolaus Marschalk in 1498. Johannes Lang was a disciple of Marschalk and thus reflected the negative view of scholasticism which was becoming more common among the Erfurt humanists; see Junghans, *Der junge Luther*, 33f.

students so that lectures on the scholastic doctors were left with only two or three auditors.³⁸⁹

One can assume that Lang had primarily Luther's Romans lectures in mind (and possibly his own) and that his excitement over the renewal of the "*bona studia*" was thus also seen as a renewal of theology.

Lang did not, however, stay in Wittenberg to continue such theological reforms, having been called back to the Augustinian cloister in Erfurt. Rather, it was the forum of the academic disputation which first made Luther's ideas known to the rest of the university. On 25 September 1516, Luther's student, Bartholomäus Bernhardi of Feldkirche, presented and defended the disputation theses *de viribus et voluntate hominis sine gratia* for his promotion to *sententarius*. Drawing essential ideas from Luther's lectures on Romans, the theses implicitly challenged the scholastic teachings on free will, merit, human sinfulness, and the law, supplanting them with quotations from Paul and Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings. The scholastic doctrines of *praeparatio ad gratiam*, the *facere quod in se est*, and the distinction of *meritum de congruo—de condigno* are clearly rejected. Because every inclination of the human heart without the grace of God is deemed sinful, any positive preparation for grace on the part of man must be entirely excluded. This goes against Luther's earlier position in the *Dictata*, where observance of the law played the part of *dispositio* and *praeparatio*, a type of "doing what is in one" which merited grace *de congruo*.³⁹⁰ Here, however, man without grace is necessarily *sub peccato*; if he "does what is in him" (*facit quod in se est*) he sins. Consequently, the law cannot

³⁸⁹ See Kenneth Hagen, "An Addition to the Letters of John Lang. Introduction and Translation," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 60 (1969), 30: "Talia sunt studia, quae iam reviviscere cum gaudio cernimus, dum sacram bibiam antiquosque scriptores complures et anhelant et laetanter audiunt, dum scholastici doctores (quod appellant) vix aut duos aut treis habent auditores. Dabit deus iis molestis perplexis et multo plus quam praebeant promittentibus studiis finem."

³⁹⁰ WA 55II, 901, 304-8; WA 55II, 876, 72- 877, 105. See pages 99-103 above.

be kept. There is no positive preparation for grace; neither *de congruo* nor *de condigno*. Instead, the law has been given for a different purpose: to increase sin (“make proud transgressors”) so that one might seek grace. The *praeparatio ad gratiam* is thus limited to the law’s manifestation of sin.³⁹¹

Luther’s ideas were now publicly offered up for academic discussion within the university. Initially, Luther was not well received; in fact, he wrote to Lang (now prior of the Augustinians in Erfurt) that he had upset everyone, especially Dr. Karlstadt.³⁹² Eventually, however, following intense discussion, individual colleagues began to side with Luther. Within a year’s time Nikolaus von Amsdorf, Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, and Peter Lupinus were “converted” to Luther’s cause, all after having read Augustine’s anti-Pelagian writings. Soon they would actively engage in the reform of the university.³⁹³

On the surface, Luther’s proposals for theological reform were not unique. A desire to return to the early Fathers and the Scriptures coupled with a general antipathy to scholastic theology characterized the attitudes of many German intellectuals who, through the rebirth of classical studies, sought a renewal of Christian faith and piety. This movement of “biblical humanism,” as it is sometimes called, was especially prevalent north of the Alps, in which the

³⁹¹ WA 1, 147, 10-19: “Homo Dei gratia exclusa praecepta eius servare nequaquam potest neque se vel de congruo vel de condigno ad gratiam praeparare, verum necessario sub peccato manet. . . . Cognitio itaque legis facit superbum praevaricatorem, per donum autem charitatis delectat legis esse factorem. . . . Lex data est ut gratia quaereretur, gratia data est ut lex impleretur. . . . [148, 14-15] Homo, quando facit quod in se est, peccat, cum nec velle aut cogitare ex seipso possit.” Cf. WATr 5, 76, 10-12, no. 5346. On the significance of this disputation see Grane, *Modus Loquendi*, 110-15; Kruse, *Universitätstheologie*, 78-82. See also Marylin Harran, *Luther on Conversion: The Early Years* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1983), for a discussion of the *praeparatio ad gratiam* as it relates to *conversio*.

³⁹² WABr 1, 65, 18f., no. 26.

³⁹³ See WATr 5, no. 4197; Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther, 1483-1521*, 167f.; Grane, *Martinus Noster*, 10-19; Kruse, *Universitätstheologie*, 82-89; Ernst Kähler, *Karlstadt und Augustin: der Kommentar des Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt zu Augustins Schrift De spiritu et litera* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1952). Karlstadt became especially active,

ideal “*ad fontes*” was programmatically applied to the study of the Bible and religious reform.³⁹⁴

There was a sense among these humanists that the ancient sources of Christianity, esteemed along with other works of classical antiquity as *bonae litterae*, could serve both their spiritual and educational goals. To be sure, Luther had encountered various forms of humanism early on in his education at Erfurt, and the university at Wittenberg was quite open to the new learning from the beginning;³⁹⁵ nevertheless, his initial relationship to the movement was ambiguous and the original impetus for reform stemmed from different concerns.

We have already noted that Luther’s critique of scholasticism was not an abstract aversion to its method but arose from his attempt to understand the biblical text. It was for this reason that he valued the Fathers; they were read for their exegetical insights, not their Latin style. The typical humanist blasts against the scholastic’s barbarous latinity and abstruse dialectic were generally missing from Luther’s polemic. In Luther’s estimation the fundamental problem with scholastic theology was its misreading of Scripture through the imposition of alien philosophical concepts.³⁹⁶ Specifically, it was *moral philosophy* (Aristotelian ethics) which had

composing 151 disputation theses on *natura, lege et gratia contra scolasticos et usum communes* in April 1517 and then lecturing on Augustine’s *De spiritu et littera* the following academic year, 1517/18.

³⁹⁴ See Cornelis Augustijn, “Humanisten auf dem Scheideweg zwischen Luther und Erasmus,” in *Humanismus und Reformation: Martin Luther und Erasmus von Rotterdam in den Konflikten ihrer Zeit*, ed. O.H. Pesch (München: Schnell & Steiner, 1985), 118-34; idem “Die Stellung der Humanisten zur Glaubensspaltung 1519-1530” in *Confessio Augustana und Confutatio: der Augsburger Reichstag 1530 und die Einheit der Kirche*, ed. Erwin Iserloh (Münster: Aschendorff, 1980), 49-61. Also Grane, *Martinus Noster*, 30; Noel L. Brann, “Humanism in Germany” in *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy*. Vol. 2: *Humanism and the Disciplines* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), 123-55; Spitz, *Religious Renaissance*; idem, “The Third Generation of German Renaissance Humanists,” in *The Reformation: Basic Interpretations*, ed. Lewis Spitz (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972), 44-59.

³⁹⁵ See Bauer, *Universitätstheologie*; Steinmetz, “Die Universität Wittenberg,” 103-39; Grossmann, *Humanism*; Kruse, *Universitätstheologie*.

³⁹⁶ Cf. WABr 1, 150, 24f.; no. 61, Luther’s letter to Spalatin on 22 February 1518, which explicitly argues this very point: “...the same grammatical vocabulary is used far differently by theology than by dialectic...they are not able to grasp an understanding of one chapter of Scripture, much less to teach it...I observed the doctrines and

led to a false understanding of Paul. Humanists, on the other hand, had cultivated a special interest in moral philosophy, producing a significant body of literature on various moral topics and had even occupied many of the lecture chairs on ethics at the universities.³⁹⁷ Some of this thought remained more secular, as evident in the Florentine and Venetian tradition of “civic humanism” which concerned itself largely with political and economic theory.³⁹⁸ But there were also humanist contributions to moral thought which were directed more overtly toward religious concerns. In the north, where the *devotio moderna* exerted considerable influence on the religious climate, many humanists sought a simpler, more practical Christianity than that promulgated in the schools.³⁹⁹ In the eyes of the humanists, the scholastics had turned the Christian faith into an arid, speculative discipline devoted to the exercise of academic acrobatics and pride, while the simple folk were left to pursue impiety and superstition. Thus one facet of the “religious renaissance” of northern humanism encouraged a simple, practical faith and piety by returning to the Scriptures and the Fathers—the pristine sources of Christianity purged of all scholastic dross.

rules of scholastic theology and intentionally wanted to handle Holy Scripture and the church fathers according to them.”

³⁹⁷ Paul Oskar Kristeller has pointed out that the *studia humanitatis* consisted of essentially five disciplines: grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, and moral philosophy. For the significance of the last subject see Kristeller, “The Moral Thought of Renaissance Humanism,” in *Renaissance Thought and the Arts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 20-68; idem, “Renaissance Philosophy and the Medieval Tradition” in *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 127-9. Aristotle’s *Ethics* and *Politics* were the main classical texts and often received new humanist translations—Leonardo Bruni’s controversial 1416 translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* was certainly the most famous of these.

³⁹⁸ See Hans Baron, “Cicero and the Roman Spirit in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 22 (1938): 72-97; idem, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny*, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955); William J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968). Kristeller has also pointed out that Renaissance political thought was not limited to republican ideals but could be expressed in monarchical contexts as well. The respective treatises of Machiavelli and Thomas More are well known examples of this fact, “Moral Thought,” 30.

This ideal was in many ways exemplified by Erasmus' programmatic *philosophia Christi*. At first blush, one might consider Erasmus' chosen banner along the lines of Luther's "*modus loquendi theologicus*"—not the philosophy of Aristotle but the "true philosophy" of Christ. But upon further comparison it is clear that Erasmus orients Christ and Christianity toward a practical morality.⁴⁰⁰ Luther came to realize this almost immediately. While he saw great value in Erasmus' work, especially the *Novum Instrumentum* (which he began consulting soon after it appeared in 1516), Luther nonetheless found Erasmus' interpretation of Paul to be incompatible with his own. When Luther asked Spalatin in a letter to convey his concerns to the famed humanist, one can surmise that this was for him no trifling matter.⁴⁰¹ There was no need to bother "that most erudite man" with peripherals; this was *pro re theologica et salute fratrum*—"for theology and the salvation of the brethren." It is therefore not surprising that this letter invokes two of the most salient points of Luther's new theology: sin and the law. "Sin" in Paul's letter to the Romans ought to be understood as original sin, not actual sins; Erasmus appeared ambivalent here. Moreover, Paul's "works of the law" do not refer to the ceremonial and figurative observances of Moses but rather to all of the works enjoined in the Decalogue. Part of Erasmus' problem, Luther maintained, was his partiality to Jerome instead of Augustine. If only he would read Augustine's writings against the Pelagians, he would have a better

³⁹⁹ The importance of the *devotio moderna*, however, does not diminish the significance of the Italian influence upon northern humanists. See especially Spitz, *Religious Renaissance*, 3-19.

⁴⁰⁰ See James Tracy, "Liberation through the Philosophia Christi. Erasmus as a Reformer of Doctrina, 1514-1521" *Luther Jahrbuch* 62 (1995): 28-47; Alfons Auer, *Die vollkommene Frömmigkeit des Christen: nach dem Enchiridion militis Christiani des Erasmus von Rotterdam* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1954); Ernst-Wilhelm Kohls, *Die Theologie des Erasmus*, 2 vols. (Basel: F. Reinhardt, 1966); Cornelis Augustijn, *Erasmus als Theologe und Kirchenreformer*, *Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought* 59 (Leiden: Brill, 1996); idem, "Erasmus und seine Theologie: Hat Luther Recht?" in *Colloque Érasmien de Liège: commémoration du 450e anniversaire de la mort d'Erasmus*, ed. Jean-Pierre Massaut (Paris: Société d'édition "Les belles lettres," 1987), 49-68.

⁴⁰¹ WABr 1, 69-71, no. 27 (19 October 1516).

understanding of Paul and of Scripture in general. Finally, Luther summarizes the entire problem as a confusion of moral categories for theological ones. Aristotle's *Ethics* may be able to adequately describe the righteousness of such irreproachable pagans like Fabricius and Regulus, but this has nothing to do with the righteousness that comes from faith in Christ. "For we are not, as Aristotle puts it, made righteous by the doing of righteous things, save hypocritically; but (if I may say so) in becoming and being righteous we work righteous things."⁴⁰²

This letter to Spalatin serves as a nice summary of where things stand for Luther going into his lectures on Galatians. In addition to the great significance afforded to Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings, the concomitant doctrines of sin and the law are held up as key points for Luther's new theology. It is on these two points that his most violent polemic was levied against the scholastics, and it is on these two points that Luther finds the philosophical definitions of Aristotle to be in the clearest conflict with the theology of Paul. Furthermore, it is also evident that, for as much as the humanists will later invoke the name of Luther and Erasmus in the same breath, there is already here quite a different spirit.

Lectures on Galatians, 1516-1517

We know the date Luther began his first lectures on Galatians from a letter written to Johannes Lang on 26 October 1516. After having written Spalatin about Erasmus' shortcomings in Pauline theology the week before, Luther now informs Lang that he is about to begin another lecture on Paul, this time the epistle to the Galatians. "You write that yesterday you began the second book of the *Sentences*, but tomorrow I will begin the epistle to the Galatians, although I

⁴⁰² WABr 1, 70, 29-31: "Non enim, ut Aristoteles putat, iusta agendo iusti efficitur, nisi simulatorie, sed iusti (ut sic dixerim) fiendo et essendo operamur iusta." See Ernst-Wilhelm Kohls, *Luther oder Erasmus: Luthers*

fear that the presence of the plague may not allow it to continue.”⁴⁰³ The lecture did continue, in spite of the plague, from 27 October 1516 until 13 March 1517.

There are several difficulties that one encounters when evaluating the Galatians lectures. First, unlike the two previous lectures, we have nothing of the Galatians lectures in Luther’s own hand, but must be satisfied only with the class notes produced by his students.⁴⁰⁴ From the example of Romans, where fortunately we can compare an original manuscript with student notes, we see that Luther’s preparation was far more extensive than the notes represent. If this can serve as a gauge, then probably only a third of Luther’s original preparations for Galatians are represented in the student notes.⁴⁰⁵ This lack is most strongly felt in the *scholia*. Many of the most important verses for our question, such as Gal. 3:23-25, are not to be found in this section of the dictates. We are thus left only with glosses on these texts which, due to their brevity, are not always entirely clear as to Luther’s meaning.

However, because Luther eventually revised and published these lectures in 1519, we do have some ability to cross-check. Of course the big *formgeschichtlich* question—how much of

Theologie in der Auseinandersetzung mit Erasmus, vol. 1 (Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt, 1972), 1-50.

⁴⁰³ WABr 1, 73, 27-29: “Scribis, te heris auspiciatum secundum Sententiarum; at ego cras Epistolam ad Galatas, quanquam metuo, ut pestis praesentia permittat prosequi coeptam.” One gets the sense that there is a little collegial ribbing—poor Lang has advanced to *sententarius* and must leave the biblical studies behind.

⁴⁰⁴ WA 57II, 5-108 represents one set of student notes (the so-called Brettener Nachschrift=B). These were first edited by Hans von Schubert in 1918 and appeared in the Weimar Ausgabe with further editorial work done by Karl A. Meissinger in 1939. A second set of student notes containing only the glosses were discovered in 1953 (the Wolfenbüttler Nachschrift=W) and first published by Hans Volz in 1955. In 1983, this appeared in the supplemental volume, WA 59, 371-383.

⁴⁰⁵ There are several reasons for this: First, Luther simply did not share with the class everything he had written in his preparations. A clear example of this in the Romans lectures is Luther’s *scholia* to Rom. 2:12 in which the students receive only the final results of what in the original equivocates between several interpretations. (See Schmidt-Laube, *Luthers Vorlesung*, for a comparison and analysis of the original manuscript and the dictates). It is also quite possible that the students did not take down everything that Luther actually said in class. An example of this fact is found in the second set of student notes (W) which contain several long fragments not represented in B; see WA 59, 382-3. None of these remarks are intended to call into question the reliability of the student notes as a

the 1519 commentary stems from Luther's original lectures in 1516?—is also fraught with difficulties. On the one hand, there are many parallels in the commentary that have been taken almost verbatim from the lectures. This is especially the case with the scholia. But it is also clear that the 1519 commentary contains many additions which can only be a result of Luther's experience following the indulgence controversy. Statements against papal primacy, against the authority of the decretals, and against the corruption of the church abound in the 1519 commentary, statements which all reflect the events after 1517.⁴⁰⁶ Beyond these, however, it becomes exceedingly difficult to determine the source of the supplemental material—whether it represents Luther's original lecture or whether it is a reflection of his later thought. Because of these uncertainties we will largely restrict ourselves to the lecture notes, going to the commentary only for the sake of clarification.

As in the Romans lectures, Luther stresses that the “works of the law” are not to be limited to the ceremonial law but include the moral commandments of the Decalogue.⁴⁰⁷ Paul's exclusion of the law from justification is absolute and universal. Whether ceremonial laws or moral, Jewish works or Gentile superstitions, none come “from faith” and therefore do not justify. “One must be on his guard against that crude and uninstructed exposition of those who understand ‘law’ only as the *ceremonialia* or *figuralia* of the law, as though *moralia* and the *Decalogue* were ‘*ex fide*!’”⁴⁰⁸

source, but only to recognize their limitations. This is perhaps why they have been generally neglected in Luther research.

⁴⁰⁶ See Meissinger's introduction for a listing of these statements, WA 57II, xiii-xv.

⁴⁰⁷ WA 57II, 17, 15-16; 17, 28-9; 61, 5-7; 69, 1-6; 71, 20-3; 80, 22-4; 86, 14-21; 96, 19-20; 100, 5-16.

⁴⁰⁸ WA 57II, 80, 21-24 (Gal. 3:12; *Sch.*): “**Lex autem non ex fide**...Et hic quoque cavenda est rudis et informis illa expositio eorum, qui solum intelligunt legem ceremonialia seu figuralia legis, quasi, sc. moralia et decalogus sint ‘*ex fide*.’” Although the expositors that Luther could have had in mind might be legion (e.g. *Glossa*: “*ex operibus legis: quae sunt de sacrificiis et aliis legalibus*”), they are all simply a footnote to Jerome and Origen,

It is interesting to note that Luther does not direct his students to Augustine's *Expositio epistulae ad Galatas* as support for this interpretation, but to *De spiritu et littera*.⁴⁰⁹ The reason, of course, is that in the commentary, Augustine goes through great lengths to limit the "*opera legis*" to the ceremonial laws or "*sacramenta*" of the Old Testament. Only in 5:13 is Paul's argument said to shift to the moral law, "*quae ad bonos mores pertinent*."⁴¹⁰ This demonstrates once again the exegetical importance which Luther accords to the anti-Pelagian writings at this time. Even though he follows the commentary in the division of Paul's letter, the distinction for Luther is not between the ceremonial and moral law but between faith and works, "*de fide...de bonis moribus*."⁴¹¹

When it comes to the purpose of the law and its divinely intended office, the answer is likewise the same as in Romans. It "preaches what is to be done and omitted...and through this gives only knowledge of sin." To preach the law is "to build up sins;" "it kills and unjustifies,

as Luther's 1519 commentary makes clear, WA 2, 515, 25- 516, 4. See Rudolf Mau, "Die Kirchenväter in Luthers früher Exegese des Galaterbriefes" in *Auctoritas Patrum: zur Rezeption der Kirchenväter im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Leif Grane, Alfred Schindler, and Markus Wriedt (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 1993), 122-3. In several instances in the glosses Luther describes the law as "*figura*" and "*umbra*" in contrast to Paul's "*veritas evangelii*" (e.g. WA 57II, 14, 19: "Lex enim et iusticia legis sunt umbra et figura evangelii et iusticie fidei." Cf. WA 57II, 20, 8; 29, 12; 31, 9-10; 38, 7). On the one hand, "figure" and "shadow" are almost knee-jerk glosses to "truth"; in this sense they ought not be surprising. Nonetheless, in using these terms he clearly does not wish to distinguish between the ceremonial and moral law. Rather, in contrast to the "truth of the gospel," *everything* is indeed a figure of grace: the ceremonies and the Decalogue can both "signify" one's need for grace. Cf. WA 57II, 31, 20-4; 69, 1-6; 86, 3f.; 100, 5-16.

⁴⁰⁹ WA 57II, 69, 1-6 (Gal 2:16; *Sch.*): "Hoc eciam singularissime notandum, quod 'opera legis' hoc loco non tantum cerimonialia, ut aliqui volunt, sed omnia, eciam decalogi, que quia fiunt in littera, quando fiunt sine gratia, recte 'opera legis' dicuntur,...Hec beatus Augustinus diffusissime probat libro de spiritu et littera." Cf. WA 57II, 96, 10f.

⁴¹⁰ See pages 31f. above.

⁴¹¹ WA 57II, 40, 14-16 (Gal. 5:13; *RGI* 1): "Postquam instruxit eos *de fide*, que est fundamentum, nunc in fine, ut solet, instruit *de bonis moribus*, qui edificantur supra fundamentum fidei" [emphasis mine].

that is, it shows those bound for sin and death.” It is thus the “law of the letter” and the “law of death, wrath, and sin.”⁴¹²

When this question of the law’s purpose is specifically addressed in 3:19—“Why then the law?”—Luther enters into a dispute with Jerome, whose interpretation of Paul, as the letter to Spalatin had already pointed out, leaves much to be desired. Jerome had understood Paul’s answer, “on account of transgressions,” to mean that the law was given to *restrain* and *prevent* sin. Here he had in mind especially the innumerable rites and onerous ordinances imposed upon the Jews as a “yoke,” to keep them from idolatry and other gross sins.⁴¹³ Jerome was undoubtedly one of the interpreters that Luther had in mind when he warned his students against limiting the law to the ceremonial law.⁴¹⁴ But for Jerome, Paul’s statements were too severe to embrace the Decalogue. Thus, when Paul said the law had been “destroyed” and that he had “died to the law” (2:18-19), this could only refer to such observances as the Sabbath, new moons, the typological sacrifices, and the like. These were commandments which were “not good, precepts by which they could not live” (Ezekiel 20:25). On the contrary, the moral law is

⁴¹² WA 57II, 59, 18-20: “...quod lex predicat facienda et omittenda, immo commissa et omissa, ac per hoc solam dat cognitionem peccati.” WA 57II, 72, 13-14: “Porro ‘reedificari peccata’ hoc est rursus legem predicare irritam et non impletam atque adhuc implendam.” WA 57II, 73, 21-24: “Lex autem littere est...lex mortis et peccati, quia necque iustificat necque vivificat, immo occidit et iniustificat, hoc est peccati, mortis reos ostendit.” WA 57II, 80, 24-26: “Prorsus itaque omnis lex est lex mortis, ire et peccati, quia est littera tantummodo docens, non etiam adiuvans, ac sic non est ‘ex fide’.”

⁴¹³ Cf. Jerome, PL 26, 391 C-392 A (Gal. 3:19): “Post offensam enim in eremo populi, post adoratum vitulum, et murmur in Dominum, lex transgressionibus, prohibitura successit...ritus colendi Deum et delinquentium poena sancita est in manu mediatoris Christi Jesus, quia omnia per ipsum facta sunt...etiam illa quae per Moysen duro populo quasi jugum ligis imposita sunt”; 393 C (Gal. 3:21-3): “...quia arbitrii libertatem noluerant innocentes exspectare promissum, legalibus vinculis praepediti, et in servitutem mandatorum redacti, custodierunt in adventum futurae in Christo fidei”; 393 D-394 B (Gal. 3:24-6): “Paedagogus parvulis assignatur, ut lascivians refrenetur aetas, et prona in vitia corda teneantur...Itaque et Moysi lex, populo lascivienti, ad instar paedagogi severioris apposita est.”

⁴¹⁴ See note 408 above.

“holy and righteous and good” (Romans 7:12), and surely must continue in the “spiritual law” or the “evangelical law” of Christ.⁴¹⁵

Luther, however, lists five arguments against Jerome’s interpretation, all arising from what he considers to be the proper context and the thrust of Paul’s argument. First, if Paul had wanted to say that the law was given to restrain sin rather than increase them, then he would have done so clearly, saying “for the sake of justification” or perhaps “observation” (*propter iustificationem—observationem*) rather than “for the sake of transgressions.” After all, a law is given so that it might be kept. Second, “*propter transgressionem*” follows the apostle’s particular *modus loquendi* demonstrated elsewhere (Romans 4, 5 and 7); namely, that the law was given for the purpose of increasing sin—not as its final goal—but in order that the grace of forgiveness (*gratia remissionis*) might be earnestly sought and increase all the more. Third, if the law were given to prevent sin, then the phrase which follows, “until the seed comes,” would make no sense. It is absurd to think that the law held sin in check only until Christ, as if then it should not be prohibited. But the apostle is trying to say the very opposite: sin was increased until Christ put an end to sin by fulfilling the law and bestowing righteousness. Furthermore, the objection of Paul’s interlocutor, “Is the law then against the promises of God?” (3:21), would likewise make no sense. Only when sin is increased and wrath provoked would it appear that God’s promises are hindered. Finally, the phrase “in the hand of a mediator” implies that the law was not given that we should fulfill it. That is to say, it was not placed in *our hand*, but in the hand of

⁴¹⁵ Jerome, PL 26, 369 D-370 C; cf. 385 B-C; 402 D. See WA 57II, 71, 20f.; 72, 28- 73, 1. The reference to Ezekiel 20:25 (“*praecepta non bona et iudicia in quibus non vivitur*”) was commonly used in the tradition to distinguish between the ceremonial (and judicial) laws and the moral law. See note 18, above. In Luther’s *Disputatio contra scholasticam theologiam*, 1517, he explicitly rejects this interpretation and applies the verse to the Decalogue and every moral command; WA 1, 227, 25; 228, 7-12: “*Lex bona necessario fit mala voluntati naturali. . . Non tantum caeremonialia sunt lex non bona et praecepta in quibus non vivitur. Contra mul. doctor. Sed et ipse decalogus et quicquid doceri dictarique intus et foris potest. Lex bona et in qua vivitur charitas dei est spiritu sancto diffusa in cordibus nostris*” [emphasis mine]. Cf. *Against Latamos*; WA 8, 70, 12f.

another: Christ, who alone fulfills the law. The law was therefore given for the purpose of convicting sin and sinners, so that our need for such a mediator might be truly felt.⁴¹⁶

The next verse only reinforces this interpretation in Luther's mind: "But the Scripture confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe" (3:22). Here "the apostle excellently expresses *the end and intention of the law* when he says that it was not laid down to quicken and be fulfilled by us, but rather that it might confine us under sin and humble us so that grace might be sought."⁴¹⁷ It is thus precisely in the fact that the law does not justify or give life that it serves the promise. When the proud receive the law as a means to establish their own righteousness, then it works *against* grace and the promise of God.⁴¹⁸

The next verses, 3:23-27, are without scholia in the notes and so we must glean what we can from the glosses. For the most part, Luther does not say anything new here. He follows the images closely: the law is depicted as a prison (*custodiere=incarcerare*), enslaving through fear and threats until faith is revealed. He glosses, "the law was our pedagogue" with "*erudiens ad gratiam*," which would seem to hearken back to the more positive image of preparation found in

⁴¹⁶ WA 57II, 83, 10- 84, 17; WA 57II, 26, 1-11; 20-24. In the gloss, Luther notes that he follows the judgment of Augustine here rather than Jerome; "Hec mens beati Augustini, licet contrarie sapiat beatus Ieronimus."

⁴¹⁷ WA 57II, 84, 29- 85, 2 (Gal. 3:22; *Sch*): "Itaque Apostolus egregie finem et intencionem legis exprimit, dum non est posita, ut vivificaret et impleretur a nobis, sed magis, ut concluderet sub peccato et humiliaret ad querendam gratiam." The scholia contains citations from Rom. 3:10, 19 (Ps. 13:3), Rom. 5:20, Rom. 11:32, and Augustine's commentary as well: "Unde et hoc loco beatus Augustinus: 'Quod prevaricatores legis inventi sunt, non ad perniciem, sed ad utilitatem valuit eis, qui crediderunt, quia per cognitionem maioris egritudinis et desiderari medicum vehementius fecit et diligi ardencius. 'Cui enim plurimum dimittitur, plurimum diligit.'"

⁴¹⁸ WA 57II, 27, 2-4 (Gal. 3:22; *GI*): "sic enim lex humilibus est pro promissis Dei, superbis autem 'adversus promissa Dei', quia illos facit suspirare ad gratiam, hos inflat propria iusticia contra gratiam." WA 57II, 27, 21-23 (Gal. 3:22-23; *RGI* 1): "Declarat, quomodo lex non sit 'adversus promissa Dei', immo valuerit ad promissa Dei, dum humiliat superbos et ad gratiam suspirandam cogit."

the *Dictata*.⁴¹⁹ But in the margin he paints the pedagogue in decidedly negative colors: he is one who subjects his charge to many “terrors and rules” and in this way prepares him for his father and his inheritance. No docile teacher which gently guides us to our master, the law-as-pedagogue is something to overcome. When we were *sub lege* and *sub pedagogo* we served as captives, but in Christ, “who gives us victory,” we triumph over the law.⁴²⁰

But does the law have this function beyond the time of the Old Testament? Is there a “pedagogical use” of the law even today? Such was not the case in Luther’s understanding of these verses in the *Dictata*—how does it stand now? Limited to these glosses, it is difficult to determine whether the temporal clauses—*before...until...when...now...no longer*—refer strictly to the times of salvation history or more generally to each individual’s experience of the law. There is, however, a curious gloss on 3:23 which may give us a glimpse into the answer. At the conclusion of the verse, “...confined unto that faith yet to be revealed,” Luther remarks, “*quia et sub lege habebatur in multis sanctis occulta*”: “for also under the law [faith] was kept among many saints—though hidden.” The *Glossa ordinaria* has something quite similar, “*quia occulta in antiquis*.” There the emphasis is on the *ignorance* of the ancients, that

⁴¹⁹ Cf. however, Luther’s contemporaneous sermon for Advent, 1516; WA 1, 108, 14-18: “...erudit homines ad perfectissimam *cognitionem peccati* et sui ipsius, ita ut monstret gratiam omnino necessariam...*humiliat*, ac sic ad gratiam praeparat et dirigit ad Christum” [emphasis mine].

⁴²⁰ WA 57II, 27, 24-27 (Gal. 3:24; *RGI* 2): “Sicut puer sub pedagogo relictus est a patre multis subiectus terroribus et regulis pedagogi, que tamen ideo non super eum sunt, ut in illis considat et permaneat, sed ut per hec ad subiectionem patris et hereditatem paretur.” WA 57II, 27, 15-19 (Gal. 3:26; *GI*): “ergo dixi: ‘sub patre, non sub pedagogo’, quia filii, ac per hoc iam eciam ipsius pedagogi estis domini, et supra [legem] ut [“ut supra. Et” was an incorrect conjecture; cf. W: “et supra legem ut”] 1 Cor. 10.: ‘Deo gratias, qui dedit nobis victoriam per Dominum nostrum Ihesum Christum.’ Quia per Christum super legem triumphamus, sine quo sub lege captivi servimus.” Cf. the scholia to Gal. 4:19 (WA 57II, 93, 12-19) where Luther calls the pseudo-apostles “pedagogues” because they *enslave* through the preaching of the law.

faith was hidden among them, or as the marginal gloss says, it was “obscure.”⁴²¹ But is this what Luther means as well? How does he understand this gloss?

Perhaps the 1519 commentary can shed some light. We have already noted that when Luther reworked his lecture notes into the commentary, he often transferred scholia whole cloth into the text with few variations. How much of the commentary stems from his own (no longer extant) lecture manuscript is uncertain, but it is quite probable that the commentary does reproduce scholia from his lecture preparations which are not found in the student notes. Naturally, as longer narrative-like expositions, the scholia tend to be clearer than the glosses, expanding and even improving upon their elliptic exegesis. It appears that such an expansion on the gloss to 3:23 is reflected in the 1519 commentary’s explanation of the same verse. It too concerns the faith of the Old Testament saints:

“Before faith came” is not only understood of the faith which was revealed after Christ, but of all faith of all the righteous (*omni fide omnium iustorum*). For in the same way faith came also to the fathers long ago (*olim*), because the law of God, when first revealed to them, also compelled them to seek after grace: although at that time [faith] was not preached throughout the world, yet it was preached privately (*praedicabatur privatim*) in the households of the fathers.⁴²²

The conceptual parallels are quite noticeable: *omnium iustorum/multis sanctis; patribus olim/sub lege; praedicabatur privatim/habebatur occulta*. Read in light of this text, the gloss, “faith kept hidden among the saints” (*habebatur in multis sanctis occulta*) would take on the same sense as “faith preached privately in the households of the fathers” (*praedicabatur privatim per familias patrum*). The purpose of the gloss then would be to point out that the coming of

⁴²¹ *Glossa*, Gal. 3:23: “Quae. Tempore Christi erat. Reuelanda. Ubi multa aperta sunt, quae prius obscura.”

⁴²² WA 2, 528, 4-8: “Illud ‘Priusquam veniret fides’ non tantum de fide, quae post Christum revelata est, sed de omni fide omnium iustorum intelligitur. Nam et patribus olim eadem fides venit, quia et lex dei eis primo revelata coegit eos gratiam quaerer: licet tum non ita per orbem praedicaretur, praedicabatur tamen privatim per familias patrum.”

faith is not to be equated in an absolute sense with the historical advent of Christ and the publishing of the gospel, for this would exclude the Old Testament saints from the faith that justifies. Rather, faith also came to the saints in the Old Testament; indeed, faith comes wherever and *whenever* the law reveals sin so that the sinner might seek after the grace promised.

If this is the proper sense of Luther's gloss, then we have a very different understanding of faith, especially the faith in the Old Testament, than what we saw in Luther's first Psalm lectures. There he made a clear distinction between faith in the Old Testament and faith in the New. The righteous of old possessed a figural faith, a "simple literal faith" (*simplici fide literali*) or a "faith veiled in the letter" (*fide velata in litera*) which awaited "another faith" (*aliam fidem*), a faith "revealed and fulfilled" (*revelata et impleta*). Theirs was a *fides informis*, a *fides in fidem*. They were righteous only "by a faith in our faith" (*per fidem fidei nostrae*). This peculiar Old Testament faith was inculcated by the ceremonies and rites of the old law which prefigured the *spiritualia* of the faith taught in the new law. Luther thus related the two different faiths to one another in the same way in which he at that time related law and gospel; namely, as prophecy and fulfillment. Now, however, Luther wants to safeguard the qualitative oneness of faith. The faith of the Old Testament saints was the same as ours. The difference lies only in the manner in which it was promulgated, not in the character of the faith itself.⁴²³ Because Luther's distinction

⁴²³ Cf. Luther's earlier scholia on Rom. 1:17, "ex fide in fidem" where this oneness of faith is also emphasized. Luther argues that the context of Paul's argument has made such qualitative distinctions impossible. WA 56, 173, 2-18: "Alii sic: 'ex fide sc. patrum antique legis in fidem nove legis'. Et hec glosa sustinetur, licet possit reprobare et redargui videri, ex hoc sc., quod non vivit iustus ex fide preteritorum, cum tamen dicat: 'iustus ex fide vivet', et eadem creiderunt patres, que nos, una fides, licet illi obscurius, sicut et modo docti idem credunt, quod rudes, sed tamen clarius... Burgensis: 'ex fide' (sc. velut a termino a quo) 'synagoge in fidem Ecclesie' (velut ad terminum ad quem). Sed Apostolus dicit, quod iustitia sit ex fide, sed Gentes non habuerunt fidem, ex qua in aliam ducti iustificarentur."

of law and gospel is no longer governed by the categories of redemptive history, his concept of faith has also shed its distinctively *heilsgeschichtlich* qualities.

It is especially the universality of the law which gives rise to this common experience of faith found in all times and places. Though the ultimate referent of the gospel promise remained the same throughout the Old Testament, the clarity and explicitness of the promise progressed and developed throughout salvation history.⁴²⁴ The law, on the other hand, is not constrained by the time or place of God's revelation. It did not begin with Moses, but was written indelibly in nature upon the human heart. One could certainly misuse the law and attempt to ignore it, but its judgment upon sin is nevertheless universal; no one is without excuse. Any attempt to wriggle out from under its dominion is futile.

This is, at least, the way Luther has treated the Pauline "*lex*" throughout Romans and Galatians. Any attempt to limit the law's sway is quickly rejected by Luther. Paul "is speaking in the *most general terms*, namely that *everyone, as many as there are*," have been under the law, for "the law or Scripture 'confined *all* under sin.'"⁴²⁵ Not only the division between ceremonial and moral but also the common distinctions of the *lex naturae*, *lex scripturae*, and the *lex gratiae* are without significance when it comes to the law's office.⁴²⁶ "Every doctrine or law of any kind

⁴²⁴ Along side the "eternal" nature of the gospel ("Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever"), Luther also recognized that the form in which it was received changed, becoming clearer as one neared the advent of Christ—a view held throughout his life. See, for example, WA 10I/1.1, 417, 20f.; 471, 9-13, *Weihnachtspostille*, 1522; WA 39II, 188, 7f., *Die Promotionsdisputation von Heinrich Schmedenstede*, 1542, esp. theses 12-15. See also Heinrich Bornkamm's classic treatment in *Luther and the Old Testament*, trans. Eric W. and Ruth C. Gritsch, ed. Victor I. Gruhn (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 101-20.

⁴²⁵ WA 57II, 86, 18-21 (Gal 4:3; *Sch.*): "...tum quod *generalissime* loquitur, sc. quod *omnes, quotquot sunt*, sub elementis eramus, quod nisi de lege intelligatur, nullo modo intelligitur. Lex enim seu Scriptura 'conclisit *omnes* sub peccato', ut supra dixit" [emphasis mine]. Cf. WA 57II 71, 20-3 (Gal. 2:18; *Sch.*): "Ista 'destructa' intelligit beatus Ieronimus ipsam legem, non autem nisi ceremonialem. Et quanquam hec sententia in sua limite servata sit vera, *tamen angusta est nec universalis*, quia saltem decalogus isto modo non potest dici destructus."

⁴²⁶ WA 57II, 101, 3-8 (Gal. 5:14; *Sch.*): "Non minus caute et observanda est illa distinctio vulgatissima, quod alia est lex nature, alia est lex Scripturae, alia gratie, cum hic dicat omnes 'in uno' et in summa convenire, et

when it is without grace” is the killing letter. Consequently the *whole law* is both “letter” and, as Paul says in Romans 7, “spiritual,” because it simultaneously lacks grace and points to the need for it.⁴²⁷

This goes for the teachings of Christ as well. Just as the law did not begin with Moses, neither did Christ improve upon it or replace it with a new law. “In so far as Christ taught many things in the gospel, he gave a clearer knowledge of the law, and through this a greater knowledge of sin, so that even as grace is more ardently sought, more largely bestowed, and more diligently guarded, so sin is more profoundly known.”⁴²⁸ Even though these words fall from the lips of Christ, *this is not the gospel*. For “the voice of the gospel is sweet, just as it is called in the Songs: ‘Your voice sounds in my ears, for your voice is sweet’ ...and Ps. 44: ‘Grace is poured into your lips.’ It does *not* say ‘knowledge and understanding is poured,’ but ‘grace,’ because the words of the gospel announce *grace* and the *forgiveness of sins*.”⁴²⁹ The traditional nomistic continuity between the law and gospel is thus sharply overturned. As in Romans, Luther distinguishes them according to the function which is proper to each:

Christus quoque Mathei 6. illam [legem]: ‘Omnia, quecumque vultis, ut faciant vobis’ etc. expresse dicat idem esse cum lege et prophetis. Si ergo differunt, magis fit vitio intelligentium quam officio ipsarum.” Cf. WA 57II, 100, 5-16.

⁴²⁷ WA 57II, 96, 12-20 (Gal. 4:24; *Sch.*): “...sed ‘littera’, ut beatus Augustinus, de littera et spiritu, est prorsus omnis doctrina seu lex quecumque, quando est sine gratia... ‘spiritus’ autem est ipsa gratia significata per legem seu id, quod requirit lex; nec vocatur ulla doctrina spiritualis, nisi quia requirit spiritum. Idcirco omnis lex simul est littera et simul spiritualis, quia est sine gratia et significat gratiam. Quod manifeste patet Ro. 7., ubi Apostolus de tota lege loquens dicit: ‘Scimus, quoniam lex spiritualis est.’” Cf. WA 57II, 80, 24-26: “Prorsus itaque omnis lex est lex mortis, ire et peccati, quia est littera tantummodo docens, non etiam adiuvens, ac sic non est ‘ex fide’.”

⁴²⁸ WA 57II, 60, 9-13 (Gal. 1:11; *Sch.*): “Quod Christus in evangelio multa docuit, fecit ad clariorem legis cognitionem ac per hoc maiorem peccati cognitionem, ut gratia tanto ardentius quereretur et largius donaretur et diligentius servaretur, quanto peccatum profundius et magis cognosceretur.”

⁴²⁹ WA 57II, 60, 15-22 (Gal. 1:11; *Sch.*): “Alioquin vox evangelii est dulcis, sicuti in Canticis dicitur: ‘Sonet vox tua in auribus meis, vox enim tua dulcis.’...Et psalmo 44.: ‘Diffusa est gratia in labiis tuis.’ Non ait: diffusa est scientia et cognitio, sed ‘gratia’, quia evangelii verba gratiam nunciant et remissionem peccatorum” [emphasis mine]. Cf. WA 57II, 9, 21 (Gal. 1:11; *RGI* 1): “Quicquid annunciat Christum, dicitur evangelium.”

Law and gospel differ properly in this, that the *law* preaches what ought to be done and omitted, indeed what has been committed and omitted, and through this gives only *knowledge of sin*. But the *gospel* preaches *forgiveness of sins* and *the fulfillment of the law already done, namely by Christ*. Therefore the voice of the law is this: “Render what you owe”; but the voice of the gospel is this: “Your sins are forgiven you.” Thus Romans 3: “Through the law is knowledge of sin.” But concerning the gospel, the end of Luke says: “Thus it was necessary that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name unto all nations.” *Behold, the preaching of the forgiveness of sins, this is the gospel*. And Romans 10 from Isaiah 52: “How beautiful are the feet of those that preach the gospel of peace, and preach the gospel of good things,” i.e. the forgiveness of sins and the grace of justification.⁴³⁰

Contemporary Works

Giving lectures, of course, was not Luther’s only task at Wittenberg.⁴³¹ In May of 1515 he had been elected as district vicar of his order, making him “prior eleven times over.” At his own monastery he was in charge of the *studium generale*, a reader at mealtime, and the appointed preacher. At some point he had also been appointed to preach in the city church—daily, in fact. While lecturing on Galatians, Luther took on the further task of assembling material from his first Psalm lectures for publication. This last undertaking, however, was never completed, although a few fragments of this early editorial work still survive.⁴³²

⁴³⁰ WA 57II, 59, 18- 60, 9 (Gal. 1:11; *Sch.*): “Lex et evangelium proprie in hoc differunt, quod lex predicat facienda et omittenda, immo commissa et omissa, ac per hoc solam dat cognitionem peccati. Evangelium autem predicat remissionem peccati et implecionem factam legis, sc. per Christum. Ideo vox legis est hec: redde, quod debes; evangelii autem hec: remittuntur tibi peccata tua. Unde Roman. 3.: ‘Per legem cognitio peccati.’ At de evangelio Luce ultimo: ‘Sic oportuit Christum pati et resurgere a mortuis et predicari in nomine eius penitentiam et remissionem peccatorum in omnes gentes.’ *Ecce predicatio remissionis peccatorum, hoc est evangelii*. Et Roma. 10. ex Isaie quinquagesimo secundo: ‘Quam speciosi pedes euangelizantium pacem et euangelizantium bona’ i.e. remissionem peccatorum et gratiam iustificationis” [emphasis mine].

⁴³¹ Luther’s letter to Lang on 26 October 1516 gives a glimpse of Luther’s busy schedule, WABr 1, 72, 1f., no. 28. For Luther’s additional responsibilities outside the university during this time see Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther*, vol. 1, 150-61.

⁴³² The nature and circumstances of these preparations are too uncertain to be used as a source for this study. Present scholarly consensus attributes these various fragments to the autumn of 1516/winter 1517 as Luther began “collecting” his lecture notes for publication (see WABr 1, 56, no. 21; 72, 9-10, no. 28). Yet, unlike other texts which Luther revised, these were never in a condition to be published. Luther was clearly reluctant to put his first

This was obviously a period of tremendous productivity. His new theology was now finding venues for expression outside the lecture hall and the academic disputation. Not only was the Elector immensely pleased with his investment,⁴³³ but rumors of Luther's activity were spreading beyond the two streets of Wittenberg. At Erfurt, his old teachers were disturbed by some of Luther's criticisms, but in Nürnberg, Luther's name was favorably invoked among humanist circles.⁴³⁴ During this time Luther would also first enter the world of printing and publication. While Luther's *Dictata* never reached the printing press, other works from this time did. His "Erstling" was a German commentary on the seven penitential psalms, appearing in print in the spring of 1517. The lectures on Galatians, of course, would not be published until several years later in 1519. He also undertook a series of sermons on the Decalogue from the end of June 1516 until 24 February 1517 which he later edited and published in Wittenberg

lectures into print, and these fragments represent, perhaps, renewed attempts towards a project eventually abandoned. While there are clear indications of Luther's progress since the *Dictata* (most notably his acquaintance with Augustine's *De spiritu et littera*), it is difficult to establish whether they are, as a whole, reliable examples of Luther's thought in 1516 or simply a collection of interpretations typical of the first Psalm lectures (cf. for example, WA 55II, 7, 15- 8, 5 and WA 57II, 79, 6-11). The fragments are printed in various places: an exposition of Ps. 1 and 4 are bound in the first and second quire of the Dresdener Scholien Manuscript, Bl. 2r-5v and Bl. 18r-25v (WA 55II, 1-24; 46-85); the so-called "Vatican Fragments" contain expositions of Ps. 4 and 5 (AWA 1, 485-558); the "Löscher Fragment" on Ps. 5:12 (WA 1, 347-49); and scholia to Ps. 22-24 (WA 31I, 464-80). For more on the so-called 1516 *Druckarbeit* see *Operationes in Psalmos 1519-1521*, Archiv zur Weimarer Ausgabe, vol. 1, ed. Gerhard Hammer (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1991), 48-61; 467-84; Horst Beintker "Luthers Bemühungen um die Erarbeitung eines Psalmenkommentars zwischen 1515-1523" in *Lutheriana: Zum 500. Geburtstag Martin Luthers von den Mitarbeitern der Weimarer Ausgabe*, Archiv zur Wimarer Ausgabe, vol. 5 (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1984), 193-218; Siegfried Raeder, *Die Benutzung des masoretischen Textes bei Luther in der Zeit zwischen der ersten und zweiten Psalmenvorlesung (1515-1518)* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1967).

⁴³³ WABr 1, 78, 27f., no. 30 (14 December 1516).

⁴³⁴ Having received a copy of the 1516 disputation from Amsdorf, Luther's former teachers, Jodocus Trutfetter and Bartholomäus von Usingen, were unimpressed in spite of Luther's attempts to win them over (see WA Br 1, 65f., no. 26). Staupitz, however, was preaching in Nürnberg and praised Luther among the humanist circle which had gathered about him. Christoph Scheurl, a former professor at Wittenberg, was a member of this *sodalitas Staupitziana*, and helped to spread Luther's reputation through his personal contacts. In a letter to Johannes Eck on 21 January 1517, Scheurl mentioned Luther and his brilliant lectures on Paul, "Professus sum quinquennio in academia Wittenburgensi recenti quidem sed certe litterata, et ita professus sum, ut si qui ingenio praestent mihi adificiantur. Inter theologos eminent Martinus Luder Augustinianus qui epistolas Tharsensis miro ingenio commentatur..." [emphasis mine]; *Christoph Scheurl's Briefbuch*, ed. Franz von Soden and J.K.F. Knaake, vol. 2 (Potsdam, 1867), 2, no. 155. Scheurl would later play the "Emma" and introduce Luther to Eck.

under the title *Decem praecepta Wittenbergensi praedicata populo* in 1518. These sermons are particularly interesting, considering our topic. It is hardly accidental that having focused so intently on Paul's doctrine of the law in his lectures, he would now choose to preach to the Wittenbergers on the Ten Commandments.

Sermons on the Decalogue were certainly not unusual for this time. Ever since the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) decreed the necessity for annual confession, the Decalogue had received growing attention. With regional synods ordering that the Ten Commandments have a fixed place in the confession of sins, penance handbooks and devotional literature began to appear which concentrated on the Decalogue.⁴³⁵ However, the intention of these works was not to present a theological exposition on the doctrine of the law, but to aid the penitent in the enumeration of sins. Since the goal was to confess every sin, the handbooks served the very practical purpose of "jogging the memory" as well as interpreting what might have been considered gray areas.

It is a strange irony that while the Decalogue found a central place in the sacramental confession of sins, it did not receive such significance in formal theological reflection. Since the law was employed to reveal sin on a regular basis, one would expect this to influence the doctrine of the law in contemporary exegesis and theology. But this is not the case. In the

⁴³⁵ Gottfried Krodel, "Luther's Work on the Catechism in the Context of Late Medieval Catechetical Literature" *Concordia Journal* 25 (1999): 364-404. Popular were Jean Gerson's *Little Book on the Decalogue, Confession, and the Art of Dying*; Martin von Amberg's *Der Gewissenspiegel*; and Johannes Wolff's *Beichtbüchlein*. On the teaching and practice of penance see also Schwarz, *Vorgeschichte*; Susi Hausammann, *Buße als Umkehr und Erneuerung von Mensch und Gesellschaft* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1974), 33-94; Thomas N. Tentler, *Sin and Confession on the Eve of the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977); as well as Michael Baylor, *Action and Person: Conscience in Late Scholasticism and the Young Luther*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1977).

various scholastic commentaries, the law had virtually no place in the doctrine of penance.⁴³⁶

Rather, the law is considered in accordance with the relationship between the testaments and the various distinctions between the old and new law. The Decalogue is therefore taken up into the doctrine of the gospel as *nova lex*. The “*cognitio peccati*” is left to its role in the Old Testament, while the new law of the gospel provides the resources (*gratia infusa*) through its sacraments to fulfill its demands.

Luther’s sermons, however, are not presented as traditional penitential sermons but are an attempt to expound the Ten Commandments in the framework of Paul’s theology.⁴³⁷ The original sermons from 1516-17 are unfortunately no longer extant in their entirety, but only as brief *exordia*. Nevertheless, even in their truncated form there are several which offer further examples of Luther’s growing clarity over the function of the law and its relationship to the gospel.⁴³⁸ Because the law’s purpose is now defined by its connection to sin rather than its place in the course of history, Luther can likewise define the gospel by *its* distinctive office: the forgiveness of sins.

By Advent Luther had reached the Fifth and Sixth commandments in his sermon series. Since these two commandments have a central place in Christ’s Sermon on the Mount, Luther

⁴³⁶ William of Auvergne does, however, speak of the relationship between natural law and synderesis, though this has little to do with a Pauline doctrine of the law; see Schwarz, *Vorgeschichte*, 103-24.

⁴³⁷ This is quite obvious in the printed edition which begins by describing the purpose of the law according to Pauline texts, WA 1, 398, 10-16: “Every commandment of God is given to show sins already past and present sins rather than to prevent future sins, for according to the Apostle: ‘Through the law is nothing except knowledge of sin,’ and again: ‘God confined all under sin that he might have mercy on all.’ Therefore the commandments of God, when they come, find sinners and increase [sin] ‘that sin might abound all the more,’ Rom. 5.”

⁴³⁸ I am again trying to be conservative with the sources. There is undoubtedly much in the 1518 printing which represents Luther’s thought from 1516, but the form has changed considerably so that the original pericopal context is no longer recognizable. Furthermore, it is virtually impossible to know with any level of certainty whence particular expressions and vocabulary arise. We can be sure that Luther would not have published anything on which he had since changed his mind. Moreover, Luther’s increasing clarity over terminology would most certainly

took the opportunity to address the traditional notion of the gospel as *nova lex*. In the sermon for the Second⁴³⁹ Sunday of Advent, Luther points out that if one does not give heed to the proper definition of the “gospel,” then it is impossible to understand Paul or even Christ who, in the appointed text (Matt. 11:5), says “to the poor the gospel is preached.” Luther explicitly blames the *falsa intelligentia* of many which defines the gospel as “*praecepta vivendi in nova lege*.” This, however, is to confuse the two offices of the gospel.⁴⁴⁰ It is true that the gospel does interpret the law, giving it a “spiritual understanding,” but this is not its “proper and true” office. The spiritual interpretation which Christ offers in Matt. 5 is nothing else than a sharpening of the

be reflected in the editorial process. Without the ability to cross check with the 1516 sermons, such an analysis of the printed sermons would be highly subjective.

⁴³⁹ To avoid confusion I will refer to the liturgical dates as they are printed in the Weimar Ausgabe, even though Löscher’s liturgical dates for the Advent sermons, which the Weimar reproduces, are almost certainly incorrect. If 1516 is the proper year, then the sermon for St. Andrew’s Day (WA 1, 101-4) would have been preached on the First Sunday in Advent, which fell on the same day that year, November 30. Luther clearly followed the appointed text of St. Andrew’s for the third Nocturn of Matins (Mat. 4:18-22) which, even as Luther’s allusion suggests, was traditionally followed by a reading of Gregory the Great’s fifth homily on the Gospels (WA 1, 101, 9). However, the next sermon (104-6), which Löscher designates as “Sermo Dominica II. Adventus,” was based on Matthew 11:5—the appointed lesson for the *Third* Sunday of Advent. Likewise, the sermon which Löscher labels as Advent III (107-109) was based on the appointed reading for the *Fourth* Sunday of Advent, John 1:23. For the next sermon (109-111), which was based on Luke 3:5, there are two possibilities for the liturgical date. It was either preached for Matins the Saturday before the Fourth Sunday of Advent, or during the next day’s Matins—both had Luke 3:1-6 as an appointed text. It is probably the latter, so that both this sermon and the previous one fell on Advent IV, the first representing the main sermon for Mass and the other coming from the daily office. Finally, the sermon which is said to be from Saint Thomas’ Day (111-15) is most likely derived from the appointed Psalm (18:2, “Coeli enarrant...”) for the first Nocturn of Matins on *Christmas Day*. This is preferable to the Octave of the Nativity (which also has Ps. 18 for Matins), since the theme of the sermon is so closely tied to those preached on Advent IV, four days earlier. In summary, the date changes are as follows (L=Löscher): Advent II (L)=Advent III (14 Dec. 1516); Advent III (L)=Advent IV (21 Dec. 1516); Advent IV (L)=Advent IV (Ibid., Matins); S. Thomae (L)=Christmas Day (25 Dec. 1516, Matins).

⁴⁴⁰ Both Ernst Bizer, *Fides ex auditu: Eine Untersuchung über die Entdeckung der Gerechtigkeit Gottes durch Martin Luther* (Neukirchen: Verlag der Buchhandlung des Erziehungsvereins, 1958), 131-2 and Oswald Bayer, *Promissio: Geschichte der reformationischen Wende in Luthers Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 157-8 interpret this “duplex officium evangelii” as a confusion of law and gospel in support of the thesis that Luther had not yet come to his reformation breakthrough. Not only do the sermons themselves speak against such an interpretation, but Luther continued to use this phrase into the 1520s. Cf. Luther’s *Enarrationes epistolarum et euangeliorum, quas postillas vocant*, written on the same liturgical texts in 1520 and published in 1521. In the sermon for Advent III, Luther spends several pages sharply distinguishing the offices of the law and the gospel and then remarks, “Euangelium habet duplex officium” (WA 7, 508, 31f.) and continues on in the same fashion as we have seen in the sermons of 1516. Likewise, the sermon for Advent IV: “Officium Iohannis et Euangelii duplex est, alterum, peccatores facere, alterum, iustos facere” (WA 7, 530, 36f.). Cf. 39I, 386, 19-388, 20.

law's demands, revealing its universal condemnation of all humanity. While people may be able to avoid the act of killing or adultery, no one is without anger or lust: "such are we from birth."⁴⁴¹

Christ does this, however, in service of the true work of the gospel: "to announce help and aid to desperate consciences." The spiritually understood law shows that the law is impossible to fulfill, so that man, despairing of his own powers and being thus humbled, might then hear the "happy and sweet news": "Take heart, your sins are forgiven you...the law is fulfilled by Christ." To the soul that is already lost and dejected, "pressed down by an impossible law," the gospel proclaims that it is no longer necessary to fulfill the law; only cling by faith to the one who has already fulfilled it and be thus conformed to him, "for Christ is our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."⁴⁴²

Twice Luther repeats the phrase, *hoc est Euangelium*, so that his hearers are left without a doubt. "This is the gospel: the announcement of peace, of forgiveness of sins, of grace and salvation in Christ." Those who do not take care to note this "proper" office transform the

⁴⁴¹ WA 1, 105, 2-17: "Sed falsa intelligentia vel saltem obscura huius dicti etiam hac occasione venit, quod quid sit Euangelium non attenditur. Multi enim vocant *Euangelium praecepta vivendi in nova lege*. Quibus fit impossibile, ut Apostolum Paulum intelligant, qui sicut et Christus proprie accipit 'Euangelium'. Igitur Euangelium habet *duplex officium*. *primum est interpretari legem veterem*, ut Dominus Matth. 5. illud praeceptum 'Non periurabis, non occides, non moechaberis' interpretatur, et sic *literaliter in spiritualem intelligentiam transferre*. Nam haec est litera 'non occides', scilicet de opere tantum externo intelligendo, quia haec intelligentia occidit. Sed spiritualis intelligentia est illa 'non occides corde seu spiritu', i.e. non irascaris, non odies, quia qui odit fratrem suum homicida est...Haec autem intelligentia legis spiritualiter multo magis occidit, quia facit legem impossibilem impletu ac per hoc hominem de suis viribus desperatum et humiliatum, quia nullus est sine ira, nullus sine concupiscentia: tales sumus ex nativitate" [emphasis mine].

⁴⁴² WA 1, 105, 17-27: "Quid autem faciet, quo vadet homo tam impossibili lege pressus? Hic, hic iam venit *officium Euangelii secundum et proprium et verum*, quod nuntiat desperatae conscientiae auxilium et remedium. Cuius officii sunt haec verba: venite ad me omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam vos, et iterum: confide, mi fili, remittuntur tibi peccata tua. *Igitur hoc est Euangelium, i.e. iucundum et suave nuntium animae*, quae per legem interpretatam iam iam peribat et deiecta fuit, audire scilicet, *quod lex est impleta, scilicet per Christum, quod non sit necesse eam implere, se tantummodo implenti per fidem adhaerere et conformari, quia Christus est iustitia, sanctificatio, redemptio nostra*" [emphasis mine].

gospel into the law, indeed, into a burden greater than the law. On the other hand, those who only regard the letter of the law are puffed up and do not recognize themselves to be sinners.⁴⁴³

As we saw in Galatians, the law is most “spiritual” when it manifests with clarity the need for the Spirit and grace.⁴⁴⁴ It is spiritual because it reveals humanity’s true spiritual condition before God, laying bare the inclination of the heart. That the gospel is said to have this office ought not to be understood in the traditional sense, namely that the gospel and the *lex spiritualis* are identical.⁴⁴⁵ That would undermine the entire purpose of the sermon. The point is rather that such knowledge of sin is ultimately the work of the Spirit. As in Romans, the depth of sin must be *believed*.⁴⁴⁶ Natural man does not perceive his “hidden faults” but is puffed up with his own works which outwardly conform to the law’s demands. So, in Luther’s sermon for the Fourth Sunday in Advent, even though John the Baptist interprets the law to reveal such sin, the Pharisees and scribes reject him and do not believe it.⁴⁴⁷ Having been born *curvitate* they do

⁴⁴³ WA 1, 105, 32-40: “Quare qui non attenderent, facerent nobis ex Euangelio onus maius quam lex erat, quia grandius est non irasci quam non occidere, et gravius est non concupiscere quam non moechari, imo impossibile. Sic itaque homo per legem humiliatur, ut per gratiam exaltetur... Igitur hoc est Euangelium, nunciato pacis, remissionis peccatorum, gratiae et salutis in Christo. Huic autem gratiae nemo pertinacius resistit quam qui in litera legis iusti sunt. Hi enim interpretationem legis non suscipiunt, multo minus se peccatores agnoscent.”

⁴⁴⁴ WA 1, 106, 9-11: “Spiritualis lex seu intelligentia est ea, quae significat Spiritum seu gratiam, ut scilicet qui habet Spiritum et gratiam, hic habet quod lex iubet.” Cf. WA 1, 108, 25-6: “...agnoscere docuit quod sit vacuus igne et spiritu, ut sic fugiat ad ignem.”

⁴⁴⁵ Nor should Luther’s phrase in the sermon for the Third Sunday in Advent, “spiritualis intelligentia legis, quae est Euangelium” (WA 1, 108, 13-14), be understood in this way. The context of the entire sermon does not allow for such an interpretation. The spiritual understanding of the law is the work of John the Baptist preparing the way for Christ. It is no more to be identified with the gospel than John the Baptist is with Christ. The point is rather that John the Baptist’s office is nonsensical without the presence of Christ. The spiritual law “erudit homines ad perfectissimam cognitionem peccati et sui ipsius, ita ut monstret gratiam omnino necessariam” (WA 1, 108, 14-15). The gospel is the final goal. See Steffen Kjeldgaard-Pedersen’s discussion of these sermons in *Gesetz, Evangelium und Busse. Theologiegeschichtliche Studien zum Verhältnis zwischen dem jung Johann Agricola (Eisleben) und Martin Luther* (Leiden: Brill, 1983), 359-68, in response to the respective interpretations of Bizer and Bayer.

⁴⁴⁶ Cf. WA 56, 68, 10- 69, 21; 67, 13- 69, 1; 231, 6f.; 235, 30-38; 340, 30f.

⁴⁴⁷ Fourth Sunday in Advent, WA 1, 109, 31- 110, 7: “...sed Iohannem odiunt et dicunt ‘daemonium habet’, Quando hoc nempe nolunt Euangelio credere quod sint peccatores et nihil, nolunt dimittere sapientiam et iustitiam suam...non credunt, quod sint nihil, quod legem nullo modo impleant: Iohannem interpretem eius non audiunt, ideo

not feel the accusation of the law; they are unable to confess their sins. They first need an “upright (*rectus*) heart and an upright spirit.” Such comes only from the Holy Spirit by whom man’s will, curved in upon itself, is “straightened (*directa*) unto those things which are of God.”⁴⁴⁸

That the work of law and gospel is ultimately *God’s* work is a theme that is carried on into the next sermon, the Feast of St. Thomas. The gospel is the *opus Dei*, divided into the *opus alienum* and *opus proprium*; God’s work is *duplex*.⁴⁴⁹ Before God can do his proper work he must do that work which is alien and “contrary to himself,” namely to make sinners, unrighteous, and liars by showing them to be such.⁴⁵⁰ Only after people are conscious of their own sin and unrighteousness does God perform his proper work of creating righteous, peaceful, truthful men. The gospel according to its proper office is therefore *grace*. “Thus the gospel is called a good, delightful, sweet, friendly gospel...whenever the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to sorrowful consciences...not the law, not the threats of the law, not something that must yet be fulfilled and done, but rather the forgiveness of sins, peace of conscience, and that the law has been

neque Christum obtinere possunt.” Cf. St. Thomas, WA 1, 114, 4-6: “Alii vero, qui sibi conscii iustitiae, non credunt verum esse, neque ad se illud pertinere ‘poenitentiam agite’, imo, inquirunt, iusti sumus, peccatum nescimus...[13-16] solum quaerunt de se ipsis audire Euangelium, i.e. bonum nuntium, quod iusti sint et recte faciant, non autem de Christo. Item de se nolunt audire alienum sonum Euangelii quod peccent, stulti sint, sed credunt potius Euangelium falsum et mendacium esse.”

⁴⁴⁸ WA 1, 110, 18-27: “Ideo ad Deum dirigitur et humiliata suspirat ad gratiam. Hoc autem est esse rectum cor et spiritum rectum, qui in Deo solo nititur et misericordia eius. Igitur curvitas literae est directa in rectitudinem Spiritus...et per hoc curva ipsa, i.e. homines voluntate curvi, in se rectificata directa sunt in ea quae sunt Dei...superbia, quae ex curvitate nascitur, quia litera servata inflat: qui enim se sentit non teneri lege nec reum legis, non potest sese peccatorem confiteri.”

⁴⁴⁹ WA 1, 111, 21-2: “Euangelium est nihil aliud nisi annuntiatio operum Dei: praedicat enim ea, quae Deus operatur...” WA 1, 113, 4-6: “Nam sicut opus Dei est duplex, scilicet proprium et alienum, Ita et Euangelii officium est duplex.”

⁴⁵⁰ WA 1, 112, 24-30: “Ecce autem ad hoc ipsum opus suum proprium non potest pervenire, nisi assumat opus alienum et contrarium sibi, ut Isaiae 28. alienum est opus eius, ut operetur opus suum: alienum autem opus est facere peccatores, iniustos, mendaces, tristes, stultos, perditos...imo solum hoc opere utatur, ut eos ostendat tales esse, ut fiant id in oculis suis quod sunt in oculis Dei.”

fulfilled.”⁴⁵¹ The alien work ought rather to be called *Cacangelium*, “bad news,” for it declares all men to be sinners and without God’s grace.⁴⁵² In this it is the interpreter of the law, “so that no one can be found righteous, no one who does not transgress the law.”⁴⁵³ The alien work of the gospel to reveal sin is in reality identical to the proper work of the law, but used and directed in such a way that the gospel may be received. In the end, all that Luther wishes to say by his *duplex officium evangelii* is that the law’s final goal is the gospel—a pedagogue unto Christ. “Therefore, the law is an excellent thing, as long as it points out evils and makes us to recognize our own wretchedness, and thus moves us to seek after the good.”⁴⁵⁴

Summary and Conclusions

It should be apparent at this point in examining Luther’s early Pauline lectures that salvation history is no longer the working framework in which Luther’s theology of the law is expressed. Luther’s rigorous *heilsgeschichtlich-offenbarungsgeschichtlich* handling of law and gospel in the *Dictata* is now replaced by a ubiquitous *lex* which seizes upon every sin and every sinner. Specifically with respect to the selected Galatians text, Luther understands the increase and revelation of sin to be the law’s chief purpose. Its most important function is not the

⁴⁵¹ WA 1, 113, 6-15: “Proprium officium Euangelii est nunciare proprium opus Dei i.e. gratiam...Inde enim Euangelium dicitur bonum, iucundum, suave, amicum, quod qui audiat non possit non gaudere. Hoc est autem, quando nunciatur remissio peccatorum tristibus conscientis...non legem, non minas legis, non implenda et facienda, sed remissionem peccatorum, pacem conscientiae, impletam esse legem.”

⁴⁵² WA 1, 113, 16-20: “Alienum autem Euangelii opus est parare Domino plebem perfectam, hoc est, peccata manifestare et reos arguere eos, qui iusti erant sibi, dum dicit, omnes esse peccatores et gratia Dei vacuos. Hoc autem pessimum nuntium videtur esse, unde potius Cacangelium i.e. malum et triste nuntium dici possit.”

⁴⁵³ WA 1, 114, 26-8: “Quare Euangelium magnificat peccatum, dum latificat mandatum, ita ut nullus possit iustus inveniri, qui non praevaricetur legem.”

⁴⁵⁴ WA 1, 114, 38-40: “Ideo lex optima res est, dum mala monstrat et infelicitatem propriam agnoscere facit atque sic ad bonum quaerendum movet.” The point is essentially the same as the one made much later in the Antinomian disputations, WA 39I, 446, 21-22: “Lex enim non ostendit Christum, sed tantum peccatum et iram. Evangelium facit ex lege paedagogum in Christum.”

prefiguration of Christ through shadows and figures, but its humbling effect on the sinner.

Furthermore, this is not a feature limited to the Old Testament or even to the unconverted but is present wherever sin is to be found.

The importance of Augustine for Luther's view of the law is considerable. Reading Paul through the lens of the anti-Pelagian writings, Luther came to focus on the law's negative office as it relates to sin. The law cannot prevent sin, at least not *real* sin which issues from the heart. Its effect is just the opposite. As outward obedience is forced through threats and coercion, hatred for the law grows within. But hatred for the law in turn indicates a deep-seated hatred for righteousness and love for sin. For this reason Luther could no longer hold to the opinion that obedience to the law could make a sufficient preparation to receive grace. Rather, the path to grace is made ready by manifesting man's utter need for it. The law has no ability to offer life, not because it is an imperfect form of the gospel, but because *its purpose is to kill*, to place all people under wrath and sin and death. Yet all this, so that life might be sought from where it may truly be found—not in ourselves or in our works but in Christ. The law is thus seen as a pedagogue which drives us from ourselves unto Christ.

Such a view of the law was particularly useful in Luther's critique of the scholastic teaching on human merit. The assumption that one could fulfill the law "according to the substance of the act" (*quoad substantiam actus*) and thereby make a sufficient *praeparatio ad gratiam* was further bolstered by the notorious sentence of Pelagius circulated under the name of Jerome: *Maledictus, qui dicit deum aliquid impossibile praecepisse*, "Cursed is he who says that God would command anything impossible."⁴⁵⁵ Yet even under the name of Jerome, such a

⁴⁵⁵ See Schwarz, *Fides, Spes, und Caritas*, 388f. Luther was also aware of this sentence, alluding to it in his comments to Rom. 8:3; WA 56, 355, 5: "Ego si dicerem Impossibilia nobis precepta, maledicerer."

dictum required nuance to avoid crass Pelagianism. One could indeed fulfill the entire law purely through natural powers (*ex puris naturalibus*)—even love God above all things—but God *intended* the law to be fulfilled by sacramentally infused grace (*quoad intentionem praecipientis*). Nonetheless, if one performed the former, he would “merit,” *de congruo*, grace for the latter, on the principle that “God does not deny grace to those who do what is in them (*facere quod in se est*).”⁴⁵⁶ Of course, Luther thought such a distinction was indeed crass Pelagianism and perhaps worse, since it turned “grace” into a demand above and beyond the law.⁴⁵⁷ He eagerly took over the main thrust of Augustine’s argument against Pelagius, which regarded the institution of the law as indicative of man’s moral weakness and failure rather than proof of its strength.

Yet it is also clear that Luther goes beyond Augustine.⁴⁵⁸ He is not interested in the *heilsgeschichtlich* orientation of Augustine’s statements on the law—the grand historical scheme in *De spiritu et littera* of past (*littera*), present (*spiritus*), and future (*perfectio*).⁴⁵⁹ While the form of Augustine’s argument with Pelagius is determined, in part, by the question of a historical precedent for the law’s fulfillment, Luther is only concerned with the law’s effect on the individual conscience. Because of Luther’s radical view of sin, the work of the law can never

⁴⁵⁶ For the relationship of these concepts to late scholastic theology see Heiko Oberman, “Facientibus quod in se est”; idem, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965); Berndt Hamm, *Promissio, Pactum, Ordinatio: Freiheit und Selbstbindung Gottes in der scholastischen Gnadenlehre* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1977); Leif Grane, *Contra Gabrielem*.

⁴⁵⁷ See WA 56, 274, 14f.; WA 56, 279, 3f.; WA 57II, 80, 6f. Cf. *Disputatio contra scholasticam theologiam*, 1517, theses 54f.; WA 1, 226, 32f.

⁴⁵⁸ See above, note 370 and 375. See Dorothea Demmer, *Lutherus Interpres: Der theologische Neuansatz in seiner Römerbriefexegese* (Wittenberg: Luther Verlag, 1968), 237-242, who concludes that Luther’s distinction of law and gospel is aided by Augustine but also deeply divided from him.

⁴⁵⁹ See Grane, *Modus Loquendi*, 46-49; idem, “Divus Paulus et S. Augustinus,” 143-4; Lohse, “Gesetz und Gnade—Gesetz und Evangelium,” 240-5.

belong to the past. It is an ongoing part of the Christian struggle even as sin remains a reality throughout this life. The tension in which the righteous live, that of *simul peccator et iustus*, is correspondingly the tension of law and gospel, a *simul sub lege et sub gratia*, so to speak.

This existential application of law and gospel is evident in his lectures on Hebrews as well, given in the following year. Thus, in his remarks to Hebrews, 7:12, “with a change in the priesthood it is necessary that there be a change in the law,” Luther notes that one can define “*lex*” in one of two ways. The first is to identify it with that law which is distinctive to the Old Testament; namely, the various ceremonies, sacrifices, and juridical laws. These are certainly abrogated in the New Testament and ought to be interpreted spiritually, figures now fulfilled. But “*lex*” according to the “*superiorem intelligentiam*” of Romans and Galatians is simply whatever has been commanded, whether divine or human, whether ceremonial, juridical, or moral. This law Christ completely fulfills, and therefore has nothing to do with the preaching of the New Testament which is, properly speaking, the preaching of the grace of Jesus Christ.⁴⁶⁰ Nonetheless, the law still needs to be taught in so far as man is still a sinner. “But this ‘change’ has not yet been perfected, as the previous one [i.e. ceremonial laws]; *but it is being perfected from day to day*. Therefore, the new priest partly

⁴⁶⁰ WA 57III, 190, 16f., (Heb. 7:12; *Sch*): “Unde hic notandum, quod vocabulum *lex* hic ab Apostolo usurpatum dupliciter potest accipi. Primum secundum inferiorem intelligentiam, qua significat coereemonialia tantum...huiusmodi coereemoniae lege praeceptae abrogatae sunt, et ea, quae significabantur per haec, instituta, hoc est spiritualis atque interior vestis et ornatus sacerdotum... [192, 16f.] Secundo potest ‘*lex*’ accipi iuxta superiorem intelligentiam, qua incedit Apostolus in epistola ad Romanos et Gal, ubi per ‘*legem*’ simpliciter intelligit, quicquid divinitus et humanitus praecipitur, sive sit coereemoniale sive iudiciale et morale. Sic sensus est: ‘*lex* translata est’ id est per Christum impleta est... Ideo sacerdotis novi officium proprie non est docere legem, sed monstrare gratiam Iesu Christi, quae est plenitudo legis.”

teaches [the law], partly points out [the grace of Christ]...since in this time no one is that 'righteous man' for whom 'the law has not been laid down,' except as one beginning."⁴⁶¹

Strictly speaking, such a perception of law and gospel cannot be said to be that of Augustine. Nevertheless, when it comes to the question of historical influence, Luther's differences from Augustine should not dissuade us from recognizing the great significance the church father had for him. Luther valued him as a faithful interpreter of Paul, a guide for understanding the apostle's theological argument. Where the scholastics had simply muddied the waters with their *modus Aristotelis*, Augustine had mirrored the *modus Scripturae*. The conflict with the Pelagians had flushed out the best in Augustine; never was he nearer to the true Paul.

But had not others studied Augustine as well? Surely Luther was not the only one to have read the anti-Pelagian writings alongside Romans and Galatians. Must we not also say that concomitant with Luther's particular interpretation of Paul was an equally distinctive interpretation of Augustine? To some extent this is true. While Luther was not primarily interested in interpreting Augustine *per se*, he adamantly gave priority to the anti-Pelagian writings as faithful expositions of Paul and universally applicable for theology. To relativize the *modus loquendi* of Augustine (and of Paul!) as pastorally motivated exaggerations—as some contemporary scholastics were wont to argue—was completely unacceptable to Luther.⁴⁶² Such

⁴⁶¹ WA 57III, 193, 5-9: "Verum haec translatio nondum est perfecta sicut prior, perficitur autem de die in diem. Ideo partim docet, partim monstrat cum Ioan Baptista sacerdos novus, cum iustus ille, cui lex non sit posita, in hoc tempore nullus sit nisi inchoative" [emphasis mine].

⁴⁶² Wendelin Steinbach is a good example of such an approach to Augustine and Paul; see Heiko Oberman's discussion in *Masters of the Reformation*, 92-110. Luther began his *Disputatio contra scholasticam theologiam*, 1517, attacking such a handling of Augustine, something which he considered to be "dictum commune." WA 1, 224, 7-12: "1. Dicere, quod Augustinus contra haereticos excessive loquatur, Est dicere, Augustinum fere ubique mentitum esse; 2. Idem est Pelagianis et omnibus haereticis tribuere occasionem triumphandi, immo victoriam; 3.

a reading of *auctoritates* undermined their usefulness or value, leaving theology to the whim of human opinion. This does not mean that one ought to *identify* Luther's theology as an interpretation of Augustine or a fruit of a particular Augustinianism. That would appear to be saying more than the evidence would allow. For one, Luther's eclectic use of the church father in his early lectures makes the notion of an *Augustinerschule* doubtful as a significant source and vehicle for the new Wittenberg theology.⁴⁶³ Furthermore, Luther precisely goes beyond Augustine in those places where he hits the scholastics the hardest. Perhaps Augustine's greatest contribution was to illustrate the relevance that Paul's theology of the law had for present theology. As Paul's doctrine of the law spoke directly against the Pelagians in the fourth century, so Paul continued to speak in Luther's day.

Luther's interpretation of Galatians and his view of the law would continue to be clarified in the years following. Both the question of the Scripture's applicability and its authority loom large in the theological conflicts which lie ahead, and the distinction of law and gospel has a key part to play in answering those questions. Though it is hard to say whether he yet fully appreciated the distance he had come, upon later reflection Luther would acknowledge that it was indeed this new understanding of law and gospel—not the relative difference between two successive ages of redemptive history, but the radical theological distinction between wrath and grace, sin and forgiveness—which would finally give him the clarity and the comfort he sought:

Et idem est omnium ecclesiasticorum doctorum auctoritatem illusioni exponere." Cf. Karlstadt, Th. 60; Kähler, *Karlstadt und Augustin*, 21-22: "Corruit hoc, quod beatus Augustinus contra hereticos loquitur excessive."

⁴⁶³ See the various studies by Leif Grane, note 353 above. This fact is also apparent when one compares Luther's reception of Augustine to the more repristinating approach of Karlstadt; Kähler, *Karlstadt und Augustin*, 8-37. See especially the essay by Bernhard Lohse, "Zum Wittenberger Augustinismus – Augustins Schrift De Spiritu et Littera in der Auslegung bei Staupitz, Luther und Karlstadt" in *Augustine, the Harvest, and Theology (1300-1650)* ed. Kenneth Hagen (Leiden: Brill, 1990): 89-109. Luther's colleague, Johannes Dölsch, similarly testifies to such a relationship to Augustine and the Scriptures in his 1520 defense of Luther; see Grane's assessment of Dölsch's witness in *Martinus Noster*, 13-14. See also Junghans, *Der junge Luther*, 123-41.

“I lacked nothing before this except that I made no distinction between the law and the gospel. I regarded both as one thing and said that there was no difference between Christ and Moses except time and perfection. But when I discovered the proper distinction, that the law is one thing and the gospel is another, I broke through.”⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶⁴ WATr 5, 210, 6f., no. 5518: “Zuor mangelt mir nichts, denn das ich kein discrimen inter legem et euangelium machet, hielt es alles vor eines et dicebam Christum a Mose non differre nisi tempore et perfectione. Aber do ich das discrimen fande, quod aliud esset lex, aliud euangelium, da riß ich her durch.”

CHAPTER FOUR

LUTHER AND GALATIANS 1519-1522

Introduction

Between the time of the Galatians lectures in 1516-17 and their publication in 1519, Luther's whole world turned upside down. Initially his sphere of influence remained relatively small, limited to Wittenberg as well as a select circle of German intellectuals. In September of 1517, he continued his campaign for theological reform through another disputation, *Disputatio contra scholasticum theologiam*, and although it was Luther's sharpest and most thorough attack on scholastic theology to date, its impact outside Wittenberg appears to have been slight.⁴⁶⁵ Of course, we know that in just a few months Luther's reform activity would take a decisive turn. With the publication of his ninety-five theses against indulgences, this virtually unknown monk would suddenly become the talk of the people, the rising clamor in Germany reaching even the ear of Rome.⁴⁶⁶ Luther's name was spread throughout the empire but so was his polemic—beyond what he could have anticipated or even imagined. In the following year, when Luther was compelled to stand before Cardinal Cajetan, it became distressingly clear that the conflict between two kinds of theology extended to the highest place in western Christendom. No longer

⁴⁶⁵ WA 1, 221-28. The occasion for the disputation was the promotion of Franz Günther to *baccalaureus biblicus*. Luther composed the theses and presided over the disputation on 4 September 1517. In it he argues against the scholastic use of Aristotle, their doctrine of merit, free will, sin, and the law. See Grane, *Contra Gabrielem*; idem, *Modus Loquendi*, 132-35.

⁴⁶⁶ For the public reaction to the ninety-five theses and the resulting renown of Luther see Bernd Moeller, "Die letzten Ablaßkampagnen. Der Widerspruch Luthers gegen den Ablaß in seinem geschichtlichen Zusammenhang," in *Lebenslehren und Weltenwürfe im Übergang vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit*, ed. Hartmut Boockmann, Bernd Moeller, and Karl Stackmann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 539-67; idem, "Das Berühmtwerden Luthers" in *Die dänische Reformation vor ihrem internationalen Hintergrund*, ed. Leif Grane and Kai Hørby (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 187-210; Junghans, *Der junge Luther*, 292-3.

was it Scripture against the subtle opinions of some scholastic epigone, but now, confronted by the papal legate, it was Scripture against the very head of the Roman church, the pope. The use of human opinion for theological proof had come to an all time high: “*revoco*,” because I said so. Luther didn’t blame Cajetan personally so much as he faulted the theological method in which he was trained.⁴⁶⁷ But this fact pointed to the deeper problem, realized now by Luther for the first time, that the method and the Roman institution had become one and the same— theology by human fiat.⁴⁶⁸

Meanwhile, the university of Wittenberg was burgeoning with reform activity as Luther’s colleagues began to follow his lead. Shortly after Luther had finished his lectures on Galatians, Karlstadt made public 151 theses *de natura, lege et gratia contra scolasticos et usum communes*, reflecting similar views as Luther, especially with respect to the pride of place given to

⁴⁶⁷ WA 2, 17, 5-12 (*Acta Augustana*, 1518): “Ubi vero ego scripturas pro me attuli, cepit homo, paterne agens, de corde suo mihi fingere glosas. . . . Nec tamen hanc violentiam eius aegre tuli, sciens eam facultatem interpretandi ex longa Romanae Curiae consuetudine et scholasticorum distinctorum usu sibi praesumptam.”

⁴⁶⁸ It is instructive to compare two of Luther’s early statements on reform. In May of 1518, before his meeting with Cajetan, Luther wrote to his former teacher, Jodocus Trutfetter, WABr 1, 170, 33-6, no. 74, and remarked, “. . . it is impossible to reform the church, unless canon law, the decretals, scholastic theology, philosophy, and logic as they are now regarded are eradicated and other studies are instituted.” However, after his meeting with Cajetan, Luther transferred the fundamental problem of the universities to the Roman Curia; WA 2, 609, 10-14 (*Galatians*, 1519): “. . . it is impossible for the Scriptures to be explained and for other churches to be reformed unless that ‘universale reale,’ the Roman Curia, is reformed as soon as possible. For the Roman Curia is unable to hear and uphold the Word of God so that it is taught purely. But if God’s Word is not taught, no aid can be brought to the rest of the churches.” It was after this meeting with Cajetan that the idea of the Antichrist first appeared in Luther’s view of the papacy. Luther suggests with trepidation the possibility in a letter to Wenclesas Link; WABr 1, 270, 11-14, no. 121 (18 December 1518). See Grane’s discussion of Cajetan, *Martinus Noster*, 23-29, 38-40; Jan Aarts, *Die Lehre die Martin Luthers über das Amt und der Kirche: Eine genetisch-systematische Untersuchung seiner Schriften von 1512 bis 1525*, Schriften der Luther-Agricola-Gesellschaft, 15 (Helsinki: Hämeenlinna, 1972). The marriage of scholastic theology and the Roman Curia was not as fully consummated as it might have appeared to Luther. Humanism had made significant inroads in Rome, finding its own form of expression within the Curia. See especially John D’Amico, *Renaissance Humanism in Papal Rome: Humanists and Churchmen on the Eve of the Reformation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1983). For the religious interests of Italian humanists in general see Charles Trinkaus, *In Our Image and Likeness. Humanity and Divinity in Italian Humanist Thought*, 2 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

Augustine's anti-Pelagian writings.⁴⁶⁹ A few weeks later, Luther would write to Lang and remark, "Our theology and St. Augustine are advancing as hoped and reign in our university by God's working."⁴⁷⁰ Aristotle was being toppled, the *Sentences* were disdained, and the students' desire for lectures on the Bible and the Fathers was clearly felt. By the next semester Luther was lecturing on Hebrews, Karlstadt on Augustine's *De spiritu et littera*, Lupinus on Ambrose, and the humanist Aesticampianus on Jerome.⁴⁷¹ Karlstadt was especially enthusiastic about the new studies at Wittenberg, congratulating his students that in their university the old truth of the Scriptures, previously darkened by philosophy, now shone forth.⁴⁷² The reform of theology laid the foundation for more extensive curriculum reforms so that by the fall of 1518 several new courses in the arts were put into place by the Elector, including a chair for Greek.⁴⁷³ By advancing such humane studies, Wittenberg was quickly becoming recognized as one of the finest schools in Germany. Undoubtedly, it was the highpoint of the university's initial reform

⁴⁶⁹ Karlstadt posted the theses on 26 April 1517; Kahler, *Karlstadt und Augustin*, 9f. See Lohse, "Zum Wittenberger Augustinismus," 100-08. Luther sent a copy of the theses on 6 May to Wenceslas Link in Nürnberg via Christoph Scheurl, extolling them as wonderful paradoxes (*paradoxa*) in contrast to the bad doctrine (*cacodoxa*) of those who neither read nor understand Augustine and Paul. WABr 1, 94, 15-26, no. 38.

⁴⁷⁰ WABr 1, 99, 8-13, no. 41 (18 May 1517): "Theologia nostra et S. Augustinus prospere procedunt et regnant in nostra universitate Deo operante. Aristoteles descendit paulatim inclinatus ad ruinam prope futuram sempiternam. Mire fastidiuntur lectiones sententiarum, nec est, ut quis sibi auditores sperare possit, nisi theologiam hanc, id est bibliam aut S. Augustinum aliumve ecclesiasticae autoritatis doctorem velit profiteri." The next year Luther informed the elector through Spalatin that the students have requested that the course on *ethics*—"since it is plain that it is to theology as a wolf to a lamb"—be made an elective rather than required for graduation; WABr 1, 196, 21-29, no. 90 (2 September 1518).

⁴⁷¹ Kähler, *Karlstadt und Augustin*, 10, 5f. Johannes Aesticampianus, Ulrich von Hutten's teacher (Spitz, "Luther and Humanism," 70) was an older humanist who had previously been embroiled in a controversy at the University of Leipzig.

⁴⁷² Kähler, *Karlstadt und Augustin*, 9, 29-10, 5.

⁴⁷³ For the elector's university reforms in 1518 see Steinmetz, "Die Universität Wittenberg," 125-28; Brecht, *Martin Luther*, vol. 1, 275-82; and Kruse, *Universitätstheologie*, 139f.

when one of humanism's brightest stars, Philip Melanchthon, joined the faculty in August of 1518 as the new professor of Greek.⁴⁷⁴

In these first years after Luther's sudden emergence as a public figure, it was indeed the humanists who led the way for the positive reception and promotion of his ideas. It is no wonder, given Luther's attacks on scholasticism, his high appreciation of Augustine and the Fathers, and the enormous emphasis laid on a theology oriented to the biblical texts. Luther appeared to be saying and successfully implementing what so many advocates of the new learning had long desired.⁴⁷⁵ This solidarity was only reinforced by the attacks of Luther's opponents which were seen by humanists as part of an ongoing harassment of the learned. The notion of a common enemy placed Luther in the company of such princes of erudition as Reuchlin and Erasmus, giving him a broad base of support among Germany's educated and well-placed.⁴⁷⁶ It is for these reasons that Bernd Moeller would emphatically conclude, "*Ohne Humanismus keine Reformation.*"⁴⁷⁷ It was the humanists who first disseminated Luther's ninety-five theses, eagerly received his polemical and devotional tracts, circulated his name in their letters, in town councils, and in the halls of princes.

⁴⁷⁴ After hearing Melanchthon's inaugural address, Luther showered the young humanist with praise in a letter to Spalatin; WABr 1, 191-193, no. 88 (31 August 1518).

⁴⁷⁵ Martin Bucer's well known remark to Beatus Rhenanus after the Heidelberg Disputation (1 May 1518), WA 9, 162, 8-10, "says openly what Erasmus says in secret," summarizes well the common sentiment.

⁴⁷⁶ See Grane, *Martinus Noster*, 147-87; 201-8; Erika Rummel, *The Confessionalization of Humanism in Reformation Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 9-29.

⁴⁷⁷ Bernd Moeller, "Die deutschen Humanisten und die Anfänge der Reformation," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 70 (1959): 46-61, (59). See also Grane, *Martinus Noster*, 149f.

Whether or not they were yet fully aware of the theological significance of Luther's reform did not at this stage matter much.⁴⁷⁸ Even Luther appears to have been somewhat unclear as to the differences between his own goals and those of the German humanists—or at least so publicly. Just as humanists embraced Luther as *Martinus noster*, he would write of “our Erasmus” or “our Reuchlin,” cultivating humanist connections and even assuming for a time the humanist name “*Eleutherius*.”⁴⁷⁹ Although privately both Erasmus and Luther were becoming increasingly disenchanted with each other, this unified public front was important in the face of a common adversary.⁴⁸⁰

Galatians Commentary, 1519

It is in the midst of this mixture of public turmoil and acclamation that Luther began revising his lectures on Galatians in order to put them into print. Sent to the press at the end of 1518, subsequently withdrawn, revised, and completed by the spring, the commentary finally emerged from Melchior Lotther's Leipzig printery in September of 1519.⁴⁸¹ The significance of

⁴⁷⁸ We have already noted in the last chapter the basic difference between Luther and the humanists in the critique of scholasticism; see pages 163-67 above. The incompatibility of Aristotle and theology is for Luther an exegetical problem—the application of definitions from moral philosophy to such Pauline concepts as “law,” “sin,” and “righteousness.” For humanists the use of Aristotle is simply symptomatic of the scholastics' preference for dialectic and speculation rather than a more practically oriented theology. Moral philosophy was actually preferred and promoted.

⁴⁷⁹ For Luther's connections with humanists during this time see Dost, *Renaissance Humanism*, esp. 154-60; 185-6. See also Bernd Moeller and Karl Stackmann, *Luder—Luther—Eleutherius: Erwägungen zu Luthers Namen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981).

⁴⁸⁰ Luther did not wish his criticisms of Erasmus to be made public. In his letters to Lang and Spalatin, he accompanied his negative opinions with exhortations of confidentiality for the sake of the enemies of Erasmus and the “*Bonis literis*.” See, for example, WABr 1, 90, 15-26, no. 35 (1 March 1517) and 133, 9-31, no. 57 (18 January 1518). In their first exchange of letters, both Luther and Erasmus reservedly acknowledge affinity through a common enemy; WABr 1, 363f., no. 164 and 412f., no. 183.

⁴⁸¹ Cf. WABr 1, 400, 22f., no. 176 (16 May 1519); 408, 15, no. 182 (30 May 1519); 506, 20f., no. 196 (3 September 1519); 508, 10f., no. 198 (22 September 1519)

this work should not be understated.⁴⁸² Following upon the heels of the Leipzig debate, the 1519 commentary presented another image of Luther to the public: more than a polemicist, he was now to be regarded as one of the leading biblical scholars of the day.⁴⁸³ After all, it was the interpretation of Scripture that was for Luther the all-important matter in theological reform. Appearing at the height of confluence between Luther's reforms and the humanist cause for the *bonae litterae*, Galatians was, in fact, Luther's first complete exegetical work produced specifically for an educated audience.⁴⁸⁴ Eagerly anticipated by humanists and even more eagerly read, Luther's commentary not only used the tools of humanist scholarship, but it also

⁴⁸² Luther research has not always reflected the importance of this commentary, favoring instead Luther's later lectures of 1531 or the commentary of 1535. Uuras Saarnivaara, *Luther Discovers the Gospel* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), 103-4, n. 234, even manifests a certain antipathy, relegating the entire commentary to "pre-reformation" as justification for ignoring it entirely. On the positive side, the most thorough dogmatic treatment of the 1519 commentary is, of course, by Karin Bornkamm, *Luthers Auslegungen des Galaterbriefs*. Ernst Bizer dealt with both the early lectures and the commentary in *Fides ex auditu*, 130-46. Cf., however, Heinrich Bornkamm's response to Bizer's interpretation in "Zur Frage der Iustitia Dei beim jungen Luther" *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 53 (1962): 25-31. Studies which have given more attention to the historical context of the commentary include Helmut Feld, "Lutherus Apostolus. Kirchliches Amt und apostolische Verantwortung in der Galaterbrief-Auslegung Martin Luthers," in *Wort Gottes in der Zeit: Festschrift für Karl Hermann Schelkle zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Helmut Feld and Josef Nolte (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1973), 288-304; Cornelis Augustijn, "Erasmus von Rotterdam im Galaterbriefkommentar Luthers von 1519" in *Luther Jahrbuch* 49 (1982): 115-32; Rudolf Mau, "Die Kirchenväter in Luthers früher Exegese des Galaterbriefes," 117-128; Thorsten Jacobi, "*Christen heißen Freie*": *Luthers Freiheitsaussagen in den Jahren 1515-1519* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1997), 137-235; Johannes Kunze, *Erasmus und Luther: Der Einfluß des Erasmus auf die Kommentierung des Galaterbriefes und der Psalmen durch Luther 1519-1521*, *Arbeiten zur Historischen und Systematischen Theologie*, vol. 2 (Münster/ Hamburg/ London: LIT, 2000). For yet another approach see Kenneth Hagen, *Luther's Approach to Scripture*.

⁴⁸³ On this point see the remarks of Emmanuel Hirsch, "Luther 1517-1521," in *Lutherstudien*, vol. 2 (Waltrop: Hartmut Spenner, 1998), 80f.; and Grane, *Martinus Noster*, 139-40. Along with Faber Stapulensis' commentary on the Pauline epistles and Erasmus' *Enarratio* on Psalm 1, Luther's commentary was regarded as a paradigm for scholars.

⁴⁸⁴ The first two psalms of his *Operationes in Psalmos* appeared in print in March 1519, but Galatians still receives pride of place as his first complete exegetical commentary. His earlier German exposition of the seven penitential Psalms, published in 1517, was intended for the laity only. Luther was therefore embarrassed to hear that the work was being read by the humanists in Nürnberg; see WABr 1, 93, 6f., no. 38 (6 May 1517). On this distinction between the lay and educated audiences of Luther's early publications see Bernd Moeller, "Das Berühmtwerden Luthers," 190-5.

exhibited a deliberate appeal to the advocates of the new learning in both form and content.⁴⁸⁵ In addition to a preface and afterward authored by Melanchthon⁴⁸⁶ and several poetic epigrams, the printed commentary contained a dedication by Luther⁴⁸⁷ which, filled with brilliant sarcasm and irony, was sure to delight the audience that produced and circulated such satirical pieces as *Epistolae obscurorum virorum*.⁴⁸⁸ The use of technical rhetorical expressions—for example, replacing the tremendously important phrase “*modus loquendi apostoli*” with “*tropus*

⁴⁸⁵ At the first of the year Christoph Scheurl reported that the Nürnbergers were awaiting Luther’s Galatians commentary, WABr 1, 288, 23-5, no. 127 (1 January 1519). Apparently the work was already at the printers, but had to be withdrawn by Luther during the negotiations with Karl von Miltitz. There were 5 editions by the end of 1519 and 1 in 1520. The average number of individual books printed for a given edition was 1,000. See Moeller, “Das Berühmtwerden Luthers,” 201f., 207; Benzing, no. 416-421.

⁴⁸⁶ The preface (WA 2, 443-5) which Melanchthon wrote under the pseudonym “Otho Germanus” speaks with unmistakably Erasmian language, appealing to a “*philosophia Christiano*,” and “*sacra philosophia*” over and against the “*Peripatetica philosophia*.” In the afterward, Melanchthon notes that Luther’s pure treatment of Scripture is *second only to Erasmus*. In both the preface and afterward, Melanchthon is sure to note that the commentary was produced at a university in which the *tria lingua* flourish. See the discussion of Kunze, *Erasmus und Luther*, 91-4. Regarding Melanchthon as the author see Wilhelm Maurer, *Der junge Melanchthon zwischen Humanismus und Reformation*, vol. 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 50, n. 79.

⁴⁸⁷ Luther dedicated the commentary to his colleagues, Peter Lupinus and Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, giving the impression that this commentary was not just the expression of one man but the theological position of the entire university. With the *Operationes in Psalmos* dedicated to the elector earlier that year, it is no wonder that all eyes began to turn to Wittenberg as a rising center of biblical scholarship. In 1520 Willibald Pirckheimer hailed the university as a harbinger of a new age: “*Hoc nullo non memorandum aevo, primos fuisse Witenbergenses sapientes, qui post tot secula oculos aperire, verum a falso dignoscere, & depravatam philosophandi rationem a Christiana Theologia secernere inceperint*”; cited by Grane, *Martinus Noster*, 138, n. 90. See also Kruse, *Universtätstheologie*, 238-40.

⁴⁸⁸ For example, Luther quite shrewdly cast the recent controversy into the language of Galatians, noting that in Augsburg he had a “very kind and fatherly *Pedagogue*”; namely, Cajetan. But in contrast to the law in Galatians, the guidance and direction of this pedagogue led to a completely different kind of Christian freedom. All laws have consequently been abolished save one: *the power of the pope and the privileges of the Roman Church*. The irony is unstated but obvious; while Paul has the pedagogue leading to Christ, Luther’s opponents lead the church to Rome and the papacy. WA 2, 445, 30f. At the end of the dedication Luther observed that he would have preferred to wait for the commentaries of Erasmus, “a man above all others in theology” (*viro in Theologia summo*), if the situation had not demanded otherwise. Given Luther’s true opinion of Erasmus’ theology such superlatives must be seen as a rhetorical tip-of-the-hat to his humanist audience. It is also difficult to miss the Erasmian tone when, at the conclusion, he styles himself as one devoted to “*Christian piety and erudition*” (*pietatis et eruditionis Christianae*); WA 2, 449, 16-31.

apostoli”—may also be regarded as intentional humanist dressing.⁴⁸⁹ And, of course, it hardly goes without saying that the numerous references to Erasmus in the commentary were invitations for humanist approval, not the least being Luther’s very first sentence which hailed Erasmus as *Theologicissimus*.⁴⁹⁰

But the Galatians commentary of 1519 was not only important for Luther’s public image and strategic ties; it also gave a clearer glimpse into what was at stake for Luther and the true nature of his theological reform. Luther’s critique of scholasticism (and now the papacy) could be seen for what it was: a clash over the proper interpretation of Scripture, and most especially of Paul. As a sustained presentation of Pauline theology, the Galatians commentary afforded the reader the opportunity to reevaluate his own understanding of the apostle and to witness where philosophical ideas clashed concretely (i.e. exegetically) with theological ones. The result was not just a reading of Paul freed from cumbersome Aristotelian concepts, but a *new* Paul. In other words, with the publication of Galatians the *causa Lutheri* was emerging more narrowly as a *Paulus Lutheri*.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁹ Meisinger makes note of this change in his introduction to the Galatians lectures, WA 57II, xvii-xviii. For a discussion of Luther’s use of *tropus* in the 1519 commentary (though without reference to the earlier *modus loquendi*) see Kunze, *Erasmus und Luther*, 210-28.

⁴⁹⁰ WA 2, 452, 3-5 (Gal. 1:1): “Quando iam graecatur totus orbis Christianus et Erasmi Theologicissimi annotationes omnium manibus teruntur, non est necesse indicare, quid ‘Apostolus’ graece significet...”. See Augustijn, “Erasmus von Rotterdam im Galaterbriefkommentar Luthers von 1519,” 116, who notes that this reference to Erasmus is entirely superfluous since the *Glossa ordinaria* contains the same explanation of the Greek text as the *Annotationes*. In contrast to the 1516-17 lectures in which Erasmus is mentioned only once, Augustijn counts twenty explicit references to Erasmus’ name in the 1519 commentary. The reason for this does not depend upon new extensive use of Erasmus: only three of the twenty places cannot be traced back to Luther’s use of the *Annotationes* in the original lectures of 1516-17; Augustijn, 119. It rather reflects Luther’s intentional association with the humanists at this time. The situation was much different by the time the revised edition of the commentary appeared in 1523; the *causa Lutheri* and *Erasmi* were no longer so easily interchangeable. There all of the references to Erasmus are omitted.

⁴⁹¹ Whereas a deliberate association with Augustine characterized Luther’s earlier call for theological reform, he now began to identify himself more directly with the Apostle himself. While his opponents occupied themselves with such “great matters” as *extravagantes*, he busied himself with the “least of the apostles” and, like Paul, the lowliest of subject matters: Christ, and him crucified; WA 2, 446, 12-25. Even in his famous

The significance of Luther's commentary for his relationship to the intellectual and religious reform movement of the humanists is therefore a complex one. While it was certainly intended as a point of solidarity, it was potentially also an occasion for division and disagreement. The irony of the commentary was that it set forth as Erasmian an interpretation of Paul that was fundamentally distinguished from that of Erasmus.⁴⁹² Luther's antipathy towards moral philosophy is expressed primarily in anti-scholastic terms, and yet there are subtle reminders that the humanist preference for the "*eruditio moralis philosophiae*" is likewise unacceptable when interpreting Paul.⁴⁹³ The teaching of philosophers, pontiffs, and *orators* are all "of the flesh" because they do not teach the righteousness of faith.⁴⁹⁴ The fact that such a difference between Luther and the *philosophia Christi* of Erasmus was not immediately grasped by most humanists in no way diminishes the importance of the difference here expressed. The Galatians commentary of 1519 can thus be seen as a contribution to the gradual realization of this difference which became painfully obvious after 1521.⁴⁹⁵

As we saw in the last chapter, the fundamental shift in Luther's interpretation of Galatians had already been made in his initial lectures on Paul. Although the commentary demonstrates a greater clarity and precision in Luther's theological expression than the previous

reminiscences in the 1545 preface to his Latin writings, Luther patterns his whole theological development after the radical conversion of Paul; WA 54, 179, 27f.: "Tantum eram Saulus."

⁴⁹² See the discussion of Luther's criticism of Erasmus in the previous chapter, pages 166f.

⁴⁹³ WA 2, 458, 8-11 (Gal. 1:4-5): "Ubi sunt nunc superbi iactatores liberi arbitrii, ubi *eruditio moralis philosophiae*, ubi legum tam sacrarum quam prohanarum virtus, si tanta sunt peccata nostra, ut non nisi dato tanto precio potuerint tolli?" [emphasis mine]. Cf. WA 2, 469, 21f.; 493, 8-12; 503, 23-26; 589, 10f.: "Igitur cum Apostolo contemptis habitibus aliisque deliriis moralis philosophiae."

⁴⁹⁴ WA 2, 509, 34-6 (Gal. 3:4): "Quibus fit, ut omnis omnium hominum, philosophorum, oratorum, etiam pontificum doctrina et iusticia carnalis sit, ubi non fidem docent..."

⁴⁹⁵ This initial lack of doctrinal awareness is in part how Leif Grane explains the relationship of the humanists to Luther as a "productive misunderstanding." See *Martinus Noster*, 293-7.

lectures, its main significance now lies in the public presentation of these ideas. All emphasis must now be laid upon Luther's explicit exploitation of his new understanding. We are especially interested when a move away from a *heilsgeschichtlich* understanding of the text is expressly stated.

We already mentioned the commentary's exposition of 3:23 in the last chapter, but it is worth looking at here again. "But before faith came we were kept under the law, confined unto that faith which was to be revealed" (*prius autem quam veniret fides sub lege custodiebamur conclusi in eam fidem quae revelanda erat*). "Before" (*prius quam*) refers to the status of the individual, not to the times: "For all, he says, who are under the law *before being justified by faith*, the law itself...is a kind of prison."⁴⁹⁶ Rather than understand the "coming of faith" as a kind of trope for the advent of Christ, Luther interprets the verse according to one's personal faith in Christ—the faith that justifies. Likewise, "under the law" is not simply life in the days of the onerous old covenant, but much more the individual's experience of spiritual imprisonment, of life trapped in sin. Restrained from outward transgressions by the law's threats, the person *sub lege* is simultaneously exacerbated to the blasphemies of inner hatred for the law and all it represents, "for they would rather wish that the law did not exist, so that they might be allowed to satisfy their lusts with impunity. But to prefer this is to hate the law; and to hate the law is to hate truth, righteousness, and holiness. Now this is not only sin but also love of sin, not only not to be righteous but also to hate righteousness. This is truly to increase sin through the law."⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁶ WA 2, 527, 26-7 (Gal. 3:23): "Omnibus, inquit, qui sub lege sunt, antequam fide iustificentur, lex ipsa velut quidam carcer est..." [emphasis mine].

⁴⁹⁷ WA 2, 527, 26-37 (Gal. 3:23): "...lex ipsa velut quidam carcer est, in qua concludantur et servantur, quia vi et terrore legis arcentur a libertate peccandi invita et reluctante concupiscentia: furit enim concupiscentia et odit

Instead of reflecting the course of sacred history, the movement from law to faith finds its primary referent in the experience of each person who comes to know (*intellegere*) and feel (*sentire*) his sin through the law's prison and "desires to be set free through faith." It is the movement from spiritual slavery into freedom. Thus even before Christ was born, the Old Testament saints experienced this "coming of faith," driven from the pressure and accusation of the law to trust in the gracious promise of Christ: "'Before faith came' is not only understood of the faith which was revealed after Christ, but of *all faith of all the righteous*. For in the same way, faith came also to the fathers long ago, because the law of God, when first revealed to them, also compelled them to seek after grace."⁴⁹⁸ Uniting the faith of the patriarchs with that of the Church is certainly nothing new, but this was usually done through an appeal to a spiritual élite that had received the revelation of Christ ahead of time. However, for Luther, the oneness of faith that exists between those living before Christ and those after is rooted in the theological situation shared by all human beings. "Law" and "faith," as Luther explains them here, are highly personal, theological—indeed, existential categories, having a foundation in human experience that runs deeper than the permutations and contingencies of temporal-historical existence.

legem, carcerem suum, sed cogitur tamen ab operibus abstinere peccati. . . mallet enim legem non esse, ut impune liceret concupiscentias explere. At hoc malle est legem odisse: legem odisse est veritatem, iusticiam, sanctitatem odisse: hoc iam non solum est peccatum, verum et amor peccati, non solum non esse iustum sed odisse etiam iusticiam, quod est vere peccatum per legem augeri." This is followed by a quotation from Augustine's *Expositio epistulae ad Galatas*, even though Augustine himself is speaking of the law as it affected the proud Jews in the Old Testament. Cf. WA 57II, 84, 25-8.

⁴⁹⁸ WA 2, 528, 4-7 (Gal. 3:23): "Illud 'Priusquam veniret fides' non tantum de fide, quae post Christum revelata est, sed de omni fide omnium iustorum intelligitur. Nam et patribus olim eadem fides venit, quia et lex dei eis primo revelata coegit eos gratiam quaerer" [emphasis mine]. Luther makes a similar point when commenting on Gal. 4:4, "when came the fullness of time," WA 2, 534, 16-19 (Gal. 4:4): "ita enim et deus praefinierat tempus, quo benedictio Abrahae promissa in semine suo Christo impleretur, *non quod non interim sancti patres eandem benedictionem consecuti sint*, sed quod in Christo revelanda erat per mundum et ipse manifestandus, in quo et illi et nos benedicimur" [emphasis mine].

The rest of the passage follows this same line of thought, although at first it appears that Luther has gone on a digression. He warns his readers, “Take care, lest you arrange these words ‘confined in that faith’ (*conclusi in eam fidem*), as if [Paul] wanted it understood that they were confined in faith as in a prison (*in fide velut in carcere*), since this is what he affirms concerning the law.”⁴⁹⁹ What a strange warning. Does someone actually advocate such an interpretation—that faith confines as a prison—or is this, perhaps, some kind of pedagogical strawman? Looking through the various commentators in the tradition, the latter would seem to be the case. Another possibility, however, is that Luther here refers to the interpretation that he himself advanced in his very first lectures on the Psalms. As was previously discussed, the *Dictata* repeatedly cited this verse in connection with the law’s guardianship over Israel’s faith. Though not in a “prison,” the synagogue was nevertheless “held and confined” in a distinctively Old Testament faith, a *fides revelanda*, in preparation for a new faith revealed in Christ, the *fides revelata*.⁵⁰⁰ In the commentary, however, it appears that Luther is deliberately correcting his old view. By glossing the text with the less ambiguous “*ad fidem*,” Luther prevents an interpretation of the accusative that might understand the text as “confined *in* faith” or “*into* faith.”⁵⁰¹ Yet even a relational or temporal “until faith” is understood by Luther in terms of one’s personal faith—*fides qua*—rather than the *fides quae* manifest at Christ’s coming in history. “We were confined in the prison of the law; and this was *in fidem*, that is, *until* the faith yet to come (*ad fidem futuram*), or rather for this, that we might be set free by a coming faith (*fide futura*), since the law

⁴⁹⁹ WA 2, 528, 8-10 (Gal. 3:23): “Item vide, ne sic contextum ordines: ‘Conclusi in eam fidem’, quasi in fide velut in carcere conclusos intelligi velit, cum hoc de lege affirmet.”

⁵⁰⁰ See Chapter Two, pages 82-96 above.

⁵⁰¹ Cf. the *Dictata*, WA 55II, 988, 2785 (Ps. 118:146), where Luther betrays such an understanding by changing the accusative into the ablative, “Tenebatur enim clausus *in fide* reuelanda.”

makes itself into a prison so that we might desire to be set free through faith (*per fidem optaremus liberari*).”⁵⁰²

In contrast to the *Dictata*, the commentary is not concerned with the law’s *heilsgeschichtlich* preparation of Israel through shadows and figures. Although he does not deny that it had such a function, Luther believes that Paul’s sole interest is in the law as revealer of sin. This is its highest office. Only in the disclosure of humanity’s deep depravity and utter moral impotence can the law truly act as a *praeparatio ad gratiam* and a pedagogue unto Christ.⁵⁰³

Luther also finds other opportunities to counter a strict epochal interpretation of law and gospel. In 4:4-5 Luther reacts to one unnamed commentator (cited by Jerome) who understands “*sub lege*” to describe the Jewish condition alone. When Christ is said to be “born under the law, to redeem those under the law,” the commentator appears to have in mind only Christ’s submission to circumcision and other various Jewish rites. Thus, he wonders whether Christ also had to be born *without the law* so that he might redeem the Gentiles.⁵⁰⁴ This confusion, Luther maintains, is due to a faulty definition of the law, arising from a complete disregard to the

⁵⁰² WA 2, 528, 10-12 (Gal. 3:23): “...sed eramus conclusi carcere legis et hoc in fidem, id est ad fidem futuram seu in hoc, ut fide futura liberaremur, quando lex carcere suo id fecit, ut per fidem optaremus liberari.” Already in the lectures of 1516/17 Luther interpreted the accusative in this way, glossing “in eam fidem” with “usque ad” for clarification; WA 57II, 27, 7. Cf. Faber Stapulensis’ translation from the Greek, *S. Pauli*, e.ii, r: “...ad futuram fidem quae reuelanda erat.”

⁵⁰³ WA 2, 529, 5-9 (Gal. 3:24-5): “...ita lex est noster paedagogus ad Christum, id est, ut per legem acti et exerciti ad Christum, ad fidem, ad haereditatem quaerendam et suspirandam paremur: lex enim, ut dixi, *ad gratiam praeparat*, dum peccatum revelat et auget, humilians superbos ad auxilium Christi desyderandum” [emphasis mine]. For Luther’s development on the *praeparatio ad gratiam*, see pages 99-103 and 162-63 above.

⁵⁰⁴ WA 2, 534, 22-5. Cf. PL 26, 398 C: “Quaerat quispiam, et dicat: Si ideo sub lege factus est, ut eos qui sub lege erant, redimeret: quod videlicet impossibile fuerit redimi eos qui erant sub lege, nisi factus fuisset ipsi sub lege: aut sine lege factus est, ut redimeret eos, qui sub lege non erant: aut si non est factus ipse sine lege, non redimit eos qui sub lege non fuerant. Quod si possibile erat eos qui sine lege erant, redimi; ita ut sine lege ipse non fieret; ergo superflue sub lege factus est; ut redimeret eos qui sub lege erant.” Jerome tries to solve the problem by

apostle's way of speaking. For Paul, "to be 'under the law' is *not that one lives during the time of the law* and according to its decrees...but it is to be a debtor of the law, to not have what you need to fulfill it, and to deserve all of the punishments laid down by the law."⁵⁰⁵ In other words, "*sub lege*" has to do with one's theological situation as a sinner. If "*sub lege*" refers only to those laws distinctive to the time of the law, then Paul's description of Christ's redeeming work loses much of its relevance: "For Christ did not redeem us from ceremonies only. No, rather he redeemed us from concupiscence or the law prohibiting concupiscence: for he himself was indebted to no one and yet he made himself a debtor, abiding as a sinner....He was not nor could he be 'under the law,' yet he was born under the law as sin and a sinner—not by doing things against the law as we, but by innocently bearing the punishments for sins imposed by the law. Therefore all nations were 'under the law,' at least the law of nature and of the Decalogue."⁵⁰⁶

We have already seen in his earlier lectures how Luther shunned the various distinctions of the law when interpreting Paul. "Law" ought to be understood in its most general sense (*generalissime*). Likewise, the commentary tirelessly warns its readers to avoid placing distinctions on the law, especially since it was for this very reason that the vast majority of the

distinguishing between *redimere*, which he maintains referred only to the Jews, and *emere*, which pertained to Gentiles (e.g. 1 Cor. 7:23); PL 26, 399 A.

⁵⁰⁵ WA 2, 534, 30-3 (Gal. 4:4-5): "Proinde Tropus Apostoli servandus est. Non enim sub lege esse est id, quod tempore et decreto legis vivere...sed est esse debitorem legis, non habere quo impleas et reum esse omnium poenarum a lege positarum" [emphasis mine]. Cf. WA 2, 496, 30-34; 499, 1f.; 587, 27-8.

⁵⁰⁶ WA 2, 534, 27f.; cf. WA 514, 17-22. See also Bonaventura, *Sent.* III, d 1, q. 4, dub 3, which treats the question of what sense Christ can be said to be *sub lege*. There he offers a threefold distinction (tribus modi): ad causam, ad observationem, and ad motivum. None of these modi make any explicit connection to living in the *tempus legis* and indeed the first one approaches Luther's definition—"Quantum ad causam sunt illi qui nati sunt *sub peccato*"—but is unfortunately not developed further. Since Bonaventura is only interested in the christological question, he concentrates instead on the second modus, "ad observationem," which for him is the only one applicable to Christ.

exegetical tradition had, in Luther's view, fundamentally misinterpreted Paul's argument.⁵⁰⁷ "It is impossible for those to understand [Paul] who think he is speaking only about the ceremonial law."⁵⁰⁸ While the place of the Jewish ceremonial laws was undoubtedly central to the controversy in the Galatian churches—specifically circumcision and table fellowship—Luther believed that Paul addressed these particular questions with a much deeper theological principle.⁵⁰⁹ That is to say, *all law*—whether ceremonial, juridical, or moral; divine or human—all, without exception, consist of *works*, of *doing*; that is, they deal only with a righteousness "before men" (*apud homines*).⁵¹⁰ But the righteousness before God is of an entirely different sort; it is of *faith*, of *believing*.

Indeed, let the state have its own righteousness, the philosophers their own, and everyone his own. Yet here one ought to take "righteousness" according to the understanding of Scripture, and the Apostle plainly says that righteousness does not exist save through faith in Jesus Christ, while all other works, *even of the most holy law of God*, so far from bestowing righteousness, are even sins and make a man worse *before God*. . . . Therefore, in theology do not call that which is outside faith in Christ, "righteousness."⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁷ Cf. WA 2, 489, 17f.; 492, 10f.; 515, 25f. (495, 31; Jerome's interpretation is "angustior"). Luther notes that in more recent times the use of Aristotle's *moralia* has brought about an even greater obscurity so that in effect "Paul's theology completely vanished," WA 2, 493, 6-12 (Gal. 2:16): "Atque ita clarum est, iusticiam Christianam et humanam esse prorsus non modo diversas, sed contrarias quoque, quia haec ex operibus fit, ex illa fiunt opera. Inde nihil mirum, quod theologia Paulina penitus ceciderit nec intelligi potuerit, postquam ii coeperunt Christianos docere, qui Aristotelis moralia prorsus convenire mentiti sunt cum Christi Paulique doctrina, prorsus nec Aristotelem nec Christum intelligentes."

⁵⁰⁸ WA 2, 519, 18-20: "Vides, ergo, quam digne tractet scripturas Apostolus, ita ut impossibile sit eum intelligi ab iis, qui de lege ceremoniali tantum eum putant loqui. Nam eodem argumento concludit contra iusticiam decalogi." Cf. WA 2, 468, 32f.; 495, 29f.; 496, 30f.; 508, 12f.; 514, 10f.; 515, 30-34; 534, 26f.; 561, 14f.; 566, 20f.; 596, 8-10.

⁵⁰⁹ Cf. Augustine's interpretation of the conflict in Galatia in his letter to Jerome, *ep.* 82, 20; CSEL 34, 372, 13-373, 4; see also Chapter One, pages 36-38.

⁵¹⁰ Likewise, the only life which the law can offer is a life before men, that is, a life of physical rewards and escape from physical punishment. WA 2, 515, 16-23 (Gal. 3:12): "Sed qui fecerit ea, homo vivet in illis. . . . lex non vivificat nec iustificat coram deo: qui autem fecerit ea, quae legis sunt, vivet ut homo in illis, hoc est, evadet poenam legis acquiratque praemium legis, . . . in illis operibus, inquam, suis vivet, id est, vitam tuebitur, ne occidatur iudicio legis. . . . [516, 2-3] hominem ex lege vivere apud homines, sed iustum hominem ex fide apud deum."

⁵¹¹ WA 2, 503, 25-32 (Gal. 2:21): "Habeat sane civilis res suam iusticiam, philosophi suam et quicumque suam. Nos oportet hic iusticiam ad intellectum scripturae accipere, quam Apostolus plane negat esse nisi per fidem

Rather than address the value of one law over against the other, Paul is said to argue from a “foundational premise” (*subsumptio*);⁵¹² namely, that “law and faith are not the same.”⁵¹³ Such is Luther’s understanding of Galatians 3:11-12: “It is evident that no man is justified before God by the law, because ‘*iustus ex fide vivet.*’ But the law is not ‘*ex fide.*’” On the other hand, to those who do not recognize this general premise, Paul’s statements on the law, if applied to the moral commandments, appear outrageous: How can commandments which are “holy and righteous and good” be worthless for righteousness and justification? The only alternative is to reduce Paul’s argument to a dispute over the function of particular *kinds* of laws. Such interpretations inevitably run along *heilsgeschichtlich* lines: certain aspects of the law are now, with the coming of Christ, outdated.⁵¹⁴

Iesu Christi, caetera omnia opera, etiam *sacratissimae legis dei*, adeo non praestare iusticiam, ut etiam peccata sint et hominem peiorem faciant *coram deo*...Ne ergo in theologia iusticiam vocaveris, quod extra fidem Christi fuerit” [emphasis mine]. Cf. WA 2, 491, 38f. (Gal. 2:16): “Non iustificatur homo ex operibus legis, q.d. ‘Admitto fieri opera legis, sed dico eis non iustificari hominem nisi *coram se et hominibus* et pro huius vitae mercede. Sint opera legis, modo sciatur, *ea esse coram deo peccata* et iam non vera opera legis’. Ac sic funditus destruit iusticiae nostrae fiduciam, quod ultra omnia opera legis longe *alia iustitica* opus sit, nempe operibus dei et gratiae” [emphasis mine]. WA 2, 516, 1-4 (Gal. 3:12): “Apostolus enim vult, hominem *ex lege* vivere *apud homines*, sed iustum hominem *ex fide apud deum*, hoc est, quod iusticia, vita et salus hominis apud deum sit fides, non iusticia prior fide sed per fidem iusticia et vita” [emphasis mine]. See also Luther’s very important comments on the two modes of justification, WA 2, 489f. This fundamental distinction was already clearly laid out a year earlier in the Heidelberg Disputation, WA 1, 354, 29-32: “25. Non ille iustus est qui multum operatur, Sed qui sine opere multum credit in Christum. 26. Lex dicit ‘*fac hoc*’, et nunquam fit: gratia dicit ‘*Crede in hunc*’, et iam facta sunt omnia” [emphasis mine].

⁵¹² WA 2, 514, 39f.

⁵¹³ WA 2, 515, 11-15 (Gal. 3:12): “Lex autem non est ex fide. Hoc est, quod dixi, ideo lege neminem iustificari, quia sola fide iustificabitur iustus. At lex et fides non sunt idem, nec ipsa nec opera eius sunt ex fide neque cum fide. Proinde coram hominibus iusti sunt, sed non apud deum, ut sequitur.”

⁵¹⁴ Cf. WA 2, 492, 5-15 (Gal. 2:16): “Item et hoc observabis, quod ‘opera legis’ *generaliter* dicit, non tantum *ceremonialia*, sed prorsus omnia etiam *decalogi*...Nam hic sensus in causa est, quod Apostolum *plurimi non intelligunt*, qui opera legis non nisi iusta et bona intelligere possunt, quando lex ipsa bona est et iusta: ideo coacti sunt per legem intelligere ceremonialia, quod illa fuerint tunc mala et moruta. Verum errant...” [emphasis mine]. WA 57II, 69, 1f.

So it is with the threefold *lex naturae*, *lex scripta*, and *lex evangelica*.⁵¹⁵ Like the division between the ceremonial and moral laws, the distinction served to relativize Paul's disparagements and preserve the necessary continuity of *lex* between the testaments. Obviously, standing behind these "three laws" are the three ages of salvation history: the time before the law, the time of the Mosaic law, and the time of the evangelical law of Christ. Yet Luther brushes aside such qualifications as *falsa intellegentia*. *Lex* is defined by its function, not the times: "These three laws differ not so much by their office as by the interpretation of those who falsely understand them...therefore there is *one law* which runs through *all ages*, known to all men, written in the hearts of all, and leaves no one with an excuse *from the beginning until end*."⁵¹⁶

The distinction between the *vetus lex* and the *nova lex* receives the same treatment by Luther. For instance, when Paul declares that the whole law is fulfilled in the words, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (5:14), Luther is careful to point out that this verse does not refer to the cessation of the old law through the institution of a more spiritual evangelical law. On the contrary, "fulfilled" ought to be understood in this context as "summed up" (*capitulatur*) or "summarized" (*summat*),⁵¹⁷ for the fulfillment of the law is not through a new law (*per novam*

⁵¹⁵ Cf. WA 57II, 101, 3-8. *Sententie divine pagine*, 35f., 92; Robert of Melun, *Sententie*, I, 1, c. 14-15; Bonaventura, *Breviloquium*, prol. 2, n. 1: "Describit (scil. scriptura sacra) autem per tria tempora mundum decurrere, scil. per tempus legis naturae, legis scriptae et legis gratiae... [n. 2] universum tempus...decurrit secundum triplicem legem, scil. inditam interius, datam exterius et desuper infusam"; Thomas, *Super Galat.*, c. 3, lec. 7: "Unde signanter dicit [lex scripta] *posita est*, quasi debito ordine collocata inter legem naturae et legem gratiae"; Biel, *Sent.* IV, d. 1, q. 2, a. 1, nota 2: "Et hic status hominis lapsi subdividitur secundum triplicem legem. Est enim status hominis lapsi sub lege naturae, sub lege scripta Moysi et sub lege veritatis et gratiae, quae est lex Christi."

⁵¹⁶ WA 2, 580, 13-20 (Gal. 5:14): "...tres has leges non tam officio quam falso sensu intelligentium differre... Igitur una est lex, quae transit per omnia secula, omnibus nota hominibus, scripta in omnium, nec excusabilem relinquit ullum ab initio usque in finem" [emphasis mine].

⁵¹⁷ WA 2, 575, 31-7. Luther refers to Rom. 13:9 as justification for this interpretation which places the Greek verb, ἀνακεφαλαιώω, in parallel to πληρώω. Cf. WA 57II, 100, 5f.

legem) which spiritually interprets the words of the old, but through grace. “Therefore the whole law is *summarized* by this one sentence, but it is *fulfilled* by grace.”⁵¹⁸

The gospel is not merely an allegory of the law, a new spiritual interpretation of what had already existed hidden within the old law. This is not what Paul meant when he called the law “spiritual.” Whether or not the law is spiritual depends entirely upon its effect, not on who said it or when.⁵¹⁹ Hence, commenting on 2:19, Luther points out that the old law (i.e. “*lex operum, lex vetus, lex Mosi, lex carnis, lex peccati, lex irae, lex mortis*”) can indeed be quite spiritual. The *lex spiritualis* lives up to its name when, through the revelation of our sinful state, it lays bare our spiritual poverty and our *need* for the Spirit. “It is spiritual because it requires the spirit of faith.”⁵²⁰ Consequently, the more spiritual it is, the more it “damns everything, makes all people guilty, increases concupiscence, and kills.” For this reason, Luther can understand “do not covet” as one of the most spiritual commandments—it makes more people guilty than all the rest.⁵²¹ The “letter that kills” is in every way a very spiritual law (“*omnis lex literae est*

⁵¹⁸ WA 2, 575, 37- 576, 4 (Gal. 5:14): “Quod ideo dico, ne quis Apostolum putet docere, per novam legem sic impleri veterem, quod illa sit spiritualis intelligentia et spiritualia verba, cum sola gratia sit plenitudo legis et verba verba non implent, sed res implent verba et virtutes confirmant sermonem. alioquin hoc praeceptum diligendi proximi spiritualissimum nonne Levi. xix. scribitur? Summatur ergo hoc verbo omnis lex, sed gratia impletur” [emphasis mine]. Cf. Artur Landgraf “Die Gnadenökonomie,” 221-22 lists various scholastics that hold to the view that Luther here rejects, for example, Petrus of Capua: “Quantum ad veram expositionem nichil additum est, set explanata est lex per evangelium. Set littere et litterali intelligentie aliquid additum est.”

⁵¹⁹ This is true conversely of the gospel which is also defined by its effect. Cf. Luther’s comments on Gal 1:11, WA 2, 466, 3f., which were taken largely from his lectures, WA 57II, 59, 18f. Here he is sure to point out that although Christ and the apostles give many rules and instructions, these are not to be regarded as the gospel but as explanations of the law, since they reveal sin. Only when the message is of God’s grace and the forgiveness of sins in Christ can this, properly speaking, be “gospel.”

⁵²⁰ WA 2, 500, 22-3. See also Wilhelm Maurer’s essay which compares Melancthon’s understanding of the *lex spiritualis* to that of Luther and Erasmus, “Lex spiritualis bei Melancthon bis 1521,” in *Gedenkschrift für D. Werner Elert: Beiträge zur historischen und systematischen Theologie*, ed. Friedrich Hübner (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1955), 171-98.

⁵²¹ WA 2, 409, 36- 500, 1 (Gal. 2:19): “Haec est lex operum, lex vetus, lex Mosi, lex carnis, lex peccati, lex irae, lex mortis, damnans omnia, reos faciens omnes, concupiscentias augens, et occidens, *eoque magis, quo fuerit*

spiritualis”),⁵²² yet the “spirit that gives life,” its various traditional synonyms notwithstanding (“*lex fidei, lex nova, lex Christi, lex spiritus, lex gratiae*”), is no law at all, but faith, grace, the Spirit, and Christ himself, “justifying, fulfilling everything, and crucifying the concupiscence of the flesh.”⁵²³

In the last chapter, we saw that Luther had wedded his doctrine of the law to his doctrine of sin. A *peccatum radicale* meant, on the one hand, a ubiquitous law, one which had the power to harry the conscience until the end of this life. It was a situation that was basic to the human condition, even in the life of the Christian. Wherever sin was present there too was the law, making transgressors and laying down its curse. *Lex enim omne peccatum tangit*. And yet our text in Galatians intends to assert the very opposite: that the law indeed has an end; that its office is only a temporary one which ceases in Christ. And Luther finds this likewise to be true—true for *everyone* who believes in the promise of Christ, whether he lives in the Old Testament or the New. With the coming of faith and the Holy Spirit the law is entirely fulfilled in the believer. He produces the fruit of the Spirit and “against such there is no law” (5:23). Christians, therefore, are not *sub lege*.

The tension here described cannot be resolved for Luther by equivocating on “*lex*.” In both cases, it is the law as moral demand in any and every form. The tension must rather be

spiritualior, sicut est illa ‘Non concupisces’: haec enim plures reos facit quam illa ‘Non occides’ aut illa ‘Circumcidite praepudia vestra’ aut similis ceremoniae...” [emphasis mine].

⁵²² WA 2, 500, 17-18 (Gal. 2:19): “Item sequitur, quod omnis lex literae est spiritualis, quo modo dici potest spiritualis, sicut Rho. vij. Scimus, quia lex est spiritualis.” Cf. WA 2, 551, 36- 552, 14 (Gal. 4:24): “...*nulla lex est quae non sit spiritualis*...*Lex in se semper est spiritualis*, id est spiritum significans, qui est plenitudo eius...sed quia nobis hanc non dat nec dare potest, nobis litera dicitur, quantumlibet spiritualis ipsa sit...Quare spiritualem intelligentiam legis recte appellamus eam, *qua scitur lex requirere spiritum et nos carnales convincere*” [emphasis mine].

⁵²³ WA 2, 499, 26-8 (Gal 2:19): “...*lex fidei, lex nova, lex Christi, lex spiritus, lex gratiae, iustificans, omnia implens et carnis concupiscentias crucifigens.*”

within the Christian himself: in him the law both remains and has come to an end, it is both fulfilled and yet to be fulfilled; that is to say, he is both free from sin and the law and a sinner nevertheless. From the standpoint of faith “the law has been fulfilled, sins have been destroyed, and no law is left.” But this freedom from the law is limited to the inner life of the Christian, the conscience which rests in faith. So long as he is in the flesh, he is still a sinner and the law is necessarily against him.⁵²⁴

Because Luther understands the Christian as *simul iustus et peccator*, a strict *heilsgeschichtlich* interpretation of Paul is insufficient. The continual reality of sin coupled with the law’s continual revelation of sin underlies Luther’s more existential view of law and gospel. In subsequent writings, this is, in fact, Luther’s stated justification for such an interpretation of Paul.⁵²⁵ Although the coming of Christ has decisively freed us from the curse of the law, vanquishing sin and death, this is a reality that can only be experienced in its fullness after our

⁵²⁴ WA 2, 496, 35f. Cf. WA 2, 497, 22-4 (Gal. 2:18): “Proinde si fidem spectes, lex impleta est, peccata destructa, nulla lex superest: sed si carnem, in qua non est bonum, iam peccatores cogeri fateri eos, qui iusti sunt in spiritu per fidem...[497, 36-7] praecepta sunt necessaria tantum peccatoribus. At iusti quoque sunt peccatores propter carnem suam.” WA 2, 596, 32-7 (Gal. 5:24): “...ii, qui perfecti in iis sunt, sub lege non sunt: legem implent plene, ideo lex nihil adversus eos, verum dum in carne nemo est qui hanc metam perfecte attingit, in hoc saltem servantur qui Christi sunt, quod carnem suam crucifigunt et pugnant cum desyderiis eius, et sic spiritu implent legem dei, licet carne (ut Rho. vij. dicit) serviant legi peccati...[597, 1-3] tantum ergo illis non adversatur lex quantum spiritu vivunt, tantum adversatur quantum carnis moventur desyderiis.”

⁵²⁵ See, for example, his *Operationes in Psalmos*, 1519; AWA 93, 4-7, 10-17 (Ps. 2:7): “Discernit itaque hic versus genus doctrinae, quod in novo testamento docetur, ab eo, quod in veteri docebatur. Olim lex, quae iram operabatur et peccatum augebat, nunc fides, quae remissionem operatur et iustitiam adimplet, docetur... Non quod etiam nunc non doceatur lex... sed quod gratiae praedicatio propria sit novi testamenti et legis propria veteris testamenti; cum enim nullus sit in hac vita, in quo impleta sit omnis plenitudo novi testamenti, nullus quoque invenietur, in quo non sit alia pars veteris testamenti reliqua. Transitus enim est et ‘phase’ quoddam haec vita de lege ad gratiam, de peccato ad iustitiam, de Mose ad Christum; consummatio autem futurae resurrectionis est.” WA 7, 658, 26f. (1521); WA 40I, 534-38 (1531/35); WA 39I, 379, 9f. (1538). Cf. also his Hebrews lectures, 1518; WA 57III, 192, 16f.: “Secundo potest ‘lex’ accipi iuxta superiorem intelligentiam, qua incedit Apostolus in epistola ad Romanos et Gal, ubi per ‘legem’ simpliciter intelligit, quicquid divinitus et humanitus praecipitur, sive sit ceremoniale sive iudiciale et morale. Sic sensus est: ‘lex translata est’ id est per Christum impleta est... Ideo sacerdotis novi officium proprie non est docere legem, sed monstrare gratiam Iesu Christi, quae est plenitudo legis... [193, 5-9] Verum haec translatio nondum est perfecta sicut prior, perficitur autem de die in diem. Ideo partim docet, partim monstrat cum Ioan Baptista sacerdos novus, cum iustus ille, cui lex non sit posita, in hoc tempore nullus sit nisi inchoative.”

own death.⁵²⁶ Thus, from one perspective, Paul is speaking of history when he says that the law ends with Christ. But this central event of salvation history can only be the history of *our salvation* in faith. The cross of Christ does indeed divide law and gospel, but the Christian does not now simply exist in the happy age of the evangel—he bears this cross as well. He dies and rises daily. Law and gospel therefore mark an ongoing dialectic in the Christian life. The law remains the constant structure of human life, which, when that life is marred by sin, becomes a prison. But alien to this imprisoned existence is that message *extra nos*, the gospel. Each time the gospel is proclaimed, the Christian is freed once again; he is forgiven.

In our examination of the 1519 commentary, we have highlighted Luther's most explicit statements regarding his new interpretation of Paul, especially when he deliberately contrasted himself to the preceding exegetical tradition. Luther was quite aware that he was presenting something new. While he demurely admitted the commentary's shortcomings in a letter to Staupitz, Luther also acknowledged that Paul was still more clearly explained in his commentary than in the commentaries of others before him.⁵²⁷ Indeed, many of his readers held this to be true as well.⁵²⁸ The *Paulus Lutheri* presented to the world at this time would eventually change the subsequent direction of Pauline interpretation. The historical details of the commentary's

⁵²⁶ See Ulrich Asendorf, *Eschatologie bei Luther* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), esp. "Die eschatologische Ausrichtung des Gesetzes" and "Der eschatologische Ort des Gewissens," 48-60; Lennart Pinomaa, *Die Existenzielle Charakter der Theologie Luthers: Das Hervorbrechen der Theologie der Anfechtung und ihre Bedeutung für das Lutherverständnis* (Helsinki: 1940); Albrecht Peters, *Glaube und Werk: Luthers Rechtfertigungslehre im Lichte der heiligen Schrift*, Arbeiten zur Geschichte und Theologie des Luthertums, vol. 8 (Berlin/Hamburg: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1967).

⁵²⁷ The letter accompanied two copies of the commentary; WABr 1, 513, 4-8, no. 202 (3 October 1519): "Mitto duo exemplaria, R.P., insensatorum Galatarum meorum. Nec iam adeo placent, quam placuerunt primum, ut videam potuisse latius et clarius eos exponi; sed quis omnia simul? imo quis semper multa? Confido tamen apertiorum esse Paulum istum, quam antea ab aliis factus sit, etsi stomacho meo non satis facit."

⁵²⁸ Cf. the panegyrics of Martin Bucer and Philipp Melanchthon cited in WA 2, 436.

influence—its reception, use, and impact—still need to be more thoroughly studied.⁵²⁹

Nonetheless, even without such details we may safely acknowledge this often overlooked fact: the 1519 commentary on Galatians marked the beginning of Luther’s influence on the history of Pauline exegesis.

Galatians in the *Weihnachtspostille*, 1522

At the end of 1519, a request came from the Elector for Luther to prepare “*enarrationes*” for the Sunday pericopes leading up to Lent.⁵³⁰ In spite of his many other obligations, Luther began writing a Latin exposition on the first four Sundays in Advent which he completed by June of 1520. Nevertheless, due to confusion or difficulties at the printing press it was not published until the next year.⁵³¹ Dedicated to the Elector, the Postils appeared in Wittenberg on 7 March 1521 under the title *Enarrationes epistolarum et euangeliorum, quas postillas vocant*.⁵³²

However, with *Exurge Domine* appearing in 1520 and the summons to the Diet of Worms in 1521, Luther’s work on the Postils came to a halt. It was not until the forced solitude of the Wartburg that he could return his pen to the task. There he began with the pericopes for

⁵²⁹ One of the earliest known receptions of Luther’s new interpretation of Galatians can be found in the margins of the so-called Lyon Vulgate of 1519. Originally thought to have been Luther’s own personal copy with his hand-written comments, it is now generally believed to have belonged to an unidentified early follower of Luther. Interpretations peculiar to Luther as well as direct quotations from the 1519 commentary can be found in the margins. See Stefan Strohm, “Eine protestantische Biblia cum Glosis und ein Plädoyer für Luthers Deutsche Bible,” in *Eine glossierte Vulgata aus dem Umkreis Martin Luthers. Untersuchungen zu dem 1519 in Lyon gedruckten Exemplar in der Bibelsammlung der Württembergischen Landesbibliothek Stuttgart*, Martin Brecht and Eberhard Zwink, eds., *Vestigia Bibliae*, vol. 21 (Bern: Peter Lang, 1999), 247-327.

⁵³⁰ The letter from Spalatin that made the Elector’s request known is reflected in Luther’s response, WABr 1, 594, 8f., no. 231 (18 December 1519): “Verum quod de enarrandis Euangeliis & Epistolis xlmalibus tantopere urges, nescio, si queam praestare.”

⁵³¹ WABr 2, 36, 36-7, no. 251; 41, 3-6, no. 254; 120, 15-19, no. 297; 249, 26-29, no. 368; 270, 20-22, no. 378.

⁵³² WABr 2, 275, 7-9, no. 381 (6 March 1521); WA 7, 463-537.

Christmas, this time in German.⁵³³ *German*, let us observe, not Latin—it was now a different situation than in 1519 and Luther was writing for different people. German was for the common folk, not the erudite scholar of the *studia humanitatis*. A significant change had occurred in the landscape of reform.

Having responded to the threat of excommunication with an unequivocal denunciation of the papacy as Antichrist, Luther forced Germany's humanists to reconsider their relationship to his reform program. The tension in the reform movement became especially poignant after his excommunication and subsequent condemnation at Worms in 1521. To openly support Luther and remain within the Roman church was no longer a possibility; a dangerous decision had to be made. Erasmus made his position clear and withdrew even his nominal support from Luther. With Erasmus' rejection of the Lutheran reform, the confluence of *causae* had, in effect, come to an end.⁵³⁴ The Reformation would thus be more than an intellectual movement. Both prince and peasant would feel its impact and take up its banner.

In part, the significance of the *Weihnachtspostille* lay in this new direction and focus of Luther's reform. No longer were his thoughts directed to the *sodalites*. This is not to say that Luther ceased to value his ties to humanist circles or that his reform had abandoned its concerns for the academia. Indeed, there was still much to do in the universities, and humanists still had a large part to play toward that end. But if the gospel was to spread, that is, if reform was really

⁵³³ WABr 2, 357, 26-27, no. 418 (13 July 1521): "Ego Postillas in Euangelia vernacula tracto, statim missurus ad incudem, ubi denarium attigero." Because "denarium" refers to number of Sundays (gospels), Luther implies here that he intends to translate the Advent sermons into German as well. Cf. WABr 2, 369, 39-31, no. 423 (31 July 1521): "Nem festinabo, vt denarium Euangeliorum absolutum emittamus pro vno libro. Quatuor dominicas transferam et reliqua adiiciam."

⁵³⁴ On the dissolution of the humanist reform party in Germany and the place of Erasmus in the process see Grane, *Martinus Noster*, 269-87; Rummel, *Confessionalization of Humanism*, 30-49; Dost, *Renaissance Humanism*, 197-99.

“*pro re theologica et salute fratrum,*” then it had to extend beyond the quiet study and the lecture hall and be placed in the hearts and mouths of preachers. Luther’s Postils were directed toward this purpose, intended for the common parish *Pfarrer* and pulpit as well as for the general edification of literate German Christians.⁵³⁵ With the publication of Galatians in 1519, Luther had produced a biblical commentary that would serve as a model for contemporary scholarship; in the Postils he now offered an example, indeed a wellspring, for future evangelical preaching.

With respect to the particular question posed to Luther’s interpretation of Galatians, the Christmas Postils offer a sense of completeness, functioning as a kind of *inclusio* to this study. In the two sermons that focus on Galatians, (the Sunday after Christmas, Galatians 4:1-7 and New Year’s Day, Galatians 3:23-29),⁵³⁶ Luther returns to ideas first introduced in the *Dictata*, yet now reinterpreted to support his changed view of the text. Looking at the Postils is therefore also a look back, a measuring of the distance traveled.

1. Fullness of Time and Spiritual Advent

In his first Psalm lectures, Luther would from time to time talk about the coming of Christ as the coming of the *tempus plenitudinis*, the “time of fullness.”⁵³⁷ The phrase was an inversion of the text from Galatians 4:4—“But when came the fullness of time (*plenitudo temporis*), God sent his Son”—which Luther took over from Lombard’s interpretation of this verse at the beginning of his third book in the *Sentences*.⁵³⁸ Because “fullness” reflected that

⁵³⁵ Ebeling, *Evangelische Evangelienauslegung*, 30-7.

⁵³⁶ WA 10I/1.1, 324-78; 449-503.

⁵³⁷ See Chapter Two, pages 106-10.

⁵³⁸ Lombard, *Sent.* III, d. 1: “**Cum venit igitur plenitudo temporis, ut ait Apostolus, misit Deus Filium suum, factum de muliere, factum sub Lege, ut eos qui sub Lege erant redimeret, in adoptionem filiorum Dei.** Tempus autem plenitudinis dicitur tempus gratiae, quod ab adventu Salvatoris exordium sumpsit. Hoc est *tempus miserendi* (Ps. 101:14) et *annus benignitatis* (Ps. 64:12), in quo *gratia et veritas per Iesum Christum facta est* (John

which traditionally distinguished the New Testament from the Old, the *tempus plenitudinis* was an apt synonym for the *tempus gratiae* ushered in by Christ. The advent of the Son of God was the advent of spiritual plenitude—“*plenum gratiae et veritatis*.” Unlike the “time of the law,” the time of the incarnation offered the fullness of the Spirit and of grace, bestowing the gift of *caritas* so that fulfillment of the law was now possible. Christ’s advent also heralded the fullness of God’s revelation, for all of the figures and shadows of the Old Testament found their spiritual fulfillment in him and his gospel. It is especially this last aspect which Luther emphasized in the *Dictata*. The ministry of Christ was marked by revealing that which formerly had been veiled. The carnal things of the old law were now to be understood spiritually in the new.

In the Galatians lectures of 1516-17, Luther began to move away from this interpretation, glossing the “fullness of time” in 4:4 as the time “previously established by our Father,” Galatians 4:2.⁵³⁹ To interpret this phrase as the “time of fullness” no longer made sense to Luther in this context. The coming of Christ was the source, not the result of spiritual fullness. In other words, if one wanted to understand this verse as Lombard, then Paul should have said “when God sent his Son, the fullness of time came.”⁵⁴⁰

In 1519, he followed this same interpretation: “*Plenitudinem temporis* refers here to what [Paul] said above as the time predetermined by the father. In this way God had predetermined

1:17): *gratia*, quia per caritatem impletur quod in Lege praecipiebatur; *veritas*, quia per Christi adventum exhibetur atque perficitur humanae redemptionis sponsio facta ab antiquo. Filii ergo missio est ipsa incarnatio: eo enim missus est quod in forma hominis mundo visibilis apparuit. De quo supra sufficienter dictum est.”

⁵³⁹ WA 57II, 29, 13-14 (Gal. 4:4): “**At ubi uenit plenitudo** sc. pre finita a patre nostro **temporis**...”

⁵⁴⁰ WA 57II, 29, 23-30, 16 (Gal. 4:4; *RGI* 4): “Hic etiam notandum, quod subocculte simul predestinationem coexsequitur. Alioquin debuit potius dicere: at ubi Deus misit filium suum, venit plenitudo temporis. Non enim tempus fecit filium mitti, sed econtra missio filii fecit tempus plenitudinis.” The reference to predestination in the first sentence is a further explanation of his gloss, “pre finita a patre nostro.” The predetermination of the Father for the coming of the Son implies also our predestined “sonship.” In other words, God has preset the former for the sake of the latter. For similar remarks about the sending of the Spirit, see WA 57II, 30, 23-6, (Gal. 4:6; *RGI* 3).

the time when the promised blessing of Abraham was to be fulfilled in his seed, Christ...and this he calls ‘the fullness of time,’ that is, the fulfillment of the time previously established.”⁵⁴¹

Being a scholarly work, the commentary also mentioned the interpretation of “others” who “call the ‘fullness of time’ the ‘time of fullness,’ i.e. the ‘time of grace,’” yet with obvious little regard for it.⁵⁴²

However, in his 1522 Postil on Galatians 4:1-7, Luther is far more explicit and specifically mentions the interpretation of the “*meyster von hohen*,” quoting Lombard almost word for word: “The time of fullness is the time of grace, which came after Christ was born.”⁵⁴³ Luther then dismisses such a reading as contrary to the Apostle’s own words which precisely do not say “the time of fullness,” but rather, “the fullness of time.” He even notes that with this phrase, Paul is here speaking “according to the way of Scripture” (= *modus loquendi scripturae!*), and cites further biblical examples of this use of “*erfullung*.”⁵⁴⁴

So far, Luther’s argument against a “time of fullness” reading has been a syntactical one. But the sentences which immediately follow his criticism of Lombard demonstrate that there is more at stake here than a little word play with the genitive.

⁵⁴¹ WA 2, 534, 15-20: “Plenitudinem temporis hic reddit, quod supra dixerat praefinitum tempus a patre: ita enim et deus praefinierat tempus, quo benedictio Abrahae promissa in semine suo Christo impleretur...Et hoc vocat plenitudinem temporis, id est impletionem temporis praefiniti.”

⁵⁴² WA 2, 534, 21: “Alii plenitudinem temporis tempus plenitudinis, id est gratiae, vocant.”

⁵⁴³ WA 10I/1.1, 353, 1-6: “Darumb hatt hie der meyster von hohen Synnen geyrrett, da er dißen ortt S. Paulus alßo deuttt: *Die tzeytt der erfullung ist die tzeytt der gnaden, die nach Christus gepurtt ist komen*, gleych widder den Apostell, der nitt spricht: die tzeytt der erfullung, Bondernn die erfullung der tzeytt, und meynet die vorige tzeytt, die vom vatter dem erben bestympt ist, wie lang er iung unter den furmunden seyn soll” [emphasis mine]. Cf. Lomb., *Sent.* III, d. 1: “Tempus autem plenitudinis dicitur tempus gratiae, quod ab adventu Salvatoris exordium sumpsit.”

⁵⁴⁴ WA 10I/1.1, 352, 16f.: “Denn S. Paulus redt hie *nach der weyß der schrift*, die da pflegt tzu sagenn: die tzeytt ist erfullett, Wenn sie eyn ende hatt...” [emphasis mine].

As this same time was fulfilled for the Jews by the bodily advent of Christ, so it is still daily fulfilled when a person is enlightened by faith, so that his slavery and the effects of the law have an end. For Christ's bodily advent would have been of no use if it had not effected such a spiritual advent of faith. For this reason he has come bodily: that he might establish such a spiritual advent. For he has come to all who, before and after [his coming], believed in his bodily advent. Hence, he had always come to the ancient fathers on account of their faith; but down to the present he has not yet come to the Jews of today because of their unbelief. Everything, from the beginning of the world to the end, must cling to this bodily advent. Slavery ends whenever, wherever, and in whomsoever such adherence takes place. Therefore, for each individual his time is fulfilled when he begins to believe in Christ; formerly, as the one yet to come, and now, as the one who has come.⁵⁴⁵

It is clear that, for Luther, the time of fulfillment is more than a moment in history; it is also—in fact, much more so—the personal realization of this moment in one's faith. There is, to be sure, a fulfillment of time in history, one for which the ancient Jews longed and which we now revere in our remembrance. Yet while the advent of Christ is clearly presented as the turning point of *Heilsgeschichte*—"everything, from the beginning of the world to the end, must cling to this bodily advent," it is only its daily fulfillment by faith which effects such salvation for the individual. Indeed, the coming of Christ in history has no purpose (*were keyn nutz*) unless it brings about "such a spiritual advent of faith."⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴⁵ WA 10I/1.1, 353, 6-354, 2: "Wie nu den Juden dieselb tzeytt durch Christus leypliche tzukunft erfullet ist, ßo wirt sie noch teglich erfullet, wenn der mensch erleucht wirt durch den glawben, das seyn knechtere y und gesetz wircken eyn end habe. Denn Christus leypliche tzukunft were keyn nutz, wenn sie nit solche geystliche zukunfft des glawbens wirckte. Er ist auch drumb leyplich kummen, das er solch geystlich zukunfft auffrichte; denn alle, die zuuor und hernach an solch seyne leypliche zukunfft glewbt haben, den ist er komen. Drumb ist er den allten vetern umb solchs glawbens willen alltzeytt komen gewest und ist doch noch heuttigs tags den itzigen Juden nit komen, umb yhrß unglawbens willen. Es muß alles hangen von anbegynn der welt biß anß ende an dißer leyplichen tzukunft, durch wilchs anhangen die knechtere y auffhörett, wenn und wo und ynn wilchem solchs anhangen geschicht. Drumb wirt eynem iglichen seyne tzeyt erfullet, wenn er anhebt ynn Christum tzu glewben, alß ynn den, der da komen sollt vortzeytten, unnd nu komen ist."

⁵⁴⁶ Cf. WA 10I/1.1, 131, 15f.: "Darumb das die geschicht ynn die wortt gefasset und dadurch kundgemacht werdenn, ßo ists doch auch darumb alßo vorschafft von gott, das der glawbe wurd außgedruckt, wilcher an dem wortt hanget und auff das wortt sich ergibt, das von der geschicht gesagt wirt. Denn Christus leben und leyden, wo es nit ynn das wortt vorfasset were, daran der glawbe hafften muge, were es *keyn nutz* geweßenn, dieweyll alle, die es sahen mit augen, keyn frucht dauon empfiengen odder gar wenig." Cf. also *Adventspostille*, 1522; WA 10I/1.2, 203, 5f.: "Denn wo er nicht angefangen hette tzu predigen, were seyn gepurt *keyn nutze* geweßen..."

Hence, the “time of fullness” interpretation, which draws upon the traditional graduated distinction between the testaments, has little value for Luther’s overall understanding of this text. To be faithful to Paul, the “times” of the law and grace, of bondage and freedom must be in absolute opposition—law in all its forms must cease with the coming of Christ. Yet, in this life, to which sin and death still tenaciously cling, the reality of the law’s end happens only in the individual conscience, in faith. “For the more there is of faith, the more there is such joy and freedom; the less faith, the less joy. See, properly speaking, this is the Christian redemption and freedom from the law and from the law’s judgment—i.e. from sin and death. Not that no law or death remain, but that both the law and death become as if they were not. The law no longer causes one to sin, nor does death cause disgrace, but faith conveys one from them unto righteousness and eternal life.”⁵⁴⁷

For this reason, one might say that Luther’s understanding of the “fullness of time” is transhistorical, an event reflected in the lives and faith of all the saints—even of those who lived before the birth of Christ. The faith of the righteous in the Old Testament was the same as ours, for they also came to know their sin in the face of the law and yet grasped hold of the promise of Christ by faith. Through this faith they too experienced the “fullness of time.” Delivered out from under the slavery of the law into the freedom of the gospel,⁵⁴⁸ they experienced the “coming of Christ,” his spiritual advent.

⁵⁴⁷ WA 10I/1.1, 368, 1-7: “Denn yhe mehr glawbens da ist, yhe mehr solch freud und freyheyt; yhe weniger glawb, yhe weniger freud. Sihe, das ist die recht Christlich erloßung und freyheyt vom gesetz und von des gesetzts urteyl, das ist: von sunden und von dem todt. Nit das keyn gesetz odder todt bleybe, sondern das beyde gesetz und todt werden, als weren sie nit. Das gesetz macht nit zu sunden, der todt macht nit tzuschanden, sondern der glawb geht durchhynn ynn die gerechtickeyt und leben ewiglich.” Cf. *Adventspostille*, 1522; WA 10I/1.2, 6, 22-4: “Wer am meysten glewbt, dem ist er am nehsten, und wer am wenigsten glewbt, dem ist das heyl am fernisten nach der besitzung und habe zu reden.”

⁵⁴⁸ See also the next Postil on Luke 2:33-40 in which Luther discusses in detail the relationship of law and faith in the Old Testament saints by way of an allegory of “Anna” (=die heylige Synagoga), WA 10I/1.1, 414, 18f.

Once again, we encounter in Luther's writings the old doctrine of Christ's spiritual coming to the heart of the believer, the *adventus spiritualis*. Earlier in the *Dictata*, we saw that Luther received this tradition, especially through the sermons of Bernard, and incorporated it into his own interpretation of the Psalms.⁵⁴⁹ Christ's advent was *triplex*: his first advent in the flesh, his spiritual advent through grace, and his future advent through glory. Each advent reflected the unfolding of salvation history and could likewise be expressed in the various senses of Scripture. Thus, while the first coming of Christ was the prophetic-literal sense of the Psalms, applied *tropologically* to the Christian, it signified Christ's spiritual advent to the soul. Indeed, without this spiritual advent, Christ's advent in the flesh would be of no use (*nihil profuisset*). For Luther, as for Bernard, such an advent was of special benefit to the Christian penitent who sought the spiritual coming of grace. Not only did it offer comfort to the soul burdened by sins, but it also prepared the soul for Christ's second coming. The spiritual advent was therefore a necessary part of the Christian's progress, besought throughout his pilgrimage as he advanced from one stage to the next toward his final perfection. In the *Dictata*, Luther specifically connected this preparation for grace (*praeparatio ad gratiam*) and spiritual progress with the scholastic doctrine of merit—the *facere quod in se est* and the distinction between *meritum de congruo* and *meritum de condigno*.

While there was a certain correlation between the longing of the Old Testament faithful for Christ's first coming and the Christian penitent's longing for his spiritual coming, the two advents were, nevertheless, unique to the faith of each testament. Only the New Testament

Cf. esp. 424, 10f.: "...das heylige allte volck, nitt alleyn unter das gesetz wurff und knechte drauß machet, zeygtt er weytter an, wie sie neben solchem wandell unter dem gesetz auch ym freyen glawben und geyst gewandelt hatt... Und also sind beyde leben zugleych mit eynander lauffen" [emphasis mine].

⁵⁴⁹ See Chapter Two, pages 111-34.

viator could seek and receive the spiritual advent of grace, for only he had received the full revelation of the gospel made manifest with the incarnation. For the Old Testament Jew, on the other hand, grace was not yet available. He lived in the darkness of the letter and the old law and still needed to experience the light of Christ's first advent; hence, his faith and hope were directed solely to the first advent yet to be.

In the Postils, the *adventus spiritualis* takes on an important new significance. Rather than one of the characteristics that distinguish the New Testament from the Old, the spiritual advent serves to unite them. Christ comes spiritually to all who believe on him, regardless of the times in which they live: "Hence, he had always come to the ancient fathers on account of their faith."⁵⁵⁰ The spiritual advent is no longer conceived as a stage of preparation and progress on the path of Christian perfection. It is salvation itself, the very faith that frees one from the law and justifies. In the fullness of time, the advent of Christ announced the end of the law. But

⁵⁵⁰ Cf. WA 10I/1.1, 343, 18-24: "Sihe, das testament gottis hatt Abraham unnd alle veter erkennenet, ist yhn auch außteylet unnd geben, wie unß allen; obs wol zu der tzeyt nit ynn aller wellt gelesen und außgeschrien ist wie nach Christus auffartt, ßo haben sie doch eben dasselb erlangt, eben mit demselben glawben, damit wirß und alle gottis kinder erlangen." Cf. also *Adventspostille*, 1522; WA 10I/1.2, 6, 17f.: "Denn die vetter haben denselbigen glawben gehabt, und eben denselbigen Christum, er ist yhn eben ßo nahe geweßen als uns, wie Heb. 13. sagt: Christus gistern heutt und ewiglich... Wer am meysten glewbt, dem ist er am nehsten, und wer am wenigsten glewbt, dem ist das heyl am fernisten nach der besitzung und habe zu reden." For other expressions of Christ's spiritual advent and birth see WA 10I/1.1, 48, 9f.: "...man dyr Christum nitt gibt ynn die hand,...ßondern man tregt dyr yhn fur, alleyn mit dem wort und Euangelij, unnd helt yhn durch deyn oren fur deyn hertz, und beutt dyr yhn an, alß denen, der fur dich, fur deyn unrechtickeyt, fur deyn unreynickeyt sich geben hat; drumb kanstu yhn auch mitt keynem andern, denn mit dem hertzen auffnehmen, das thustu wenn du auffthuist unnd sprichst mit hertzen, ya ich glewb es sey alßo. Sihe alßo geht er durchs Euangeli zu den oren ey nnn deyn hertz und wonet alda durch deynen glawben." WA 10I/1.1, 72, 4-7: "So kan die gepurt Christi leylich nitt außgeteylet werden, wurd auch nichts helffen; drumb wirt sie geystlich, durchs wort außgeteyllt yderman, wie hie der Engel sagt, sas alle, die do festiglich gleuben, sie sey also yhm geben." WA 10I/1.1, 73, 13f.: "Unß, Unß, Unß geporn und unß gegeben. Darumb sihe tzu, das du auß dem Eüangelio nit alleyn nehmist lust von der historien yhr selbs. Denn die besteht nit lang. Auch nit allein das exempell; denn das haffet nit on den glawben, Bondernn sihe tzu, das du die gepurt dyr zu eygen machist unnd mit yhm wechßlist, das du deyn gepurt löß werdist unnd seyne ubirkomist, wilchs geschicht, ßo du alßo glewbist, ßo sitzistu gewißlich der iunpfrawen Marien ym schoß und bist yhr liebes kindt." WA 10I/1.1, 619, 15f.: "Die leylich gepurt Christi bedeuat allenthalben seyn geystliche gepurt, wie er ynn uns und wyr ynn yhm geporn werden...Nu ist nott zu solcher gepurt zwey stück, gottis wort und glawbe, ynn wilchen tzweyen die geystlich gepurt Christi volnbracht wirt." Incidentally, in the *Adventspostille*, Luther mentions the tradition of identifying "*vierley tzukunft Christi*" for the sake of the fours Sundays in Advent, noting that the most important

since Christ also comes in faith, there is a daily abrogation of the law that extends beyond all temporal boundaries, experienced by all the saints. “Slavery ends whenever, wherever, and in whomsoever” there is such an advent in faith. The spiritual advent is therefore removed from its *heilsgeschichtlich* framework in order to mark a new boundary; namely, the existential divide of law and gospel in the conscience.⁵⁵¹

There is now, in this new boundary, an entirely different basis for relating the Old Testament to the New. Traditionally, *lex* was given central place in the effort to maintain continuity between the testaments. Just as in the old dispensation, the New Testament gathered itself around the law—the new and more perfect law of the gospel—but law nevertheless. Law and gospel were essentially one. But according to Luther’s understanding of Paul, law and gospel must be utterly distinct, the function of their peculiar offices being mutually exclusive. Yet therein lay the source of theological continuity. It is precisely within the distinction of law and gospel that Luther finds the thread that joins the two testaments to one another. It is law and gospel that expresses the fundamental theological situation of all human beings. They are the two ways in which man’s existence is defined before God; that is, they are the two ways in which God deals with man. They cannot be peculiar to one people or time but constitute the necessary experience of all who would come to faith.⁵⁵² The *unity* of the testaments is, therefore,

advent, his coming in the preaching of the gospel, is nonetheless wholly neglected; 10I/1.2, 7, 17—8, 6. For the tradition of four advents see above, note 279, 300, and 301.

⁵⁵¹ See Bornkamm’s relevant comments in *Luthers Auslegungen des Galaterbriefs*, 219: “Durch diese Umsetzung des Grenzbegriffes in die Zeit stehen alle Distinktionen, mit denen die *doctrina iustitiae* aufgerichtet werden soll—zwei Gerechtigkeiten, Gesetz und Gnade, zwei Welten, alter und neuer Mensch, Fleisch und Geist—an der entscheidenden Stelle, auf die sei alle hinführen, d.h. in ihrer Bezogenheit auf die *conscientia*, dem handeln Gottes offen. Sie sind begründet in dem ‘quando is venit’ und halten den Menschen in der Erwartung dieses Kommens.”

⁵⁵² Cf. WA 10I/1.1, 426, 1-6: “Soll der mensch geystlich werden und den glawben ubirkommen, ist yhm nodt, das er zuor unter dem gesez sey. Darumb, das on das gesez niemant sich selb erkennet was yhm gepricht, wer sich aber nit erkennet, der sucht nit gnade. Wenn aber das gesez kompt, so fodert es so viel, das der mensch

found in *distinction*.⁵⁵³ The movement from slavery to freedom, from wrath to grace, from sin to forgiveness marks the daily life of all God's people. Only when law and gospel are distinguished sharply and personally—within the individual's conscience—can there be faith in which the coming of Christ is experienced unto salvation.

2. Quid igitur Lex? The Use of the Law

It has been noted by Gerhard Ebeling that the first time the expression “use of the law” appears in Luther's writings is here in the Galatians sermons of the *Weihnachtspostille*.⁵⁵⁴ While this is essentially true,⁵⁵⁵ it would be quite anachronistic to render too much importance to the employment of this term as some new-found technical theological expression. Indeed, Ebeling points out that Luther never really standardizes the formula *duplex usus legis*, as we find, for example, in Luther's students, in Melancthon, and in the subsequent generation.⁵⁵⁶ On the level of vocabulary, the term *usus legis* or *uti lege* (here, “*brauch des gesetzes*”) is in itself innocuous and bears no special significance beyond the lexical and semantic equivalents *utilitas*, *causa*, and *ratio* which have been traditionally employed in answer to the question introduced in Galatians 3:19, “Why then the law?” (*quid igitur lex*); i.e. for what reason was the law given; what is its purpose, its use, its function?⁵⁵⁷ Luther distinguishes himself from the tradition not by his

fulet und bekennen muß, er vormuge seyn nit, da muß er denn an yhm selv vorzweyffeln und gedemütiget nach gottis gnaden suffczen.”

⁵⁵³ See Ebeling's discussion of “Unterscheidung” in *Luther: Einführung in sein Denken* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1964), 125-36.

⁵⁵⁴ Idem, “On the Doctrine of the *Triplex Usus Legis* in the Theology of the Reformation,” in *Word and Faith*, trans. James W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), 72-3.

⁵⁵⁵ For *uti lege* in the 1519 commentary see Ebeling's remarks, *Ibid.*, 69, note 3.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 70-2.

⁵⁵⁷ Lombard, *In ep. ad Galat.*, Gal. 3:19; PL 192, 127 B: “Quid igitur lex? id est cur a Deo data est lex? quae est ejus utilitas?”; *Quaestiones et decisiones in Epistolas divi Pauli*, Gal. 3:19; PL 175, 559: “...quaeritur quare lex

terminology, but by the way in which he answers this question. Since he had, in substance, arrived at this interpretation in his previous lectures on Paul, the *Weihnachtspostille* represent the fruit rather than the beginning of Luther's doctrine of the *usus legis*. It is, nonetheless, instructive to observe in the Postils how the entire passage (Galatians 3:19-4:7) has received its orientation from this doctrine.

Both Postils on Galatians take up this question of the law's *raison d'être* as the central issue for each text.⁵⁵⁸ Paul's various analogies are simply vivid illustrations of the law's "right understanding and use" (*recht vorstand und brauch*).⁵⁵⁹ Luther's first sermon (Galatians 4:1-7) considers Paul's example of the young heir who is under the care of a guardian. Since the experience of a child that is restrained by its guardian from bad behavior is no better than that of a slave, he is, at the same time, driven by such restraint to yearn for freedom and the inheritance. The guardian essentially has a twofold effect on the child: restraint and the desire to be free. Similarly, the law is given for two reasons: to restrain sin and to evoke a longing for grace through the revelation of one's enslavement to sin.⁵⁶⁰

sit data? et quid utilitatis contulerit?"; *Glossa*, Gal. 3:19: "que ergo est eius vtilitas? Cur a deo data...Ecce quattuor causas date legis"; Thomas, *Super Galat.*, c. 3, lec. 7: "...quid igitur lex, etc., sit, id est, ad quid lex utilis fuit?"; Lyra, *Biblia*, Gal. 3:19: "ad quid lex mosai ea fuit data...ad quid fuit vtilis?...Hic respondet ad questiones ostendens triplicem legis vtilitatem"; Dionysius, *Commentaria*, 236: "[Quid igitur lex?] id est, cur data est & quae eius utilitas"; Steinbach, *ad Galatas*, 164, 5: "...aliquas causas dacionis legis..."; 169, 4f.: "Est ergo illa secunda ratio utilitatis legis, quod ostendit et docet omnes homines esse conclusos sub peccato."

⁵⁵⁸ WA 10I/1.1, 335, 13-17: "Szo mochtistu sagen: Bo dem alBo ist, das die werck nit rechtfertigen, Bondernn das hören und glewben ynn Christum, alß der unß tzu eygen geben ist, was sind denn die gepott nutz odder nott? Warumb hatt sie denn gott selb Bo hartt gepotten? Anttwortt: Hie komen wyr nu auff die Epistell, die wirtt unß sagen, wotzu die gepott gebenn sind." WA 10I/1.1, 449, 16f.: "...was deselb gesagt ist von dem knecht, soll auch hie von dem schulder vorstanden werdenn; denn die tzwo gleychniß furet S. Paulus, das er uns lere, was das gesetz thue und wozu es nutz sey."

⁵⁵⁹ WA 10I/1.1, 337, 21f.

⁵⁶⁰ WA 10I/1.1, 344, 23—345, 9: "AlBo ist und soll auch seyn eynem iglichen, der noch ynn den wercken unter dem gesetz wandellt und eyn knecht ist. Das gesetz ist seyn furmund und pfleger...und ist yhm *tzum ersten geben*, das er ynnen bleybe und getzogen werde, das er sich von den bößen wercken ewßerlich durch furcht der straff enthallt...*Zum andernn*, das er sich selb dran erlern und tzu seyner vornunfft kome, sehe an, wie unwillig er

It is not, however, the case that the law itself changes, performing one task here and another there. Luther is rather describing concomitant effects that result from one's encounter with the law. Man is shown to be against the law in his heart even as he conforms to the law externally. The very fact that the law *must* restrain him reveals that human beings *want* to rebel and sin against it. Those who do not see this will remain slaves to the law, driven by its threats but never fulfilling it freely with the heart. But those who learn to truly recognize in themselves this inner rebellion and sin experience the law's end and the coming of the gospel. Luther calls this moment—the moment in which the conscience feels the angst and distress of helplessness and enslavement—the “time appointed by the Father,” Galatians 4:2. It is this moment of the stricken conscience that marks the coming of grace and succor, the advent of the gospel. *Da kompt denn das Euangelium*—“At that moment comes the gospel, at that moment God gives grace to the humble...at that moment the works of the law are no more, but rather there is now the heart of the law. This is ‘the time appointed by the Father’ for the heir—that he should no longer be a slave nor under the guardian.”⁵⁶¹

The same point is made in the next sermon (Gal 3:23-29) with the figure of the pedagogue (*zuchtmeyster*). The works which the youth performs under this household

unter dem gesetz sey unnd keyn werck thu alß eyynn willig kind, sondern allis wie ein gezwungner knecht, dadurch er erfare, woran es yhm gepreche...” [emphasis mine].

⁵⁶¹ WA 10I/1.1, 347, 17f.: “...die erlernen sich selb am gesetz, wie eyn unlustig hertz sie tzum gesetz habenn, fallen vonn yhr vormessenheyt, lassen gehen hend unnd füß, werden gar tzu nicht ynn yhren augen durch solch erkenntnis. Da kompt denn das Euangelium, da gibt gott die gnade den demutigen...Da sind nitt mehr werck des gesetz, sondern es ist da hertz des gesetz. Das is die tzeytt vom vatter bestympt dem erben, das er soll nymmer knecht noch unter den furmüenden seyn.” Cf. WA 10I/1.1, 346, 4-13: “...ßo dringt das gesetz auff sie und vordampft sie tzur helle, alß die ungehorsame gottis gepotten. Da ist denn angst und elend gewissen, unnd doch keyn hulff. Hie ist die tzeytt von dem vatter bestympt, da begerd sie denn gnade und hulff, da bekennet sie yhren iamer, unuormugen und schuldt. Da lessit sie fallen vormessenheyt yhrer werck und voracht sie selber...ym hertzen ist sie dem gesetz eben ßo widder, alß keyn ander sunder. Ja, es mag geschehen, das yhr hertz heffiger sey auffß gesetz, denn keynß andern ßunders.”

disciplinarian are not his own, but are extorted from him by the strict rod of his master.⁵⁶² The youth may indeed be externally compliant, but if he had his druthers, there would be no pedagogue at all, so that he might be free to do as he pleased. Thus, there are two aspects (*tzwey stück*) of the pedagogue's work upon his charge. First, he restrains the boy from external acts of evil, keeping him from an otherwise dissolute life. Secondly, however, the youth grows to hate the pedagogue in his heart: "The more severely he is forbidden externally from evil, the more indignant he becomes in the heart toward the one who forbids him. His situation rests in the scales: as much as external sin decreases, so much does internal sin increase; one side of the scale goes up, the other down."⁵⁶³ Such is the psychology of the pedagogue and such is the law's "meaning, end, and work."⁵⁶⁴

Thus we see these two aspects [of the law] in all human beings. First, they are kept by the pedagogue—the law, from disgraceful, impudent, wild conduct and remain concluded in the discipline of such works of the law in an honorable outward life. Second, within the heart they truly become enemies of the law and its punishment; the growth of enmity corresponding to the severity of the punishment. Yet, who isn't an enemy of death and hell? But what is that except to be an enemy of the law which imposes such punishment? But what does it mean to be an enemy of the law except that one is an enemy of righteousness? And what is an enemy of righteousness, but an enemy of God himself? Is it not here concluded that we are not only unrighteous, but also hate righteousness, love

⁵⁶² WA 10I/1.1, 450, 7f. Consequently, Luther can understand the phrase, "works of the law" as a *subjective genitive*, that is, works which the law achieves through threats and promises belong in reality to the law; WA 10I/1.1, 451, 10—452, 20. Cf. WA 10I/1.1, 345, 20f.; WA 57II, 69, 6-13; WA 2, 492, 23-35.

⁵⁶³ WA 10I/1.1, 450, 19—451, 5: "Denn ynn dießem knaben sehen wyr tzwey stück: Das erst, das er wirt bewartt durch solch furcht und ubirhalten seyenes tzuchtmeysters fur vielem boßen, das er ßonst thett unnd sich ynn eyn frey, boß leben ergebe unnd gar willd wurde. Das ander, das er ym hertzen dem tzuchtmeyster deste feynder wirt, der yhm seyenen willen weret. Und steht mit yhm alßo: yhe hertter yhm das boße eußerlich vorpotten wirt, yhe unwilliger er ym hertzen uber den vorpieter wirt. Und steht seyn weßen auff socher wage, das die sund, ßo viell sie eußerlich abnympt, ßo viell sie ynnerlich zunympt; gehtt eyne wageschuffel auff die ander abe."

⁵⁶⁴ WA 10I/1.1, 450, 15-19: "Inn dissem groben, seyenen exempell bildet S. Paulus des gesetzs und freyen willenß odder der natur gescheffte mit eyinander ßo klar, das nitt klerer mocht furgepildet werden, und eyn iglicher leycht hyrauß des gesetzs meynung, ende und werck, item der natur tugent und art erlernen mag."

sin, and are enemies of God with our whole heart, however beautiful and honorable our outward life in works may glitter?⁵⁶⁵

Both aspects serve God's purposes,⁵⁶⁶ but it is especially the second that is relevant for this text. In man's recognition of such inner enmity toward righteousness, God wishes to bring him unto the cross of Christ. Seeing that the law only exacerbates the inner life toward greater sin, one is driven to confess his helpless condition and "crawl to the cross, sigh for Christ and yearn for his grace, completely despair of himself and find all his consolation in Christ."⁵⁶⁷ Faith in Christ is, therefore, both the end and the goal of the law's pedagogy. "This is the right understanding and best use of the law."⁵⁶⁸

The question of the law's use is, for Luther, filled with urgent theological relevance. Paul's description of the law's confinement "unto faith" (Galatians 3:23) defines the redemptive course of every soul: "Through such confinement we should learn to desire this faith and to recognize our wickedly inclined nature; for this redemption is spiritual and redeems only the

⁵⁶⁵ WA 10I/1.1, 452, 21—453, 11: "Alßo sehen wyr diße tzwey stuck auch ynn allen menschen. Das erst, das sie durch den tzuchtmeyster, das gesetz, bewaret werden fur eynem schandparn, vrechem, wilden weßen und bleyben eyngetzogen ynn der tzucht solcher werck des gesetzes, ynn eynem erbern weßen eußerlich. Das ander, das sie ynnwendig ym hertzen warhafftig dem gesetz und seyner straff feynd werden, und ßo viel feynder, ßo viel hertter die straff dringet. Wer ist dem todt und der helle nit feynd? Was ist aber das anders, denn dem gesetz feynd seyn, das solch straff aufflegt? Was ist aber dem gesetz feynd seyn, denn der gerechtickeytt feynd seyn? Was ist aber der gerechtickeytt feynd seyn, denn gott selber feynd seyn? Ists nitt hie beschlossen, das wyr nitt alleyn ungerecht sind, ßondern auch die gerechtickeyt hassen, die sund lieben und gott feynd sind auß gantzem hertzen, wie hubsch und erber das eußerlich weßen ynn den wercken ymer mag gleyssen?" Cf. WA 10I/1.1, 463, 21—464, 9; 467, 20—468, 8.

⁵⁶⁶ WA 10I/1.1, 454, 8-9: "Alhie sihestu yhe, wotzu das gesetz nodt und gutt sey, und was gott darynnen suche. Nemlich die zwey stück..."

⁵⁶⁷ WA 10I/1.1, 455, 5-11: "...das der mensch sich alßo durchs gesetz erkenne, wie falsch und unrecht seyn hertz sey, wie fern er noch von gott sey, wie gar die natur nichts sey...Und alßo gedemütigett werde, tzum creutz krieche, Christum erseufftze und sich nach seyner gnaden sehne, an yhm selbs gar vortzage, alle seynen trost auff Christum setze."

⁵⁶⁸ WA 10I/1.1, 460, 16-19: "Sihe, das ist der rechte vorstand und beste brauch des gesetzes; darumb es wol nott ist, das das gesetz sey, den menschen hieher tzu bringenn, das er sich alßo erkenne und nach gottis gnaden sufftze."

heart.”⁵⁶⁹ Again, Luther interprets these verses apart from—actually, *against* the pattern of salvation history. “Not only were the Jews thus confined, but they are still confined, and so are those in every time, who before faith try to become pious through works, law, threats, fear, reward, and similar reasons.”⁵⁷⁰ Here, “under the law” is stripped of its *heilsgeschichtlich* garb, signifying instead, man’s theological situation. The coming of a future faith (*ztukunftigen glawben*) denotes the spiritual timeline of the *individual*, rather than the epochal shift which Luther had emphasized in the *Dictata*. In faith the law ends personally: “All who believe in Christ become righteous through faith and receive his Spirit and grace. For them, the law comes to an end, so that they are no longer under the law. This is the law’s final sense (*meynung*), as follows: ‘But now that faith has come, we are no longer under the pedagogue’ [Galatians 3:25].”⁵⁷¹

Yet what is to prevent us from concluding that Luther is merely spiritualizing Paul’s argument? Perhaps this is nothing more than a tropological sleight of hand, an internalization and personalization of what ought to remain, by all accounts, *Heilsgeschichte*. How does

⁵⁶⁹ WA 10I/1.1, 458, 20—459, 4: “Doch war das vorschliessen und vorwaren nit dahyn gericht, das wyr albo solten bleyben, Bondern es war auff den tzukunftigen glawben gericht, das uns derselb frey und loß machet, nit das boße tzu thun, dafur uns das gesetz vorschloß, Bondern frey das gutt tzu thun, da uns das gesetz tzu tzwang. Desselben glawbenß sollten wyr durch solch vorschliessen lernen begern und unßer böß geneygte natur erkennen; denn diße erlöbung ist geystlich und erlöbet nur das hertz.”

⁵⁷⁰ WA 10I/1.1, 462, 21-3: “Albo sind beschlossen geweßen nit alleyn die Juden, Bondern auch noch und alle tzeyt dieihenigen, die tzuor dem glawben durch werck, gesetz, drewen, furcht, vordienst und dergleychen ursach sich uben, frum tzu werden.”

⁵⁷¹ WA 10I/1.1, 466, 1-6: “...alle, die ynn Christum glewben, werden durch den glawben rechtfertig und empfaßen seynen geyst und gnad. Damit wirt des gesetzes ein ende, das er nymmer unter dem gesetz sey, wilchs auch des gesetzes endlich meynung ist, wie folget: Nu aber der glawbe kommen ist, sind wyr nymmer unter dem zuchtmeyster.”

Luther's exegesis here differ from the four-fold method which he eschews in principle elsewhere?⁵⁷²

Again, Luther's doctrine of sin plays a formative role in how he interprets Paul's doctrine of the law. Luther's existential interpretation of this text is motivated by the conviction that, for Paul, sin and deliverance from sin are *primarily issues of the conscience*. They are first and foremost matters of relation, rather than ontology—man as he is *coram deo*.⁵⁷³ Luther's definition of concupiscence as *incurvatus se*, of original sin as unbelief, of flesh and spirit as designations of *totus homo* all point to this move away from the “quiddities” of theology.⁵⁷⁴

Perhaps, one of the most striking examples comes from his lectures on Romans:

For the apostle speaks thus to indicate (resound!) that man rather [than sin] is taken away, with sin remaining as a kind of relic, and man is purged from sin rather than the contrary....And the reason for this locution: because grace and spiritual righteousness carries man himself and changes him and turns him away from sin, though sin remains.⁵⁷⁵

⁵⁷² See, for example, Henri de Lubac's discussion of Tropology in *Medieval Exegesis*, vol. 2, 127-43.

⁵⁷³ See Joest, *Ontologie*. For the place of ontology in the Finnish interpretation of Luther see Tuomo Mannermaa, *Der im Glauben gegenwärtige Christus: Rechtfertigung und Vergottung zum ökumenischen Dialog*, Arbeiten zur Geschichte und Theologie des Luthertum, 8 (Hannover: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1989); idem, *Thesaurus Lutheri*; Risto Saarinen, *Gottes Wirken auf uns: Die transzendente Deutung des Gegenwart-Christ-Motivs in der Lutherforschung* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1989); Simo Peura, *Mehr als ein Mensch? Die Vergöttlichung als Thema der Theologie Martin Luthers von 1513-1519*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte Mainz, Abteilung Religionsgeschichte, vol. 152 (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1994); Carl Braaten and Robert Jenson, eds., *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of Luther* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1998).

⁵⁷⁴ For “flesh and spirit” see Eerdman Schott, *Fleisch und Geist nach Luthers Lehre unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Begriffs “totus homo”* (Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung D. Werner Scholl, 1928); Karl-Heinz zur Mühlen, “Innerer und äußerer Mensch. Eine theologische Grundunterscheidung bei Martin Luther” in *Reformatorisches Profil. Studien zum Weg Marthin Luthers und der Reformation* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 199-207.

⁵⁷⁵ WA 56, 334, 15-26 (Rom 7:1; *Sch*): “Quia Apostolus loquitur, vt significet [sonet] hominem potius auferri peccato remanente [velut relicto] et hominem expurgari a peccato [potius quam econtra]...Et ratio huius locutionis: Quia gratia et spiritualis Iustitia ipsum hominem tollit et mutat et a peccatis auertit, licet peccatum relinquat...”

This is not to say that there are no external, visible, or even ontic consequences. Luther continues to maintain a notion of progress in terms of one's faith and works, and the great eschatological fruits of death and resurrection are, of course, thoroughly "ontic."⁵⁷⁶ Nevertheless, like the forgiveness of sin, the end of the law does not signify its end *in res*. The coming of faith and the gospel only mark the end of the *hostility* which exists between the law and man. In Christ, the law relinquishes its claim against the Christian; it "no longer demands, no longer punishes, but allows the conscience to rest."⁵⁷⁷ Likewise, with the gift of the Spirit, the Christian no longer fears the law as a slave driver, but delights in it, now a joyous companion.⁵⁷⁸ The law still continues on in this world as a necessary part of human existence; it is man's relationship to it that has changed. "For Christ does not redeem the hand from work, the person from office, the body from life's station, but rather the soul from false delusions and the conscience from a false faith. He is a redeemer of consciences and a bishop of souls."⁵⁷⁹

Thus, Luther can also talk about the "use" of the law in terms of one's posture towards it. In the Postil, he identifies three uses of the law, that is, three ways in which human beings stand in relationship to the law—" [*wir sehen*] *das dreyerley brauch des gesetzes seyn, odder das sich*

⁵⁷⁶ See Peter Manns, "Absolute Faith and Incarnate Faith: Luther's Doctrine of Justification in the Great Galatians Commentary," in *Catholic Scholars Dialogue with Luther*, ed. Jared Wicks, S. J. (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1970), 121-56; Regin Prenter, "Luthers Synergismus" *Vierhundertfünfzig Jahre lutherische Reformation 1517-1967: Festschrift für Franz Lau zum 60. Geburtstag* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 265-81.

⁵⁷⁷ WA 10I/1.1, 467, 11-14: "Biß das Christus kam und gab uns denselben seynen geyst und liebe durch den glawben, ym Euangelio gepredigt; da wurden wyr loß vom gesetz, das es nymmer foddert, nymmer straffet, das gewissen rugen lessit, mit dem todt und helle nymmer schreckt, und ist unßer gunstiger freund und geselle worden."

⁵⁷⁸ WA 10I/1.1, 459, 16-20: "Sihe, alßo hatt uns auch Christus vom gesetz erloßett geystlich, nitt das gesetz tzubrochenn unnd abethan, ßondern unßer hertz, das tzuuor ungerm drunder war, alßo vorwandellt, ßo viell guttis yhm than und das gesetz ßo lieblich gemacht, das es keyn grosser lust noch freud hatt, denn ynn dem gesetz, wollt nitt gernn, das eyn tüttell abfiele." Cf. WA 10I/1.1, 459, 4f.; 460, 11-16; 466, 16-23; 467, 1-20.

⁵⁷⁹ WA 10I/1.1, 492, 12-15: "...denn nitt die hand vom werck, nitt die person vom orden, nit den leyb vom stand, ßondern die seel von dem falschen wahn, unnd das gewissen von dem falschen glawben erloßet Christus. Er is eyn erlöber der gewissen und eyn bischoff der seelen."

die menschen dreyerley weyße datzu stellen.” Some disregard it entirely, neither keeping it outwardly nor inwardly—coarse rascals, to be sure. Some, on the other hand, are kept in check by the law’s threats and conform to their “pedagogue” outwardly, though inwardly they resent and hate the law. Finally, there are those who inwardly love the law and keep it with joy. “The first neither keep it nor are kept; the second are kept; the third keep it.”⁵⁸⁰

The “right use” of the law thus depends on recognition of man’s protean relationship to the law. It is a dangerous business, for if the law does not direct one to faith as God intends, then it works the very opposite: producing persistent presumption or deep despair. Either way, help has fled and given way to hell—“so perilous is it for the one who does not make the right use of the law and thus come ‘unto faith.’”⁵⁸¹ Of special importance is this “right use” to the task of *preaching*—appropriate, considering the purpose of the Postils.⁵⁸² Only when discerning the state of his hearers, can the one who preaches hope to be faithful to the law’s intention. Incidentally, the right use of the law is fully manifested when preaching of the law comes to an *end*. The law’s best use is to give way to the preaching of the gospel, to cease so that faith in Christ might begin.⁵⁸³ Then, and only then, can it be said that the law is a “pedagogue unto Christ.”

⁵⁸⁰ WA 10I/1.1, 456, 8f: “[...]wir sehen] das dreyerley brauch des gesetzes seyn, odder das sich die menschen dreyerley weyße datzu stellen...[457, 12-13] Die ersten wider halten noch werden behalten, die andern werden behalten, die dritten behalten.”

⁵⁸¹ WA 10I/1.1, 463, 1-5: “... Bo es [das Gesetz] nitt auff den glawben gericht wirt, odder der glawb nitt tzuletzt kompt und yhn bekandt wirt, muß es nur erger mit yhn werden und tzuletzt ynn vortzweyfflung odder vorstockte vormessenheytt fallen, das yhn nymmer tzu helffen ist. Alßo ferlich ists, wer des gesetzes nit recht braucht, auff den glawben dadurch tzu kommen.”

⁵⁸² WA 10I/1.1, 456, 21f.

⁵⁸³ WA 10I/1.1, 457, 8-10: “...da muß man denn mehr und ubir das gesetz auch das Euangelium predigen, darynn Christus gnade wirt geben, das gesetz tzu halten.” Cf. WA 10I/1.1, 467, 11-14; cited in note 577, above.

* * *

The Postils are a fitting conclusion to Luther's exegetical journey in Galatians. Not that Luther stopped his work with the epistle—this was merely the beginning of what he himself styled as a kind of courtship: Galatians, his betrothed, his “Katie von Bora.”⁵⁸⁴ Rather, it is here in the Postils that Luther's theology finds its end, its goal, its *telos*. The reform of theology began in the university, but it was never intended to remain an affair of academia alone. There was, for Luther, a necessary movement from the study to the pulpit. From the beginning of his first lectures, Luther's personal spiritual struggles and effort to understand the Scriptures were wedded to his professional vocation as a called teacher of the church.⁵⁸⁵ The solemn obligations of a *doctor theologiae vocatus* bound his quest for spiritual certainty to a battle over theological method for the salvation of his fellow Christians. Exegesis was theology, and theology was for preaching. Thus, in the mind of Luther, nothing could reform the church and change the hearts of its members as the weekly proclamation of the gospel. Consequently, the sermon was no place to experiment or introduce uncertain innovations—life and death collided in the meeting of voice and ear, here everything was at stake.⁵⁸⁶ The necessary conservatism and confidence

⁵⁸⁴ WATr 1, 69, 18-19, nr. 146: “Epistola ad Galatas is mein epistelcha, der ich mir vertrawt habe. Ist mein Keth von Bor.”

⁵⁸⁵ For example, at the end of the 1519 commentary, Luther defends the continuous polemical applications of his exegesis by noting that he does so as one under obligation to publicly handle the Scriptures—undoubtedly a reference to his teaching office. Otherwise, he would much rather prefer the private study; WA 2, 601, 16f.: “Testis mihi dominus est, non studio aut libidine mea me hoc facere, qui nihil optem ardentius quam in angulo latere: sed quando omnio sacras literas publice tractare debeo, domino Ihesu Christo volo pure servire quantum possum.” See also Marilyn Harran, “Luther As Professor,” in *Luther and Learning*, 29-51.

⁵⁸⁶ For Luther's theology of preaching see Vilmos Vajta, *Die Theologie des Gottesdienstes bei Luther* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1954), 117-57; Alfred Niebergall, “Die Geschichte der christlichen Predigt,” in *Leiturgia: Handbuch des Evangelischen Gottesdienstes*, vol. 2, eds. Karl Ferdinand Müller and Walter Blankenburg (Kassel: Johannes Stauda, 1955), 257-75. For Luther's homiletical method see especially, Ulrich Nembach, *Predigt des Evangeliums. Luther als Prediger, Pädagoge und Rhetor* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag des Erziehungsvereins, 1972); Birgit Stolt, *Martin Luthers Rhetorik des Herzens* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 2000), 62-83.

which such a conviction entails make all the more remarkable Luther's assertion that he is among the few who understand Galatians rightly.⁵⁸⁷ In this context, the boast is not so much an indication of Luther's inflated self-image as it is an expression of the importance with which he invests this text for theology.

Furthermore, by the time of the *Weihnachtspostille*, the essential changes in Luther's interpretation of Galatians 3:19-4:7 have been made and explicitly addressed. His subsequent dealings with the text may reflect the increasing clarity and precision that come with experience and maturity, but the interpretation remains substantially the same until the end of his life.⁵⁸⁸ We now conclude this study by touching upon the hermeneutical consequences that such a shift in interpretation may have had for Luther.

⁵⁸⁷ WA 10I/1.1, 325, 7-11: "Das ist eyn rechte Paulische Epistell. Darumb sie auch nit vorstanden wirt von vielen, nit das sie ßo finster und schwer sey, ßondern das die lere des glawbens ßo gar auß der welt komen ist, on wilche es nit muglich ist, Paulum tzuuorstehen, der mit allem gewallt und ernst auff den glawben treybt ynn allen Epistelln. Darumb will sie unß ettwas wort kosten, sollen wyr sie liecht machenn, und das wyr yhe auff's klerlichft wyr mugen dauon reden wollen wyr ditz lassen eyn vorrede unnd eyngang seyn." Cf. WA 10I/1.1, 369, 3-5; 456, 1-8; 466, 7-9.

⁵⁸⁸ Cf. *In epistolam S. Pauli ad Galatas commentarius*, WA 40I, 33-688 and WA 40II, 1-184 (1535/1531); as wells as his various sermons: *Wie das Gesetz und Evangelium recht gründlich zu unterscheiden sind*, WA 36, 8-42 (1532); WA 41, 493-503 (1536); WA 46, 113-33 (1538); WA 49, 1-11 (1540); WA 49, 652-60 (1545).

CHAPTER FIVE

HERMENEUTICS

To conclude a study with hermeneutics feels a bit like singing the *Magnificat* at Matins—somewhat out of place. Yet rather than a dreadfully belated *Arbeitsweise*, this chapter represents a final opportunity to reflect upon the relationship between Luther’s interpretation of Paul and his interpretation of Scripture in general. The question of Luther’s hermeneutics is, of course, a separate topic unto itself.⁵⁸⁹ Yet, if Gerhard Ebeling’s assessment is true, “that the Pauline doctrine of the law must be addressed as being in actual fact the only fundamental theological indication in the New Testament as to how the question of the use of the Old Testament in the church would have to be thought out,”⁵⁹⁰ then some further observations on the interaction of Luther’s doctrine of the law with his hermeneutic may prove helpful.

As we have seen, in his earliest lectures Luther evinces fundamental agreement with the exegetical tradition. Law and gospel are related to one another as two stages of redemptive history. The gospel is the perfection and fulfillment of the law, even as the New Testament fulfills the Old. They are essentially one and the same, differing only in degree. Any sense of antithesis stems from an abuse or misperception of the law, rather than from an opposition intrinsic to the law’s intended function or goal. The *spiritualia* of the gospel are latent in the

⁵⁸⁹ Foundational essays on Luther’s hermeneutics include Karl Holl, “Luthers Bedeutung für den Fortschritt der Auslegungskunst (1921),” in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, vol. 1 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1932), 544-82; Karl Bauer, *Die Wittenberger Universitätstheologie*, 14-44, 145-52; Erich Vogelsang, *Die Anfänge von Luthers Christologie*; Erich Seeberg, “Die Anfänge der Theologie Luthers,” *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 53 (1934): 229-41; Fritz Hahn, “Luthers Auslegungsgrundsätze und ihre theologischen Voraussetzungen”; Gerhard Ebeling, *Evangelische Evangelienauslegung*; idem, “Die Anfänge von Luthers Hermeneutik.”

carnalia of the law; the things of the spirit are prefigured in the letter. The coming of Christ is consequently the end of the law in its old form, since, with figures now fulfilled, what was always true is now manifest. Thus, Luther finds Paul's discussion of the law's purpose and function descriptive of this *offenbarungsgeschichtlich* movement toward spiritual clarity. The law is a pedagogue because it is *figura*. Those under its instruction are in a stage of preparation and expectation, disposed to the future of God's revelation. By such a spiritual posture, the Old Testament faithful are joined to the *viator* of the New Testament, who likewise looks ahead to the next stage of salvation history.

In this scheme, the Christian appropriation of the law is achieved on the same basis as that of the Old Testament: they are both abrogated according to the letter, but continue their relevance through the spirit. If there was anything literally applicable in them, it must already manifestly exhibit the spiritual characteristics of the New Testament; but then, properly speaking, this could hardly be called "old." Thus, it was the task of spiritual exegesis—for the sake of application—to transform both the law and the Old Testament into the New Testament and the gospel. In the *Dictata*, the hermeneutical orientation of both letter/spirit and law/gospel points to the progressive stages of *Heilsgeschichte-Offenbarungsgeschichte*. Letter and spirit is a broader, more comprehensive distinction, descriptive of every stage in salvation history. Law and gospel, however, represent the foundational expression of letter and spirit, since their transformation from one into the other occurred with the coming of Christ. Still, because Luther viewed such a transformation as an event long past, law and gospel as paired categories do not

⁵⁹⁰ Ebeling, "Reflexions on the Doctrine of the Law," 274.

possess any immediate theological relevance for Christians.⁵⁹¹ This is why in the *Dictata*, Luther regards the distinction of the letter from the spirit, not the law from the gospel, as the *sine qua non* for one's entire theological endeavor.⁵⁹²

It is on this point that Gerhard Ebeling's thesis on Luther's early hermeneutic needs some qualification.⁵⁹³ In his essay, *Die Anfänge von Luthers Hermeneutik*, Ebeling wishes to distinguish two understandings of letter and spirit transmitted from the exegetical tradition to Luther. The first he identifies as the "Origenistic" interpretation. Here, letter and spirit correspond to the literal and spiritual interpretations of Scripture. The second is the "original sense" of 2 Corinthians 3:6 and can be found in Augustine—the distinction of law and gospel. The former tends toward continuity, the latter antithesis. In the *Dictata*, the interplay of the two, or rather, the growing ascendancy of the second over the first is, according to Ebeling, the beginning of Luther's subversion of the traditional hermeneutical framework. In other words, already latent in Luther's early distinction of letter and spirit is his doctrine of law and gospel.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹¹ Thus, when Luther attempts application through the *quadriga*, the distinction of law and gospel immediately disappears. See Chapter Two, pages 93f.

⁵⁹² WA 55I, 4, 25-6: "Item in Scripturis Sanctis optimum est Spiritum a litera discernere, hoc enim facit vero theologum."

⁵⁹³ "Qualification," because I am in essential agreement with much of what Ebeling has to say about Luther's early lectures. His insightful analysis into what is unique to Luther's thought is very helpful given the complex nature of the *Dictata*. Yet, even these thoughts, which are indicative of Luther's characteristic approach to theology, are less fruitful in the *Dictata* than elsewhere, because they are still governed by many of the traditional frameworks.

⁵⁹⁴ This is true in spite of Ebeling's disclaimer that he is not attempting to answer the question of how and to what extent the hermeneutical ideas in the *Dictata* influenced his later development; "Die Anfänge von Luthers Hermeneutik," 8, n. 31: "Ich muß dringend warnen vor der Meinung, als sollte im folgenden Luthers Theologie schlechthin charakterisiert werden. Die Arbeit beschränkt sich ausschließlich auf die Jahre 1513/15. Es ist eine Frage für sich, wie weit in der späteren Entwicklung Luthers die hier festgestellten Ansätze fortwirken oder korrigiert werden."

In fact, Ebeling later attributes the difference to a mere matter of linguistic clarity rather than any substantial change in thought.⁵⁹⁵

However, what is so helpful in Ebeling's analysis also appears as the greatest difficulty for his thesis, namely, that only when law and gospel are conceived outside the structure of salvation history, only when they are sharply distinguished from the dispensations of the Old and New Testaments, can they yield new hermeneutical consequences. But this is precisely not the case in the *Dictata*. The law and the Old Testament are still enmeshed, the testaments relate to one another as old law and new law, and Ebeling admits as much.⁵⁹⁶ The few examples cited that offer possibilities for a contrary way of thinking are too ambiguous to bear more than limited significance.⁵⁹⁷ Because Luther's first lectures on the Psalter continue to run with a *heilsgeschichtlich* interpretation of law and gospel, there can be no fundamental hermeneutical difference between the "Origenistic" and "Augustinian" view of letter and spirit. It is only when he begins to see in Paul a function of the law that extends beyond the historical boundaries of the *tempus legis* that a new basis for Scriptural interpretation and application becomes possible. Not until Luther's lectures on Romans and Galatians do we see any clear indications of this move.

⁵⁹⁵ Idem, *Luther: Einführung in sein Denken*, 120-1: "Dieser sprachliche Wandel [from letter/spirit to law/gospel], der sich in gleitendem Übergang vollzog, bedeutet sachlich keinen Bruch, sondern die Ausreifung und Sicherstellung dessen, was sich schon in der Frühzeit angebahnt hatte." Ebeling then illustrates the continuity between the two concept pairs by juxtaposing Luther's initial statement in the *Dictata* on the theological centrality of letter and spirit (cited above, note 592) with similar statements made later regarding law and gospel, e.g., WA 7, 502, 34f.: "pene universa scriptura totiusque Theologiae cognitio pendet inrecta cognitione legis et Euangelii"; WA 40I, 207,17f.: "Qui igitur bene novit discernere Evangelium a lege, is gratias agat Deo et sciat se esse Theologum"; WA 40I, 486, 26f; WA 36, 9, 6f.; WA 39I, 361, 1-4. But such juxtaposition only establishes that at one time Luther regarded the distinction of letter and spirit central, while later he regarded that of law and gospel as most important. Hardly a definitive demonstration of continuity and gradual transition, such quotations could just as well be proof of a radical change.

⁵⁹⁶ Idem, "Die Anfänge der Theologie Luthers," 49.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid., 49-51. I address most of the passages that Ebeling cites in Chapter Two, "Sub Peccato—Sub Lege," 135-46 above.

Consequently, the emergence of this new hermeneutical possibility should not be confused with the presence or lack of allegory. While it is true that Luther hardly employs the traditional *quadrigena* in the Pauline lectures, this fact more likely reflects the change in genre than a conscious abandonment of the four-fold method of interpretation. Indeed, neither the exegetes of the early church nor their medieval heirs engaged in allegory when interpreting Paul's epistles.⁵⁹⁸ Given his subject matter and style, Paul does not really lend himself toward allegorization. Rather than texts filled with mysteries needing to be uncovered, the epistles were regarded as expositions of those mysteries. That is to say, Paul is not allegorized because he himself allegorizes. Repeatedly throughout the tradition, Paul is revered as the spiritual exegete par excellence, for he is the apostle who brings the testaments together into harmony; he is the one who preaches the mysteries of Christ now fulfilled; he is the one who, above all else, establishes the "*concordinam legis et evangelii*," the concord of the law and the gospel.⁵⁹⁹ It is therefore not the absence of allegory, but the absence of this Pauline *concordia* that takes Luther's early lectures down a new hermeneutical path.

The evidence clearly necessitates this distinction; for in spite of Luther's many disparaging statements regarding allegory and the proliferation of mystical interpretations ("*allegorias, id est alieniloquia!*"),⁶⁰⁰ he continues to use allegory in varying degrees throughout his life. The same is true of *Heilsgeschichte*. In an entirely traditional manner, Luther continues to regard the economic relationship of the Old Testament and the New Testament as one of

⁵⁹⁸ See de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, vol. 2, 216-26.

⁵⁹⁹ Atto of Vercelli, PL 134, 367 C: "...Paulus, loquens de N.T., de V.T. sumens exemplum, confirmat, idipsum ostendit concordinam legis et evangelii; ostendit etiam allegorizandum esse;" cited by de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis*, vol. 2, 223/432.

⁶⁰⁰ WA 14, 500, 15; dedication to *Deuteronomion Mosi cum annotationibus*, 1525.

prophecy and fulfillment, of *figura* and *res*, of *umbra* and *veritas*. There is within this relationship a progression of revelation that increases in clarity, receiving its definitive turning point at the incarnation and the public preaching of the gospel. Furthermore, Luther never denies that the ceremonial laws prefigured Christ, that the law had a prophetic, preparatory function in its sacrifices and rituals, or even that we should interpret such aspects of the Old Testament spiritually, i.e., christologically.

Yet it is another thing to say that *Paul* should be understood in this way. It is precisely here where Luther diverges sharply from the tradition. Coming to see that the *heilsgeschichtlich* relationship of law and gospel is *not* the primary concern of Galatians, Luther intentionally excludes any such contingencies from Paul's argument. The place of the Mosaic law in history is indicative of the function of law *in general*, a function entirely distinct from that of the gospel. Since this relationship between the law and the gospel is not governed by the usual distinctions of salvation history, it can now express a theological reality that is common to all—a reality characteristic of every encounter with the Word of God throughout history. For this reason, it becomes the new *sine qua non* for theological application and proclamation. In other words, law and gospel becomes the key to Luther's hermeneutic.

Still, several studies have attempted to argue that Luther's hermeneutic ought to be grounded in a particular view of salvation history. For example, Hans Martin Müller's unpublished dissertation, *Die Heilsgeschichte in der Theologie des jungen Luther*, differentiated between a medieval view of history, which Erich Auerbach has termed "Figuralstruktur," and one that stresses the progressive continuum of "Heilsgeschichte."⁶⁰¹ In Luther's early lectures,

⁶⁰¹ Hans Martin Müller, "Die Heilsgeschichte in der Theologie des jungen Luther," (Diss., University of Erlangen, 1956). See also idem, "Die Figuraldeutung und die Anfänge der Geschichtstheologie Luthers," *Kerygma und Dogma* 7 (1961): 221-36. One must remember that during the time that Müller was writing, Oscar Cullmann

especially the *Dictata*, a figural view is operative. Müller argues that such a view of history is integral to the medieval hermeneutic; it is the soil from which the *quadrige* springs. But Müller also sees in these lectures, introduced alongside this “Figuralstruktur,” a new view of history that invests these same events with a preparatory, pedagogical role. Here the function of the law in the Old Testament plays the central role. Such a “*heilspädagogischen*” view of history, Müller maintains, brings about a decisive change in Luther’s hermeneutic, though it remains unclear how this actually differs from the rest of the tradition or could in any way be considered “new.” Similarly, in a recent study by Sabine Hiebsch, *Figura Ecclesiae*, Auerbach’s “Figuralstruktur” takes on a central place of importance as she traces the role of *figura* in Luther’s sermons on Genesis.⁶⁰² However, her thesis places the figural significance of history opposite the fourfold exposition of Scripture. According to Hiebsch, Luther does not introduce anything new, but rather opts for another tradition of Scriptural interpretation that originates in Paul and the church fathers.⁶⁰³

In either case, to place the figural structure or the pedagogical progression of salvation history at the center of Luther’s hermeneutic remains problematic for several reasons. First, while Auerbach’s thesis is a helpful presentation of the various contours in Western historical and literary thought, it intentionally paints the picture with broad strokes as it contrasts the

was quite popular and the notion of “Heilsgeschichte” was in vogue as an important theological perspective—especially among German scholars. Erich Auerbach, however, dealt with this topic from a literary point of view, first examining the figural significance of history in Western thought in his essay, “Figura.” This was further developed in his now classic book on Western literature, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Thought*.

⁶⁰² Sabine Hiebsch, *Figura Ecclesiae: Lea und Rachel in Martin Luthers Genesispredigten*. Arbeiten zur historischen und systematischen Theologie, vol. 5 (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2002).

⁶⁰³ Cf. Timothy Maschke, “The Understanding and Use of Allegory in the Lectures on the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Galatians by Doctor Martin Luther” (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 1993); idem, “The Authority of Scripture: Luther’s Approach to Allegory in Galatians,” *Logia* 4 (1995): 25-31, who came to a very similar conclusion.

Christian and pagan approaches to literature and textual interpretation. The difference between “allegory” and “typology” or “Figuralstruktur” *within* Christian exegesis is really a modern construction rather than a historical reflection of a distinction traditionally conceived and maintained. Likewise, the notion that one’s hermeneutic must proceed from a previously acquired historical consciousness presupposes a logical consistency that rarely reflects the image that emerges from the sources. Fidelity to tradition is a more probable explanation for continuity than an agreed upon view of history. While it is true that perceptions of history and historical progress did begin to receive some new expressions in the Renaissance, this did not effect much change to exegetical method.⁶⁰⁴ Finally, the question of Luther’s hermeneutic entails the fundamental problem of application and relevance—a problem that, for Luther, the figure motif cannot answer.

The difficulty with the prophecy-fulfillment scheme of salvation history is not that it is untrue, but that the identification and exposition of types and antitypes do not readily present themselves as relevant for the present individual. So with Galatians: does mere knowledge of the facts of redemptive history—that Christians live on one side of the temporal divide and the people of the law live on the other—bear with it any necessary application to one’s present existence? Indeed, if this is the way it ought to be read, then Paul’s argument hinges upon the absolute *irrelevance* of the law for the Christian situation. Of course, we have seen how the tradition had to qualify this interpretation; nevertheless, the passage has little to say to the relationship between the past events of salvation and the present life of the believer. In what

⁶⁰⁴ For the place of history during the Renaissance see especially W. Von Leyden, “Antiquity and Authority: A Paradox in the Renaissance Theory of History,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 19 (1958): 473-92; Felix Gilbert, “The Renaissance Interest in History,” in *Art, Science, and History in the Renaissance*, ed. Charles S. Singleton (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967), 373-87; Nancy Struever, *The Language of History in the*

sense do the events of salvation history, foreshadowed and fulfilled, become part of *my history*, *my salvation*? Wherein does faith lie? In *assensus*? In unmitigated *imitatio*? In either case, the historical distance between the salvific events of the past and the existence of the believer in the present is maintained. The one elicits only a lifeless *fides historica*, the other generates moral works disconnected from the object of faith. “Either allegory is directed to the things of the faith and the connection to existence is missing; or it is directed to existence and the connection to the things of faith is missing. Faith and existence are divided by a chasm....on both sides only an empty shell remains: *historia mortua* and *opera mortua*.”⁶⁰⁵ The people and events in the Old Testament may indeed prefigure Christ, but knowledge of such cannot be the basis of faith. This is true of all the saints, whether they lived in the Old Testament or in the New.

All the histories of the Old Testament so delightfully and so beautifully reflect Christ and altogether confess him... Yet therein [the saints of old] would not have been saved, and it is probable that they themselves did not know at the time that their deeds reflected Christ. For figures and significations are not enough upon which to ground faith, it must first of all be grounded upon clearer Scripture...they only became figures of Christ in their external life and works—through which no one could have become holy—but they believed with the heart in the Christ who was to come through clear speech and God’s Word, without figures.⁶⁰⁶

Thus allegories came to be vested with a different function for Luther. He continued to use them more or less throughout his life, but in a capacity utterly divorced from hermeneutical

Renaissance. Rhetoric and Historical Consciousness in Florentine Humanism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970).

⁶⁰⁵ Ebeling, *Evangelische Evangelienauslegung*, 197.

⁶⁰⁶ WA 101/1, 416, 7-9: “Daher kompts auch, das alle historien des allten testaments so lieplich und hubsch sich auff Christum reymen und allesampt yhn mit der thatt bekennenn...[417, 10f.] Doch darynn weren sie nit selig geweßen, und mocht seyn, sie hetten selb nicht alle gewist tzu der tzeytt, das yhr thun auff Christum also sich reymete. Denn figur und deuttungen sind nit gnug den glawben tzu grunden, er muß tzuuor gegrundett seyn mit klarer schrift,...Darumb, wie ich gesagt, ist nitt yhr weßen alleyn Christus figur geweßen, das sie eußerlich gefurtt haben ynn wercken, dadurch niemant were heylig worden, sondernn sie haben auch ym hertzen glawbt ynn den tzukunftigen Christum, durch klare spruch und gottis wort, on figur vorstanden.”

concerns. They were illustrative, pedagogical, even homiletical devices, yet they could have nothing to do with *application*. Such was the task of law and gospel. In other words, Scripture does not become relevant to Christians through any form of spiritual exegesis, but as a witness to God's alien and proper work of judgment and mercy.⁶⁰⁷

The realization of this new hermeneutical foundation came about gradually for Luther—more gradually than his understanding of law and gospel. Yet as he began to set the medieval method of application aside, it is clear that he does so precisely on the basis of this new interpretation. Thus, it was in his lectures on Galatians that Luther first formerly criticized the benefit of the *quadriga* as traditionally handled. There, he took the occasion of Paul's own "allegory" in 4:24 to comment on the distinction of letter and spirit. Like Augustine, he dismissed their identification with the literal and spiritual senses of Scripture, and equated letter and spirit with law and grace.⁶⁰⁸ Yet this does not mean that he now tosses out the fourfold exposition of Scripture. Instead, he fundamentally changes it. Baptizing the *quadriga* into Augustine's definition, every form of theological application must now consist of the distinction between law and grace. The traditional subject matter of each spiritual sense (allegory=church,

⁶⁰⁷ Cf. WATr I, 136, 14f. (No. 335): "in allegoriis, cum essem monachus, fui artifiex. omnia allegorisabam. post per epistolam ad Romanos veni ad cognitionem aliquam Christi. ibi videbam allegorias non esse, quid Christus significaret, sed quid Christus esset. Antea allegorisabam etiam cloacam et omnia, sed post cogitabam in historiis, wie schwer es gewesen sey, quod Iosua tali ratione cum hostibus pugnat. Wenn ich da wer gewest, het ich fur furcht in die hosen geschissen. *Das war nit allegoria, sed spiritus et fides*, cum 300 viris tantam cladem hostibus inferre etc. Hieronymus et Origenes haben dazu geholfen, Got vergebe in, das man nur allegorias suchet. In toto Origene non est verbum unum de Christo" [emphasis mine].

⁶⁰⁸ WA 57II, 96, 6-13 (Gal. 4:24; *Sch.*): "Verum quicquid sit de illis sensibus, certum est hoc neque apostolos neque antiquos doctores observare, qui tropologiam, allegoriam, mysticum seu misteria et spirituales sensum prorsus indiscrete accipiunt, anagoges vero nec verbo meminerunt. Igitur proprie loquendo secundum Apostolum 'littera' non est idem, quod historia, nec 'spiritus' est idem, quod tropologia vel allegoria, sed 'littera', ut beatus Augustinus, de littera et spiritu, est prorsus omnis doctrina seu lex quecumque, quando est sine gratia."

tropology=rational soul, anagogy=heaven) is replaced with this new content, so that the text only manifests its relevance in so far as it is law or gospel.⁶⁰⁹

Here we have, in essence, a double *quadriga* reminiscent of the one Luther had mapped out at the beginning of the *Dictata*. But it bears a very different theological import. In the *Dictata*, the two-fold *quadriga* signified an erring hermeneutic. With it Luther was illustrating the danger in following those who would interpret the Psalter apart from Christ. Unfolding the *quadriga* according to the letter was to be avoided.⁶¹⁰ But here, each application of law and grace is presented as a legitimate possibility. The law as “killing letter” is also “spiritual.” The absence of grace necessarily points to one’s need for it. Law and grace, therefore, form both the basis and the content of Scripture’s application.⁶¹¹

This is all due to the fact that Paul’s doctrine of the law has, for Luther, become far more relevant for theology than previously. The figural significance of the law moves into the background as Luther now concentrates entirely upon its relation to sin as both accuser and inciter. As figure, the law’s office had ceased with the coming of Christ. It remained a curiosity of the past. But as revealer of sin, the law’s office continued as an active force in all times and places, an ever-present testimony to the fundamental human situation. Consequently, whenever the Scriptures bore witness to this situation, there emerged the basis for man’s connection to its message. One did not need to look for figures and types in the Old Testament in order to make it

⁶⁰⁹ WA 57II, 96, 20-25 (Gal. 4:24; *Sch.*): “Rectius igitur, si cui placent isti 4 sensus, primus historicus dicendus est, non litteralis, cuius materia sit res gesta in natura, allegorici autem materia sit non tantum Ecclesia, sed quelibet persona in gratia vel extra gratiam constituta, tropologici vero non ipsa anima rationalis, sed ipsa gratia, iustitica, meritum et virtus et iis contraria culpa, peccatum et vitium, anagoges autem utriusque premium.”

⁶¹⁰ See Chapter Two, pages 78-80.

⁶¹¹ WA 57II, 96, 13-18 (Gal. 4:24; *Sch.*): “Unde manifeste patet, quod tam historia quam tropologia quam allegoria et anagoge est ‘littera’ secundum Apostolum, ‘spiritus’ autem est ipsa gratia significata per legem seu id,

relevant. Its unity with the New Testament is grounded in bedrock that runs far deeper: the common experience of faith.⁶¹² As the Old Testament exhibits the existential tension between law and gospel in the lives of God's people, it truly becomes, as Heinrich Bornkamm has put it, a "mirror of life."⁶¹³ Just as the saints of old trusted solely in God's promises, because through the law they had come to know their own helpless state, so it is for us today. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever"—he is present in all times and all places in this Word of promise and mercy and forgiveness. Thus, with such a gospel, Christ *fills* the Old Testament, putting an end to the accusations of the law and giving the conscience peace. In this way, faith in both testaments is christological, not as some special insight into *figura*, but as a gift of God formed in the crucible of law and gospel.

quod requirit lex; nec vocatur ulla doctrina spiritualis, nisi quia requirit spiritum. Idcirco omnis lex simul est littera et simul spiritualis, quia est sine gratia et significat gratiam."

⁶¹² See Christian Bogislav Burandt, *Der eine Glaube zu allen Zeiten: Luthers Sicht der Geschichte aufgrund der Operationes in psalmos 1519-1521*, Hamburger theologische Studien, vol. 14 (Hamburg: LIT, 1997), which argues that this is precisely what distinguishes Luther's second Psalm exegesis from his first. The "Figuralstruktur" evident throughout the Dictata is no longer the view of history that drives his interpretation of the Old Testament. Over and against Hans Martin Müller's "*heilsgeschichtliche Kontinuität*," Burandt maintains that Luther's new hermeneutic is expressed in this "*geistliche Kontinuität*," that is, this common experience of faith; see especially his conclusion, 265-67.

⁶¹³ Bornkamm, *Luther and the Old Testament*, 11f.

EPILOGUE

In 1529, Lucas Cranach the Elder attempted to capture the essence of Martin Luther's theology through a woodcut that eventually became one of the most popular artistic portrayals of Reformation theology.⁶¹⁴ The picture focused on the central events of salvation history with a single tree dividing the page into the Old and New Testaments. On the side of the Old Testament stood images of the fall into sin, Moses and the law, death, the devil, and hell—all symbolizing *the condemnation of man*. On the side of the New Testament, the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ were vividly portrayed—*the redemption of man*. Yet the sharp contrast of the ages begins to get muddled when one reads above the depiction of condemnation passages from the New Testament, all describing God's wrath against sin. In the same manner, man's redemption is related through Old Testament passages. Finally, one realizes that the tree does not actually divide the Old and New Testaments into two epochs of history. They are two experiences of one and the same man. *Homo*—the Everyman—experiences both condemnation and redemption, both the time of the law and the time of grace. In one version, man sits at the base of the tree wringing his hands in *Anfechtung*, his body turned towards the realm of the law, but his head craned towards the right in order to hear the words of John the Baptist who points to the crucified Christ. His life is divided, held in tension between two realms of theological existence. In one simple image, Cranach brilliantly represented what was, according to Luther, Paul's doctrine of law and gospel.

⁶¹⁴ For more detail regarding the history and influence of this picture see Friedrich Ohly, *Gesetz und Evangelium. Zur Typologie bei Luther und Lucas Cranach: Zum Blutstrahl der Gnade in der Kunst*, Schriftenreihe der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Münster, n.s., vol. 1 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1985), 16-47; Jérôme Cottin,

Luther's early exegesis of Galatians 3:19-4:7 has also presented us with an image. While Cranach has depicted its final shape, Luther's lectures and sermons portray the gradual emergence of this picture amidst the intellectual, institutional, and religious complexities of the day. The image is one of continuity and creativity. A "break" with the exegetical tradition is perhaps too strong a word, for he is certainly shaped by the tradition even as he reshapes it. Yet there is in the end something distinctly new, both in the particulars of Luther's interpretation and in the larger consequences drawn.

Luther's earliest exegetical lectures on the Psalms (1513-15) demonstrated essential agreement with the interpretation of Galatians common throughout the exegetical tradition. The law's function was understood solely in terms of its preparatory role in salvation history among Old Testament Israel. It had no value beyond the coming of Christ, who instead imparted the new law of the gospel. Like the Old Testament itself, the law ought to be interpreted spiritually, a type and shadow of the evangelical law.

In Luther's lectures on Paul, first Romans (1515-16) and then Galatians (1516-17), a new understanding unfolded. Paul's doctrine of the law was interpreted as a more general theological concept so that its preparatory role was to be found in all times. Coupled with an increasingly more radical view of sin, Luther came to interpret Galatians as a description of the law's theological function on the individual conscience, regardless of the dispensation of salvation history. Rather than a veiled type foreshadowing the spiritual doctrines of the gospel, the preparation of the law consists in the revelation of sin, a testimony to the universal human condition. Important in this transformation were the anti-Pelagian writings of Augustine, which

"Loi et Évangile chez Luther et Cranach," *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 76 (1996): 293-314; and Christoph Weimer, "Luther und Cranach: Das Rechtfertigungsthema in Wort und Image," *Luther* 74 (2003): 22-38.

Luther read thoroughly during this time, and his dispute with late scholastic theology and its doctrine of merit.

Finally, in the context of Luther's relationship to the German reform movement and his escalating conflict with the papacy, both his published commentary on Galatians in 1519 and the *Weihnachtspostille* of 1522 presented this interpretation of Paul to the scholar and layman. Thus began Luther's influence on the history of Pauline exegesis. Later, Luther would publish a sermon on Galatians 3:23-29 in 1532, "*Wie das Gesetz und Evangelium recht gründlich zu unterscheiden sind*," which, as its title indicates, invests Galatians with a kind of *loci* quality for his doctrine of law and gospel.⁶¹⁵ In 1535 a second commentary on Galatians appeared, exceeding the first in popularity and publication.⁶¹⁶

Still, it was the precedent of the 1519 commentary that produced the initial impetus for the growing number of annotations and commentaries among Luther's contemporaries. Johannes Bugenhagen published several short commentaries on the Pauline corpus in 1524 and 1525, clearly indebted to his colleague.⁶¹⁷ Erasmus' revisions of his *Annotations* (1527) and his *Paraphrases* (1532) appear to have been partly influenced by Luther's interpretation, if not directly then perhaps through his ongoing relationship with Melancthon.⁶¹⁸ Other commentators on Galatians during Luther's lifetime include Kaspar Meganders, Heinrich Bullinger, Cardinal Cajetan, Erasmus Sarcerius, Johannes Brenz, and Girolamo Seripando, all

⁶¹⁵ WA 36, 8-42.

⁶¹⁶ WA 40I, 33-688 and WA 40II, 1-184.

⁶¹⁷ In 1524 Bugenhagen published annotations on 10 Pauline epistles, beginning with Ephesians. In 1525 they were reissued, but this time including Galatians: *Annotationes Io. Bvgenhagij Pomerani In Epistolas Pauli...* (Basel: Adam Petri, 1525).

⁶¹⁸ See John Payne, "The Significance of Lutheranizing Changes in Erasmus' Interpretation of Paul's Letters to the Romans and the Galatians in his *Annotations* (1527) and *Paraphrases* (1532)" in *Histoire de l'exégèse au XVIe siècle*, eds. Olivier Fatio and Pierre Fraenkel (Geneva: Libraire Droz S.A., 1978), 312-30.

exhibiting some familiarity with Luther's interpretation of Paul.⁶¹⁹ This was then followed by another generation of exegetes virtually filling the sixteenth century with expositions of the apostle: John Calvin, Ambrosius Catherinus Politus, Georg Major, Wolfgang Musculus, David Chytraeus, Niels Hemmingsen, Rudolf Gwalther, Tilemann Heshusius, Christoph Corner, and Nikolaus Selnecker.⁶²⁰

Generally speaking, evangelicals influenced more by the Swiss Reformation than Wittenberg were inclined toward a *heilsgeschichtlich* interpretation of Galatians, even though they may have exhibited indebtedness to Luther elsewhere. Like the exegetical tradition, Kaspar Meganders, Heinrich Bullinger, and John Calvin all smooth over the Pauline antithesis in favor of the centrality of the law for the Christian's relationship to God. Luther's interpretation was known to them, but his judgments regarding the law's abrogation were considered too harsh.⁶²¹

Lutherans, on the other hand, followed Luther much more closely in this matter. In

⁶¹⁹ Kaspar Meganders, *Gasparis Megandri Tigurini, nunc Bernae e concionibus, in Epistolam Pauli ad Galatas, Commentarius* (Zurich, 1533). Heinrich Bullinger, *In D. Apostoli Pavli ad Galatas . . . 1535*. Thomas de Vio (Cajetan), *Epistolae Pavli et aliorvm apostolorum ad Graecam veritatem castigate, . . . iuxta sensum literalem enarratae*. (Paris: Josse Badius Ascensius, 1532). Erasmus Sarcerius, *In epistolas D. Pavli, ad Galatas . . .* (Frankfurt/Main: C. Egenolph, 1542). Johannes Brenz, *Explicatio epistolae Pauli ad Galatas* (Halae Svevorum: Petrum Frentium, 1546). Girolamo Seripando, *Hieronymi Seripandi in D. Pauli epistolas ad Romanos et Galatas Commentaria*, Facsimilie (Westmead, England: Gregg International Publishers, 1971).

⁶²⁰ John Calvin, "Commentarii in Pauli Epistolas" in *Opera Exegetica* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1992). Ambrosius Catherinus Politus, *Commentarius in omnes divi Pauli et alias septem canonicas Epistolas* (Venice, 1551). Georg Major, *Commentarius ad Galatas* (Wittenberg, 1560). Wolfgang Musculus, *In Epistolas . . . Pauli, ad Galatas et Ephesios Commentarii* (Basil: 1561). David Chytraeus, *Dispositiones Epistolarum . . .* (Wittenberg, 1566). Niels Hemmingsen, *Commentaria in omnes epistolas apostolorvm, Pavli . . .* (Wittenberg, 1564). Rudolf Gwalther, *In D. Pauli . . . epistolam ad Galates homiliae LXI*. (Zurich, 1576). Tilemann Heshusius, *Explicatio epistolae Pavli ad Galatas* (Helmstedt: Jacob Lucius, 1579). Christoph Corner, *Epistola D. Pavli ad Galatas scripta . . .* (Heidelberg: J. Spies, 1583). Nikolaus Selnecker, *In omnes epistolas D. Pavli apostoli Commentarius . . .* (Leipzig: Jacob Apel, 1595).

⁶²¹ See Ernst Koch, "Paulus exegese und Bundes Theologie Bullingers Auslegung von Gal 3,17-26," in *Histoire de l'exégèse au XVIIe siècle*, eds. Olivier Fatio and Pierre Fraenkel (Geneva: Librairie Droz S.A., 1978), 342-50; I. John Hesselink, "Calvin and Heilsgeschichte," in *Oikonomia: Heilsgeschichte als Thema der Theologie*, ed. Felix Christ (Hamburg-Bergstedt: Reich, 1967), 163-70; idem, "Law and Gospel or Gospel and Law? Calvin's Understanding of the Relationship" in *Calviniana: Ideas and Influences of Jean Calvin*, ed. Robert Schnucker (Kirksville, Mo.: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishing, 1988), 13-32; idem, "Luther and Calvin on Law and Gospel In Their Galatians Commentaries," *Reformed Review* 37 (1984), 69-82.

Robert Kolb's essay on Lutheran commentaries in the late sixteenth century, he traces several theological themes through seven different works, concentrating especially on the doctrine of the law.⁶²² Though all saw the distinction of law and gospel as the chief theme of the epistle, Kolb observes subtle differences between Luther and his followers, for example, the notion of the law as an eternal divine norm. An interpretation of Galatians three and four according to salvation history was often avoided and even explicitly rejected, but the focus quickly shifted to the law's continued permanence as a guide for Christian living. Because they concentrated on the individual's initial conversion, Luther's emphasis on the daily tension of law and gospel was lost. While all were familiar with Luther's Galatians, the commentaries of later Lutherans did not mechanically reproduce the Reformer's interpretation, but reflected independent exegetical work for a new context.⁶²³

Exegetes who remained within the Roman church continued to uphold the traditional interpretation of Galatians, some apparently in explicit opposition to Luther.⁶²⁴ One very interesting exception was Jacob Schoepper (d. 1554), the humanist preacher and educator of Dortmund.⁶²⁵ His sermons on Galatians followed a line of interpretation remarkably close to Luther. For Schoepper, *sub lege* is not so much a temporal referent as it is a possible condition

⁶²² See Robert Kolb, "The Influence of Luther's Galatians Commentary of 1535 on Later Sixteenth-Century Lutheran Commentaries on Galatians," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 84 (1993): 156-83.

⁶²³ Cf. Robert Kolb, "Sixteenth Century Lutheran Commentaries on Genesis and the Genesis Commentary of Martin Luther," in *Théorie et pratique de l'exégèse*, ed. Irena Backus and Francis Higman (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1990), 243-58.

⁶²⁴ For example, Politus and Seripando.

⁶²⁵ See Ursula Olschewski, *Erneuerung der Kirche durch Bildung und Belehrung des Volkes. Der Beitrag des Dortmunder Humanisten Jacob Schoepper zur Formung der Frömmigkeit in der frühen Neuzeit* (Müntzer: Aschendorff, 1999).

of one's soul, including even the soul of one baptized.⁶²⁶ "When faith comes" (Gal. 3:25) does not refer to the time of the incarnation, but to the coming of a personal faith that receives the benefits of Christ. Faith then applies the events of salvation history past to the present, so that "Christ might come to us, be born to us, suffer, be crucified, die and be resurrected to us."⁶²⁷ The possibility of Luther's influence on Schoepper's understanding of Paul has not yet received any significant scholarly attention.

Clearly, more needs to be done in order to better appreciate Luther's legacy to the history of interpretation. A separate study devoted to the role that Galatians might have played in both the academic and polemical contexts of the later sixteenth century would be helpful toward this end.

But Luther's solution to the problems posed by Paul's theology of the law was provocative enough to strike a chord in the modern context as well. In the first half of the twentieth century, New Testament scholarship vigorously debated the significance of *Heilsgeschichte* as an important expression of biblical and theological thought.⁶²⁸ It was especially Oscar Cullmann's *Christus und Zeit* that brought the idea of salvation history back

⁶²⁶ Jacob Schoepper, *Conciones in Epistolas et Evangelia Dominicalia...* (Cologne: Maternus Cholinus, 1570), 132: "In hac enim lectione Paulus similitudine admodum eleganti docet et ostendit, primo, non Iudaeos solum, sed et omnes in vniuersum homines, ipsos etiam electos, sub lege esse ante fidem... [133] Qui iam huiusmodi adhuc coercionem sentit in animo, hoc est, qui nondum toto corde propensus est ad facienda bona, et fugienda mala... is (etiamsi baptizatus sit, et Christi nomen gerat) adhuc vere sub lege est, necdum Christum vere agnoscit."

⁶²⁷ *Ibid.*, 134-35: "At quomodo (inquis) hoc Christi beneficium nobis applicatur? Resp. Per fidem. Sic enim Apostolus cap. Praecedenti inquit: Vbi venit fides, non iam fumus sub paedagogo... Quando igitur certo credimus, Christum nobis venisse, nobis esse natum, passum, crucifixum, et mortuum, nobis resurrexisse etc. omnium ipsius bonorum reddimur participes etc."

⁶²⁸ See Oscar Cullmann, *Christus und Zeit* (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1956); *idem*, *Heil als Geschichte: Heilsgeschichte Existenz im Neuen Testament* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1967); Hans Conzelmann, *Die Mitte der Zeit* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1960); Rudolf Bultmann, *History and Eschatology: The Gifford Lectures, 1955* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1957); Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Gottes Herrschaft und Reich* (Freiburg: Herder, 1959); cf. also Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the*

into the center of Pauline interpretation among Lutheran theologians. Not surprisingly, opposition to such a perspective came from theologians dedicated to the presuppositions of existential philosophy, most notably, Rudolf Bultmann. In the arena of systematic and ecumenical theology, Wolfhart Pannenberg has also asserted the centrality of salvation history, and has explicitly criticized Luther's interpretation of Galatians for its existential turn on Paul's argument.⁶²⁹ For Pannenberg, law and gospel are primarily historical designations, marking an epochal shift that has happened once and for all with the coming of Christ. While this reflects Pannenberg's commitment to a Hegelian teleology rather than a predilection for a pre-Lutheran interpretation of Galatians, the move bears similar consequences. As in medieval and modern Roman Catholic theology, Pannenberg finds congenial the traditional definition of the gospel as *a nova lex*.⁶³⁰

Then there is, of course, that other Pauline renaissance, the so-called "new perspective" on Paul. Identified most closely with the remarkable book by E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, the "new perspective" is the most recent and perhaps most provocative reaction against Luther's interpretation of Paul.⁶³¹ Ironically, many of these new readings of

Philosophy of History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949); Carl Michalson, *The Hinge of History: An Existential Approach to the Christian Faith* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959).

⁶²⁹ See especially Pannenberg's discussion of "Law and Gospel" in his *Systematic Theology*, vol. 3, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998), 58-96. Cf. also his important "Heilsgeschehen und Geschichte" *Kerygma und Dogma* 5 (1959): 218-37, 259-88.

⁶³⁰ For a recent critique of Pannenberg on this issue see Mark C. Mattes, "Wolfhart Pannenberg on the Doctrine of Justification," *Lutheran Quarterly* 18 (2004): 296-324, esp. 298-302.

⁶³¹ E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977). This assessment of Luther's interpretation was also expressed before Sanders' publication. See for example George F. Moore, *Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim*, vol 2 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1927), 93-94; and Krister Stendahl, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West." However, there have been some recent attempts to bring modern exegesis back into a more constructive dialogue with Luther. See, for example, Volker Stolle, *Luther und Paulus. Die exegetischen und hermeneutischen Grundlagen der lutherischen Rechtfertigungslehre im Paulinismus Luthers*, *Arbeiten zur Bible und ihrer Geschichte*,

Paul simply reassert the old traditional interpretations that Luther had found so unacceptable. The *heilsgeschichtlich* aspects of Paul's theology are again emphasized over and against an understanding that directs Paul's argument to the situation of the individual.⁶³² Yet, the problems of continuity and application still remain. It is not altogether clear whether the answers to these problems recommended by modern exegesis have differed fundamentally from those that were offered by the exegetical tradition before Luther. It would seem that the debate is starting over.

But at least there is still a debate. Happily, Paul's letters continue to inspire careful study and vigorous discussion. While Luther has played a part in this discussion, recent Pauline studies tend to exhibit what Stephen Westerholm shrewdly observes as an unfortunate "provincialism that thinks serious biblical scholarship a modern invention."⁶³³ Consequently, Luther and other "pre-critical" interpreters have been too easily dismissed. Yet perhaps the *Paulus Lutheri* is more than a particular interpretation of the apostle. It would seem that precisely in the ongoing study of Paul, Luther's greater intention has been fulfilled.

I have had one thing in view: may I bring it about that, through my work, those who have heard me explaining the epistles of the apostle may find Paul clearer and happily surpass me. But if I have not achieved this, well, even this labor I shall have wasted gladly; it remains an attempt by which I have wanted to kindle in others an

vol. 10 (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2002); and Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004).

⁶³² This is not only true of Sanders but especially of Richard B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983). See also D. J. Lull, "Salvation History: Theology in 1 Thessalonians, Philemon, Philippians, and Galatians: A Response to N.T. Wright, R.B. Hays, and R. Scroggs," in *Pauline Theology*, vol. 1, ed. J.M. Bassler (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 247-65; R. Scroggs, "Salvation History: The Theological Structure of Paul's Thought" in *Pauline Theology*, 212-26; N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1991); idem, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London: SPCK, 1992). For a more recent contribution to the debate see the collection of essays in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment*, ed. Bruce W. Longenecker (Louisville, KY: Westminster Knox Press, 2002).

⁶³³ Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New*, xvii.

interest in Paul's theology. This no good man will ascribe to me as a fault.
Farewell.⁶³⁴

⁶³⁴ WA 2, 449, 27-31: "Unum spectavi, si consequar, ut mea opera ii, qui me Apostolicas epistolas audierunt enarrantem, Paulum apertiore habent et foeliciter me superent. Sin nec id effeci, age, et hoc libens perdiderim laboris: conatus reliquus est, quo alios ad Paulinam Theologiam volui accendere, quem nemo bonus mihi vitio dederit. Valet." *Galatians*, 1519.

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